



**Archibald J. Motley Jr.,**  
*Another Mexican Baby* 1953–1954. Oil on woven  
petate mat, 35.24 x 67 inches (89.5 x 170.2 cm).  
Collection of Mara Motley, MD, and Valerie Gerrard  
Browne. Image courtesy of the Chicago History  
Museum, Illinois. © Valerie Gerrard Browne.

# THE ART OF ARCHIBALD MOTLEY

CONNECT,  
COLLABORATE  
& CREATE

## LESSON PLAN

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## Summary of lesson plan

This unit, “Push and Pull: Migration Tug-o-War” for 5<sup>th</sup> grade language arts and social studies explores the themes of migration, movement and change in connection with Archibald Motley’s painting, *Another Mexican Baby* (1953-54). It examines the opportunities and obstacles that migrants face; specifically contradictions that migrants experience. The students will view art, read a text about migration, write migration stories and create art around their experiences.

## Big Idea

- People migrate for a variety of reasons with a variety of results.
- Paintings can tell a story.
- Everyday experiences hold significance for the people involved and for those who document them.
- Migration experiences are motivated by both necessity and choice (push and pull factors).
- Themes can be expressed in a variety of ways based on the medium in which they are created.

## Enduring Questions

- How do events and experiences influence people to move and change?
- How do migration experiences create opportunities for some and obstacles for others?
- How do artists and writers express these experiences?

## Learning Objectives

- Identify reasons for migration.
- Analyze a painting to determine theme and message.
- Analyze how the artist conveys that theme.
- Compare and contrast works of art.
- Describe how migration is both universal and personal.
- Describe how migration experiences create both obstacles and opportunities.

Standard	Common Core Standard	Objectives – Students will. . .
RL.5.3	<p>Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings or events in a story or drama drawing on specific details in the text (how characters interact).</p> <p>CCR- analyze how and why individuals, events and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</p>	<p>Read <i>Esperanza Rising</i> by Pam Muñoz (NY: Scholastic 2000). They will identify challenges that Esperanza faces throughout the novel.</p> <p>Students will analyze how Esperanza’s interactions with the other characters cause changes for her.</p>
RL.5.7	<p>Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone or beauty of a text.</p> <p>CCR- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</p>	<p>Students will analyze Archibald Motley’s painting <i>Another Mexican Baby</i> to identify elements that contribute to tone and mood.</p>
RL.5.8	<p>Compare and contrast stories in the same genre on their approaches to similar themes and topics.</p> <p>CCR- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the author’s take.</p>	<p>Students will comparing the painting to the art and stories in Carmen Lomos Garza’s book <i>Family Pictures/ Family Pictures Cuadros de Familia</i> (1990).</p>
5.RIT.7	<p>Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.</p> <p>CCR Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</p>	<p>Students will determine important events in the life of Motley using the online timeline organized by the Nasher Museum of Art at <a href="http://nasher.duke.edu/motley/">http://nasher.duke.edu/motley/</a></p>
5.W.3	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.</p>	<p>Students will create a “Postcard Project,” writing narratives on migration experiences inspired by the painting and texts.</p>
5.W.4	<p>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.</p>	<p>Students will write descriptive passages about a place where they hope to visit in the style of a travel brochure.</p>
5.SL.1	<p>Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one on one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p>	<p>Throughout the project, we will have whole class, partner and small group discussions.</p>



## Lesson Plan Activities

**Length:** This lesson has several sessions that take place over a 3 week period.

### Materials/Supplies for the Lesson:

- Reading notebooks
- Writing and drawing materials
- Woven mat or placemat
- Paints and brushes

**Day 1:** Close read of the painting. Students look at Motley's painting, *Another Mexican Baby* (1953-54) for about 5 minutes completing the "I notice... This makes me think..." T-chart. Whole class discussion follows. Allow students to share insights. Here are some suggested questions and prompts to use as needed to guide the discussion.

- What do you see? What else do you see? (Stick to observations only at first).
- What's happening in this picture?
- What did you notice first when you looked at this picture? Why do you think your eye traveled there first?
- What is the mood of this picture? What makes you think that? How did the artist create this mood?
- Pick a person in the painting – What would that person say? What makes you think that?
- Where do you think this painting is taking place?
- Why do you think the artist painted this picture? What message is he trying to convey?
- What title would you give this painting? Now that you know the title, does your idea of the message change? Why or why not?
- What would you like to know about the artist?
- How would you describe this artwork to someone else?
- How does this artwork relate to our study of migration?

