

*Altar-ing:  
Mexican-American Memoir in the South Texas Borderlands.*

*#AltaringProject*

Mexican American Studies/ Mexican American Literature  
Memoir/Autohistoria Unit

Grade Levels:  
Middle - High School  
ELA, MAS, MA Lit, Creative Writing

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Andres Lopez, consultant

*This curriculum is one facet of Bodies of Agua, a literary research project supported by the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures, Southwest Airlines, and the City of San Antonio Department of Arts & Culture through a grant from the NALAC Fund for the Arts Grant Program.*

*Altar-ing* is aligned with TEKS for middle through high school classes in the hopes that it can be implemented with a variety of students..

### **DEDICATION:**

*For my daughters & my mama.  
For my students & their students.  
For the South Texas maestras/escriptoras  
whose passion for learning and teaching led me here:  
Ms. Cavazos, Mrs. Longoria, Mrs. Villarreal, Ms. Anzaldúa:  
whether they stayed on the rancho or left for the academy,  
these trailblazers are forever lighting my path.*

### **GOALS & METHODS**

Gleaned from various readings and copious notes taken at Mexican American Studies conferences in San Antonio, Texas, the purpose of this unit is to decolonize



the literature class, empower our students, center their voices, create spaces, and mobilize them to justice. By tapping into community knowledge and cultural memory, and by utilizing interdisciplinary approaches, Mexican American Literature works as both a window and a mirror that can lead to *conocimiento*.

Recognizing the power of seeing oneself in literature, the lessons are designed to inspire students to see their stories as not only valid, but beautiful, to be inspired to dig up history that has otherwise been excluded or diluted, and to discover the cultural goldmine in their own backyards by collecting oral histories in their own familias in order to both preserve and generate knowledge.

In conjunction with *Bodies of Agua*, the following lessons encourage students to go outside traditional classroom tomes and texts in order to reconnect with cultural and natural facets that compose South Texas.

In addition, lessons spiral from exploring students' individual family histories to collective cultural elements such as music, food, icons, and landmarks. The lessons feature Mexican-American authors writing memoir, or *autohistoria-teoría*, a term coined by Gloria Anzaldúa to describe writing that weaves together elements of "cultural and personal biographies with memoir, history, storytelling, myth, and other forms of theorizing.....(to) create new stories of healing and self-growth, cultural critique, and individual and collective transformation" (*Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*, 242)

## **BIO:**

Bonnie Cisneros spent five years teaching public school at an inner-city academy. She never meant to land in middle school, but fate propelled her to help launch the first 8th grade class at Nathaniel Hawthorne Academy, which was, at the time, the jewel in the crown of San Antonio Independent School District.

Her mentors at Hawthorne had already laid the foundation for her; a group of exemplary teachers thought outside the box and made Hawthorne a school where inner-city students could flex their thoughts and not be bound to humdrum curriculum.

Its charter declared Hawthorne a Core Knowledge school (curriculum with systematic syllabus of topics designed to give educators a way of knowing what students have experienced in school and to give students a common foundation on which to build additional learning).

Core Knowledge stems from the idea that "cultural literacy" should be taught, and Bonnie wholeheartedly agreed with the theory. For example, students are taught [aphorisms and sayings](#) like "can't hold a candle to" and "make ends meet" because



learners who are not exposed to the sayings of the dominant culture will surely run across them in their readings and conversations throughout their formal education.

Bonnie was sold on Core from the start, and found great pleasure in delving into the curriculum and content, though it was always clear that her culture, and that of her majority Mexican-American and Mexican-immigrant students, was missing. Where were the Mexican dichos and poesia Tejana, not to mention the history and literature, of the indigenous, Mexicans, and Tejanos?

Bonnie's path pivoted several times. She spent five years teaching at Hawthorne. In 2011, she took a job at San Anto Cultural Arts as the *El Placazo Barrio Newspaper* coordinator. At SACA, the theories and skills synthesized, which is probably the topic of another paper, but a lightbulb moment occurred when members of the SACA community showed her [Precious Knowledge](#), the documentary about the fight to keep MAS in Arizona Public Schools. That movie really moved her!

After SACA, Bonnie had babies and earned her MFA in Creative Writing from Texas State University. Writing MAS curriculum is a project in communication with Bonnie's ancestors and mentors, and she's wondering whether it is a good choice to write this in third person.

I'll switch it back to first person.

All of the energy given to me over the years inspires me to gift *Altar-ing* to all the South Texas teachers and students who continue to do the real work---blurring the boundaries of what the state says we should teach and learn.

This is the time to remember where we came from and point students in the directions that led them here. South Texas, after the colonies and missions, after the wars and treaties, after the bridges and walls, has much to teach.

*Altar-ing* is an attempt to rebuild.

### **A NOTE ABOUT THE FINAL PROJECT:**

I know how 45-minute segments, five days per week, can both be too much and yet not enough time. Some of these lessons may stretch out, and others may fizzle out after a day.

It is up to your students to help guide the ship. Allow for their interests to steer the direction and be attuned to their excitement or lack thereof.



I honestly believe that this unit would be best placed towards the end of the school year when trust has been built, and they've been exposed to a plethora of Mexican American Studies/Literature.

I've left the final project guidelines somewhat open so you can tailor it to your students' needs. Music plays a central role in this journey. You might want to invest in some decent speakers if you don't have some.

Time is always a factor, so remember that each lesson is designed to be a possible facet of the final project. Assignments may be revisited throughout, revised and tweaked, in an attempt to model how formal research and creative projects happen in real life.

That's one of the things that bugged me when I was teaching---that feeling that we were regulated by time/bells, classroom/walls, rules/standards. I'm hoping that we can use *Altar-ing* as a map to get you, at least intellectually and emotionally, beyond these boundaries.

Families are going to be a key component to doing this. It's their stories, customs, music, recipes that will take center stage. Keep them in the loop with newsletters, texts, and maybe even social media.

Once all is said and done, the final product could very well be a family heirloom.

### **EDITOR/CONSULTANT BIO:**

Andres Lopez, a San Antonio native, has taught English Language Arts for over 15 years in San Antonio, Houston and Austin, Texas, Boston, Massachusetts and Guanajuato, Mexico. Of his 16 years in the classroom, 13 were in middle schools. For the last three years, Andres has taught on-level and dual credit English at Stevens High School, where he established San Antonio's first high school Mexican American Literature class. He obtained his teaching degree at the University of Texas at Austin, a master's in education at Boston College and a master's in English Literature with an emphasis on Chicano/a rhetoric and literature from Texas State University. He was recognized as Northside I.S.D.'s 2018 Educator of the Year and was the district's 2018 nominee for the Trinity Prize for Excellence in Teaching. Andres is also an active member of Somos MAS, a group of educators organized to support MAS in San Antonio and Texas.

### **Preguntas to unfold over the course of the unit:**

Search out one's past





Open windows into your life

Make sense of the past and find how it led to the present

Who are we? What have we become? What are we becoming?

Repeat stories about choices, perspectives, responses, results

Explore both good and bad, living and dead, real and mythological

CELEBRATE people and places that might otherwise be overlooked

build an altar of words, artwork, research

### **METHODS:**

The unit is composed of 10 lessons that culminate in a final project. Lessons are intended to tap into students' personal history and cultural memory by reading a variety of Mexican American authors and participating in activities that keep them talking, thinking, writing, sharing, and listening.

A lexicon of the borderlands will be built as a class, the Tex, Mex, Latinx vocabulary that has been traditionally excluded and even vilified in the classroom will be uncovered and admired.

Technology, music, film, photography, fine and folk art, murals will supplement and enhance lessons.

Final projects/products and presentations may include a variety of products such as murals, altars/ofrendas, slideshows, documentary videos, essay collections, original mixtapes, poetry chapbooks, and graphic novels.

