

#10392

HOLIDAY FACTS & FUN: CINCO DE MAYO

RAINBOW EDUCATIONAL MEDIA, 1998

Grade Level: 2-5

13 Minutes

4 Instructional Graphics



CAPTIONED MEDIA PROGRAM RELATED RESOURCES

[#2625 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY](#)

[#2633 PRESIDENT'S DAY](#)

[#3156 MEXICO: THE PEOPLE AND THEIR CUSTOMS](#)

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Cinco de Mayo

Time: 13 minutes

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Intended Audience and Uses

This video is intended to be used with youngsters, ages 6-9. The program has been designed to be used for holiday programs and multicultural studies.

Program Synopsis

Shot on location in San Antonio, Texas, this video features lots of dancing, singing, and colorful Mexican

activities typically seen on this joyous holiday. Viewers are first transported to San Antonio's colorful Market Square, the largest Mexican market in the United States, where holiday bands play lively *conjunto* music, where dancers strut and spin, and where a cornucopia of delectable Mexican foods is served to countless thousands. The program then shows how one school celebrates the holiday. At a special assembly, performers from San Antonio's famed Guadalupe Cultural Center present a pageant that explains the historical significance of *Cinco de Mayo*. Animated maps and historical pictures are used in the presentation to help students better understand the holiday's historical roots. Student performers also dance, play the *conjunto* accordion and sing Mexican songs. Later, youngsters visit a lively, colorful *mercado* (market) set up in the school's gymnasium. The program ends at the Baldares home, where one Mexican-American family, proud of its ethnic heritage, celebrates the holiday with games (*piñata* and *cascarones*), stories about life in Mexico, a huge Mexican feast, and dancing.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, students should be able to do the following:

1. Explain why *Cinco de Mayo* is celebrated.
2. Tell three ways the holiday is celebrated.
3. Define the following Spanish terms: *conjunto*, *piñata*, *cascarones*, *Chicano*, *sombrero* and *cinco*.
4. Describe some of the major tourist attractions of San Antonio, Texas.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

1. Introduction

Ask the members of your class from what country or countries their ancestors have come. Help everyone understand that, in our country, almost everyone's ancestors, except Native Americans', come from somewhere else. Now, ask if anyone in the class celebrates a special holiday that his or her ancestors celebrate, such as Chinese New Year or Hanukkah. If so, have the child tell about the holiday – how it's celebrated, the songs that are sung, unique foods that are eaten and special games that are played. After the class has talked about various holiday celebrations, ask why holidays are observed. Help your students understand that holidays are observed to help people remember historical events (an example would be Independence Day) to honor individuals (Martin Luther King Day and Presidents' Day), and to remember important ideas (Kwanzaa).

2. Previewing Activities

Tell your students that they are now going to see a program about a holiday that people of Mexican-American heritage celebrate. Mention that they'll see people other than Mexican-Americans celebrate the holiday, also. Ask why someone would be interested in another group's holiday. Help your students understand that in a multicultural society such as ours, many persons enjoy learning about the cultures of others in their community. They like to participate in activities that help them appreciate the many things each group has to offer.

3. Post-viewing Activities

Discuss the historical background of the holiday. Help your class understand the importance of “right versus might.” Have the class discuss the meaning of the phrase. Which army in the play had the “might?” Which had the “right?” Next, pass out the four activity sheets that come with this guide. Depending on the age of your students, you may have them complete these handouts as a group or individual seatwork activity.

PURPOSES OF HANDOUT MATERIAL

How Cinco de Mayo Is Celebrated – To review the different ways the holiday is celebrated and to offer an art activity associated with Cinco de Mayo.

Facts About Piñatas – To present extended, enrichment information about piñatas.

Some Facts About Mexico – To underscore Mexico’s importance in today’s world, to give a few additional facts that will increase an understanding of the country and to help students use contextual clues when reading.

A Spanish Crossword Puzzle – To review the Spanish terms used in the video.