*The following activities are part of a larger unit that would follow. The pacing guide is suggested.*

**Day 2:** Class discussion of migration –what are the reasons, motivations, etc. Encourage students to consider multiple perspectives. Introduce the idea of push and pull factors in regard to migration.

Ongoing: Read novel *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz (NY: Scholastic 2000).

Develop questions about the characters during reading and identify cause and effect relationships. As a culminating activity connected with this book, have the students write postcards between the main character and her grandmother describing their experiences (Rubric attached).

The postcard project connects to Motley by showing communication between people in Mexico and the United States. An additional written reader response activity can be connected to either theme/message or how the main character changes from the beginning of the story to the end.

**Day 3:** Read Carmen Lomas Garza, *Family Pictures/ Family Pictures Cuadros de Familia*. (Children's Book Press. San Francisco, CA, 1990). Compare/Contrast these images of daily life in Mexico to Motley's painting, *Another Mexican Baby*. Focus question: How are these images like Motley's painting? How are they different? Why do you think Motley and Carmen Lomas Garza created pictures like these?

**Day 4:** Using *Family Pictures* as a model, write a narrative describing *Another Mexican Baby*.

**Day 5:** Read and discuss article about Motley's exhibit at the Library. Why would this generate so much interest? (Market Scene Comes to Chicago: NEGRO ARTIST EXHIBITS AT PUBLIC LIBRARY *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963); Oct 25, 1953; *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune* (1849-1989) pg. S\_A2).

**Days 6 and 7:** Build background knowledge of Motley through on-line readings. Emphasize the idea of choice migration and that Motley traveled to Mexico to visit his nephew. (Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, *Archibald Motley: Jazz Modernist timeline*, artworks and audio guides: <http://nasher.duke.edu/motley/#timeline>)

**Day 8:** Examine the brochures about travel to Mexico at that time period. What information can we learn about the time period and the place from these brochures?

Teachers can find examples on-line, especially at sites such as Pinterest, using search terms "Mexican Travel Brochures 1930s-50s" — <https://www.pinterest.com>, additionally, see appendix for one example.

**Day 9:** Generate list of questions one might use to interview a relative about their migration story. Review protocol for interviewing someone.

**Day 10:** Students will interview family members or friends regarding migration story. Remind students that their family

members don't necessarily have to have migrated from another country. Migrations are movements and they can take place within the country, state or even parts of the city. Students can conduct interviews in person, online or over the phone. A helpful planning sheet can be found at: <http://web.archive.org/web/20080905154756/http://www.maclester.edu/geography/mage/teachers/archives/2002nclb/hedenstrom/MigrationSeriesPlanSht.htm>

**Day 11-13:** Write migration story. Utilize the writing process.

**Day 14-15** Create a travel brochure for the place your family migrated from to come to Chicago. Include elements that would showcase the site and entice people to travel there.

**Day 16:** Create a scene from your own family migration story and paint it on woven mat fabric. (Could use placemats, sourced at Dollar Tree).

**Day 17-18:** Share out stories, brochures and artwork in a culminating event.

### Assessments:

#### (D) Diagnostic

The students will complete a t-chart with the headings "I Notice..." and "This Makes Me Think..." for the initial viewing of the painting.

**(F) Formative** – the check for understanding mechanisms used throughout the unit to ensure each student gets the instruction needed to be successful on the summative performance assessment. Examples: reader's notebooks, post-it jots, small group anecdotal records, discussion, drafts.

The students will complete "do now slips" for the beginning of lessons and "exit tickets" throughout the unit. Reader's notebook entries connected to the text will also be assessed. Venn diagrams will be used to compare the art in the text *Family Pictures* to Motley's painting, *Another Mexican Baby*.

**(S) Summative** – the "summary of student's achievement in relation to...learning standards."

Postcard Project, The written account of family migration, travel brochure, narrative about the artwork and creating the artwork. Photographs, student written work including exit tickets and a formal written migration story, artwork created by students including postcards, a travel brochure, and narrative about the painting.

## Works of Art



Archibald J. Motley Jr., *Another Mexican Baby*, 1953–1954. Oil on woven petate mat, 35.24 x 67 inches (89.5 x 170.2 cm). Collection of Mara Motley, MD, and Valerie Gerrard Browne.

### **Key information about the artist:**

Motley grew up in Chicago and attended the School of the Art Institute. He is well known for his portraiture and scenes depicting life in Chicago's vibrant Bronzeville neighborhood in the 30's. Motley had always seen himself as a painter of people and this painting reflects that. The painter visited his nephew, Willard Motley frequently after he moved to Guanajuato, Mexico in 1951. Archibald and Willard (a writer) were attracted to the everyday events in people's lives and visited many towns and tourist sites including Cuernavaca, Puerto Vallarta, San Blas, San Miguel, and Toluca.

