

What's in our Names? - Spanish Language Years I, II, III

Created by Kim Fryman

Lesson Objective:

The students will become familiar with regions of the United States that were once a part of New Spain and Mexico. The students will be aware of the Spanish origins of many place names in the American West. Students will learn the significance of several of these place names. The students will leave the classroom with an increased understanding of the Spanish history of the western United States.

Texas TEKS Objectives:

114.22. Levels I and II - Novice Progress Checkpoint (One Credit Per Level).

(3) Connections. The student uses the language to make connections with other subject areas and to acquire information. The student is expected to:

(A) use resources (which may include technology) in the language and cultures being studied to gain access to information; and

(B) use the language to obtain, reinforce, or expand knowledge of other subject areas.

(4) Comparisons. The student develops insight into the nature of language and culture by comparing the student's own language and culture to another. The student is expected to:

(A) demonstrate an understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the student's own language and the language studied;

(B) demonstrate an understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the student's own culture and the cultures studied; and

(C) demonstrate an understanding of the influence of one language and culture on another.

Procedure:

- Provide each student with a current atlas or detailed map of Texas. The students should also have access to a map of the western United States. It is not necessary to have as great detail in the U.S. map. Usable examples follow this lesson page. Maps can also be located online at the Texas Department of Transportation website (<http://www.dot.state.tx.us/travel/maps.htm>). For a United States map www.nationalatlas.gov is also a great resource with downloadable and printable maps.
- Provide each student with a map from the TIDES website.
- Students will compare and contrast the maps and record details on the designated page to guide their observations. This is also included after the lesson procedure.
- At this point in the lesson, the teacher may wish to put the students in cooperative learning groups. However, they may continue to work independently. The students will record five

place names they would like to learn about. The teacher will take suggestions from the class, recording the suggestions for the entire group to observe. The teacher may know which names will be the easiest to find information on or to determine the historical figure they represent.

- The students will then use Spanish-English dictionaries, encyclopedias, or web searches to discover the meaning behind the Texas or United States place names assigned to them by the teacher. This part of the activity lends itself to cooperative group work with a student recorder, a researcher, and a presenter. After the students have researched the names, they will share what they have learned with the class.
- The teacher can write the findings on a wall chart to help the students record their discoveries as a class.

Evaluation:

- The teacher may be grade the completed observation, discovery sheets and place name origins for neatness, accuracy, and completion of assigned aspects of the lesson.
- The teacher may add bonus questions to a quiz or test, asking for the meanings or background behind the place names. The students could also be asked to give a short summary to explain what they learned.

G.T. Extension:

To provide additional challenges, require GT learners to research an historical figure for whom a city in Texas is named. They may create a power point to share with the class, create a portrait or poster of the person and explain why that person was significant in Spanish or Mexican history, or create a poster board display to share information regarding the individual's life and contribution to history.

Modifications:

In order to modify this lesson for a struggling learner the teacher may use peer grouping, reduce the number of names to be investigated, or allow for individualized oral responses.

Materials:

[Maps of the United States](http://nationalatlas.gov) at nationalatlas.gov

[Maps of Texas](#) at the *Texas Department of Transportation*

[1777 Map of Mexico](#) (SHHIX_01p1)

[1805 Map of Spanish Texas](#) (SHHIX_02ap1)

[1815 Spanish Dominions](#) (SHHIX_03p1)

[Spanish Texas \(1805-1819\)](#) (Map23)

Observation and discovery sheets (attached)

Large poster paper for recording class responses

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

What's in our Names? Observations

1. Which states in the U.S. were once a part of New Spain and Mexico? _____

2. Which states do you think may have Spanish origins? _____

3. Which Rivers in Texas have Spanish names? _____

4. Which Texas cities have Spanish names? _____

5. Are there mountains our land forms in Texas or the United States with Spanish names? List them. _____

List ten names you would like to investigate. For example, find out who the person was or what the word means.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Name _____
Date _____
Period _____

What's in our Names? Discoveries

Record your place names below and what the name means in Spanish.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Record here what you learned about the exploration and history of Texas and the western United States from this lesson. Use complete sentences and write in English.

