

Rituals of Remembrance

Día de los Muertos and Other Occasions Honoring the Dead

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Grade Level	9th – Secondary Grade	**Time Frame**	145-165 minutes
Subject	World Language	**Duration**	3-4 class period(s)
Course	World Language		

Essential Question

How do different cultures celebrate and mourn the dead? Why are these customs important to learn about and share?

Summary

In this lesson, students will be examining the practices associated with rituals and festivals that honor the dead around the world. They will design anchor charts and participate in a Detective Board activity in order to identify similarities between the various rituals. As they read a handout and participate in a Painting a Picture activity, students will make inferences about Día de los Muertos, its historical significance, and the customs associated with the festival. Students will use Canva to create a digital ofrenda that honors someone important to them who has passed away.

Snapshot

Engage

Students answer open-ended questions to foster meaningful connections and conversations related to the topic.

Explore

Student groups design anchor charts and participate in a Detective Board activity to identify similarities between various rituals and festivals honoring the dead.

Explain

Students use the Painting a Picture strategy to make observations and inferences about artifacts that are used in ofrendas.

Extend

Students create a virtual ofrenda using Canva and present their information.

Evaluate

Students reflect on the lesson by using the Mirror, Microscope, Binoculars strategy.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (High School)

4: Comparisons: Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence
4.1: Language Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.
4.2: Cultural Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of the culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Attachments

- Advanced Painting A Picture Set—Rituals of Remembrance.docx
- Advanced Painting A Picture Set—Rituals of Remembrance.pdf
- Example Writing Task—Rituals of Remembrance.docx
- Example Writing Task—Rituals of Remembrance.pdf
- Hungry Ghost Article (Abridged)—Rituals of Remembrance - Spanish.docx
- Hungry Ghost Article (Abridged)—Rituals of Remembrance - Spanish.pdf
- Hungry Ghost Article (Abridged)—Rituals of Remembrance.docx
- Hungry Ghost Article (Abridged)—Rituals of Remembrance.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Rituals of Remembrance.pptx
- Name Strips—Rituals of Remembrance - Spanish.docx
- Name Strips—Rituals of Remembrance - Spanish.pdf
- Name Strips—Rituals of Remembrance.docx
- Name Strips—Rituals of Remembrance.pdf
- Painting a Picture Chart—Rituals of Remembrance - Spanish.docx
- Painting a Picture Chart—Rituals of Remembrance - Spanish.pdf
- Painting a Picture Chart—Rituals of Remembrance.docx
- Painting a Picture Chart—Rituals of Remembrance.pdf
- Painting a Picture Set—Rituals of Remembrance.docx
- Painting a Picture Set—Rituals of Remembrance.pdf
- Qué es el Día de los Muertos—Rituals of Remembrance.docx
- Qué es el Día de los Muertos—Rituals of Remembrance.pdf

Materials

- Pencils/Pens
- Printer paper
- 5W Cubes (one per student group of five)
- Internet-connected device like Chromebook or iPad (for Canva)
- Dry erase cubes (optional)
- Sets of dice (optional)
- Name Strips (attached; one set per class)
- Large poster paper (optional)
- Hungry Ghost Article (Abridged) (attached; optional; several copies to accommodate student group)
- Skeins of yarn in different colors (one per group)
- Multiple rolls of tape (one per group)
- Multiple pairs of scissors (one per group)
- Example Writing Task (attached; for facilitator or student use)
- ¿Qué es el Día de los Muertos? handout (attached; one per student or student pair, depending on grade level)
- Painting a Picture Set (attached; one per group)
- Advanced Painting a Picture Set (attached; one per student pair, or several copies per room depending

on grade level)

- Painting a Picture Chart (attached; one per student)

10 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: 5W Cube Preparation

This Engage activity assumes that you will already have pre-constructed 5W Cubes. If you want students to assemble their own at the start of class, budget an extra ten to fifteen minutes. Alternatively, you can have students use reusable, dry erase cubes, or number the questions and use a set of dice.

Teacher's Note: Introducing Sensitive Subjects

Some students might have experiences with death that they do not wish to discuss. Before teaching this lesson, you should make the class aware that this is coming up and *if they feel uncomfortable discussing family members* ask them to pick a public figure or celebrity who has significant meaning to them to use in place of a loved one who has passed away.

