



**#9677**

## **UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER: MEXICANS AND AMERICANS**

LEARNING SEED COMPANY, 1998

Grade Levels: 9-12

26 minutes

### **DESCRIPTION**

Explores common misconceptions, generalizations, and stereotyping that both Americans and Mexicans share about each other's cultures and behaviors. A diverse group of high school students frankly discuss these topics and suggest external appearance matters less than internal character.

### **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

#### **Subject Area: Language Arts - Viewing**

- ★ Standard: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
  - Benchmark: Uses strategies to analyze stereotypes in visual media (e.g., recognizes stereotypes that serve the interests of some groups in society at the expense of others; identifies techniques used in visual media that perpetuate stereotypes) (See Instructional Goal #1.)

#### **Subject Area: Behavioral Studies**

- ★ Standard: Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior
  - Benchmark: Understands that cultural beliefs strongly influence the values and behavior of the people who grow up in the culture, often without their being fully aware of it, and that people have different responses to these influences (See Instructional Goal #2.)

### **INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS**

1. To examine stereotypes between Mexicans and Americans in the United States.
2. To illustrate cultural differences.

### **VOCABULARY**

1. stereotype
2. race
3. culture
4. potential
5. benefits
6. nationality
7. generalization
8. pass on (die)
9. benefit
10. misunderstand

## BEFORE SHOWING

1. List stereotypes of Mexicans and of Americans in the United States.
2. Review the Mexican-American War of 1846.
3. Which country had control of Texas, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, and California prior to 1846?
4. What happened to Mexicans living in these states after 1846?

## DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause to discuss each of the on-screen questions. Note which student speaker you most agree with and most disagree with.
  - a. Is it a truth or misconception that Mexicans tend to show emotion outwardly and that Americans tend to be more reserved?
  - b. Do Mexicans in the United States tend to speak Spanish to each other? If so, is this a problem?
  - c. What do these terms mean to you: "Mexican" and "Mexican-American"?
  - d. Do all Mexicans look alike?
  - e. Is there a difference in family life between Mexicans and Americans?

## AFTER SHOWING

### ► Discussion Items and Questions

- a. What is the potential for benefits between Mexicans and Americans? For misunderstandings?
- b. Does culture dictate behavior? Why or why not?
- c. How do the following characteristics relate to being or not being Mexican: speaking Spanish and having or not having a Spanish last name?
- d. What is the difference between race and nationality?
- e. Why do Mexicans come to America?
- f. Who is fueling the stereotypes between Mexicans and Americans?

### ► Applications and Activities

1. Survey the local and school community to find which name people most identify with and why.
  - a. American
  - b. North American
  - c. Mexican American
  - d. Mexican-American
  - e. Chicano or Chicana
  - f. Hispanic
  - g. Latino or Latina
2. Research life in Mexico.
  - a. What were the primary cultures in Mexico prior to the Spanish conquest in the 16<sup>th</sup> century? How did this conquest change Mexico?
  - b. What kind of government system is in place in modern Mexico?
  - c. What languages are spoken in Mexico?
  - d. What roles do family life and religion play in Mexicans' lives?



3. Evaluate personal values based on traditional Mexican values as described by the video producer.
  - a. What guides your personal decisions: rules and laws or personal relationships and feelings?
  - b. What is more important in resolving a conflict: blunt directness or flattery and bargaining?
  - c. What are you more comfortable with in friendships: close physical contact or a comfortable distance?
  - d. In dealing with others do you assume equality or keep an awareness of social standing and titles?
  - e. Which is more important: to see a friend or family member or to be punctual for an appointment?
  - f. Do you tend to believe that a man who is devoted to his mother is a "mama's boy" or a man rightly honoring his mother?

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## RELATED RESOURCES

- [Celebrating Our Differences: Race #3286](#)
- [Cultural Baggage #3598](#)
- [Make a Difference #3377](#)
- [The 22nd Floor #3328](#)



### World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.



- **CULTURE AND SOCIETY OF MEXICO**

Primarily a resource of related links. Frequently asked questions specifically relate to stereotypes, culture, and cross-culture relations.

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~rjsalvad/scmfaq/scmfaq.html>

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- **THE IMPACT OF MEXICAN CULTURE ON AMERICA**

**ThinkQuest**

[http://www.thinkquest.org/library/lib/site\\_sum\\_outside.html?name=C008371&url=C008371/](http://www.thinkquest.org/library/lib/site_sum_outside.html?name=C008371&url=C008371/)

Written by high school students from Florida to demonstrate how the Mexican-American culture has impacted the culture of the United States in many ways including politics, fine arts, sports, foods, language, and demographics.