It may be that this unit will work best at the end of the school year, when testing is complete and everyone is allowed to breathe again. There is an attempt on the authors' part to create a suggested timeline, but all teachers know that lessons sometimes expand and other times fizzle out.

Finally, it is recommended that teachers take the time to compose their own writing assignments ahead of time in order to provide their students with authentic examples of the reading, researching, reflecting, writing, revising, performance/product cycle.

If you'd rather write with them watching, that's cool too.



All English teachers started as voracious readers and avid writers, so this unit asks that you tap into that passion.. Be curious and sensitive and willing to share with them, and they'll meet and exceed your expectations.

Maybe it'll help you shape your own memoir!

## LESSON PLANS:

### ***Lesson 1: A Foto is Worth a Thousand Palabras***

*Memories make us who we are. Photographs capture events and preserve the basic facts. In this lesson, students will analyze a favorite family photo for sensory and emotional memories and use poetry to transform the photo into their own "Stenciled Memory."*

#### Objectives:

- To analyze visual text in the form of a family photo for time period, setting, cultural markers, family history, body language, clothing, and emotional connotations.
- To write a poem conveying the importance of the photo in connection to their own identity.
- to synthesize the handout and the photo

#### TEKS:

6-8th Grade: 4A; 8A; 15B

9th-12th Grade: 3A; 7A; 14B

#### MATERIALS:

- student & teacher's family photos (scanned)
- Projector
- Journals
- Poem: Lorna Dee Cervantes' ["Stenciled Memories"](#)
- [Photo Analysis Handout](#)

#### Steps:

1. Warm Up: Teacher models activity using their own family photo. Describe the scene in the photo. Talk about how your memory of the event both parallels and differs from what is shown in the frame.
  - a. Though the photo is a visual representation of the event, discuss other senses that can be gleaned about the event. What do you see and how can you infer what senses were captured in the photo: sounds, smells, feels, tastes?



- b. Teacher talks about emotions that the photo evokes.
  - c. Teacher tells some details or facts that the picture does not show.
2. Read “Stenciled Memories” aloud as either line by line popcorn read, partners, or whole group.
  - a. Discuss the following:
    - i. Our memories are often composed of senses: what an event looked, sounded, felt, tasted, smelled like. Make a quick five column graphic organizer in journals labeled with five senses. Partners dissect poem for sensory details (sweet sap, trilling crickets, bitter lemon song, etc..)
    - ii. How does the poet include sensory elements to fill in the “stencil” of the speaker’s memories of grandmother?
    - iii. “Always making do” is a key line in the poem. What does it mean to “make do” and what are some ways your elders make do on a daily basis?
3. In small groups, students analyze their photos using Photo Analysis Handout (linked above).
4. On their own, students reflect on the same details that the teacher modeled in Step 1:
  - a. sensory memories evoked by photo can be listed in a five-column graphic organizer.
  - b. list emotional memories
  - c. remember five details that the photo does not show.
5. In journals, students will use “Stenciled Memories,” their photo analysis handout, and the pre-writing from Step 4 as sources to compose a poem inspired by their photo and findings.
6. Share poems and keep as a possible resource for the final project.
7. Extension: students may scan photo, type out poem, and use design software to create a visual and verbal meme.

## ***Lesson 2: Arbol de Mi Familia / Your Roots and Branches, Tus Raices y Ramas***

*Trees are the lungs of the planet. We use our breath to speak language, express emotion, and communicate with each other. Texas is a land of many languages, all of equal beauty and importance. In this lesson, students will remember the names of their ancestors and understand the power of knowing/using/uttering both English familial terms and their Spanish/TexMex equivalents: from abuelo and tía, to tatarabuela and suegra. They will also learn the names of common Texas trees and the features that identify them, hopefully connecting the dots between their own roots and branches and their connection to Texas air, soil, and water.*

Objectives:

- to learn the names and identifiers of various South Texas trees.



- to compare and contrast how a family is like a tree, or even a nopal.
- to confer with their parents and grandparents to construct a graphic representation of their ancestors.
- to learn vocabulary in English and Spanish for genealogical terms: grandparents, abuelos, ancestor, antepasado, aunt, uncle, tía, tío, and so forth.

**\*If possible, students may access [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) to help find names and documents relating to their family.**

***\*In the case of students who may not have access to biological family members, this lesson will have to be adapted with great sensitivity. Modify according to student's interests and allow them to voice ideas for an alternate project.***

#### TEKS:

6th Grade: 23C

7th-8th Grade: 23B;

9th-12th Grade: 21B

#### MATERIALS:

- [South Texas Tree Identifier](#)
- [Family Tree Graphic Organizers](#)
- Posters
- Student journals
- Markers
- Baggies for tree specimen collections
- Homework Handout: [My Name, Mi Nombre](#)
- Teacher's Family Tree example

#### STEPS:

##### DAY ONE:

1. Warm Up: Ask students to open their journals and give them two minutes to draw a tree, any tree, any style. Partners share their drawing and talk about similarities and differences between their drawings.
2. Teacher draws a simple tree outline on the board and leads a class discussion using the following questions:
  - a. How is a tree like a family?
  - b. What are a family's roots, branches, leaves, fruit? (Here, you may choose to include the Spanish equivalents to these words: raices, ramas, hojas, fruta.)





- c. Ask students to name types of trees and talk about the importance of trees (breathing, shelter, ecosystems, soil erosion, materials, beauty)
3. Project photos of various South Texas trees: mesquite, live oak, palm, cypress, pecan, nopal (*I think you should google these and choose the images you find particularly pretty.*)
4. Divide class into equal groups representing types of common South Texas trees, such as *mesquite, palm, oak, cypress, pecan.*
5. Allow time for groups to research botany, climate, growth, symbolism, uses, fun facts. Determine what format students will use to gather information and presentations.
6. Present findings.
7. **Extension opportunity:** Take a nature walk around campus. Take photos of trees and/or sketch a favorite specimen in journals.

## HOMEWORK:

My Name, Mi Nombre handout (linked above)

Take a walk with an elder/family member and look for examples of various trees. Collect specimens such as mesquite pods, leaves, pecans, acorns in provided baggies to bring back to class for use in final projects/altars.

## DAY TWO:

\*TEACHER NOTE: You need your family tree today. You also want to be sensitive to students with little to no knowledge about their family history.

1. Warm Up: Review tree vocabulary and how to identify species. Take a moment to share specimens and talk about their nature walks. (Be sure baggies are labeled with student names for future use and store them.)
  - a. In journals, students reflect on the following prompt:  
*Why is it important to know the names of things?*
2. Teacher shares their family tree with the class. Point out interesting facts such as: recurring names (Jrs and Srs), surnames and what they mean or where they come from, if one branch is top-heavy or skimpy and why, where the ancestors were from and how they moved around or didn't. Point out that familial terms are labeled in **English and Spanish.**
3. Students fill in Family Tree handout as much as possible. Include full names, birthdates, place of birth, death dates.
4. In journal, choose one of the tree species that most represents your family. Why? Reflect on how the tree is both like and unlike your family.



5. Extension: Choose one of the local tree species that best represents their family and create an illustrated family tree in the form of their chosen tree.

#### HOMEWORK:

Students confer with family to add more names to Family Tree handout for use on the final project.

### ***LESSON 3: What's in a Name?***

*Not that long ago in South Texas, our ancestors' names were mispronounced, mocked, or even Anglicized and changed. In this lesson, students will explore the meaning (denotation) and the feeling (connotation) of their given names and learn that their identities are worth studying.*

*This lesson is dedicated to all the Blancas who were forced to become Blanches and all the Rogelios who were renamed Roger.*

#### Objectives:

- read Sandra Cisneros's "My Name" from *The House on Mango Street*.
- research the story of their given, middle, and last name.
- consult with parents to find out why they picked their name and research online to discover the origins of their names.
- analyze the connotation and denotation of their given names.
- use their family tree to compile their last names going back and back in the Spanish tradition (father's last name, mother's maiden name, father's mother's maiden name, mother's mother's maiden name, and so on).
- compose a vignette about the connotation and denotation of their names.

