



Cultural Celebrations in America

Teacher Guide

Learning Objective: Students will understand the integration of music and American history by studying three American cultural celebrations and their influence on musical compositions. Students will demonstrate their understanding by creating a drawing to represent Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day, or Juneteenth, and explain their reason for choosing that American cultural celebration.

Language Objective: Students will read, write and orally explain their understanding of American cultural celebrations.

Standards: K.1AB; 1.1AB; 2.1A, 2.2B, 2.11D, 2.12AB

Process Skills: K.14CD; 1.17CD; 2.16EF

ELPS: 3E, 4D, 5B

Preview:

Teacher Script: Good morning students! Today, we're going to learn about three American cultural celebrations: Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day, and Juneteenth. We're going to start our day by playing a game. Everyone stand up and let's make a circle. I'm going to start with this ball in my hands and tell everyone about my favorite holiday. Then, I'll pass the ball to one of you and you can share your favorite holiday. Then you'll choose someone to pass the ball to so that they can share. We'll keep passing the ball around until everyone gets the chance to share.

Access Prior Knowledge: "My favorite holiday is..."

(Teacher Note: You will need an inflatable beach ball or small, soft object that students can toss around the circle. Starting with yourself, use the sentence stem "My favorite holiday is..." to share your favorite holiday. Toss the ball to one of the students and have them do the same thing. Have the students repeat this action until everyone has shared.)

Whole Class Engagement:

Teacher Script: Now that everyone has had a chance to share, let's get ready to learn about the importance of the three cultural celebrations we're focused on for today. We're going to watch a few videos and discuss each one, so make sure you're looking and listening.

(Teacher Note: Watch each short video to get a basic understanding of each cultural celebration. If needed, turn on the closed captioning to help follow along and replay as needed. Ask the discussion questions between the videos and have students discuss their answers with a partner or in a small group before having students share with the whole group.)

- [PBS LEARNING MEDIA | Cinco De Mayo | PBS KIDS \(video\)](#)
- [PBS LEARNING MEDIA | Memorial Day | PBS KIDS \(video\)](#)
- [Juneteenth - All About the Holidays - PBS KIDS \(video\)](#)

Partner/Small Group Engagement:

(Teacher Note: You can write the questions on the board for students to see and refer to as they talk with their partner/group, or you can print the three questions and have them at the tables where the students are partnered/grouped.)

Answer the following questions with your partner/small group and with adult support after watching each video:

- What is one important fact about Cinco de Mayo? (Possible answers from students: May 5, 1862 when the Mexican Army defeated the French at the Battle of Puebla; 2,000 Mexican troops defeated 6,000 French troops; celebrated more in the U.S. than in Mexico; celebrated with food, mariachi music, and dancing)
- What is an important fact about Memorial Day? (Possible answers from students: last Monday in May; honors soldiers who died in war in the U.S. military; previously called Decoration Day; graves decorated with flowers and flags so that the soldiers wouldn't be forgotten; first celebration on May 30, 1868; became a Federal holiday in 1971; moment of silence at 3pm)
- Why is Juneteenth such an important holiday? (Possible answers from students: oldest holiday marking the end of slavery in the United States; Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863) had to be carried around and read aloud to let everyone know that Abraham Lincoln had signed a document to say that enslaved people in the South had to be set free; word reached Galveston, TX 2 ½ years later; some students may know about Opal Lee from Fort Worth, TX who is considered the Mother of Juneteenth because of her work to have Juneteenth made a federal holiday in 2021).

***Alternative Kindergarten Coloring Sheets (The teacher can briefly describe each cultural celebration and have Kinder students choose a coloring sheet. If they finish one before time is up, have the students choose a second coloring sheet): [Access Coloring Sheets](#)

Engage:

During the concert, look and listen for connections to the preview activities through live narration and music. You can write down things that you see or hear that you remember from the videos. Your notes may help you with your final activity.

Process: (After the concert)

Teacher Script: You are now going to make your own drawing that represents one of the celebrations we learned about: Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day, or Juneteenth. Choose the holiday that you want to draw. Make sure that you use crayons and/or markers for your picture. Put a title at the top of your paper. At the bottom of your paper, write one or two sentences explaining why you chose this holiday.

(Teacher Note: Students will need to be provided with white or manilla construction paper, pencils, crayons, and/or markers. Show the students the example before they start working on their own picture. Remind them they are not drawing the same holiday as the example, but that they are creating their own picture about one of the holidays they learned about. If you have access to a board, it may help to write the directions on the board so that the students can refer to them as needed.)

Create a drawing that represents one of the celebrations and write or orally explain why you chose that celebration to draw. Your drawing should include the following components:

- A title (the name of the selected celebration)
- One to two sentences explaining why you selected the celebration (if writing your explanation)
- A drawing of something that connects explicitly to the celebration. You can color your picture if you want to do so.

Example: A drawing connected to Christmas and Hanukkah celebrations