ANSWER KEY

Some Facts About Mexico – south, Spanish, fruits and vegetables, explorers, Indians, Mexico City

A Spanish Crossword Puzzle – Across: 1. piñata, 2. Chicano 3. conjunto, 4. cascarones. Down: 1. verachos, 3. cinco. (There is no number 2 down)

TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

NARRATOR: It's early May in San Antonio, Texas, and people of Mexican heritage are celebrating a special holiday – Cinco de Mayo – as are other Mexican-Americans elsewhere in the country.

Regardless of where Cinco de Mayo is celebrated, however, there always seems to be plenty of music!

There's lots of dancing, too – all kinds of dancing!

And wherever Cinco de Mayo celebrations are held, there's an abundance of delicious Mexican food for everyone to eat, and colorful sights to see.

Not everyone who comes to Cinco de Mayo celebrations is of Mexican heritage. People from many different backgrounds enjoy the celebration.

San Antonio, home to one of the country's biggest Cinco de Mayo celebrations, hosts many visitors each year.

A large number of them come for the early-May celebration. Others come for the city's many other colorful festivals.

They also come to see San Antonio's *Paseo del Rio*, or "River Walk." It runs through the city's central business district.

Visitors also come to see San Antonio’s historic sights, such as the famous Alamo and the other missions found there.

Some are almost 300 years old, built when Spanish priests came to spread Christianity and when Spanish explorers came looking for gold.

Today's San Antonio is a big, modern city. But it has kept much of its old-time Mexican charm, in large part because there are so many Mexican-Americans who live there.

In fact, more than eight out of every ten San Antonio residents have Mexican ancestors.

So Cinco de Mayo is celebrated throughout the city, including in many of its schools.

At Coronado/Escobar School, for instance, students have gathered to see a group of actors who have come to perform a play that explains why Cinco de Mayo is celebrated every May fifth.

ACTRESS: The story of Cinco de Mayo begins more than 150 years ago. It was a time when Mexico was trying to recover from a long period of wars.

It cost the Mexican government millions of dollars to pay the soldiers and to buy the weapons for these wars. It needed to borrow money from foreign countries to pay for everything.

The president of Mexico at the time was Benito Juarez.

JUAREZ: There is only one way to save our nation, gentlemen. We will tell the countries that have loaned us money they must wait two years before we begin to pay them back. Our poor people cannot be taxed any more! They've suffered enough!

ACTRESS: The three countries that had loaned the money to Mexico were England, Spain and France.

In France, the emperor Napoleon III and his wife, Eugenie, were hatching a plan.

EUGENIE: It will be easy! But of course, the United States is friends with Mexico and President Lincoln would come to Mexico's aid.

But all his soldiers are now in a Civil War. He won't be able to help Mexico!

NAPOLEON III: That's certainly true, Eugenie. We won't have any problems with the United States! But we need an excuse to take over the country!

EUGENIE: What better excuse than Mexico's not paying its debts on time? Mexico owes us that money! Who cares about their poor people? Who cares if Mexico says it will pay later!

We should have that money now!

NAPOLEON III: Well, it certainly won't be hard to defeat the Mexican army. Our army is the strongest in the world! Our soldiers are the best trained and have the best equipment. It will be easy!

EUGENIE: And then we can overthrow that horrible Mexican president, Benito Juarez!

Who does he think he is, anyway? Giving land to the poor people to make their lives better – when everybody knows only we rich, royal people deserve to live better!

That Juarez has to go!

ACTRESS: Eugenie and Napoleon III decided that once President Juarez was overthrown, they would appoint a man named Maximilian to be ruler of Mexico. Maximilian, they knew, would do whatever they told him.

And so it was decided: France, along with Spain and England, would send a huge army to Mexico to force the Mexicans to pay up - or else.

The French, Spanish and English leaders met with Mexican government officials at the sea port of Vera Cruz in 1862.

The Mexicans said they would give the invaders everything in Vera Cruz's treasury.

The Spanish and English agreed to the offer, and returned home.

But the French, wanting to take over Mexico, refused. Their commander, Comte de Lorencez, marched with his troops toward the small town of Puebla, which lay south of Mexico City, the capital.

Puebla was defended by Juarista General Ignacio Zaragoza, along with some 4,000 peasants.

ZARAGOZA: People of Mexico, we are outnumbered! The French have the most powerful army in the world!

