

**Tales from the Chihuahuan Desert:
Borderlands Narratives about Identity and Binationalism**

National Endowment for the Humanities and The University of Texas at El Paso
2017 Summer Institute for Secondary School Teachers (Grades 6th–12th)

Lesson Plan: *Making a Nation*

Prepared by

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Title: Making a Nation

Subject Area: Language Arts and Social Studies/History

Keywords: Nation, Identity, Borders, Citizenship, North America, Immigration, Spanish Colonization, Native Americans

Grade Level: 8th

Time Required to Complete: 100 minutes (meant to be divided over two 50 min sessions)

Instructional Objectives and Student Learning

**Common Core State Standards, English Language Arts, Literacy [RH.9-10.4](#)
Standards:**

- History. The student understands the causes of exploration and colonization eras. The student is expected to:
 - identify reasons for European exploration and colonization of North America

- Geography. The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of the United States, past and present. The student is expected to:
 - locate places and regions of importance in the United States during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries;
 - compare places and regions of the United States in terms of physical and human characteristics; and
 - analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major historical and contemporary events in the United States.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
 - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
 - Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
 - Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
 - Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
 - Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), §113.20. Social Studies, Grade 8, Beginning with School Year 2011-2012.

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 - compare places and regions of the United States in terms of physical and human characteristics; and
 - analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major historical and contemporary events in the United States.

Guiding Questions

1. What is a nation?
2. Are there traditional ways of defining what a nation is? What are the limits of this definition?
3. Was America a nation before Columbus?
4. How does the definition of nation change with Spanish and British Colonization?

Materials and Resources

1. Notecards
2. Chart Paper
3. Primary Source Maps (in color If possible)
4. Blank maps of North America
5. Colored Pencils
6. Blank maps
7. Art Supplies of your choosing- or have students do this on Prezi
8. Notes/PowerPoint for lecture on early Colonization
 - a. If needed: Cornell note sheets for practicing annotated note styles
9. Living Map instructions
10. Laptop with projector
11. Audio speakers
12. Internet access
13. Paper and pen

Introduction

As one of the opening goals of most US history courses, the idea of the Nation is central to student understanding as they move forward and grapple with what it means to be an American and how the changing political and geographic landscapes of North America have been shaped into the United States that we understand today. This pair of lessons is intended as the introduction to the larger concept of the nation in order to challenge student assumptions about the permanence and stability of the United States of America.

For every student, they bring their own understanding of what it means to be a part of a nation, or to be defined by a nation--understandings that have been forming since their earliest days. To question and wonder about the limits and the permeability of border spaces is essential to an understanding of the United States that challenges a single or traditional narrative of our history.

Through these lessons, students will produce an interactive map of North America in the earliest days of colonization that demonstrates the multiple nations and borderlands that cut across the physical space that we now consider to be clearly defined that they can then use throughout their study of American history.

Lesson Plans

Day 1 | 50 Minutes

Objective: Students will develop a working definition of 'nation' through consensus building and create a living map of North America after having looked at primary source maps of North America from the 15th-17th centuries, identifying and hearing the stories of both famous historical figures of the time period as well as ordinary people, and discussing their own identities with one another.

HW: Read primary source and analyze visual source for tomorrow's work on our own maps

Supplies Needed:

- **Notecards**
- **Chart Paper**
- **Primary Source Maps (in color If possible)**
- **Blank maps of North America**
- **Colored Pencils**

1) Do Now (3 mins):

- a) Have students take a notecard when they enter the room. On the board is this question: "What makes the United States of America a nation?"
- b) Students will write free form and silently for 3 minutes on the question

2) Discussion of what does the word "nation" mean: (15 mins)

- a) Think-Pair-Share
 - i) After having written their responses to the question in the Do Now, students will pair with their table groups and practice active listening to one another's responses (5 mins -2 mins for each student to share without interruption)
 - b) After students have shared and discussed with their table mates, open up a whole class discussion (teacher modeling the moderator role) for the following questions:
 - i) What is a nation?
 - ii) Are there traditional ways of defining what a nation is? What are the limits of this definition?
 - iii) Was America a nation before Columbus?
 - c) If needed, sentence stems for discussion can be used for students who need help interjecting into the conversation
 - d) Take notes of student responses throughout the discussion on a sheet of chart paper that can be used for tomorrow's lesson as well

3) Mapping the Americas (10 mins)

- a) Hand students a blank map of North America. Instruct them to grab as many colored pencils as they think they will need

- b) Instructions: Map out the general boundaries of all the different nations you think were in North America in the 1500s-1600s. Use a different color for each nation, and create a key at the bottom (model this if necessary). Emphasize that there are NO WRONG ANSWERS

4) Analysis of Primary Source Maps: (20 mins)

- a) After students have created their own maps, students will do a gallery walk around the room to look at different maps from the 1500s/1600s North America. As they walk and observe, their task is to annotate their own maps with the history they are visually observing through the maps.
- b) Link for the maps is [here](#). There are several to choose from, and can be viewed either on the computer or printed larger for students to do a gallery walk.
- c) Save time at the end for students to discuss their observations and share what they added or edited on their maps.