#### TEKS:

6th-8th Grade: 2E, 8A

9th-12th Grade: 1E, 7A

#### MATERIALS:

- Vignette: ["My Name" by Sandra Cisneros](#)
- Family Trees from previous lesson
- Journals
- Name Story Handout Homework
- Connotation/Denotation [T Chart](#)
- [La Cucaracha video](#)

For name research:



<http://www.meaning-of-names.com/>

<http://genealogy.familyeducation.com/family-names-surnames/meaning-origin>

## STEPS:

### DAY ONE: (Reading)

1. Warm Up: Teacher introduces lesson by telling class the story of their name. This can be presented as a list of points or, preferably, a vignette in the style of Cisneros's "My Name," composed in advance.  
*Questions to consider: What do you know about why your parents chose your first and middle names? Are you named after someone? What do you know about that person? What does your name mean; where does it originate? (see above websites) How do you feel about your name? Has the feeling changed over time? Do you have nicknames? What do you know about your last name? Do you feel like your names suit you? Do others have trouble pronouncing your name? Would you ever change it? Why or why not?*
2. Students read Cisneros's "My Name" aloud as a whole group or in small groups.
3. Discuss Esperanza's relationship to her name.
  - What does Esperanza's name mean literally in English and Spanish? What is the denotation of her name?
  - What connotations does she associate with her name? Why does her name mean sadness or waiting?
  - What images does Cisneros use to make the connotations clear? Why are they effective?
  - What personal details does the passage include? What cultural information is included?
4. Teacher reviews the terms "connotation" and "denotation" using the surefire Quick Tip below. \*\*
5. Independent work: complete Connotation/Denotation T-chart individually in order to prepare for the writing assignments.

### \*\*QUICK TIP:

An easy and memorable way I've taught connotation and denotation is to use the example of the word cockroach (cucaracha). Ask students to define cockroach: *a scavenging insect that resembles a beetle, having long antennae and legs and typically a broad, flattened body. Several tropical kinds have become established worldwide as household pests.* That definition is flat, unemotional, it's the **denotation**.

Now, discuss what feelings arise when you hear or picture a cockroach: asco, disgust, shudder, gross. Those feelings evoked are the **connotation**.

Even further, with the word "cucaracha." Some students will have Spanish words to define (denote) the word, and others will have the association of the song "La



Cucaracha.” You can play the Cuco Sánchez version linked above, and give some historical context for the lyrics. This is a rabbit hole, but that’s sort of the point. Students may appreciate seeing the teacher get excited about words, and how they contain bottomless chasms of meaning and story. Most kids won’t forget the cockroach connotation/denotation lesson, but the excitement and borderline surprise they’ll glean from “La Cucaracha” is worth the time this detour takes. Learning, and feeling excited by research, is the gift that keeps on giving.

#### DAY TWO: My Name, Mi Nombre

1. Warm Up: Review connotation/denotation using example vocabulary such as: *snake, baggage, home, rose*.
2. Class shares homework findings. In small groups, allow time to talk about what they discovered about the origins of their names.
3. In journals, students will use “My Name” and the teacher’s vignette as examples to write their own vignette about their own name, how it connects to where they come from, and why names are valuable to their own identity.
4. Students may share their drafts.

**Remember, you’re squirrelling away these notes and discoveries for use on the final project. Remind them of this!**

#### ***LESSON 4: Recipe for Remembering***

##### *QUICK WORKING DEFINITION:*

##### *Decolonization-*

*the undoing of colonialism, the latter being the process whereby a nation establishes and maintains its domination over one or more other territories; the term also includes the intellectual decolonization from the colonizers' ideas that made the colonized feel inferior.*

In this lesson, students will tap into food and kitchen memories as a source of ancestral knowledge and cultural pride.

*Note to teacher: This lesson involves ingredients from your own pantry and/or the grocery store, plus TEN small plastic containers with lids.*

##### Objectives:

- to access kitchen memories in order to write out a family recipe.
- to compile group recipes in a book in order to preserve and pass on the ancestral ingredients and techniques.





- to analyze how food and family are intrinsically linked.
- to collect a family recipe and write it out in both story form and instructions/steps.

#### TEKS:

6-8th Grade: 4A; 8A; 15B

9th-12th Grade: 3A; 7A; 14B

#### MATERIALS:

- [Decolonize Your Diet recipe list](#)
- common spices such as garlic, cinnamon, comino, anise, oregano, onion, vanilla and other ingredients with familiar smells such as: maseca, manzanilla, cilantro, all in small plastic containers labeled 1 -10. (Make a list of which ingredient is in each container to make life easier.)
- molcajete, comal, lime squeezer, molino (common Mexican-American kitchen tools)
- ["Cornflowers" by Brenda Cárdenas](#) (one copy per student)
- Journals

#### STEPS:

1. Warm Up: Class pairs off into partners or groups of three.  
In journals, students number the page from 1 - 10.  
Pass around containers and give them a minute or so to smell containers without opening them and guess at the contents until all containers have been passed around..
2. Whole group talks though list and guesses. Ask: which smells are unmistakable? Which ones are hard to pinpoint? What does each scent remind them of?
3. Teacher goes over the answers by tallying student's guesses on an impromptu tally chart. Reveal mystery results!
4. Ask students to choose the smell that stirs up the strongest kitchen/food memory for them and put a star next to that number on their list.
5. Read "Cornflowers" with a partner and highlight all the words that evoke the sense of smell. (corn tortillas, honeysuckle, papaya, etc..)
6. Discuss:
  - How many smell words did you highlight?
  - What is the connotation and denotation of "I raise an eyebrow"?
  - What might it mean that even after applying shampoos, the speaker's hair still smells like tortillas?
  - What is the difference between artificial and natural?
  - How does the speaker's sense of smell lead them back to "ancestor grasses"?
  - What is the effect of comparing the speaker's hair to maiz?
  - How do "hybrid rows of words" connect to decolonization?



7. In journals, students draft a poem about the ingredient that evoked the most memories for them. They may use “Cornflowers” as an example of a three-stanza poem that connects an ancestral food to their present physical self.

DAY TWO:

A WORKING DEFINITION, CONTINUED:  
*from [Decolonize Your Diet](#) website:*

*What is decolonization?*

*Decolonization is the ongoing process to end oppression and servitude and to restore respect for indigenous knowledge and ways of life.*

*Decolonization requires both spiritual healing and political resistance.*

*To heal, we must acknowledge that Indigenous and African traditions in spirituality, music, literature, and food were never completely suppressed by the colonizers but kept alive, sometimes surreptitiously, in daily acts of resistance that include storytelling, recipe sharing, and ceremony. Decolonization means reclaiming and honoring our histories, our stories, and our traditions as a way to fight for our common humanity.*

1. Warm Up: Display the common kitchen tools and ask students if they know what the names and how the tools are used. This is just for fun and to make a connection from home kitchen to the classroom.
2. Allow students time to explore the [decolonizeyourdiet.org](#) website. In journals, they will take notes on the term “decolonization” and list recipes that seem appealing to them. *Decolonization* is a concept that can, at this point, be explored in terms of food.  
*A possible way to tackle this can be a Colonization/Decolonization T-Chart with simple definitions and examples.*
3. Whole group discusses findings. .
4. Teacher projects one of the recipes from the website. [Champurrado](#) is a good example, as it includes history and most students will find it familiar. Read through the recipe together, noting stylistic features of research-based, procedural/How To website writing.
7. Journal Writing: Students choose a family dish that encapsulates the spirit of their home/kitchen memory. They will write the home/family recipe from memory in the recipe format: title, introduction, list ingredients, steps.
8. Homework: Read over the recipe with a parent/grandparent. Edit the recipe for exact measurements and instructions to make it as accurate as possible.
9. Extension 1: The recipes can be collected in a classroom cookbook (students interested in design might take charge of compiling it!)
10. Extension 2: Students may research teosinte, *a Mexican grass that is grown as fodder and is considered to be one of the parent plants of modern corn.*



