



Smithsonian Latino Center

DAY OF THE DEAD DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Honoring Our
Ancestors Through
Community Celebration

Instructor Guide



Spider
Learning, Inc.

Identify

Deliver

Reflect

Instructor Guide Standards

Lesson Objective and Standard Alignment:

Through completing the Family Interviews Activity, students will learn about the importance of oral histories and the tradition of Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos. They will begin to develop identity connections as they gain a stronger understanding of the histories of their family members.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g. visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

National Visual Arts Content Standard 6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.
Achievement Standard, Proficient-Students:

- A. Compare the materials, *technologies, media, and processes of the visual arts with those of other arts disciplines as they are used in creation and types of analysis.
- B. Compare characteristics of visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues, or themes in the humanities or sciences.
- C. Synthesize the creative and analytical principles and techniques of the visual arts and selected other arts disciplines, the humanities, or the sciences.



The meaning of the Altar by Griselda Flores



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About the Instructor Guide

This Instructor Guide is one of seven guides that make up a thematic unit on *Honoring our Ancestors* through Community Celebration. Each Instructor Guide is designed to be utilized by all educators, regardless of their content background or experience with each topic and objective. They help educators to strategically implement a variety of instructional practices, interventions, and strategies to support English Language Learners. When used alone, this Instructor Guide helps educators successfully implement a lesson on the importance of oral storytelling. When used within the thematic unit, each guide builds upon previously learned concepts to empower students to better understand how their families' histories influences their identity.

This Guide is an extension to the original thematic module on Day of the Dead, *Honoring our Ancestors* through Community Celebration found in SLC's Teacher's Toolkit Vol. I: http://latino.si.edu/PDF/LVM_ENGcomplete_toolkit.pdf

Introduction and Background:

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a day of celebration for the people of Latin America, particularly in Mexico and Central America, and more recently for Mexican Americans. The celebration combines elements of indigenous Aztec rituals with elements of Catholicism to honor the dead. Rather than grieve over the loss of a beloved family or friend, the people of Latin America choose to celebrate the lives of the dearly departed and welcome the return of their spirits. The history of Day of the Dead is embedded with Pre-Hispanic and Spanish customs and symbols, such as decorating graves with ofrendas (offerings), and the creation and sharing of calaveras (candy or toy skulls). These customs and symbols shape the common elements of traditional Mexican Día de los Muertos. Today, Day of the Dead has become increasingly popular with Latinos in the United States.

(information found on the Smithsonian Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos website)

This Instructor Guide is a collaboration between the Smithsonian Latino Center (SLC) and Spider Learning, Inc.



Generous support for this program provided by Target.

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Instructional Strategy:

This activity focuses on the importance of oral storytelling. In many cases, oral storytelling helps reinforce ideas beyond the focus of the story, such as cultural history, societal roles, and how individuals identify with others. There is a strong sense of identity that is portrayed to the audience when a person shares an oral story. Individuals participate in oral storytelling to share their history and their experiences.

Children's book author Uma Krishnaswami talks of the importance of oral storytelling when she says, "The world is diminished in some way if stories from a number of groups of people aren't shared and made available to everybody...storytelling is our heritage." For this activity, encourage students to focus on the cultural heritage of their family and the ways that each family member shares that heritage and identity.

As you prepare to deliver instruction around this activity, follow the three main instructional concepts (Identify, Deliver, and Reflect) to assist all students in successfully completing all elements of the activity. In order to familiarize yourself with the importance of family in Latino culture, read the overview and importance of family sections from *Understanding Latino Families: Implications for Family Education*, published by Utah State University. To gain a stronger understanding of the value of oral storytelling in Latino culture, read the overview on *The Role of Mexican Folklore in Teaching and Learning*, and check out the accompanying resources, as developed by Learn NC.

