



# NATIVE AMERICAN ISSUES IN LATIN AMERICA

Level: 11/12th grade;  
Course: beginning Spanish, language arts

## Rationale

This project was born out of the need to create an interest in the study of the Spanish language that does not promote gang sub-culture and slang. I hope that through this project the Native American students on the Zuni Indian Reservation in New Mexico will find a "connection" in Latin America that will foster an interest in all aspects of Latin American culture. This "connection" will be an exploration of the issues of common concern to all Native Americans in North, South, and Central America. These issues include land ownership and management, sovereignty, and language.

## Lesson Overview

The issues to be explored are divided into three units which are comprised of "mini-lessons". These "mini-lessons" are intended to be part of a "cultural aspect" of a Spanish Language Arts class; they are not intended to be the whole of it. They are also not intended to be the only aspect of "culture" that the students are exposed to in the class. Each unit will explore one issue of current concern on the Zuni Indian Reservation and in Latin America. It is hoped that the students will develop a deeper understanding of these issues both on the reservation and in the wider world. These "mini-lessons" should be taught with relevant vocabulary.

by  
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## Units

Unit #1: *"Whose land is it, anyway?"*

Local issue: mining near the sacred Zuni Salt Lake

World issue: devastation of rainforests

Unit #2: *"Who's the boss here?"*

Local issue: reservation sovereignty

World issue: civil and human rights

Unit #3: *"Who says we need to learn Spanish?"*

Local issue: survival of the Zuni Language

World issue: survival of Native languages and the right to bilingual education

## Time Needed

Six weeks each unit, one semester over-all

## Materials

Maps, articles videos

## Procedures

Unit #1: *"Whose land is it, anyway?"*

Zuni Salt Lake & rainforest devastation

- \* What is the conflict?
- \* Whose land is it?
- \* What solution or compromise is there?

Mini-lesson #1: *Organization*

The students will be presented with the issue of land ownership and use, both at Zuni Pueblo and in the Amazon rainforest. Both places face exploitation by outsiders while the Native Americans who live in these places try to cope with these "invasions". The students must decide how they want to organize to undertake the exploration of this issue to answer the three main questions.

### Mini-lesson #2: Investigation

Once the students have determined how they will organize (teams?, pairs?) and divide responsibility, they must decide how to set up the investigation. What are the best sources of information: newspapers, interviews, videos, Internet? Who collects what?

### Mini-lesson #3: Synthesis

When the information has been collected, the students must determine how they want to put it together. What will they do with this information? Who will see their results? How do they want to present these results? What have they found out and how can they express it?