## **LESSON 5: Let Me Tell You About My Tía/o**

*Rhythm exists in writing, just as it does in music. Poetry is meant to be heard. "Tía Sofia" pays homage to an ancestor, musically. In many Mexican-American families, a favorite tía or tío can provide guidance, love, and support as much as a parent or grandparent. In this lesson, students will pinpoint an influential aunt or uncle and compose a tribute poem/song written with the intent to be spoken ALOUD.*

### Objectives:

- read Dr. Carmen Tafolla's "Tía Sofia" and understand how bilingual/bicultural texts can mirror the way we speak (*"a little bit in english, a little bit in spanish"*), as well as the way we write.
- make inferences based on key details in the poem.
- listen to examples of musicians namechecked in the poem and discover how music can influence the rhythms of literature.
- use brainstorming techniques to analyze how an elder in their family has influenced them and compose a "Tía Sofia" style homage to their own beloved tía/o.

### TEKS:

6-8th Grade: 4A; 8A; 15B

9th-12th Grade: 3A; 7A; 14B

### MATERIALS:

- ["Tía Sofia" audio](#)
- "Tía Sofia" by Carmen Tafolla, from *Mexican-American Literature Anthology* p. 189
- ["Tía Sofia" Spotify playlist](#)
- highlighters
- journals

### STEPS:

1. Warm Up: Teacher tells a prepared story of their favorite tía/o (a family member who changed their life or saved their life or lived a life that taught them something integral to becoming the person they became) and leads the class in a discussion of what makes an elder family member important, influential, and a source of support to them.
  - a. Ask students to close their eyes and listen to Carmen Tafolla read "Tía Sofia." Allow time for students to share their first impressions of the poem.



- b. Hand out copies of poem and allow students to listen to the clip again, following along with the page with their finger to notice line length.

Discuss:

- Notice how the line breaks align to form rhythm of Tafolla's delivery.
- How is different to hear the author read her own work?
- What does her voice tell us about the speaker's emotions about Tía Sofía?

- c. Teacher asks them to close their eyes again and asks: "Who is your favorite tía or tío?" Ask them to make a T-Chart in their journals, one column labeled "Tía Sofia" and the other column is the name of their tía or tío.

2. Class reads "Tía Sofía" aloud, line-by-line, highlighting all examples of Spanish or Tex Mex language. Discuss:

- How does code switching help tell the story of Sofía?
- What would be lost or gained if the piece was written in one language?
- How does music help the speaker of the poem define Sofia?
- What are some details about Sofia that the family does not appreciate or approve of that the speaker sees in a different way?

3. Give time for students to list "What We Know" about Tía Sofía from the poem on their T-Chart. Share inferences as a whole group.

6. In journals, students fill out the tía/tío column. Brainstorm various memories and facts such as: music, jokes, hobbies, style, moments. Take time to fill in the details. This will serve as the map for their poems.

7. Beginning with the first line "Mi Tía/o \_\_\_\_" students will write a tribute to their favorite tía/o, code-switching throughout, if possible, in their journals.

**HOMEWORK:**

Handout: Mexican Music is More than Selena (attached)

Students will confer with family to define the following musical genres: ranchera, conjunto, cumbia, tejano, mariachi, polka, huapango, banda, corrido, rock en español, son jarocho.

## **LESSON 6: *Música is Memory***

*Music is the soundtrack to our memories. Sometimes students are disconnected from ancestral sounds, songs, lullabies, or they may not be aware of the diverse and myriad of genres that make up Mexican/American/Latinx music. This lesson is a primer, a starting place for students to scratch the surface and hopefully embark on a lifetime journey down the rabbit hole called música.*

*Note:* There are more genres than the examples listed, and you can gauge which you want to include based on your region and class interest. Are they into reggaeton? Add it. Do they listen to bachata? Add it. The point here is to





get them thinking about the vastness of Latinx music and the fact that genres arise from historical, geographic, and cultural shifts.

Objectives:

- recognize the difference between natural and man-made borders.
- understand that music is a multi-faceted component of Mexican American culture and heritage.
- distinguish between common genres of Mexican music (ranchera, conjunto, cumbia, tejano, mariachi, corrido, son jarocho).
- research the roots of music genres to learn about geographic, political, cultural, historical factors that contribute to the evolution of music.
- understand the influence of Afro-Latinx, indigenous, Middle Eastern, and European immigrants whose music and culture synthesized in songs.
- understand how the primal elements of voice, rhythm, rhyme, chant lead to modern day music in all its forms
- analyze poetry
- recognize how artists seek inspiration through nature

TEKS:

6-8th Grade: 4A; 8A; 15B

9th-12th Grade: 3A; 7A; 14B

MATERIALS:

- [Outline Map of the Americas](#)
- [Topographical Map of the Americas](#)
- [Political Map of the Americas](#)
- Música: Student Graphic Organizer (attached)
- Música: Teacher Cheat Sheet (definitions, attached)
- Access to Spotify, Speakers
- Poem: ["Bribe" by Pat Mora](#)  
[Different Versions of the Same Songs Spotify Playlist](#)

DAY ONE *"Help me Catch her Music with Words" // Pat Mora's "Bribe"*

*In an ideal world, this lesson would take the class outdoors. It is up to you, your administrators, and parents how this will go. The dream is to get them to a local nature preserve or park. This can also be modified to a walk around campus and a drawing/writing session in the most natural/inspiring area you can find.*

STEPS

1. Read "Bribe" as a whole group line by line.



2. Discussion Questions:

- List the musical terms included in the poem (chanting, singing, croon) and compose quick definitions of each. How do the terms differ? What are the connotations of each?
- The speaker says they hear and see women chanting “long ago.” How does the influence of ancestors affect and inspire your life?
- “Bribe” is one long stanza. How would the poem read aloud differently if it was arranged in couplets or single lines?
- The speaker burys pen and paper in the desert. What are they hoping for?
- Many cultures consider nature as a mother. Many artists consider nature to be a muse. How does the poem illustrate these roles?

3. Students reread the poem and sketch a visual interpretation of the poem. Take time to add detail, reread, add color, share results. What are some common elements that stand out? Did anyone draw anything not so obvious?

4. Take the class outside, field trip or campus stroll, with the intent to let “the land smile” on them, and inspire a reflection on “Bribe” in the form of a poem.

5. Share poems outdoors, if possible.

DAY TWO:

1. Project outline map of the Americas. Ask students to study it and note where the lines occur (where the ocean meets land, Great Lakes outlines, in other words, where water meets land)
2. Project topographic map. Ask which areas are illustrated (oceans, mountain ranges, and lead them to the term *natural borders* (*a natural border is a border between states or their subdivisions which is concomitant with natural formations such as rivers, mountain ranges, or deserts.*) Ask: What natural border separates the U.S.A. from Mexico? What border separates the U.S.A. from Canada?
3. Project political map. Notice how the lines multiply. Ask them how these lines were marked, who decided what was where, and when? (They might not have answers to this, but that’s sort of the point.)  
Tell them that music is borderless, but it develops out of regional and historical roots.
4. Review homework and add facts from Teacher Cheat Sheet to their Música chart.
5. Play a song snippet (again, you should make this mix out of songs you feel best exemplify from each genre when its column has a solid working definition. Students choose one genre that particularly moves them. In their journals, they may write about the feelings, associations, and memories the music inspires.