IDENTIFY:

Determine which English Language Proficiency (ELP) Level each student is at before presenting this lesson. All content is presented using strategies for ELP Level 3 (Developing) students, and is easily adaptable for students at both lower and higher ELP Levels. A Vocabulary List has been provided with terms that students need to know for this activity. Terms are in both Spanish and English.

DELIVER:

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand the importance of oral storytelling, and how oral histories can help us gain a stronger understanding of the individuals within our families. As students complete this activity, they should focus on information that they already know about specific family members, and take note of any perceived similarities and differences between those specific family members and themselves. By the end of this activity, students will begin to foster a sense of familial and cultural identity as they gain a stronger appreciation for the individuals interviewed.

As you deliver your instruction, consider each student's cultural and academic background. You may use the activities and modifications listed here, or develop your own as you individualize your instruction to ensure that all students can successfully complete this activity. All materials to complete this activity are provided in the Activity Resources section of this Instructor Guide.



**Identify****Deliver****Reflect****Reinforcement Activity:**

KWL Chart - You can use this chart to complete an introductory activity where students list out selected family members, and enter information that they already know about them. This chart can help spark the development of specific interview questions later in the Family Interview Activity.

Remediation Modifications:

For ELP Level 1 (Entering) and 2 (Beginning): Allow students that are just beginning to learn the English Language to brainstorm and work primarily in their native language as they start out. Determine whether the student's strength in English is written or verbal. If their strength is written, then support the student as they write out their presentation. If their strength is verbal, then encourage them to speak in English as much as possible during each step of the activity. Have them focus on specific words and phrases that are important to this activity.

For ELP Level 3 (Developing): Encourage students to begin developing their skills by both writing and speaking in English. Have the student complete their primary work in their native language, and then have them convert the information to English. As they complete this, give students the opportunity to revise their work as needed to ensure that they are writing using appropriate conventions and structures.

Enrichment Modifications:

For ELP Level 4 (Expanding) and 5 (Bridging): Encourage students to strengthen their English Language Skills by providing time for peer reviews and self-assessments. During these reviews and assessments, students can focus on further refining their proficiency in a more nuanced manner.

REFLECT:

At the conclusion of the lesson, ask students to self-evaluate their progress with the lesson. Format your reflection assessment as follows for each ELP Level:

Level 1 (Entering): Answer "wh" questions verbally in Spanish, and write one- or two-word answers in English.

Level 2 (Emerging): Have students restate the facts in both Spanish and English, and write phrases in English.

Level 3 (Developing): Ask students to summarize the lesson in both Spanish and English, and write simple sentences using some specific language to identify key concepts of the lesson.

Level 4 (Expanding): Using a variety of sentence lengths, instruct students to write a response in English that compares the differences between select audio clips within the lesson, using specific and some technical language. Students may organize their thoughts in Spanish before writing in English.

Level 5 (Bridging): Have students complete a critical analysis in English of one audio clip within the lesson, using a variety of sentence lengths in a single organized paragraph or in extended text, with technical language. Students may organize their thoughts in Spanish before writing in English.

In addition to self-reflection, ask students to consider the following questions:

How does your family shape you?

What do you admire about your family?

What story will be told about you in the future?





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Lesson Plan - Family Interviews

Follow the step-by-step instructions below to implement this lesson plan in your learning environment.

Part 1: Introduction to Oral Storytelling (Approximately 30 minutes)

Introduce students to the LVM oral histories on Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos to learn about the tradition of sharing oral histories and oral storytelling. As they listen to the stories of each interviewee, tell the students to pay close attention to the following:

The meaning of Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos expressed

The meaning of loved ones expressed

The different ways in which interviewers frame their questions

Part 2: Family Interview Preparation (Approximately 30 minutes)

Discuss the different interview questions that were used by the interviewers shown through the LVM oral histories.

Create a list of the features of the questions with your class, and display this list on the board. Students can also keep notes separately for reference.

Organize the class into groups of 3 - 4 students, and ask them to develop a list of original interview questions that have the same features that are on your class list. Each student should be responsible for creating a minimum of 3 questions to ask.

