

NMCCSS:

English Language Arts:

Reading Standards for Informational Texts (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI):

Craft and Structure

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas; Writing (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W):

Production and Distribution of Writing

Speaking and Listening (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL):

Comprehension and Collaboration

Language (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L)

Knowledge of Language

New Mexico Content Standards:

Fine Arts/Music: Content Standards 2, 3 & 6

Social Studies/Geography: Content Standard 2

Write a Mariachi Song

Lesson 1

Utilizing a lyrics sheet and recording of “Las Mananitas” as an example, students will write their own rhyming pattern lyrics for a Mariachi song specific to the imagery of a person, place or event.

Objectives

Students will:

- Create original lyrics in either English or Spanish inspired by Mariachi music.
- Students’ lyrics will reflect a specific occasion.
- Follow a rhyme scheme.

Materials

Glowing Glue

- A recording of “Las Mañanitas” (widely available – many versions can be found on iTunes or YouTube)
- “Las Mañanitas” lyric sheet
- Pen
- Paper

Procedure

1. Review the history of Mariachi music. Note that Mariachi groups are most often seen playing at important family celebrations (i.e. weddings, birthdays, or any other public festivities).
2. Distribute “Las Mañanitas” lyric sheet. Ask how many students are familiar with the song. If students are familiar, ask them to cite occasions on which they have heard the song sung. Who was singing it? To whom was it being sung? What was the occasion? If students have no familiarity with the song, explain that the song is a traditional Mexican song

performed for people on their birthdays.

3. Play the song for the students. Have them read along with the lyrics.

4. Explain that the students will be writing their own lyrics for a Mariachi song. The song will be for a special occasion: birthday, anniversary, wedding, funeral, farewell party, etc. Ask students to choose an occasion for which to write and to think of the type of sentiment s/he would want to convey for the occasion.

5. It might be helpful if students think of a specific person who

they are addressing in their song. Instruct them to evoke imagery that would be meaningful, either to themselves or to the person for whom they are writing.

6. Be sure to note the rhyme scheme of the song. It may be helpful to read the Spanish lyrics out loud to identify the rhyme scheme used in “Las Mañanitas.” Students don’t have to repeat that exact rhyme scheme, but should follow some sort of rhyming pattern in their lyrics.

7. When the lyrics to their songs are complete, have the students share them in class.

Extensions/Modifications

- If students are fluent enough, have them write the songs in Spanish, or help them to translate their songs into Spanish once they are written.
- Set the songs to music. Identify which mariachi instruments would be featured prominently in the song.
- Younger students can do this assignment together as a group with teacher assistance.

Assessment

- Students create lyrics that are: 1) specific to an occasion, 2) follow an identifiable rhyme scheme, and 3) make sense to others.
- Quality of participation

Las Mañanitas: A Birthday Song

Spanish Lyrics

Estas son las mañanitas
que cantaba el rey David
A las muchachas bonitas,
Te las cantamos así.
Despierta, mi bien, despierta,
Mira que almaneció,
Ya los pajarillos cantan,
La luna ya se metió.

Qué linda está la mañana,
en que vengo a saludarte,
Venimos todos con gusto
y placer a felicitarte
El día en que tú naciste,
nacieron todas las flores,
El la pila del bautismo,
cantaron los ruiseñores,

Ya viene amaneciendo,
Ya la luz el día nos dio,
Levántate de mañana,
Mira que ya almaneció.

Quisiera ser solecito
para entrar por tu ventana
Y darte los "Buenos Días"
Acostadita/o en tu cama,
Quisiera ser un San Juan,
quisiera ser un San Pedro
Para venirme a cantar
con la música del cielo,

Con jasmínes y flores
hoy te vengo a saludar
Hoy por ser día de tu santo,
te venimos a cantar.

English Translation

This is "Las Mañanitas"
that King David sang
to the pretty girls;
As we sing them to you.
Wake up, my love, wake up.
Look at what has dawned,
Already the little birds are singing,
The moon already went in.

How pretty is the morning
In which I come to greet you.
We all came with pleasure
and joy to congratulate you.
On the day you were born
All the flowers were born.
At the baptismal font
The nightingales sang.

It is starting to be dawn,
The day has given us light.
Get up in the morning,
Look at what has already dawned.