As students enter the classroom, divide them into groups of no more than five. Open the slides, and show the students **slide 2** introducing the 5W Cube activity. Using premade 5W cubes, or dice, ask students to take turns rolling the cubes and using the first word to complete the questions shown on **slide 3:**

1. "**WHO** is a loved one who has passed that you honor?"
2. "**WHAT** do you do to honor loved ones who have passed?"
3. "**WHEN** do you honor loved ones who have passed?"
4. "**WHERE** do you honor loved ones who have passed?"
5. "**WHY** do you honor loved ones who have passed?"
6. "**HOW** do you honor loved ones who have passed?"

Set a timer for six minutes, and let students discuss. After their discussions, ask if any of the students learned something about a cultural event or holiday of which they were previously unaware, and allow a few students to share answers with the class.

Show the students **slides 4-6** to introduce the lesson title, essential questions, and learning objectives.

45 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: Selection of Rituals

Print and cut out the attached **Name Strips** ahead of time. There are spaces to add additional names, if you wish to add to the list. If needed, repeat name strips for larger classes. Each group will randomly draw a ritual to research. If you wish to use a digital wheel for your class, the following pages are available: Classtools.net Random Name Picker, Wheel Decide, or Tools Unite Random Picker Wheel.

Display **slide 7** with the Anchor Chart strategy. Students will need to be divided into six groups to represent the six rituals. If you wish to have smaller groups, allow rituals to be repeated.

Explain to students that with their group they will be exploring different rituals of remembrance from around the world and creating a visual representation for one of them. Begin by having one member of each group randomly draw a ritual from the name slips. Once groups have selected their ritual, instruct them to visit the shortened link on slide 7 that directs them to a Wakelet. Using the resources provided in the Wakelet, each group will create a poster to represent their ritual. Before sending groups off to work, review anchor chart expectations as a class.

Each Anchor Chart should include the following:

- What is the name of this ritual?
- How is this observed?
- What are traditions associated with this ritual?
- What is its overall significance?

Teacher's Note: Abridged Article

Since the original version of the Hungry Ghost Festival article is somewhat lengthy, there is an attached handout that features an abridged transcript of that article. If you choose to use it, you'll want to make sure to print out several copies of **Hungry Ghost Article (Abridged)** ahead of class to distribute to the student group that will be researching the Hungry Ghost Festival.

Once groups have created their posters, display **slide 8** and introduce the instructional strategy Detective Board. Give each student group a different colored skein of yarn, scissors, and a roll of tape. Instruct them to stand up and visit each poster while moving through the room in a clockwise motion. Students should also bring notebook paper with them so that they can jot notes on the similarities between the rituals as they visit each poster.

Once the students have viewed every poster, ask them to think of something that two different posters have in common and have them connect the two ideas with yarn. Instruct them to tape one end of the yarn to the text of the first idea, then unspool the yarn until they can reach the other poster to affix the other end. The end result should be a weblike array of yarn that is a three-dimensional rendering of a corkboard a detective would use in solving a case. Students should not make the same connections that other students have already made. When they have finished, instruct students to share what their group found with the class.

Once you have reached a stopping point, explain to students that while cultures are all different, many share similarities in their practices. Explain to students that today, they will be learning about one more cultural celebration that also shares some of these similarities. This festival, Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a holiday that is celebrated throughout Latin America.

20 minutes

Explain

Teacher's Note: Activity Timing

The length of the **Painting a Picture** activity will vary depending on the level of Spanish you are teaching. If you are teaching Spanish 1, you can expect the activity to last 20 minutes. The Spanish 2 activity should last about 30 minutes, and the Spanish 3 activity should last about 40 minutes.

Move to **slide 9**. Based on the class level, different options are available.

Spanish 1:

Instruct students to remain in their groups, and distribute the **¿Qué es el Día de los Muertos?** handout to each student. Explain that they will be reading this as a class and students should be following along. Once the class has read, ask if there are any words or phrases students need clarification on.

Ask students to share their POMS: Point of Most Significance or what stood out to them the most from the reading. Once a few have shared, explain that they will now be exploring more about the different components of the Day of the Dead.

Transition to **slide 10,** and introduce the Painting a Picture strategy. Give each group a copy of the **Painting a Picture Set** and everyone their own **Painting a Picture Chart.** With their groups, students will go through each image and record their observations and inferences on their chart. Using the text with each image, students will jot down the purpose of each item. Tell students that they will have about 15 minutes to complete this. A timer can be found on **slide 11.** Once students have worked through all the images, invite a few to share their observations, and as a class, have a conversation about the purpose of each item.