But we must defend our homeland. Mexico belongs to Mexicans, not the French! We must fight bravely for our homeland!

ACTRESS: And they did! Although outnumbered by almost two to one, and although they were fighting the strongest army in the world, the brave farmers of Puebla routed the French army on May 5th, 1862!

Today, the battle of Puebla stands for the strength and determination of the Mexican people, and is celebrated every year as Cinco de Mayo!

ACTOR: Viva Mexico!

STUDENTS: Viva!

NARRATOR: After the play, the student part of the program begins. The dancers are first.

Next, a young musician plays a *conjunto* button accordion, an instrument popular among the *Chicano*, or Mexican-American people, of South Texas.

The program ends with a Mexican song.

Later in the day, all the students go to a make-believe Mexican market, or *mercado*, set up in the school's gymnasium.

There are all kinds of activities and Mexican foods for the children to enjoy.

Some of the most popular booths are those where craft objects such as large, Mexican-style flowers are made.

Making necklaces is another popular craft activity there.

But perhaps the most popular area of all is the *piñata* booth. There, papier-maché strips are put on a balloon.

When they dry, students will decorate them.

Some of the finished *piñatas* have been hung in the gymnasium.

At one time, *piñatas* were hollow clay pots, colorfully decorated. Although they're seldom made of clay today, they're still decorated brightly – and are an important part of

many Mexican festivals and holidays.

In addition to school and community celebrations on Cinco de Mayo, many Mexican-American families, like the Baldares's of San Antonio, also observe the holiday at home.

The Baldares's are proud of their Mexican heritage.

The grandparents make a special point of telling their grandchildren all about the small village of China, where the Baldares's come from.

They seldom fail to mention, too, how beautiful Mexico is – from its rugged lands to its colorful cities with picturesque plazas and interesting people.

The children enjoy hearing about their family members in Mexico and how they live.

While the children listen, the *piñata* is readied.

In a short time, the first child is blind-folded, given a stick – and the fun begins!

Finally, after many tries, the *piñata* is broken, the candy spills out, and the mad dash is on!

After all the candy is gathered, another game, called *cascarones* begins. First, colored, hollowed-out eggs filled with confetti are placed on the ground.

Then, all the children gather in a circle, and when a signal is given – well, you can easily see what happens!

Eventually, it's time to eat. The Baldares's Cinco de Mayo feast has all their favorite Mexican dishes, including batter-

fried chili peppers, or *pablanos*; a kind of Mexican sandwich called *gorditas*; a bean salad called *frijoles verachos*; chicken in a delicious sauce, or chicken *mole*; *tamales* and much, much more.

The children are served first, and then it's the adults' turn.

Finally, after everyone eats, the dancing begins!

Regardless of where the Cinco de Mayo celebration is held – at home, at school, or elsewhere – it's always a joyous occasion.

For it recalls a time when the Mexican people demonstrated their bravery by fighting – against overwhelming odds – to be free.

The lesson of Cinco de Mayo is for not only Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, but for all people, everywhere!

Web Resources

Cinco de Mayo Mini Unit

An outstanding resource for teachers. Gives historical background, references, objectives, resources, time allotments, procedures, assessments, activities and more.

http://www.teacherlink.usu.edu/resources/ed_lesson_plans/Byrnes/cincomayo.html

Cinco de Mayo

Gives a brief history of the holiday and contemporary pictures.

<http://latino.sscnet.ucla.edu/demo/cinco.html>

A Piñata For You To Make

Everything your students need to make a great piñata, including clear step-by-step instructions and cutout patterns.