I would like to be a little sunlight
To go in through your window
And tell you "Good Morning"
While you're lying in your bed.
I would like to be Saint John,
I would like to be Saint Peter,
In order to come sing to you
with music from heaven.

With jasmine and flowers
Today I come to greet you,
Today being your Saint's day,
We came to sing to you.

Interesting Facts

Mariachi songs speak about machismo, love, betrayal, death, politics, revolutionary heroes, and even animals.

The instruments originally used by the Mariachi were those introduced by the Spaniards: violins, guitars, vihuelas, harps, etc.

Mariachi music was first passed down orally, meaning that songs were not written down but taught and learned by ear.

Originally, the Mariachi most often found employment at haciendas, where they would earn more than the average laborer. With the revolution, this way of life ended and they began to wander from town to town, singing songs of revolutionary heroes and enemies, and carrying news from one place to another.

The Son was the popular music of the early period. It is a mixture of folk traditions from Spain, Mexico, and Africa. "La Negra" is the best-known example.

The dancing accompanying Mariachi music may include hard rhythmic heel stomping, straight-backed with gliding or shuffling footwork. There can also be waltzes, polkas, schottisches, or other regional dance forms.

Mariachis often help celebrate the great moments in the people's lives: from birth, to courting and marriage, to funerals.

Mariachi music has been incorporated into the Roman Catholic Church's most sacred ritual: the Mass. The "Misa Panamericana" is a Mariachi folk mass, sung in Spanish, which uses traditional instruments to create vivid new interpretations of the customary elements of the service.

With the advent of radio and television, Mariachi popularity continued to grow. Due to the success of jazz and Cuban music, the trumpet was adopted, pushing the violins into second place and, in some cases, replacing the harp.

The many variations of Mariachi music are grouped into different rhythmic meters. The jarabe and huapango are typically in 6/8 time, while the cumbia and bolero ranchero are usually in 4/4. Perhaps most popular are the Mariachi styles in 3/4, such as the valsas, Mexicanos and corrido.



The history of the charro suit can be traced back to the peasants of Salamanca and Andalucía, Spain.

Today, Mariachis of both sexes wear the traje de charro (traditional Mariachi costume) to perform, though women can choose a skirt made to echo the tight charro pants.

History of Mariachi Music

Prior to the arrival of Hernán Cortes, the music of Mexico was an integral part of religious celebrations, and was played with rattles, drums, reed and clay flutes, and conch-shell horns. As Christianity spread, these instruments gave way to instruments imported by the Spanish: violins, guitars and harps, brass horns and woodwinds. The Indian and mestizo musicians not only learned to play European instruments, but also to build their own, sometimes giving them shapes and tunings of their own invention.

Music and dance were important

elements of Spanish theatrical productions, which were enormously popular throughout the Spanish-speaking world during the colonial period. The typical Spanish theatrical orchestra of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries was comprised of violins (usually two), a harp and guitars (or guitar variants). It was from this group that several of the most distinctive regional ensembles of Mexico developed, including the Mariachi.

According to the best scholarly opinion, the word Mariachi has Native roots. One theory suggests the name comes from the wood used to make the platform on which the performers danced to the music of the village musicians. Whatever its true source, the word today has two meanings that are crystal clear: Mariachi is the music of the people, and it's one of the most exciting and enchanting musical ensembles found anywhere in the world.

The Musical Instruments

Each instrument in the Mariachi serves a special function. The violin provides the melody, or the main song line. A second violin, if used, would play a harmony. Sometimes three violins play different notes to make a complete, harmonious chord. Trumpets add strength to the melody played by violins. The guitars, vihuela, and guitarrron provide the rhythm.

Violins are played in the same manner for Mariachi music as they are played for any other type of music. Violins are often used to develop the total sound of Mariachi music, and blend with the sound of other instruments.



version of the vihuela; it also originated in Jalisco. It has six strings which are plucked in pairs to create a big, deep sound. By many accounts, the guitarrron is considered to be the single most essential element of Mariachi music.



The **trumpet** is also important in Mariachi music. It is played in much the same manner as in other popular music. However, in some instances, cup mutes are used to moderate or soften the sound of trumpets.

Other Instruments: Depending on the specific arrangement of Mariachi music, flutes, accordions, French horns, and even organs can be incorporated. They are usually played in the conventional manner, but are used to contribute to the distinctive Mariachi sound.

