**Tales from the Chihuahuan Desert:**

**Borderlands Narratives about Identity and Binationalism**

National Endowment for the Humanities and The University of Texas at El Paso

2021 Summer Virtual Institute for Secondary School Teachers (Grades 6th–12th)

**Instructional Lesson Plan Framework with 5E Model**

**for E-Portfolio with Artifacts and Readings**

1. **Title and Author of Lesson Plan**

Mapping Our World: Redefining Borders

**Brenda Amaya**

Brenda Amaya is originally from Los Angeles, California, but now resides in Brooklyn, New York. She is a dedicated artist and educator with six years of experience in various educational environments in the USA and abroad. Currently, Brenda is pursuing her master’s in education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, and is working as a resident teacher in multiple grade levels. She plans to reframe the narrative by taking what she learns from the Chihuahuan Desert histories and narratives and applying it in her English language arts courses. Brenda loves to be part of her community. Last year, she worked with the educational non-profit Citizens Schools, where she created an afterschool art club for middle schoolers, and you can check out the student’s artwork [@constructiveyouthartclub](http://www.instagram.com/constructiveyouthartclub/). When Brenda is not studying or working, you can find her painting, binge-watching cooking shows, or traveling somewhere. She can be reached at bamaya@bankstreet.edu.

1. **Content or Subject Areas with Keywords**

Social Studies/English Language Arts

**Keywords:** Compass Rose, Cardinal Directions, Intermediate Directions, Scale, Grid System, Symbols, Legend, Poetry, Narrative, Borders, identity, Free Verse

1. **Grade Levels and Time Required**

5th-6th Grades

3-day lesson (45 minutes each)

1. **Instructional Objectives and Student Learning**

**Content Objectives:**

* Students will be able to construct a map of their neighborhood and identify a map’s characteristics.
* Students will read about borders and write a poem that reflects their neighborhood borders.

**Language Objectives:**

* Students can illustrate, explain, and use vocabulary related to a map.
* Students can create a free verse poem about their neighborhood and celebrate where they come from.

**Social Studies Standards:**

<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework>

Geographic Reasoning:

* Use location terms and geographic representations, such as maps, photographs, satellite images, and models, to describe where places are in relation to each other, and to describe connections between places; evaluate the benefits of particular places for purposeful activities.
* Identify and analyze how environments affect human activities and how human activities affect physical environments.

**English Language Arts Standards:**

**6W2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

* 6 W2c: Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to explain a topic.

**6W3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details and sequencing

* 6 W3d: Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.

**6W4:** Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.

1. **Guiding Questions**

* How do we define the borders in our neighborhoods?
* How do borders impact who we are?
* How can students use oral and written language to articulate their experience and the world around them?
* How can poetry and drawing help students share their narratives?

1. **Materials and Resources**

* A copy of the poem Border Kids
* Pencil
* Notebook Paper
* Drawing Paper
* Markers
* Crayons
* Ruler

1. **Introduction**

There has been a lot of controversy regarding the US Mexican border, such as who is welcome and who is not. By providing a different borderland narrative, students can learn that there isn’t one single side to a story and reflect on their own lives and how visible and invisible borders impact how we view ourselves and the world around us.

**Activity #1 Day 1**

**Opening (10 minutes)**

The teacher will display a map of North America on the board and ask students if they can match the following terms on the map:

1. Compass Rose
2. Cardinal Directions
3. Intermediate Directions
4. Scale
5. Grid System
6. Symbols
7. Legend
8. Borders

The teacher will go over the map’s characteristic vocabulary and direct the students to write them in their notebooks.

**Main Lesson (30 minutes)**

The teacher will model how to create a map on the whiteboard so that the students can follow along.

Follow the directions below. First, draw with a pencil, and when you are finished with your map, you can trace it with a marker if you like.

1. Write the title of your map.

2. Draw a compass rose on your paper.

3. Decide on what symbols to use on your map key. Fill out the map key box.

4. Create a grid for your map.

5. Draw your symbols for your map and add a scale.

6. Add as many details and be creative as you can!

* **CLOSING: TURN AND TALK (5 minutes)**
* After students complete their maps, have them turn to a partner to share and discuss their maps. Have students discuss what borders they draw on their map and the similarities and differences between their maps and their partners’ maps.

**Activity #2 DAY 2**

**Opening (10 Minutes)**

The teacher will begin the lesson by displaying a map of Mexico in the southwestern United States. The teacher will first recall the vocabulary learned yesterday and have students repeat the matching activity. Then the teacher will direct the student's attention to the US Mexican border. The teacher will then ask the following inquiry question: **What are borders?** And have students think about what the word borders means. **Ask if any students have gone from one country to another? What happens when you cross a border or land in another country? What do you see?** The teacher will write the students' responses on the board and engage in a classroom discussion.

**Read Aloud (10 Minutes)**

The teacher will read aloud David Bowles's poem Border Kid. The teacher will provide background information about the author, who grew up in Bordertown in Texas.

The poem will be displayed on a projector so students can follow along with the teacher.

**Main Activity (20 minutes)**

The teacher will first explain a free verse poem and read a poem written by the teacher as a model. Students will create their free verse poem about their neighborhood and how borders impact their lives.

* **CLOSING: TURN AND TALK (5 minutes)**
* After students complete their poems, have them turn to a partner to share and discuss their poem.

**Activity # 3 Day of Celebration (45 minutes)**

As a whole group, have several students share their maps and poems with the class.

1. **Instructional and Lesson Activities (ENGAGE, EXPLORE, EXPLAIN)**

The **elements of literacy** are noted here in abecedarian form:

1. **M**emorizing: Key vocabulary terms related to a map.
2. **R**eading: Considering text structure, author’s craft, and the author’s perspective/ stance on the topic
3. **EXTEND/ELABORATE: Additional Learning**

Students will be asked to analyze maps and explore how they see themselves in the world around them.

1. **EVALUATE: Assessment and Feedback**

Students will create their final product based on a rubric and present it to the class.

1. **Accommodations and Modifications**

The teacher adjusts this lesson to fit the needs of English Language Learners by using visual cues with words and considering different learning styles.

1. **College and Career Readiness (optional)**

N/A

1. **Additional Resources**

<https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/geography/mapskills/>

The Border: A Double Sonnet

<https://poets.org/poem/border-double-sonnet>

1. **References (or Works Cited)**

Bowles, D. (2021). They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems. United States: Penguin Young Readers Group.

Scholastic Teaching Resources. (2018). Map Skills for Today: Grade 5. United States: Scholastic, Incorporated.

Scholastic Teaching Resources, S. T. (2018). Map Skills for Today: Grade 6. United States: Scholastic, Incorporated.

1. **Reflection**

My connection to the border is my mother and family members crossing the border in 1981 to escape the Civil War of El Salvador. The US- Mexican border is filled with many contradictions. It can be a place of liberation and safety. However, it can also be a place of danger and a place where people can be detained. I think it's important for students to learn about borders and how they impact people's lived experiences. Borders are not only physical spaces, but they are also intangible. Overall, this lesson will help students think critically about the world around them and how they create borders in their own life. Also, this lesson will help students see how their classmates create similar and different borders from their own even if they live in the same neighborhood.