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Hills/8859/pinata.html>

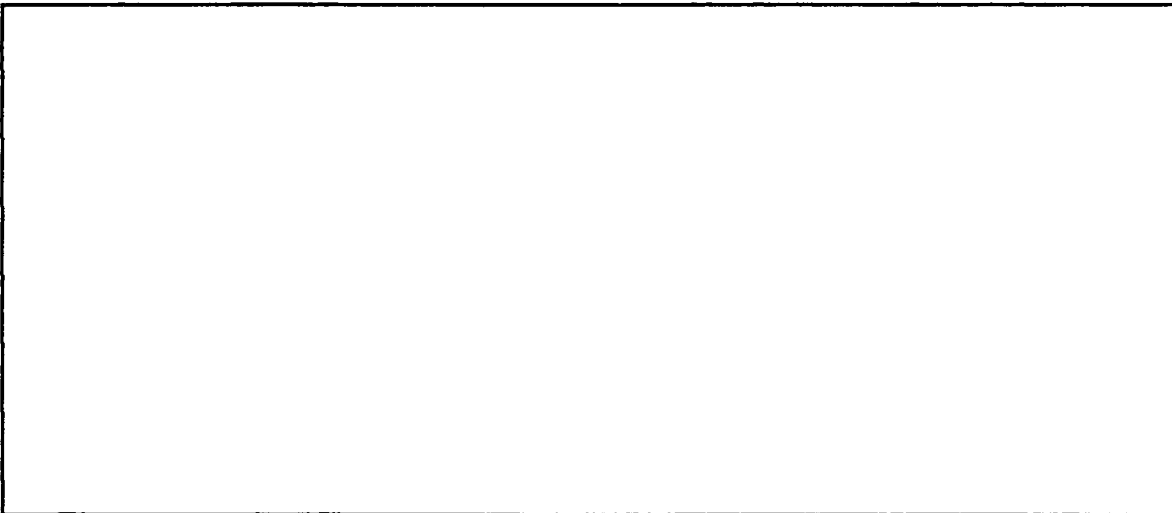
Name _____

HOW CINCO DE MAYO IS CELEBRATED

Directions: In the video, you saw the many ways Cinco de Mayo is celebrated. One was with singing. Color the singer below. Then draw your own picture that shows another way the holiday is celebrated. Color it. Then, on the back of this paper, write what is happening in the picture.



MY PICTURE



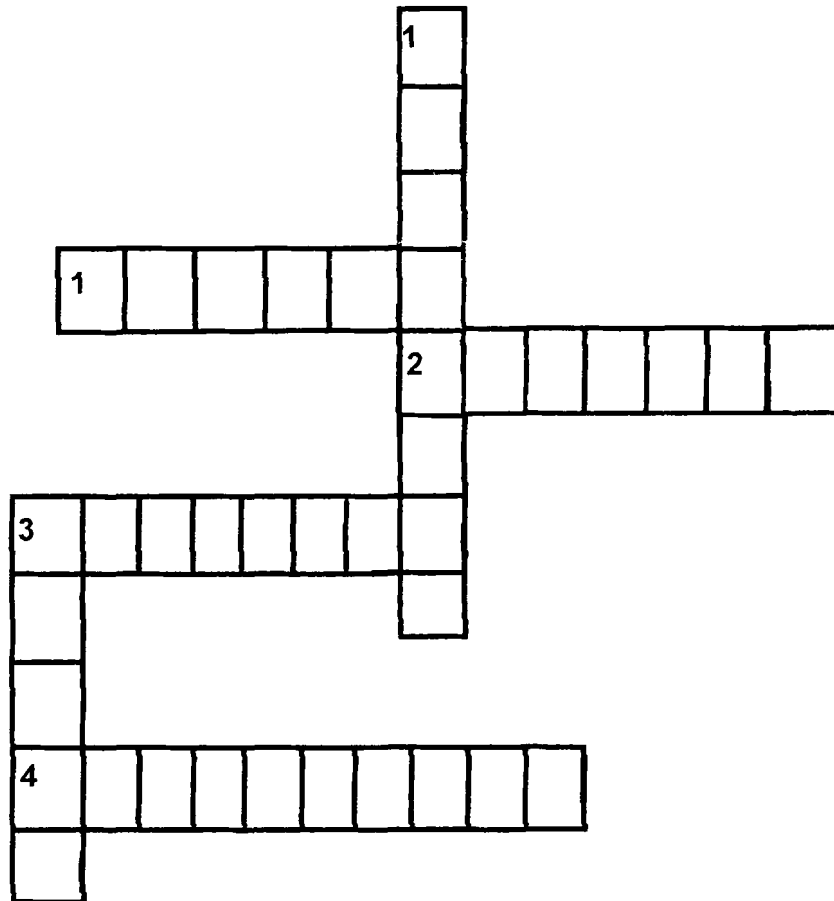
Name _____

A SPANISH CROSSWORD PUZZLE



A *sombrero* is a large Mexican-style hat.