**LESSON 7: All the Palabras // Intro to Anzaldúan Vocabulary**



*Each previous lesson is meant to open the channels of students' unique cultural memory and whet their interest in learning about "forgotten" ancestral knowledge. The writing of Gloria Anzaldúa is a guide that can further encourage students to see the beauty of the borderlands.*

Objectives:

- analyze literary elements.
- discuss themes related to Mexican-American identity.
- apply a feminist and critical perspective to Anzaldúa's work.
- analyze the hybrid structure of Anzaldúa's work.
- compose interpretative, persuasive, narrative, and comparative responses to various prompts.
- apply key concepts from Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands theory in order to build a foundation towards creating autohistoria-teoría in the form of the second tier of the Altar-ing final product.

TEKS:

6-8th Grade: 10A, 10C, 10D

9th-12th Grade: 9A, 9C, 9D

MATERIALS:

- Skein of yarn
- Scissors
- Boundaries T chart
- ["La Conciencia de la Mestiza" Gloria Anzaldúa](#)
- MA Lit Anthology, Anzaldúa p. 238-250

STEPS:

1. Warm up: define *boundary*. Start with an independent stab at defining the word, then partners confer and compare definitions, and then the whole group brainstorms to create a class definition. (Simple definition: a line that marks the limits of an area; a dividing line.)
2. List boundaries that exist on the T-Chart, both physical (walls, fences, lines on a court, etc) and invisible (rules, money, age, gravity, etc...)
3. Pass the skein of yarn around the room from student to student (read the class list alphabetically as a way to guide the passes and tell them to hold onto one end of the yarn while passing the skein itself to the next person) to create a web of boundaries. Note that the more the yarn is passed, the smaller sections become. Teacher walks around the web naming boundaries and asking students how that boundary might be transcended (a wall can be knocked down, the value of money can fluctuate) and with each "broken" boundary mentioned, teacher can use scissors to cut a line in the web. What happens when sections are cut?



4. Return to T-chart of boundaries and brainstorm ways each boundary can be defied.
5. Read intro from MA Literature anthology, p. 238, together as a class. In particular, pull out the terms *mestizo*, *mestizaje*, *conciencia*.
6. In journals, students will write definitions for the three terms and expound on how the terms relate to their own identities. What mixture makes up who you are? What is the mixture that makes up your class, school, city, country? How does consciousness change over time and how does it stay the same?

### *Day Two: The Blurry Beauty of the Borderlands*

- read and analyze Gloria Anzaldúa's "Towards a New Consciousness"
- define what it means to live in the borderlands.

#### MATERIALS:

- masking tape or ribbon
- MA Lit Anthology, Anzaldúa p. 238-250, divided into 7 sections (headings = sections)
- [Diana López MA Lit Anthology Instructor Resources](#)

#### WARM UP:

Divide the classroom into three to four "regions" with ribbon or tape. Each region of the class will confer to discover what resources they "own" (tables, electric outlet, window, door) and what resources are shared (air, ground, sounds, light). What happens if one region decides to turn off the light? What if another won't share their electrical outlet? What if one decides to open the window? What if you want to leave, but the door is not in your region?

Tear down the lines. Repeat the activity and note the change in ownership and sharing.

#### STEPS:

1. Review terms: *mestizo*, *mestizaje*, *conciencia*. Share excerpts from previous lesson's journal assignment.
2. Whole group read "La Conciencia de la Mestiza" p. 239. Discuss: where are the Borderlands? What other borders define our place and space in time? Which borders are bendable? Which borders are permanent?
3. Divide the class into seven groups and assign each group a section of "Towards a New Consciousness" (each new heading counts as a section, from "Una lucha de fronteras" (p.239) to "By Your True Face We Will Know You" (p. 248))
4. Choose one of the following prompts from Diana López's Instructor Resources for MA Literature anthology (linked above) to assign to corresponding small group:





1. Why does Vasconcelos call the Mexican people a “cosmic race”?
2. Anzaldúa discusses three types of conflict: person vs. self, person vs. person, and person vs. society. Analyze each type of conflict by examining the sources of tension. What solution to these conflicts does Anzaldúa propose? Do you agree or disagree with her solution? Explain.
3. Ask students to list various groups they are a part of. Tell them that in addition to cultural groups, they can consider groups at school, work, or church, their neighborhood, family, or friends. Have them journal about a time the values of two groups clashed. What was the source of conflict, and how did they resolve it? Did they find themselves choosing one group over another, or were they able to reconcile the groups’ differences? If Anzaldúa had been presented with a similar situation, what would she have done?
4. Research the story behind the Mexican flag and view a picture of it. Briefly summarize what you have learned. Then interpret the following line from Anzaldúa’s essay: “At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes.”
5. What does Anzaldúa mean when she says, “The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react”? What is the difference between acting and reacting, and why is one preferable to the other?
6. Anzaldúa uses the singular pronoun “she” instead of the more common “he.” What does this choice tell us about her attitudes toward gender? In what way is her essay also a feminist text? How has Anzaldúa’s identity as a lesbian influenced her ideas about gender and about the treatment of the “other”?
7. What does mythos mean? Describe the current American mythos. What does Anzaldúa mean when she says that we must create a new mythos?
8. Anzaldúa inserts poems into her essay. Examine the poems and discuss how each relates to the essay portion of the text.
9. How does the inclusion of poems reflect Anzaldúa’s theme of a new consciousness?
10. How does Anzaldúa’s code-switching reflect the theme of a new consciousness?
11. What does machismo mean to you? Does it have a negative or a positive connotation? What does it mean to Anzaldúa? How does she account for the various attitudes associated with the term?
12. Anzaldúa presents a call to action. Who does she call to action, and what does she ask them to do?
13. Describe Anzaldúa’s attitudes toward gays/lesbians, straight men, and Anglos. What type of emotional reaction did you have as you read these passages? For example, were you confused, offended, or nodding in agreement? Did her statements ring true or false to you? Explain.
14. Anzaldúa uses several metaphors in her essay. Interpret the following



examples:

a. *I am an act of kneading.*

b. *Indigenous like corn, like corn, the mestiza is a product of cross-breeding, designed for preservation under a variety of conditions.*

c. *She puts history through a sieve, winnows out the lies, looks at the forces that we as a race, as women, have been a part of.*

d. *They'd like to think I have melted in the pot. But I haven't, we haven't.*

15. Anzaldúa makes this statement: "Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain and provide examples (historical or personal) for support.

5. Allow time for groups to respond to prompt and prepare a short presentation.

6. Present.

## **LESSON 8: Role Model Rules**

*What makes you laugh? How do funny memories differ from other memories?  
How do writers use humor to bring memoirs to life?*

Objectives:

- read Michele Serros "Role Model Rule Number 1: Never Give Up an Opportunity to Eat for Free"
- create a list of rules for role models.
- write a personal essay that details a time their role model (or they themselves) either did or did not follow this rule.
- understand the role of humor as a form of healing and resistance.

**TEKS:**

6-8th Grade: 7A, 9A, 10A, 16A

9th-12th Grade: 6A, 8A, 9A

**MATERIALS:**

- ❑ "Role Model Rule Number 1" from MA Literature Anthology
- ❑ [Michele Serros Obituary \(LA Times\)](#)

**STEPS:**

1. Warm Up: In journals, make a web with "role model" in the center. Give students five minutes to brainstorm ideas that relate to/define the term. Share results on group web. Ask: Who are your role models? What characteristics make you look up to them? Are role models flawless? Are you anyone's role model? What do all role models have in common?