Spanish 2:

Instruct groups to break into pairs. Distribute the **¿Qué es el Día de los Muertos?** handout to each pair. Explain that they will be reading this passage with their partner. Allow a few minutes for them to read, and then invite pairs to share their POMS: Point of Most Significance or what stood out to them the most from the reading. Once a few have shared, explain that they will now be exploring more about the different components of the Day of the Dead.

Transition to **slide 10** and introduce the Painting a Picture strategy. Give each pair a copy of the **Advanced Painting a Picture Set** and everyone their own **Painting a Picture Chart.** Students will go through each image and record their observations and inferences on their chart. Using the text with each image, students will jot down the purpose of each item. Tell students that they will have about 15 minutes to complete this. A timer can be found on **slide 11.** Once pairs have worked through all the images, invite a few to share their observations, and as a class, have a conversation about the purpose of each item.

Spanish 3:

In preparation, hang the **Advanced Painting a Picture Set** around the room where students can access. Distribute the **¿Qué es el Día de los Muertos?** handout to each student and have them read the passage independently. Allow a few minutes for them to read, and then invite a few students to share their POMS: Point of Most Significance or what stood out to them the most from the reading. Once a few have shared, explain that they will now be exploring more about the different components of the Day of the Dead.

Transition to **slide 10** and introduce the Painting a Picture strategy. Give everyone their own **Painting a Picture Chart.** Students will go around the room looking at each image and record their observations and inferences on their chart. Using the text with each image, students will jot down the purpose of each item. Tell students that they will have about 15 minutes to complete this. A timer can be found on **slide 11.** Once pairs have worked through all the images, invite a few to share their observations and as a class have a conversation about the purpose of each item.

60 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Sensitive Subjects

Some students might have experiences with death that they do not wish to discuss. For this next activity, explain to students that they may choose to create an ofrenda for a family member, friend, pet, a public figure, or celebrity who has significant meaning to them to use in place of a loved one who has passed away.

Move to **slide 12**. Explain to students that they will now be creating a digital ofrenda themselves. Instruct students to navigate to the Canva template on their devices using the link on **slide 12.** Have students log in to Canva using their school Google account.

1. Have them navigate to the *Canva ofrenda template,* and click on the button that says "Use template for a new design."
2. Students can resize, duplicate, or change any of the existing elements to make their ofrenda. Move to **slide 13.** Additionally, they need to complete each of the following steps:
    - Add at least one photo of a loved one.
    - Add a background photo of a place where their loved one liked to visit.
    - Add at least two items that their loved one enjoyed.
    - Add an explanation of who their ofrenda is honoring and what items they chose to represent.

Teacher's Note: Example Writing Task

An **Example Writing Task** handout is provided with different examples of rigor level depending on the level of the class for the writing portion. Use this to provide guidelines for your students, or share a copy with the class.

3. When they have finished their design, instruct them to find and click the share button. Here they should select **"Copy link"** and send it to you using their preferred method (email, Canvas, Google Classroom, etc.).

Teacher's Note: Homework

Consider allowing students the opportunity to finish designing their ofrendas at home, in case they need to procure photos of loved ones or other elements.

Once students have completed the assignment and shared their work, they can present to the class using a projector so the whole class can see. Novice learners can use their written work to guide their presentation.

Teacher's Note: Canva Mobile App

Depending on your comfort level, you might allow students to use the Canva app on their phones instead of using the web version for PC, Mac, and Chromebook. The mobile application functions like a hybrid of Photoshop and a social media application, so for students who are used to creating social media posts, they might enjoy the mobile version more. Students will need to be able to access the base files for the assignment, however, so you need to make sure they can download them on their phone first. If you are less comfortable with tech, keeping all of the students on the web version is probably a more manageable way to complete the lesson.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 14**. Introduce the instructional strategy Mirror, Microscope, Binoculars. Students can respond on the back of their chart, or in a class notebook. As you show the slide, tell students to use the handout to answer the following questions:

- *Mirror (internal reflection)*: How has this experience changed my thinking?
- *Microscope (close inspection)*: How can this knowledge be applied?
- *Binoculars (global reflection)*: What actions can be taken to help people be more aware and accepting of others' cultural celebrations?

At the end of the activity, ask if any students would like to share their responses. Instruct them to turn in their responses.

Teacher's Note: Further Exploration (optional)

After reading your students' answers, you might have some suggestions in the binoculars portion that warrant further exploration. For example, if a student says that Spanish Club should host an event to celebrate Día de los Muertos, that could be a worthy idea about which to solicit student feedback. A discussion of their answers, no matter how small the next class day, could help to foster an interest in student leadership for your students.

Resources

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