Each student should write their interview questions on the Interview Question List. As the others in their group develop questions, they should add them to their individual list as well.

Have one member from each group share their original interview questions with the class. As students listen, they should add any new questions that they hear from other groups to their Interview Question List.

Part 3: Family Tree Preparation (Approximately 60 minutes)

Prepare students for interviewing their own family members by completing the Family Member List worksheet.

Instruct students to begin with their immediate family members, and then expand their list, adding as many family members as they can to the sheet.

Using the information on the Family Member List, have students complete as much of the Family Tree Worksheet as they can. You may either print out the worksheet for students to write on, or digitally share it with your students for them to use with their electronic device.

After reviewing their Family Member List and Family Tree, ask students to take a closer look at their interview questions. Instruct students to review and revise their questions to be more specific to the people that they have identified on the documents.

Finally, instruct students to develop at least one question that specifically asks family members to assist with completing their Family Tree.



Part 4: Conducting the Interviews (Complete as Extended Homework)

Instruct students to conduct their interviews with family members over the course of the next week.

As they interview each member, they need to take detailed notes. Students can use this Interview Template to keep their information organized.

Students are also to focus on completing their Family Trees as they interview family members.

As an alternative for students that have difficulty writing, students may ask each individual for permission to record their interview and record them (with permission) and/or take detailed notes and photos.

As students are conducting their interviews, they should reflect on the stories that are being shared with them. Encourage students to see whether each person being interviewed has a role in shaping their identity by having them reflect on the following Creating My Identity guiding questions:

How much of these stories are a part of me?

Who do I resemble?

Who do I not resemble?

What were the choices that this person made?

What are my choices?

How will those choices affect my identity?

Which family stories, histories, traditions, etc., do I keep from my family as I am building my own identity?

Which family stories, histories, traditions, etc., do I leave with my family as I am building my own identity?





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Part 5: Understanding the Importance of Family (Complete as Activity Assessment)

To conclude this activity, students need to compile all of their interview information into a presentation that explains what they have learned about the importance of family. This presentation can be completed in three different formats, depending on student comfort and ability:

Written Presentation - Students may type a 2-page paper that discusses what they have learned about the importance of family during the course of the activity. This paper must include at least two quotes from different family members. The cover page should include images of the family members interviewed by the student. Students should also include their completed Family Tree as the last page of the activity.

Oral Presentation - Students may complete a 3-minute oral presentation to their class that discusses what they have learned about the importance of family during the course of the activity. This presentation is to be accompanied by a slideshow depicting images of the family members interviewed by the student. The slideshow should also present the student's completed Family Tree.

Video Presentation - Students may produce a 5-minute video presentation that discusses what they have learned about the importance of family during the course of the activity. This video should include footage of at least two interviews performed by the student, and must also include the student's completed Family Tree.

As students are developing their presentations, they should think back on their Creating My Identity guiding questions:

How much of these stories are a part of me?

Who do I resemble?

Who do I not resemble?

What were the choices that this person made?

What are my choices?

How will those choices affect my identity?

Which family stories, histories, traditions, etc., do I keep from my family as I am building my own identity?

Which family stories, histories, traditions, etc., do I leave with my family as I am building my own identity?

Part 6: Summary and Connection to Next Activity

As students share their presentations, encourage them to take notes on what other students have learned about their families, and about the importance of family. Remind students that they will use their understanding of the importance of family and the information they learned during their interviews to develop a poem to honor their loved ones, which is the next activity.





