Content Overview: In the fiction story, students preparing to celebrate Cinco de Mayo learn the Mexican hat dance, *jarabe tapatío*. Their challenge is to dance without stepping on the hat. The non-fiction section introduces Benito Juárez and the Battle of Puebla, and describes the many ways in which Cinco de Mayo is celebrated across the United States.

Materials and Preparation

- chart paper and markers
- unlined white paper
- additional books about Cinco de Mayo, Mexico, and Mariachi music
- *jarabe tapatío* music

Standards Covered

NCSS Social Studies Strands
I. Culture:  a, c, d, e
II. Time, Continuity, and Change:  b
IV. Individual Development and Identity:  e, f, h
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions:  d, e, g
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance:  a, c, e, h
IX. Global Connections:  a, b

National TESOL Standards
Goal 1: To use English to communicate in social settings. Standards  1, 2, 3
Goal 2: To use English to achieve academically in all content areas. Standards  1, 2, 3
Goal 3: To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways. Standards  1, 2, 3

NCTE/IRA English Language Arts Standards:  1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12

Vocabulary

F: greet / polite / formal / bow / tap / apologize / piñata
decorate / prepare / careful

NF: freedom / victory / powerful / president / famous / festivities
mariachis / cheerful / tasty

Pacing Guide  3 days; 30–45 minute sessions, plus optional extensions
Reading and Activities

DAY 1

Explore the Topic: Cinco de Mayo

Generate a discussion about celebrations by asking students what kinds of things their families do when they want to celebrate a special day. Ask about decorations, music, dancing, special foods, etc. After several responses, tell students that you are going to read a book about a group of students who practice a dance for a special celebration at their school.

Vocabulary Introduction

On a large piece of chart paper, start a vocabulary list. Write “Cinco de Mayo” at the top; under that, write “Mexican Hat Dance” and then write the vocabulary from the fiction section in column format. Read the words aloud and have students repeat them. Ask if anyone knows the meanings of any of the words. As students respond, have them use examples and/or details to enhance their responses, and add to their responses if needed to create clear definitions for each word.

Fiction Read-Aloud & Discussion

Activate prior knowledge by starting a categorized chart of known information. At the top of a piece of chart paper, write and underline “Cinco de Mayo.” Just under the title, make two columns labeled “Things to See” and “Things to Do.” Ask students what they already know about Cinco de Mayo. Write their responses as words and short phrases in the appropriate columns. Before writing, ask students to tell whether their ideas are things to do or things to see.

In this session you will read aloud only the fiction story, Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with the Mexican Hat Dance. Before reading the story, show students the cover and read the title aloud. Explain that “Cinco de Mayo” means “fifth of May” in Spanish, and that this is an important day in Mexican culture. Have students describe what they see on the cover. Point out the traditional clothing and fancy sombrero.

As you read, stop as appropriate to use context and illustration clues to help define the vocabulary and other unfamiliar words. Make note of the characters who are accidentally stepping on the hat and point out the decorations used for the celebration.

When finished, ask students to tell you about the story, including the beginning, middle, and end. Ask the following questions, using the illustrations in the book whenever appropriate to help students with their responses:
Beginning
1. Point to the hat. Point to the dancers.
2. What are the children doing?
3. How many children step on the hat?

Intermediate
1. Who is learning the Mexican Hat Dance?
2. How many dancers step on the hat?
3. Tell about the hat used in the final show.

Advanced
1. What happens when the children practice the dance?
2. Why is the school decorated?
3. What’s so special about the hat used in the final show?

Review the “Cinco de Mayo” chart and ask students if they heard or saw anything in the story that could be added to the lists. Add their responses and leave the chart on display.

**DAY 2**

**Vocabulary Activity**

Review the words on the vocabulary list by having students reread and define them, and by using them in sentences. Then add the vocabulary for the non-fiction section. Read the words aloud, having students repeat them. Ask students if they know the meanings of the words and add to their responses as needed to create clear definitions. Tell students they will hear these words in the next story.

Show students the cover of *Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with the Mexican Hat Dance* and ask them to recall what the story was about and how it ended. Review the categorized “Cinco de Mayo” information chart. Ask for volunteers to read the two lists, then tell students that you are now going to read them a story about why the fifth of May is an important date, and that they will learn more about things to see and do on Cinco de Mayo.

**Non-Fiction Read-Aloud & Discussion**

Open the book to pages 16–17 and have students read the section title with you. Point out the colors of the Mexican flag.

Begin the story, *What is Cinco de Mayo?* At the end of page 21, stop to emphasize that the smaller army won the battle at Puebla, and this is the reason there is a Cinco de Mayo celebration. Give students a sense of the imbalance between the Mexican and French armies by having six students stand together in one spot and two students stand together in another spot, with the two groups facing each other. Ask students to imagine and describe what might happen if these two groups of students were on opposing teams for a game. Ask them to think about what it might feel like to be in the smaller group and to win such a game against the larger group. Allow some discussion and explain that the small group could represent the Mexican army and the large group could represent the French army. Encourage students to comment on this.
Continue reading the story, pointing out the states highlighted on the United States map on pages 22–23 and the repeated images and colors of the Mexican flag. Stop as appropriate to have students name and describe objects and activities in the photographs and illustrations. Make sure to stop to define and discuss any words the children may not know.