Directions: In the video, you saw dancers wearing cowboy hats. Sometimes the dancers wear large hats called *sombreros*, which is a Spanish word. There were other Spanish terms used in the video. Fill out the puzzle with some of those terms. Use the definitions given below.



ACROSS

1. COLORFULLY DECORATED POT
2. TERM FOR MEXICAN-AMERICAN
3. BUTTON ACCORDION
4. GAME THAT USES EGGS

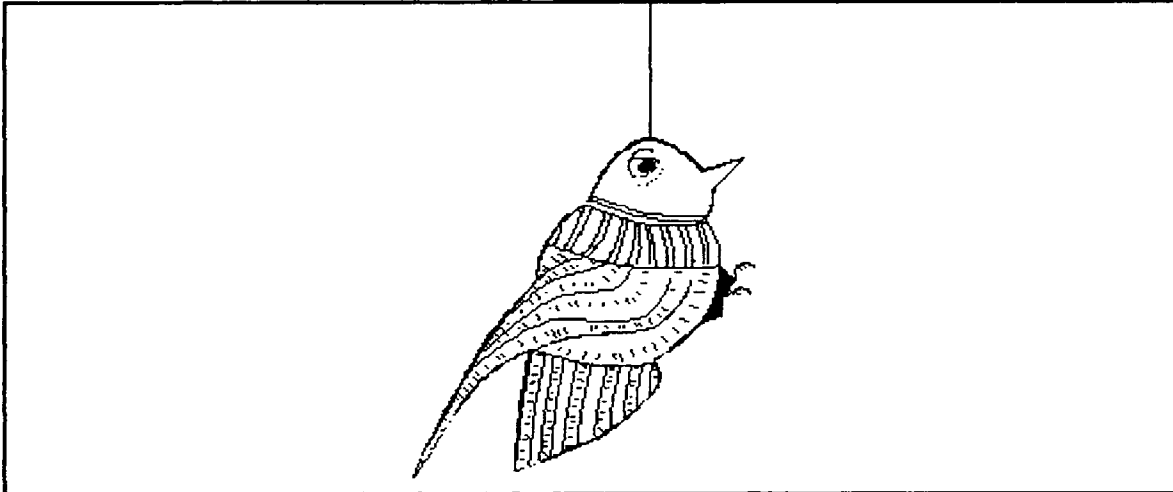
DOWN

1. FRIJOLÉS _____
3. FIVE IN SPANISH

Name _____

FACTS ABOUT PIÑATAS

Directions: Read about piñatas. Then, on the back of this paper, draw a picture of a piñata you would like to make. Color it brightly.



Piñatas have been part of Latin American festivals for many years. They were even used in celebrations before Spanish explorers came to the country we now call Mexico. Mexican Indians made piñatas from thin clay pots. They were hollow inside so they could hold small toys. The piñatas were decorated to look like the gods the Indians worshipped.

When Spanish explorers came to Mexico, they saw piñatas, liked them, and sent them back to Spain. Since then, piñatas have become a worldwide symbol of fiestas (celebrations).

As you saw in the video, a piñata is hung from a rope that is pulled up and down. Each player is blindfolded, then tries to break the piñata with a stick. When the piñata is broken, all the goodies spill out!

Name _____

SOME FACTS ABOUT MEXICO

Directions: Read the article about Mexico. Using the words below the article, fill in the blanks.



Mexico is the country _____ of the United States. It is a very important nation. It is the largest _____-speaking country in the world. It is an important trading partner with the United States. U.S. citizens buy _____ and _____ grown in Mexico. They also buy automobiles, chemicals, oil, and many other things made and mined “south of the border.”

Before Spanish _____ arrived in the 1500s, there were many Native-American tribes that lived in what became Mexico. The Maya, Olmec, Mixtec, Toltec and Aztec _____ built large cities with beautiful buildings.

_____ is the capital of the country. It is the world’s largest city, with more than 22 million people.

*Indians, south, Mexico City, Spanish,
fruits, explorers, vegetables*