The Dance

Mariachi music is created to be accompanied with dance and each of the regional variations of the son (see below) has its traditional style of dance. The technique associated with the son is the **zapateado**, a distinctive type of footwork that originated in Spain. The

performers skillfully drive the heels of their shoes or boots into the dance floor, pounding out swift, often syncopated rhythms, which complement the different sounds of the musical instruments.

The **huapango** couples line up in opposing columns. The upper part of the body is held perfectly upright as the feet perform rapid, intricate, shuffling maneuvers. Today, it is sometimes performed with a glass of water on the dancer's head to show off the dancer's great muscular control.

The lyrics of the songs frequently describe country life, and form the inspiration for the dances' movements. These are referred to as **sones**. Sones often depict the plants, animals, and people of the region. In the dance, the movements of the performers often represent the farmyard courtship described in the verses of the sones.

Another dance is the **jarabe**: a medley of dance pieces, including sones, **danzas**, **jotas**, and **polkas**. Of course, no discussion of Mariachi music would be complete without mentioning the famous **Jarabe Tapatio** (the Mexican Hat Dance). Associated with Guadalajara, in the state of Jalisco, it has become the national dance of Mexico.



The **vihuela** is an instrument unique to Mariachi music. It was originally created by the Coca Indians of Jalisco. The vihuela has a bowed and swollen V-shaped back and five strings. It looks like a small guitar that is slightly larger than a ukulele. Players strum a vihuela with a thumb pick. Vihuelas produce a crisp, clear sound that fades away quickly. It is the rhythmic and harmonic foundation of the

distinctive Mariachi sound.

The **guitar** is played in Mariachi music as much as it is played in any popular music genre. It is played in collaboration with the vihuela, and is used to supplement the rhythm. Nearly all Mariachi bands include guitars.



A **guitarrron** is another instrument unique to Mariachi music. It forms the bass foundation for the music and gives Mariachi music its special sound. The guitarrron looks like a large



Grades: 3-6
(with modifications
for PreK & K)

NMCCSS:

**English Language
Arts: Reading
Standards for
Literature (CCSS.
ELA-Literacy.RI):**

**Integration of
Knowledge and Ideas;**
Comprehension
and Collaboration

**Speaking and
Listening (CCSS.
ELA-Literacy.SL):**
Comprehension and
Collaboration

New Mexico Content Standards:

**Social Studies/
Geography: Content
Standard II**

Farolitos for Christmas

Lesson 2

This lesson includes reading *The Farolitos of Christmas* by Rudolfo Anaya, discussing Christmas traditions in New Mexico, the difference between luminaria and farolitos, and how to make farolitos and use them safely.

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about the tradition of placing farolitos out on Christmas Eve.
- Learn the difference between a luminaria and a farolito.
- Assemble their own farolitos.

Materials

- *The Farolitos of Christmas* by Rudolfo Anaya
- Paper bags
- Candles
- Sand

Procedure

1. Discuss some of the Christmas traditions presented in the show Mariachi Christmas. What holiday traditions were familiar to students? What holiday traditions were unfamiliar? Tell students that they will be reading a story that features a New Mexican holiday tradition.
2. Read *The Farolitos of Christmas* by Rudolfo Anaya.
3. Discuss the story with students. What does the book say is the reason that Abuelo would light luminarias on Christmas Eve? Why

was he unable to do so? What is the difference between a luminaria and farolito? You may bring up the fact that many people use the term luminaria to describe a farolito. Ask the class if they believe these words can be used interchangeably.

4. Ask the students about their own Christmas traditions. Do any of their families put out farolitos? Do any of them travel to see farolitos at select locations here in town or at some of the pueblos? What are their family traditions for Christmas Eve?

5. Have the class make their own farolitos.

- a.) Open the paper bags and put a handful of sand into each one (approx.1 cup).
- b.) Place a candle in the bag. Try to center it as much as possible.
- c.) Line one or more of the paths to the school with the farolitos. If your school has a winter holiday event, light the farolitos on the evening of that event.

Extensions/Modifications

- Hold a class fundraiser where you sell assembled farolitos. Have the class collaborate to create a brief write up of the reasons and traditions behind the farolitos. Include the write up with all orders filled.
- Discuss other holidays or occasions where candles are lit. Why are candles important? What about the lighting of candles is the same? Are there any differences? Who lights the candles? Why? How do these actions make you feel?

Assessment

- Quality of participation