When finished, have students answer the following questions, using the illustrations in the book as resources to help with their responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>1. Point to the map. Can you find Mexico?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Name something people do for Cinco de Mayo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. What is a piñata?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>1. Where is Mexico on the map?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What do people do to celebrate Cinco de Mayo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Tell what a piñata looks like and what is inside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1. Find Mexico and France on the map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What might people do and see on Cinco de Mayo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Tell about a piñata and what do children do with it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review the “Cinco de Mayo” chart and ask students what new information might be added. Review both categories of items and activities. Leave the chart on display.

**DAY 3**

**Vocabulary Review**

Do an oral review of the vocabulary words by having students help you categorize nouns and verbs. Ask the question, “Which of these words are things you can see?” As students identify them, mark a red asterisk to the left of each noun. Then ask, “Which of these words tell something you can do?” As students find them, mark a green asterisk to the left of each verb. Do not categorize words that don’t fit either category.

Distribute the Things to See and Do on Cinco de Mayo worksheet. In this activity, students will categorize vocabulary words. Students may be instructed to draw or write, or both, depending on their writing abilities and language levels.

Set aside some time for students to browse through and read additional picture books about Cinco de Mayo, Mexico, or other related topics. After reading, they may wish to revisit the information charts.

**Writing Activity**

Tell students that they will work together to write a class book called “Things to See and Do on Cinco de Mayo.” Explain that each student will create one page for the book and that they can use the “Cinco de Mayo” vocabulary lists and information chart to help them.
Spaced apart to avoid confusion, write these two prompts on the board:

- On Cinco de Mayo we see ____________.
- On Cinco de Mayo we can ____________.

Older and more advanced students can use blank paper and write their own sentences. For younger and beginning students, you may want to write the prompts onto white paper and make copies. Students can fill in the blanks or an adult can write for them.

Review the vocabulary list and the “Cinco de Mayo” information chart by having students read them with you. Review any definitions as necessary.

Elicit that the first prompt goes with the “Things to See” list and the second prompt goes with the “Things to Do” list. Have students give some examples for ways to complete the two prompts. Using the information chart, have students volunteer to create pages for each of the items listed.

Hand out blank or prompt papers and remind students to write first and then draw a colorful picture to go with their writing. When all pages are complete, mount them on construction paper and bind them into a book. Read the finished book to the class and add the book to the class library.

**Extensions**

**Writing**  Generate a list of words that rhyme with *hat*. Write and illustrate a four-line poem. Mount on construction paper and display.

**Art**  Make tissue paper flowers. Layer several 6x12 inch sheets of red, white, and green tissue paper, accordion fold the layers, then scrunch and bind the center with a pipe cleaner to create a stem. Carefully separate all the layers and fluff up to make the flower.

**Music**  Listen to *jarabe tapatío* (Mexican Hat Dance) music; several versions are available for download at iTunes. Watch an online video of the *jarabe tapatío* and other Mexican dances: [http://balletfolkloricossf.org/videos/SanMateoCountyFair_2004-08-22/SanMateoCountyFair.htm](http://balletfolkloricossf.org/videos/SanMateoCountyFair_2004-08-22/SanMateoCountyFair.htm)  Listen to Mariachi music online: [http://www.elmariachi.com](http://www.elmariachi.com)  [http://home.pages.at/midi/index.htm](http://home.pages.at/midi/index.htm) (scroll down to “Mexico”)

**Mathematics**  Focus on a variety of math activities using the number 5. Write and model equations for 5. Color all the numbers with 5 on a hundred chart. Create pentominos by coloring adjacent squares on graph paper in groups of 5 to make as many different configurations as possible. Count by 5s. Find all multiples of 5. Children may also enjoy learning to count to 10 or 20 in Spanish.
**Social Studies**  Have a discussion about good manners and why they are important. Practice good manners with role-playing.

**Science**  Make a chart showing healthy foods that could be used in a piñata. Cut and glue pictures from newspaper grocery store ads and label them.

**Technology**

Learn more about Cinco de Mayo:
http://www.elbalero.gob.mx/kids/about/html/holidays/home.html

Learn the steps for the Mexican Hat Dance:
http://www.kids-partycabin.com/Mexican_hat_dance.html

Play a simple concentration game and learn a few Spanish words:
http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/hispanic/pinata/game.htm

Print out and color the flag of Mexico:
http://www.abcteach.com/flags/mexico.htm

Print and color a map of Mexico:
http://www.abcteach.com/mexico/map.htm

Print out and color some Cinco de Mayo pictures:
http://www.kids-korner.net/activities/coloring/may/pic-2-may.html
http://www.gallopade.com/client/PDFs/OMA/73_Cinco_Color(K-3).pdf
http://www.kiddyhouse.com/Holidays/Cinco/cincoclips/mexkidsbw.gif

**Creative Reading**

Share this book with your students using Alma Flor Ada’s Creative Reading methodology based on the principles of Transformative Education. [Suggested questions](#) to initiate the dialogue are provided for Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced levels as well as self-assessment tools for teachers and students—in English and Spanish.

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