2. Share Serros's biography. The LA Times obituary linked above is a good intro for students who might connect with the idea that a person may be gone, but their influence remains bright.
3. Read "Role Model Rule Number 1" in small groups or independently.
4. Discussion prompts from Diana López's MA Lit Anthology Instructor Resource guide:
  1. *Write a characterization of Serros as she's portrayed in this story. Use textual evidence for support.*
  2. *Serros has a self-deprecating sense of humor. What does this mean? Illustrate with examples from the story. Does her sense of humor make her more or less sympathetic as a character? Explain.*
  3. *Serros's situation is complicated by a series of false assumptions. Identify false assumptions in the story and discuss their consequences.*
  4. *This personal narrative follows the standard plot pattern of conflict, climax, and resolution. What is the source of conflict? How does Serros cope with it? What is the climax of the story, and how is the conflict eventually resolved?*
  5. *A theme in many Mexican American stories is the loss or the preservation of the Spanish language in a country that values monolingualism. How does Serros deal with this theme? In what way is her experience with the Spanish language different from the experience of other authors in this anthology? Explain.*
  6. *In this story, Serros is a beginning poet with three tried-and-true poems that she carries in a Pee-Chee folder. Read the poem she writes in response to the woman who has ridiculed her inability to speak fluent Spanish. How does the inclusion of this poem serve to further characterize Serros and to develop the story's theme?*
  7. *The title is in the form of advice: "Role Model Rule Number 1: Never Give Up an Opportunity to Eat for Free." What does this advice mean to you? Also, examine other instances of advice presented in the story. Which is most useful or relevant to Serros's situation? Which might be useful for you?*
5. In journals, make a list of 10 rules your role model might follow. Alternately, you can make a list for what NOT to do as a role model.
6. Extension: Choose one rule to detail in the form of an essay, that details a time a role model (or they themselves) either did or did not follow a particular rule. What was the lesson? Use humor, if possible, to match Serro's style.

## **LESSON 9: I Will Always Remember**

*Sifting through memories can be daunting. Fragments arise, but for their final projects (ofrendas), students will be asked to piece together an entire altar with*



*three distinct levels. In this lesson, music will help fragments arise and form a bigger picture, mosaic-like.*

Objectives:

- analyze the tone of a popular Selena song to tap into memories.
- create a playlist of songs that represents an important era or chapter in their life story (ideally, these memories may very well be intergenerational.)
- compose a list of unforgettable memories that will serve as an archive for their final projects.

TEKS:

6-8th Grade: 14A

9th-12th Grade: 13A

MATERIALS:

- teacher's memory, written ahead of class
- ["Fotos y Recuerdos" by Selena](#)
- I Will Always Remember handout (attached)

STEPS:

1. Memories make us who we are. Teacher reads their memory, a story of something they will always remember. This can be a prepared story with a beginning, middle, and end, or, depending on your storytelling skills, off the top of your head. Be detailed and keep story to five minutes or less. Be honest and brave and your students will likely reciprocate.
2. Play "Fotos y Recuerdos" youtube clip linked above.
3. Ask students what makes the music and vocals (even if they don't understand Spanish) reflect the idea that our memories fade, just like photographs. The more we "play" a memory, the more it gets embedded in our heads.
4. Students take time to write a quick reflection to the Selena song and how music is attached to their own memories.
5. Partner share reflections.
6. Now that everyone is nice and reflective, explain to students that their job is to excavate their own memories attached to music.
7. If needed, you can get them brainstorming with the following exercise, tell students to fill in the following frame. They can jot down words that bubble up, and keep listing until time is called:

I will always remember the song \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

I will always remember the song \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

I will always remember the song \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_





## DAY TWO:

1. Students read yesterday's list aloud to themselves. Teacher can play music to buffer the voices, but it's important to HEAR the memories aloud. Tell them to put a star next to the memories that pull up the most emotion when they are recalled, or the memories they would "save" if they could only save two or three. Choose two or three vivid memories to "save."
2. Write a paragraph for each.
3. With a partner, read the paragraphs aloud and ask them which memory they are most interested in knowing more about. Which feels the most vivid? Which of the two or three memories would you keep if you could only keep one? That's your project topic.

## LESSON 10: Anything for Selenas // Heroes, Villains, Archetypes

*At this point, the story of Selena Quintanilla is embedded in Mexican-American consciousness as the ultimate TexMex rags-to-riches fairy tale, good girl who was always good, always pure and puro, love of our lives.*

*That her life was cut short by gun violence, at the hand of a family friend/fan, seems sadly....familiar to most Mexican-American Texans. We've lived this tragedy many times before.*

*Selena's assassination, I'll go ahead and call it that, only illuminates her Tejanidad. But her music remains, those Mex-Tex pop canciones that strike us in all the feels. This real-life Tejana, who only knew English and was later self-taught Spanish, who legitimized Spanglish through song, this Selena connects with students can pull from her story to learn literary archetypes.*

*All families have their lost heroes and anti-heroes.*

### Objectives:

- determine characteristics of heroes and anti-hero using popular Mexican American figures.
- analyze how archetypes and memory are related.

### TEKS:

6-8th Grade: 14A, 16A

9th-12th Grade: 13A

### MATERIALS:

- [Selena movie "Twice as Good" scene](#)
- [Deborah Paredes talks Selenidad](#)



## ❑ Selena playlist

### STEPS:

1. Write HERO on the board and have students make a web their journals and brainstorm a definition. Do the same for the term Anti-Hero. Share results.
2. Students will have Selena on the brain from the *Fotos y Recuerdos* lesson, but collective memories of the Selena story have gone past story and into legend. Ask: What is a legend? What are the characteristics of local and global legends? How are legends passed down and who determines what gets remembered?
3. Watch a clip from *Selena* linked above. Lead a class discussion on the concept of “twice as good.” What are the two sides? What does it mean to be both? How does Selena exemplify the sides?
4. View Deborah Paredes talks *Selenidad* clip.
5. Lead discussion on key concepts: Selena’s moment in history (NAFTA, the 2000 census, immigration, the Latin Explosion), the outpouring of grief but also the celebration of promise/potential), the redefinition of what it means to be a Texan-Mexican and how citizenship, cultural pride, and how the industry woke up to spending power/marketability, how her live performances still resonate with people over Youtube and how those performances are steeped in both Mexican and American influences, how current political events along the border, being a hot commodity and also a suspicious citizen/alien.
6. Students write about family “legend,” a hero who chased a dream, or had a talent, or is gone too soon, saved someone’s life, or changed the world somehow.

### **ALTAR-ING FINAL PROJECT:**

For the final project, the students will create a three-tiered inter-genre, mixed media altar. It is my hope that after the course of their semester with you, the previous lessons have prepared them to see themselves as the latest installment in a very long story.

Each tier has a corresponding song as its primary text. Start with the bottom tier and build up. Projects might not take the form of a physical altar, but students should be encouraged to see the three levels as unified elements.

**Level 3 is the base of the altar: the land, the sea, the trees, plants, animals that make up , for lack of a better word, Latinoamérica (North American to Central America to South America to the Caribbean islands).**



**Level 2 is the center, students will zoom into South Texas: the family, the culture, the language, the stories.**

**Level 1 is focal point: the student herself.**

*Please share the results using the hashtag #altaringproject.*

*I would LOVE to see what they create.*

**TEKS:**

6-8th Grade: 14A-E, 15B, 17A, 22A, 23B, 24A, 25A-C

9th-12th Grade: 13A-E, 14B, 15A, 20A, 21B, 22A, 23A-C

**LEVEL THREE:**

**“Vamos dibujando el camino”**

*To see oneself as part of the grand scheme of things is an empowering moment. If students can see themselves and their ancestors as part of the Americas, maybe they'll see how the land is a gift that should be treated as such. Maybe they'll see the interconnectedness of land, animal, plant, person, ocean, and how they themselves are integral to the story. They belong here.*

TEXT: [Calle 13 "Latinoamérica"](#)

\*Lyrics are attached in Spanish and English

Suggested activity:

Listen to the song and complete a side by side reading of lyrics, with and without music, pull out key lines to construct a frame poem using the refrain:

Soy/I am \_\_\_\_\_

Soy/I am \_\_\_\_\_

Soy/I am \_\_\_\_\_

Soy/I am \_\_\_\_\_

(etc)

Encourage them to write from the perspective of the land, to define America as a series of images that are descriptive and include literary elements to bring the lines to life. This can take the form of a poem, song, rap, or essay.

