



LAS MUJERES Y LA LITERATURA: TEMAS COMUN

Level: middle school
Course: bilingual, Spanish, English

Rationale

Throughout the Latin American world and North America are some common themes displayed through literature written by Latinas (i.e. familia, relaciones, sufrimiento, etc.). Among these writers, Sandra Cisneros of the United States, Isabel Allende of Chile, and Rogoberta Menchu of Nicaragua are prime examples of modern writers who reflect the attitudes and feelings of their own experiences and of those of millions of Latinas throughout the world. Students will read excerpts from their stories and relate them to their own personal experiences.

Lesson Overview

This is the beginning of a unit on latina writers. Many topics will be discussed in the context of our everyday lives (i.e. comida, profesiones, economia, diversiones, sueños, etc.). The relevancy of the writers' experiences will not be seen as some obscure story which occurred far away, but rather that these stories could be the students' own stories with slight variations.

Time Needed

1 semester, depends on how long is devoted to reading each book.

by
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Materials

The House on Mango Street, Sandra Cisneros

Personas de Mundo, Isabel Allende

I, Rogoberta Menchu, Rogoberta Menchu

Procedures

Sandra Cisneros

1. Discuss background. Local writer. How many students know this area? What can you tell me about your own childhood that may be similar to things she has done?
2. What is some of the symbolism she uses in her style of writing? Discuss various styles.
3. Draw what you think the house on Mango Street may have looked like. How does this compare with your own house? How are the people living there similar/different from the people in your neighborhood?

Isabel Allende

1. Isabel Allende is a relative of famous people in the Chile. How do you think that may have affected her life? Think about children of famous people. What do we know or hear about them? The country was under a great deal of difficulty. How do you think you would have coped with danger and chaos under similar situations?
2. Why do you think living under stressful conditions encourages prolific writing? People become introspective. What situations have you had in your lifetime that might have encouraged you to start a journal or diary? Have you been told stories by friends or older family members of things important to your family history?
3. Compose a poem or haiku about yourself or your family.

Rogoberta Menchu

1. Her life began as most, being a very pleasant one, but quickly became one of pain and suffering. As we grow older, life seems to become more complicated. How does this force us to look at ourselves differently? What unifying elements do we have universally about basic human rights?
2. Through worldwide media we can see first hand the chaos caused by war and uprisings. What would happen in the United States should a group decide to break away from the rest of the country? What difficulties would it cause in our lives?
3. Brainstorm about solutions to bringing resolutions to conflict/racism/prejudice.

Bibliography

Books

The House on Mango Street, Sandra Cisneros

Personas de Mundo, Isabel Allende

I, Rogobera Menchu, Rogobera Menchu

Films

We are Guatemalans, film, Maryknoll

School of Assassins, film, Maryknoll

Curriculum Kits

Why Do People Move?, curriculum kit by Lucia Nunez, SPICE, Migration from Latin America, Stanford Program and Cross-Cultural Education

Mapping Latin America, curriculum kit, SPICE, Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education.

Internet

Chicano/Latino Net web site, CLNET

URL: <http://latino.sscnet.ucla.edu/>

The Latin American Book Store, for ordering Latin American Studies books

URL: <http://199.170.0.83/lab/labld.html>