5) Exit Ticket (2 mins):

- a) Using the backside of their notecards that they used for their do-nows (Make sure their names are on it for collection):
- i) Write a 1-3 sentence definition of the word nation based on our learning in class today.

Day 2 | 50 Minutes

Objective: Students will develop a working definition of 'nation' through consensus building and create a living map of North America after having looked at primary source maps of North America from the 15th-17th centuries, identifying and hearing the stories of both famous historical figures of the time period as well as ordinary people, and discussing their own identities with one another.

HW: Creative writing exercise: Writing from the Perspective of Colonial Era North America

- Assignment: Tonight you will be writing a memory for one of the people we studied in class today. You must write for 20 minutes, or until you fill up at least one page of writing. You may write whatever comes to you, but it must be a memory that that person would have had about their life living in/traveling to North America in the 1500s or 1600s.

Supplies Needed:

- **Blank maps**
- **Art Supplies of your choosing- or have students do this on Prezi**
- **Notes/PowerPoint for lecture on early Colonization**
 - **If needed: Cornell note sheets for practicing annotated note styles**
- **Living Map instructions**

1) Do Now (3 mins):

- a) Take out your map from yesterday's class. Pair with someone in the room who has similar shoes to yours. Have one member of your pair get a blank map from the teacher, and then collaborate to make one map that you think is more accurate, based on your two separate maps. (they should just start this process- you will need to interrupt them and let them know that they will be returning to this later in class)

2) Discussion/Analysis of last night's homework: (10 mins)

- a) Display the visual or written primary source text on a projector (whichever one you would prefer to work with)
- b) Open by asking see-think-wonder questions, getting a sense of what students were able to analyze on their own the night before. Then model how you would annotate a primary source, using a key for symbols/phrases commonly used and having students add these annotations to their own homework (in a different color pen than they used in their own analysis)

- (1) Note: This is meant for the beginning of the year and for students who are learning to annotate primary source texts. As they advance, students can lead the class in annotations and discussion of these primary source artifacts

3) Lecture on Early Colonization (15 mins)

- a) This is up to the teacher and their own state standards, but a list of key terms that should generally be covered for this time period has been included in the additional resources section. Lecture is also dependent on how instructors want students to take notes and can incorporate secondary source texts if desired.
 - i) Note: for middle school students, this lecture time has been kept short on purpose in order to keep their attention and be reflective of where they are developmentally and cognitively

4) Creation of Living Maps: (20 mins)

- a) This is the introduction of a project that will continue throughout the unit on colonization (and perhaps beyond if applicable). Students will create a map within groups of 3 or 4 that is "living"
 - i) Goals/Expectations:
 - (1) Map should be a visual timeline of the changing landscape of North America before/during/after Colonization efforts by the three major powers (Spain, France, Britain)
 - (2) Map should be a collaborative effort among group members
 - (3) Map should be colorful, and multi-dimensional—covering not only political changes, but geographic, social, and cultural changes as well.
 - (4) Students are encouraged to do outside research for their maps and add in information that isn't just provided by the teacher/classroom learning
 - ii) Students can either do this project by hand on paper, or on a program like Prezi, which allows students to add text/graphics/audio/video to images—in this case, a map of North America

- b) Students should use their maps that they used yesterday/for the do now to help them start out
 - i) Teacher can select groups or students can self-select
 - ii) Students should use time in class to decide what they want to already include in their maps, what they need to research, and preliminary design ideas for their maps.

5) Exit Ticket (2 mins):

- a) This should be the time for questions/concerns that students have about the project after having time in class to work with their groups
 - i) Choice to have students write questions down or ask to the group at large

Instructional and Lesson Activities (ENGAGE, EXPLORE, EXPLAIN)

Engage: Ask students to define what it means to be a nation. Ask them to map out the early nations of North America and then have a discussion of what the limits of a nation are. See guiding questions and day 1 lesson plan for examples of engaging students in critical analysis of words that we use as historians such as nation and borders.