### **Key information about the artist's context:**

This painting was created during Motley's visits to his nephew, Willard, in Mexico. At this time, Mexico was generating great interest in both business and travel and tourism. The economy was booming, but the existing class hierarchy kept the poor from benefiting from this boom.

### **Key information about the work of art:**

The artwork was painted on woven petate mat. These mats were commonly used for sitting or sleeping on in Mexico by the working class. The scene of the funeral procession is created with the characters all facing the same direction, drooping shoulders and carrying various materials associated with the act of burying the dead. The image portrays infant mortality among the poor, which was high due to existing class systems and lack of medical care for the poor.

List of resources for teachers:

The Nasher Museum of Art, Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist. Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, NC, 9 Feb. 2015. < <http://nasher.duke.edu/motley/#timeline> >

Powell, Richard J. *Archibald Motley Jazz Age Modernist*. Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University. Durham, NC: Duke University Press (2014).

“Negro Artist Exhibits at Public Library” *Chicago Daily Tribune*. October 25, 1953. Proquest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune (1849-1989). Pg S\_A2.

List of resources for students:

- Garza, Carmen Lomas. *Family Pictures/ Cuadros de Familia*. Children’s Book Press. San Francisco, CA (1990).
- Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Esperanza Rising*. Scholastic. New York, New York (2000).

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Appendix

This example of a 1930s travel brochure was created by Oakland's Central Travel Agency and was posted on-line by Adrian Yekkes, 2 Feb. 2014, [http://adrianyekkes.blogspot.com/2014\\_02\\_01\\_archive.html](http://adrianyekkes.blogspot.com/2014_02_01_archive.html)

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# Enjoy A Winter Vacation in the Sunshine of Old Mexico

## LAND OF ROMANCE AND BEAUTY

CAST care and work-a-day worries aside and come to Old Mexico for a delightful, restful vacation! Let the spring-time warmth of her sun-filled days renew your energies and relax your mind. Though she shares our continent, Mexico is as utterly foreign as any country beyond the Atlantic. The language and customs of her people are entrancingly different from ours. In the ruins of her monasteries and in the pyramids and buried cities of antiquity she holds the intriguing remains of other cultures and other civilizations. In her mountains, her quaint, romantic cities and towns, and in her languorous semi-tropical climate, Mexico holds the beauties and elements of ever-changing interest that make travel delightful.

Your vacation begins when you board the luxurious train that takes you through to Mexico City. An ultra-modern hotel on rails it is, with spacious, inviting sun-parlor lounge and dining cars handsomely decorated and furnished. Shower bath, valet and maid service, soda fountain and radio . . . Mexico's finest hotel "The Geneve" . . . these niceties of travel luxury are at your command. And to insure your maximum comfort enroute, sleeping cars are completely air-conditioned, sealed against dirt and the outside weather, and continually supplied with fresh, washed air at the most healthful, comfortable temperature.

A perfect climate, manufactured for you, accompanies you throughout this most enjoyable of journeys.



*Luxurious comfort is the  
keynote of all appointments  
enroute and at the Hotel  
Geneve.*





During the eight days in which we visit Mexico City and its environs we come to know the city and its ever-courteous people, its shops, its fine restaurants and broad boulevards, as a pleasant relief from our own hurried existence. We quickly fall in with the less strenuous life of this near-tropical country, where flowers and music and art are necessary comforts, and where business takes its siesta in the middle of the day. We see the city comfortably and leisurely by private automobile, accompanied by a guide-interpreter.

## *Puebla*

From Mexico City we motor 85 miles to Puebla, traversing a lofty, mountainous country. This "Rome of Mexico," as it is called, because of its many churches, is a city of over 100,000 people nestling in a valley at the foot of two world-famous snow-topped volcanoes. Puebla is one of the oldest cities in Mexico and shows fewer of the results of progress than many. It has always been regarded as a strategic military point, the key to the capital, and its history reveals continual strife between the French, Spaniards and Americans for several decades prior to 1867. Orderly and clean, Puebla is noted for its fine architecture, resplendent with polychrome glazed tile. Among the many churches here we visit the magnificent Cathedral, one of the largest, handsomest and richest in the country. We visit also the near-by Pyramid of Cholula which was ancient when the Aztecs found it in 1176, and whose builders are unknown. Concluding our visit in Puebla, we return by motor to Mexico City.



*Pyramid of the Sun, San Juan Teotihuacan*



*Rural Mexico*