Activity Resources

Family Interviews

[LVM Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos Website](#)

[Vocabulary List](#)

[KWL Chart](#)

[Interview Question List](#)

[Family Member List](#)

[Family Tree Worksheet](#)

[Interview Template](#)

[Creating My Identity](#)






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Family Interviews Vocabulary List



Term	Phonetic Pronunciation	English Translation	Definition	Image
<i>Día de los Muertos</i>	Dee -ah day loas moo- wear -toes	The Day of the Dead	A celebration to honor the lives of deceased family members and friends	
<i>ofrendas</i>	oh- fren -dahs	offerings	A collection of items that are placed on an altar during <i>Día de los Muertos</i> celebrations	
<i>calaveras</i>	kal-ah- vehr -as	skulls	Decorative or edible items made to look like a human skull	



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Family Interviews KWL Chart



Use the chart to list the names of the people that you want to interview for your activity. Then, list what you already know about each person, and what you want to know about each person. After your interview, write out what you learned about them.

Family Member	What I already know...	What I want to know...	What I learned...



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Family Interviews
Interview Template



Question	Answer	Notes



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Family Interviews
Interview Template



Question	Answer	Notes



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Family Interviews
Family Members List



Name	Age	Relation to Me



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Family Interviews Your Family Tree



YOU



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Family Interviews Creating My Identity



Reflect on the answers to each of the following questions as you interview family members, and learn about their personal stories.

How much of these stories are a part of me?

Who do I resemble?

Who do I not resemble?

What were the choices that this person made?

What are my choices?

How will those choices affect my identity?

Which family stories, histories, traditions, etc., do I keep from my family as I am building my own identity?

Which family stories, histories, traditions, etc., do I leave with my family as I am building my own identity?





Additional Resources

<https://sites.google.com/spiderlearning.org/slc-guides>

<https://www.spiderlearning.com/>

<http://latino.si.edu/>

Smithsonian Latino Center (SLC) Official Social Media Channels

#SLCDayofDead #MyLatinoStory #OfrendaOnWheels #SLCAncestors



[@SLC_Latino Twitter](#) - Blog Updates & Real-Time Information

Follow @SLC_Latino on Twitter for updates on all things #SLCAncestors #MyLatinoStory



[@SLC_Latino Instagram](#) - #SLCAncestors

- Step 1: Follow @slc_latino on Instagram
- Step 2: Share your real-time celebrations of Latino cultural traditions using the hashtag #SLCAncestors
- Step 3: Like our photos and share them with your friends.



[@SLCLatino Facebook Page](#) - General News, Updates, and Community

Visit our Facebook Page to connect with our extend community of artists, educators, writers, and innovative culturalists to share discussions, find information about featured artists, and share top content of the week from the SLC Tumblr and SLC Instagram.



[SLC Tumblr](#)

Share your cultural traditions, holiday celebrations, and stories of experience within Latino and Afro-Latino cultural heritage on our blog for the #MyLatinoStory project.





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[SLC SoundCloud](#)

The SLC SoundCloud Channel features curated playlists and exclusive artist interviews. The #MyLatinoStory Group is a great way for our audience to share oral histories that preserve Latino culture and heritage.

Share Your Stories & Sounds!

