

Too Many Tamales *Lourdes Zamora*

Introduction:

The following lesson is part of a unit, “Family Celebrations.” This literature-based lesson is intended for grades K-1, allowing children the opportunity to experience one aspect of the Mexican culture. “Too Many Tamales” incorporates reading, language, and math through a kinesthetic, visual, fine motor, and auditory approach.

Standards:

This lesson focuses on Arizona Academic Standard I in Reading for Kindergarten: Identify characters in a story and retell stories in sequential order.

Behavioral Objective(s):

Students will:

1. Construct a graph with 80% accuracy.
2. Students will identify the main events and the main characters in sequential order after reading a story with 80% accuracy.

Anticipatory Set:

To introduce the lesson, generate a group discussion and ask children the following questions: “What do you and your family do on Christmas Day? What do you eat?” Elaborate on the ways families celebrate the types of food they cook and other traditions they might have. Later, introduce a previously sketched pie graph and read it to your students. Children might need a few minutes to determine which tamale they like the best. Right after, distribute stickers, sticky notes, post-it notes, or labels with children’s names. Each student will place their name under the name of the tamale they like best. Direct students to observe their graph and tell you which section has more. Less? Ask children to explain their rationale.

Teacher Input:

“Children, you and I have discussed the ways families celebrate at Christmas time. Some of your families, like mine, make tamales for dinner on that day. Right? I have a story I’d like to share with you, but before I start I’d like to see everyone sitting like Kinder People” (children know that means they need to sit on their bottoms with hands crossed on their laps and eyes on the teacher).

“It looks like you’re all ready. Good! Now I can start this story written by Gary Soto and Ed Martinez...”

“Who do you think these people are? Do you think they are the main characters? What do you think they are doing in the kitchen?” (Use your name-on-a-pop-sickle can to target all children).

“What is happening now? Why does the little girl look worried? What do you think it’s going to happen next? Would you like to find out?” (Continue the use of your can).

“What will the children do with the tamales and why? Would you eat that many tamales in only a few minutes? Could you do that? What if it was your favorite kind of tamale? Do you think you could eat all of them?”

“Now, pretend you were in Maria’s situation. What would you have done? Would you tell your Mother you’ve lost the ring and had eaten all the tamales? Why or why not? What do you think will happen in the end?”

“Now, I think Maria learned a very important lesson. Do you agree? First, she played with the ring while making the dough for the tamales. Then, she went to play with her relatives and noticed the ring was missing. Later, Maria and her cousins ate all the tamales to just to find Mother’s ring and mother had it on her finger all the time.”

“Now, I need to let you know what you will be doing next, but first I need you to show me that you’re ready. If you’re listening to me, fold your hands. If you’re listening to me, sit still. If you’re listening to me, look at me.” (Try to get the students to focus on your instructions).

“Thank you, now you and I will write the main events on this chart paper. Who can tell me what happened first? Secondly? At the end?” (Quickly jot down their answers).

“In your groups you need to role-play these events in the story. You can use items from or around the classroom as props. I’ll give you a few minutes to get your materials before you start practicing. Make sure every member in your group is participating in some way. Do you have any questions? Who can tell the class and me what you’ll be doing?”

(Allow students to practice for 5-10 minutes. Use your timer to keep you on track).

Modeling the Behavior:

Direct the students to practice each event from the story in sequential order. Travel around the classroom visiting each group and give additional assistance if needed.

Check for Comprehension:

Watch students’ performance to check for comprehension. They must act out the story in sequence, and with as much detail as possible.

Guided/Independent Practice:

For additional practice on sequencing, set a learning center with pictures. Ask children to put pictures in sequential order. Students may work in pairs, groups, or individually.

Closure:

As a group, ask children to retell the events in Too Many Tamales in sequence.

Assessment:

Ask children to draw a Christmas event of their own.

Divide paper (Christmas tree) into three sections and draw the event in order.

Resources/Materials:

A copy of “Too Many Tamales” by De Soto and
Martinez

Chart paper and colorful markers.

Modifications for Students with Disabilities:

Students with specific learning disabilities can choose to work with a partner of their choice.

For students with learning disabilities, include a teacher-made worksheet with the story events (pictures) drawn for them. They will have to number each drawing in order. For children with orthopedic impairment or OHI, have them play the “director” role while the other members in his group dramatize the story.