

Catrinatas, Skulls and Calacas, Grade 6-8

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Lesson Plan Summary: In this lesson plan, students will learn to identify the similarities and differences between common symbols used for decorations during Mexico's Day of the Dead celebrations. This lesson will focus on *Catrinatas* (parodies of the upper-class Mexican female), *Skulls* (represented by masks and foods such as sugar skulls) and *Calacas* (skulls or skeletons – usually human – commonly used for decoration during the festival). Finally, students will learn about *papel picado*, a decoration made of tissue paper also used for decorating the altars.

Objectives:

- Students will identify differences and similarities among calacas, skulls, catrinatas and papel picado.
- Students will prepare an oral presentation from research and information from the links provided.
- Students will write a small paragraph about the differences and similarities they learned about in their research.

Materials:

Catrinatas, Skulls and Calacas PowerPoint

“How to make a mask and skull” video:

<http://tides.sfasu.edu/Teachers/Tides/docs/VirtualExpeditions/videos/maskcraft.html>

“How to make papel picado” video (*coming soon*)

Making Papel Picado at Our Cabaña Girl Scout World Center video:

<http://tides.sfasu.edu/Teachers/Tides/docs/VirtualExpeditions/videos/girlscoutpapelpicado.html>

Catrina Craft video:

<http://tides.sfasu.edu/Teachers/Tides/docs/VirtualExpeditions/videos/catrinacraft.html>

Images of Catrinatas on TIDES:

<http://tides.sfasu.edu:2006/cdm4/results.php?CISOOP1=any&CISOBOX1=catrina&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOROOT=all>

Images of skulls on TIDES:

<http://tides.sfasu.edu:2006/cdm4/results.php?CISOOP1=any&CISOBOX1=skulls&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOROOT=all>

Sites on the web:

Catrinatas: <http://www.azcentral.com/ent/dead/history/posada.html>

Calacas: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calaca>

Skulls: <http://www.azcentral.com/ent/dead/history/>

Papel picado: http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/travel/dpalfrey/dppapelpicado.html

Directions:

1. Students will read and discuss all the provided information about Catrinas, Calacas, skulls and papel picado.
2. Once the students are familiar with the basic concepts of these objects and symbols, they will use the TIDES website to find images of Catrinas. Students will use the images as models for making their own Catrina dresses using materials such as crepe and tissue paper.
3. Students will make a mask or a skull craft. Students can also make and embellish a hat for their masks and/or skulls.
4. When the crafts are completed, students will pretend being a “Catrina” (girls) or a “Catrin” (boys). They will wear their mask, the clothing they made, and their hats in a Day of the Dead parade around the school grounds or hallways.