They should look back through writing assignments to get ideas.



As they draft and revise, the frame can “break.” Let them be creative as they *draw a path*.

## **LEVEL TWO:**

### **“San Antonio, Corpus Christi, y McAllen / Una tercia que nunca podré olvidar”**

*Texas is for remembering. So much has gone down on this land, and here we are: waking up from a long sleep. Steve Jordan’s song evokes the love many feel about this homeland and prods us to remember what it means to be “de Tejas.”*

Text:

[Steve Jordan "Soy de Tejas"](#)

In level two of the project, students will choose one ancestor or landmark that represents South Texas. They will conduct research on the subject and weave together findings to compose an Anzaldúan essay (autohistoria-teoría), piecing together fragments of memoir, history, storytelling, myth, dream, theory.

Again, encourage them to reflect on their writing from throughout the unit to help narrow down their ideas.

The essay might morph into a collage, a painting, a corrido, or a series of photographs. The point is that the product will illustrate why they think the person or landmark “cannot be forgotten.”

## **LEVEL ONE:**

### **“Soy yo / Soy, soy, soy, soy, soy, soy, soy /Yo, yo, yo, yo, yo, yo, yo /Soy yo”**

*Traditionally, the topmost tier of an altar “identifies the dead person who is being invited to the altar,” but we’re altering that. The student will complete their altar to celebrate themselves: where they’re from, where they are, and where they want to go.*

TEXT: [Bomba Estereo "Soy Yo"](#)

Level three can be viewed as a self-portrait and may take the form of a short film/documentary, a memory playlist/DJ set, or an actual altar with ofrendas.





Again, encourage them to utilize artifacts, drafts, photos collected throughout the unit. The teacher can supply materials scrapped from home or family donations: fabric scraps, ribbon, magazines.

The goal of the third level is to celebrate the beauty of “being you.”

When all three levels are complete, students should confer with each other and the teacher to workshop and decide how to synthesize the three elements.



## Reading TEKS

<b>Tagline</b>	<b>Knowledge and Skills Statement</b>	<b>Lessons that apply</b>
Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre	Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 3</li> <li>● Lesson 5</li> </ul>
Comprehension of Literary Text/Poetry	Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of poetry and provide evidence from text to support their understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 1</li> <li>● Lesson 4</li> <li>● Lesson 5</li> <li>● Lesson 6</li> </ul>
Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction	Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 3</li> <li>● Lesson 11</li> </ul>
Comprehension of Literary Text/Literary Nonfiction	Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the varied structural patterns and features of literary nonfiction and respond by providing evidence from text to support their understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 8</li> </ul>
Comprehension of Literary Text/Sensory Language	Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about how an author's sensory language creates imagery in literary text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 1</li> <li>● Lesson 3</li> <li>● Lesson 4</li> <li>● Lesson 5</li> </ul>
Comprehension of Informational Text/Culture and History	Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about the author's purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 7</li> </ul>
Comprehension of Informational Text/Expository Text	Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about expository text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 7</li> </ul>
Comprehension of Informational Text/Persuasive Text	Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about persuasive text and provide evidence from text to support their analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 7</li> </ul>

## Writing TEKS

<b>Tagline</b>	<b>Knowledge and Skills Statement</b>	<b>Lessons that apply</b>
Writing Process	Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Various lessons at teacher's discretion</li> <li>● Final Project</li> </ul>
Literary Texts	Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 1</li> <li>● Lesson 2</li> <li>● Lesson 4</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 5</li> <li>● Lesson 6</li> <li>● Lesson 8</li> <li>● Lesson 9</li> <li>● Lesson 10</li> <li>● Lesson 11</li> <li>● Final Project</li> </ul>
Expository and Procedural Texts	Students write expository and procedural or work-related texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 4</li> <li>● Final Project</li> </ul>

### Research TEKS

<b>Tagline</b>	<b>Knowledge and Skills Statement</b>	<b>Lessons that apply</b>
Gathering Sources	Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 2</li> <li>● Lesson 3</li> <li>● Lesson 6</li> <li>● Final Project</li> </ul>
Organizing and Presenting Ideas	Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience. Students are expected to synthesize the research into a written or oral presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson 2</li> <li>● Lesson 7</li> <li>● Final Project</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX: HANDOUTS

### Música is Memory

Ask a parent to help you define the following genres of Mexican music. You can define it by what it sounds like, where it comes from, or list some artists or song titles that fall in that category.

Extra bonus points: Make a Youtube playlist with a song from each genre!



ranchera

conjunto

cumbia

tejano

mariachi

corrido

salsa

\*\*\*

### Música is Memory Cheat Sheet:

1. Ranchera - or canción ranchera is a genre of the traditional music of Mexico. It dates before the years of the Mexican Revolution. It later became closely associated with the mariachi groups which evolved in Jalisco. Ranchera today is also played by norteño (or Conjunto) or banda and Tamborazo. Drawing on rural traditional folk music, ranchera developed as a symbol of a new national consciousness in reaction to the aristocratic tastes of the period. Some well-known interpreters of the genre are the following singers: Amalia Mendoza, Antonio Aguilar, Chelo, Cuco Sánchez, Flor Silvestre, Irma Serrano, Javier Solís, Jorge Negrete, José Alfredo Jiménez, Lola Beltrán, Lucha Villa, Pedro Infante, Rocío Dúrcal, Vicente Fernández, and presently: Pedro Fernández and Pepe Aguilar.
2. Conjunto - Mexican conjunto music, also known as conjunto tejano, was born in south Texas at the end of the 19th century, after German settlers introduced the button accordion. The bajo sexto has come to accompany the button accordion and is integral to the conjunto sound. Many conjuntos are concentrated in the Southwestern portion of the United States, primarily in Texas and California. In Mexico the term conjunto is associated with norteño and tejano music. Since tejano was bred out of norteño music originally this association is not entirely false. However, due to various cultural and socioeconomic developments in the 1900s, norteño musicians began trailblazing the tejano genre as a tangent to conjunto.





3. Cumbia - folkloric rhythm and dance from Colombia. The origin of cumbia music comes from the days of slavery in the late 17th century and is derived from the African word "cumbe" which means dance. The basic cumbia steps originate from the fact that when the music itself was born, the slaves had their legs shackled and very minimal movement was possible. Cumbia was born of a cultural melting of Black and Indígena backgrounds. Originally a working-class populist music, cumbia was frowned upon by the elites, but as the music pervaded class association with the music subsided in Colombia and cumbia became a shared music in every sector of society.
4. Tejano - or Tex-Mex music (Texan-Mexican music) is the name given to various forms of folk and popular music originating among the Mexican-American populations of Central and Southern Texas. With roots in the late 19th century, it became a music genre with a wider audience in the late 20th century thanks to artists such as Selena (often referred to as "The Queen of Tejano"), Mazz, La Mafia, La Sombra, Elida Reyna, Elsa García, Laura Canales, Oscar Estrada, Jay Perez, Emilio Navaira, Esteban "Steve" Jordan, Gary Hobbs, Shelly Lares, Stefani Montiel, David Lee Garza, Jennifer Peña, and La Fiebre.
5. Mariachi - style of music and musical group performance that dates back to at least the 18th century, evolving over time in the countryside of various regions of western Mexico. It has a distinctive instrumentation, musical genre, performance and singing styles, and clothing. From the 19th to 20th century, migrations from rural areas into Guadalajara, along with the Mexican government's cultural promotion gradually re-labeled it as Son style, with its alternative name of "mariachi" becoming used for the "urban" form. Modifications of the music include influences from other music such as polkas and waltzes, the addition of trumpets and the use of charro outfits by mariachi musicians. The musical style began to take on national prominence in the first half of the 20th century, with its promotion at presidential inaugurations and on the radio in the 1920s.
6. Corrido - a popular narrative song and poetry that form a ballad. The songs are often about oppression, history, daily life for peasants, and other socially relevant topics. It is still a popular form today in Mexico and was widely popular during the Mexican Revolutions of the 20th century. The corrido derives largely from the romance, and in its most known form consists of a salutation from the singer and prologue to the story, the story itself, and a moral and farewell from the singer.
7. Salsa - popular dance music genre that initially arose in New York City during the 1960s. Salsa is the product of various musical genres including the Cuban son montuno, guaracha, cha cha chá, mambo, and to a certain extent bolero, and the Puerto Rican bomba and plena. Latin jazz, which was also developed in New York City, has had a significant influence on salsa arrangers, piano guajeos, and instrumental soloists. Salsa is primarily Cuban son, itself a fusion of Spanish canción and guitar and Afro-Cuban percussion, merged with North American music styles such as jazz. Salsa also



occasionally incorporates elements of rock, R&B, and funk. All of these non-Cuban elements are grafted onto the basic Cuban son montuno template when performed within the context of salsa

