

Dia de los Muertos and Halloween Comparison

Social Studies

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Introduction

In this lesson students will learn about the holiday, *El Dia de los Muertos*. Students will discuss the differences between the holidays, *El Dia de Los Muertos* and Halloween. This unit will help the students understand and appreciate their own culture and tradition as well as another culture and tradition. Students will learn to compare and contrast the two holidays.

Outcomes

1. Upon successful completion of this unit, the students will describe ways in which people in the United States remember and honor the dead.
2. Upon successful completion of this unit, the students will identify the similarities and differences between *El Dia de Los Muertos* and Halloween by completing a chart in cooperative groups.

Standards

- Social Studies: 2SS-F1- Describe the varied backgrounds of people living in the United States and ways they have become members of one nation, with emphasis on:
 - PO.1- our shared principles, goals, customs, and traditions.
- Reading: R-F8- Recognize the historical cultural perspectives of literary selections.
- PO.1- Identify similarities and differences relating to theme, plot, setting, character and point of view in literature from different cultures.
- PO.2- Compare real life experiences to events, characters, and conflicts in literary selections from different cultures.

Resources And Materials

- Book: “*Pablo Remembers The Fiesta of the Day of the Dead.*”
- Hand out for students to organize their comparisons entitled similarities and differences
- World map
- Large Venn diagram pre-made on tag board
- Pencils

Process

Flip-flopping

1. **Preparations-** I would send home a letter to all the parents stating that a multicultural unit will be taught throughout the year discussing holidays. The first holiday taught will be *Dia de los Muertos*. I would provide a description of what will be taking place as we discuss this unit. I would also encourage parents to come in and volunteer through out our multicultural unit. Before the lesson I would read the book, “*Pablo Remembers The*

Fiesta of the Day of the Dead,” in order to make sure the material is suitable for my audience. I would decorate the class with suitable decorations for Dia de los Muertos. I would make sure all my materials were copied and ready for the class.

2. **Procedures-**

1. Ask the students how people in America remember their loved ones who have passed away. What is done to remember people who have passed away? Remind students that this is not designed to make any one sad and should not be a depressing topic. List student's responses on the white board.
2. Explain to students that the ways in which people bury and remember their dead say much about the people's beliefs, culture and customs. Provide examples of other cultures and how they honor their dead. Explain to students they are going to hear a story about how one boy remembers the fiesta of the “Day of the Dead.”
3. Ask students to point out Mexico on the map.
4. Read the book, “*Pablo Remembers the Fiesta of the Day of the Dead.*” Provide a brief description of the story before hand.
5. Point out important aspects of the holiday as you read the book. Show illustrations as you read. Clarify Spanish vocabulary used in the story. Tip- I would write down any Spanish words being used in the book, the Spanish and English words along with a definition and add it to a word wall for this unit.
6. Explain to the students what *El Dia de Los Muertos* is. Write the name on the board for students to see. Ask if any students have participated in this tradition. (These students may later be asked to provide accounts of their experiences.)
7. After reading the story, hand out a sheet of paper with headings entitles “Similarities” and “Differences”. Explain the definition of similar and different. Provide one example of how *El Dia de los Muertos* is similar and different from Halloween. Group students with a partner. Each group should be encouraged to provide two ideas under each heading. Allow student 10-15 minutes to work on hand out.
8. Monitor students understanding of the objective by walking around the class and answering any questions. Tip-Provide direction to students who are still having difficulty, as well as pairing students who have learning disabilities with other students who can assist them
9. Have students share their comparisons with the class. Ask students to provide comparisons. The teacher will then fill demonstrate similarities and differences by the use of a Venn diagram. Show students the differences and similarities that also overlap in the United States. How the two holidays have some activities that are alike.
10. Emphasize to the students that although Halloween and *El Dia de los Muertos* festival occur at the same time of the year, they are actually very different holidays with very different purposes.

Assessment

1. Are students working cooperatively in groups?
2. Were students able to describe ways in which people of the United States remember their dead?

3. After students heard the story, "*Pablo Remembers the Fiesta of the Day of the Dead*, were the students able to identify the similarities and differences between *Dia de los Muertos* and Halloween by completing the chart in their group?
4. Were students able to assist the teacher in filling out the Venn Diagram?
5. Were students participating?

Extensions / Modifications

- As an extension to this lesson I would have students design a picture collage of what the two holidays look like and represent. I would also ask for volunteers to present information on *El Dia de los Muertos* as they have experienced it. I would show pictures of altars or cemeteries that have been decorated. I would bring in food that is made specifically for this holiday. I could have students design an altar, in which they could remember something. I could have students construct a skeleton puppet.