Explore: Once students make their own maps of where they think nations and borders of North America were in the 1500s and 1600s, show students primary source maps from the time period and have them explore the difference between their perception and reality and what that says about how we tell history. See day 1 lesson plan for more on this activity.

Explain: During day 2 lesson plan, teacher will take time for a lecture on colonization of North America that will explain the time period, including politics, culture, society, and economics. This will be the portion of the lesson that provide the most direct instruction/explanation of history. Furthermore, their project on living maps will show their own explanation of the time period in a multi-sensory way.

EXTEND/ELABORATE: Additional Learning

Students can gain an understanding of how history, memory, and politics conceptualize and interpret boundaries and shifts in the landscape of North America through their creation of living maps (see day 2 lesson plan). These living maps will continue beyond these two days of instruction, and will provide additional learning for students.

For example, students should be able to show the shifts in the North American landscape and cultures through their maps, which will be turned in as a final product for the unit on North American colonization. These maps will demonstrate learning that goes beyond the classroom and incorporates research that they have done on their own.

Outside research and information will be a mandatory part of the project, and resources to guide students in the right direction are provided in the additional resources section of this lesson plan.

EVALUATE: Assessment

Students will be asked to give a short 8 to 10-minute presentation on their living maps to their class, incorporating both lecture style instruction and interactive features for their classmates.

Their maps should cover the 16th century primarily, but can and should include information from the centuries before and after. Their maps should include visuals, audio and video, and if possible incorporate technology (i.e. Prezi or another digital format) These maps will be the culmination of their study of the colonial period in US history and will be their final project to demonstrate their understanding of the historical terms continuity and change over time.

Additionally, regular assessment of student progress can be done through document analysis assignments and check ins about their projects—as determined by their teacher

Accommodations and Modifications

Invite students who are Spanish-language speakers to read and/or use materials written in Spanish for their project—especially in regards to Spanish colonization. Give students an opportunity to discuss the advantages of being familiar with more than one world language or culture if there are students in class who chose to incorporate multiple languages into their project.

Some accommodations and modifications to consider are as follows:

1. Adjust the method of presentation or content and develop supplemental material as needed.
2. Outline the material for the student before reading a selection.
3. Reduce the number of pages or items on a page to be completed by the student.
4. Break tasks into smaller subtasks.
5. Provide additional practice to ensure mastery.
6. Substitute a similar, less complex, task for a particular assignment.
7. Develop simple study guides to complement required materials.
8. Create a word wall that is accompanied by an image or photograph for each new vocabulary term.

College and Career Readiness

Using the document developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the following [College and Career](#)

[Readiness Standards](#) (CCRS) complement the lesson plan in English/language arts and social studies:

English/Language Arts

- I. Locate explicit textual information, draw complex inferences, and analyze and evaluate the information within and across texts of varying lengths. **(Reading)**
- II. Understand the elements of communication both in informal group discussions and formal presentations (e.g., accuracy, relevance, rhetorical features, organization of information). **(Speaking)**
- III. Apply listening skills as an individual and as a member of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews). **(Listening)**
- IV. **Research**
 - a. Formulate topic and questions.
 - b. Select information from a variety of sources.
 - c. Produce and design a document.

Social Studies

- I. Interrelated Disciplines and Skills
 - A. Spatial analysis of physical and cultural processes that shape the human experience
 - B. Periodization and chronological reasoning
 - C. Change and continuity of political ideologies, constitutions, and political behavior
 - D. Change and continuity of economic systems and processes
 - E. Change and continuity of social groups, civic organizations, institutions, and their interaction

Additional Resources

The online tool for teaching with documents by the National Archives is brings history to life and can be accessed [here](#).

The following resources support teaching and learning about Early North American Colonization:

1. <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/americas-1620>
2. <https://edsitement.neh.gov/subject/history-social-studies>
3. [U.S. Library of Congress, Teaching with Primary Sources Program](#)
4. http://digitalcommons.utep.edu/oral_history/

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Reflection

My experiences through this NEH program that focused on the disparate narratives of the borderlands of the Southwest United States were fundamental to the preparation of the lesson plan titled "Making a Nation." When thinking about teaching students about the beginning of the United States, one must ask fundamental questions about what a nation truly is, who belongs, who becomes an outsider, and how these definitions are specific to time and place.

This lesson plan is intended to help teachers weave these larger questions about identity and borders into content specific lessons that will allow students to both think about their preconceived notions about history and the content specific to American History without taking time from either goal, but rather tying them together for an interdisciplinary humanities class (or lesson!) that propels student learning beyond the rote or traditional linear narrative of history.