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Latinoamérica  
Calle 13

Soy  
Soy lo que dejaron  
Soy toda la sobra de lo que te robaron  
Un pueblo escondido en la cima  
Mi piel es de cuero por eso aguanta cualquier clima  
Soy una fábrica de humo  
Mano de obra campesina para tu consumo  
Frente de frío en el medio del verano  
El amor en los tiempos del cólera, mi hermano  
El sol que nace y el día que muere  
Con los mejores atardeceres  
Soy el desarrollo en carne viva  
Un discurso político sin saliva  
Las caras más bonitas que he conocido  
Soy la fotografía de un desaparecido  
La sangre dentro de tus venas  
Soy un pedazo de tierra que vale la pena  
Soy una canasta con frijoles  
Soy maradona contra inglaterra anotándote dos goles  
Soy lo que sostiene mi bandera  
La espina dorsal del planeta es mi cordillera  
Soy lo que me enseñó mi padre  
El que no quiere a su patria no quiere a su madre  
Soy américa latina  
Un pueblo sin piernas pero que camina, oye  
Tú no puedes comprar al viento  
Tú no puedes comprar al sol  
Tú no puedes comprar la lluvia  
Tú no puedes comprar el calor  
Tú no puedes comprar las nubes  
Tú no puedes comprar los colores  
Tú no puedes comprar mi alegría  
Tú no puedes comprar mis dolores



Tú no puedes comprar al viento  
Tú no puedes comprar al sol  
Tú no puedes comprar la lluvia  
Tú no puedes comprar el calor  
Tú no puedes comprar las nubes  
Tú no puedes comprar los colores  
Tú no puedes comprar mi alegría  
Tú no puedes comprar mis dolores  
Tengo los lagos, tengo los ríos  
Tengo mis dientes pa` cuando me sonrío  
La nieve que maquilla mis montañas  
Tengo el sol que me seca y la lluvia que me baña  
Un desierto embriagado con bellos de un trago de pulque  
Para cantar con los coyotes, todo lo que necesito  
Tengo mis pulmones respirando azul clarito  
La altura que sofoca  
Soy las muelas de mi boca mascando coca  
El otoño con sus hojas desmalladas  
Los versos escritos bajo la noche estrellada  
Una viña repleta de uvas  
Un cañaveral bajo el sol en cuba  
Soy el mar caribe que vigila las casitas  
Haciendo rituales de agua bendita  
El viento que peina mi cabello  
Soy todos los santos que cuelgan de mi cuello  
El jugo de mi lucha no es artificial  
Porque el abono de mi tierra es natural  
Tú no puedes comprar al viento  
Tú no puedes comprar al sol  
Tú no puedes comprar la lluvia  
Tú no puedes comprar el calor  
Tú no puedes comprar las nubes  
Tú no puedes comprar los colores  
Tú no puedes comprar mi alegría  
Tú no puedes comprar mis dolores  
Não se pode comprar o vento  
Não se pode comprar o sol  
Não se pode comprar a chuva  
Não se pode comprar o calor  
Não se pode comprar as nuvens  
Não se pode comprar as cores  
Não se pode comprar minha'legria  
Não se pode comprar minhas dores  
No puedes comprar al sol  
No puedes comprar la lluvia



Vamos caminando  
Vamos dibujando el camino  
No puedes comprar mi vida  
Mi tierra no se vende  
Trabajo bruto pero con orgullo  
Aquí se comparte, lo mío es tuyo  
Este pueblo no se ahoga con marullos  
Y si se derrumba yo lo reconstruyo  
Tampoco pestañeo cuando te miro  
Para que recuerdes mi apellido  
La operación cóndor invadiendo mi nido  
Perdono pero nunca olvido, oye  
Aquí se respira lucha  
(Vamos caminando)  
Yo canto porque se escucha (vamos caminando)  
Aquí estamos de pie  
Que viva la América

No puedes comprar mi vida

Songwriters: Rafael Ignacio Arcaute / Eduardo Cabra / Rene Perez  
Latinoamérica lyrics © EMI Music Publishing, Sony/ATV Music Publishing  
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#### ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I am,  
I am what they left behind,  
I am the leftovers of what they've stolen.  
A hidden town in the summit,  
My skin is of leather that's why it withstands any weather.  
I am a smoke factory,  
Peasant labour for your consumption  
Cold front in the middle of summer,  
Love in the time of cholera, my brother!  
I'm the sun that rises and the day that dies,  
with the best sunsets.  
I am the development in raw flesh,  
a political speech without saliva.  
The most beautiful faces I have ever met,  
I am the picture of a missing person.  
I am the blood in your veins,  
I am a piece of land which is worthy  
I am a basket with beans,  
I am Maradona against England scoring two goals.





I am what supports my flag,  
The planet's spine is my mountain range.  
I am what my father taught me,  
Whoever doesn't love their country doesn't love their mother.  
I am Latin America,  
A nation without legs but still walking.  
You can't buy the wind.  
You can't buy the sun.  
You can't buy the rain.  
You can't buy the heat.  
You can't buy the clouds.  
You can't buy the colours.  
You can't buy my happiness.  
You can't buy my pain.  
I have lakes, I have rivers.  
I have my teeth for when I smile.  
The snow coating my mountains.  
I have the sun which dries me and the rain which bathes me.  
A desert drunk on peyote and a drink of pulque to sing with the coyotes.  
Everything I need.  
My lungs breath clean air.  
The suffocating altitude.  
I am the molars of my mouth chewing coca.  
The autumn with its fainting leaves.  
The verses written under a starlight night.  
A vineyard full of grapes.  
A cane plantation under the sun of Cuba.  
I am the Caribbean Sea looking after the little houses,  
Performing rituals with blessed water.  
The wind that combs my hair.  
I am all the saints that hang from my neck.  
My fight is not fruitless,  
Because the manure of my land is natural.  
You can't buy the wind.  
You can't buy the sun.  
You can't buy the rain.  
You can't buy the heat.  
You can't buy the clouds.  
You can't buy the colours.  
You can't buy my happiness.  
You can't buy my pain.  
You can't buy the wind  
You can't buy the sun  
You can't buy the rain  
You can't buy the heat



You can't buy the clouds  
You can't buy the colours  
You can't buy my happiness  
You can't buy my pain  
You can't buy my happiness  
You can't buy my sadness  
You can't buy the sun.  
You can't buy the rain.  
(We draw the path, we walk)  
You can't buy my life.  
MY LAND IS NOT FOR SALE.  
I work hard but with pride.  
Here we share, what's mine is yours.  
This nation doesn't drown with the waves.  
And if it collapses I rebuild it.  
I don't even blink when I look at you,  
So you'll remember my last name.  
Operation Condor invading my nest,  
I forgive but never forget!  
(We walk)  
Here struggle is perceived.  
(We walk)  
I sing to be listened.  
Here we stand  
Long live América!

You can't buy my life.



