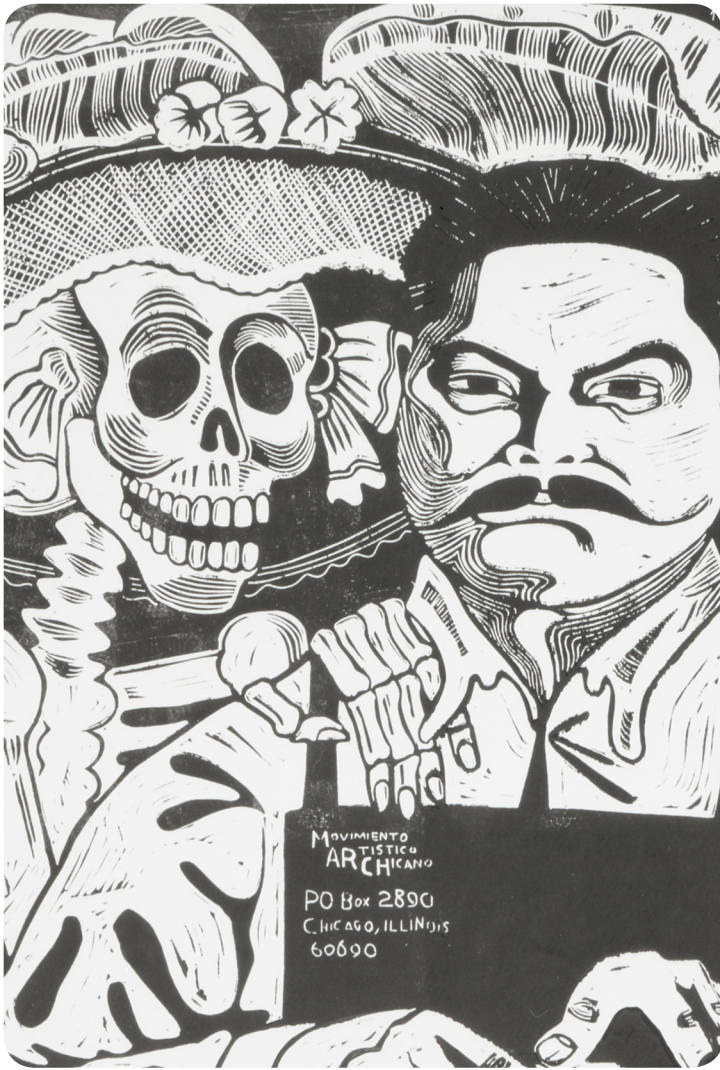
- Step 1: Create a free SoundCloud account and upload your music, audio narratives, and oral histories
- Step 2: Follow the SLC on SoundCloud for updates to our playlists and opportunities to share your content
- Step 3: Like, repost, or leave comments on our tracks
- Step 4: Share your tracks on our #MyLatinoStory SoundCloud Group to by clicking the "Add to group" button underneath your individual track's waveform
- Step 5: Share our tracks and playlists with your social networks, or embed our track and playlists on your website or blog



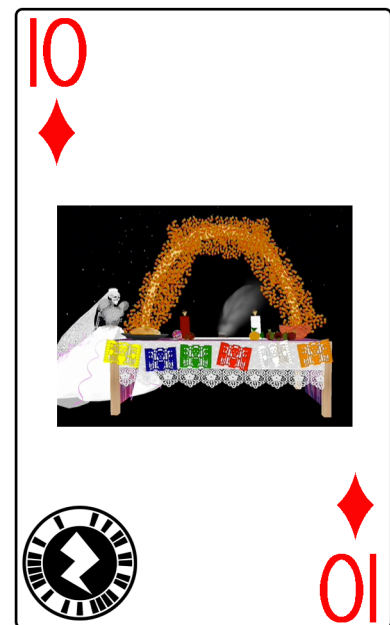
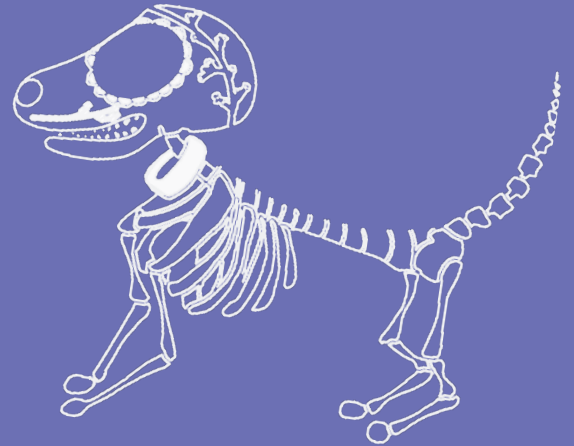
The Meaning of the Ofrenda



The Artistic Tradition of the Day of the Dead Ofrenda



[Educator Transmedia Training Kit Vol. 2](#)



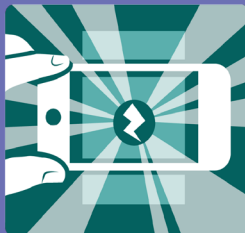
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Zap

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