



# Follow the Corn/Gente de Maíz

Time: 2 Days

Grade Level: 5th-12th

## Purpose (What will students learn from this lesson?):

- We will learn how the story of pre-colonial North America counteracts the settler-colonial myth of the roaming Neolithic hunter and vast virgin wilderness called the Americas and “New World.”
- We will learn about the origins of corn and its proliferation throughout the continents of North and South America during pre-colonial era
- We will learn about the complex network of indigenous nation states and civilizations that existed and continue to exist throughout the North and South American continents
- We will learn how ancestral indigenous beliefs about the relationship between the land and its people continue to influence activism and stewardship today.

## Unit Enduring Understandings Alignment:

- We understand that our roots and indigeneity were established prior to colonization and that they are a source of knowledge, connection and healing.
- We understand and embrace the historical contributions, intellectual knowledge and cultural wealth of our people.
- We understand and place a high value on the stories of resilience, survival and resistance of our people.

## Lesson Guiding Questions:

- How does the story of corn counter the narrative of the New World and Americas as a virgin wilderness?
- How do ancestral indigenous beliefs about the relationship between the land and its people

continue to influence activism and stewardship today?

**Essential Skills:**

- We will define and visualize critical concepts and readings
- We will identify and interpret symbolizing in art
- We will read, interpret, and make connections across texts, art, and videos
- We will write analytical responses using claim, evidence, and reasoning sentence frame structure

**Cultural Wealth (Yosso, p. 78):**

- **Aspirational Capital: Land, Stewardship, Solidarity**
- **Resistant Capital: Land/Water Protectors**

**Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment:**

- Celebrate and honor Native peoples of the land and communities of color by providing a space to share their stories of struggle and resistance, along with their cultural wealth.
- Center and place high value on pre-colonial, ancestral, indigenous, diasporic, familial, and marginalized knowledge.
- Connect ourselves to past and contemporary resistance movements that struggle for social justice on the global and local levels.

**Standards Alignment:**

Ca HSS

7.7 Students compare and contrast the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the Meso-American and Andean civilizations.

1.Study the locations, landforms, and climates of Mexico, Central America, and South America and their effects on Mayan, Aztec, and Incan economies, trade, and development of urban societies.

2.Study the roles of people in each society, including class structures, family life, warfare, religious beliefs and practices, and slavery.

3.Explain how and where each empire arose and how the Aztec and Incan empires were defeated by the Spanish.

4.Describe the artistic and oral traditions and architecture in the three civilizations.

5.Describe the Meso-American achievements in astronomy and mathematics, including the development of the calendar and the Meso-American knowledge of seasonal changes to the civilizations’ agricultural systems.

**Materials:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Art Piece: Dulce Lopez’ “Alla, Donde Palpita Mi Corazon”</li><li>● Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz’s An Indigenous People’s History of the</li></ul>	
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<p>US (For Young Readers) Chapter 1 "Follow the Corn"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youtube Video: Dr. Roberto "Cintli" Rodriguez clip on corn and migration patterns. <a href="#">video clip</a></li> </ul>	
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**Modifications, Accommodations, Resources for Multilingual Students :**

<p><b>*Sentence frames for speaking and writing responses</b> <b>*Visual representation of critical concepts, content vocabulary, and readings</b></p>	
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**Critical Vocabulary:**

<b>CRITICAL VOCABULARY</b>	<b>Definition and Rationale for choosing this word, phrase, or concept</b>	<b>Idea for pre-teaching or front-loading the concept.</b>
<b>"New World"</b>	<b>A term used by European colonizers to describe Indigenous Lands of what is now the North and South America; Rationale- students will challenge settler colonial myths and terminology</b>	<b>Asses for prior knowledge through discussion. Show a visual along with definition. Students will write on their google doc. handout.</b>
<b>exploited</b>	<b>Taking advantage or abusing someone or something; Rationale- exploitation of land and colonized peoples are inseparable</b>	<b>Asses for prior knowledge through discussion. Show</b>

		<p>a visual along with definition.  Students will write on their google doc. handout.</p>
<p><b>Steward</b></p>	<p>Someone who is responsible for the purposeful, careful management of resources so that the needs of the group can be met, both in present and in the future; Rationale; stewardship of the land as an ancestral indigenous belief/epistemology</p>	<p>Asses for prior knowledge through discussion. Show a visual along with definition.  Students will write on their google doc. handout.</p>
<p><b>Haudenosaunee Constitution</b></p>	<p>Also known as the Great Law of Peace and the Iroquois Confederacy, is an oral constitution that established an accord/democracy among several Iroquois nation states, The Seneca, The Cayuga, The Onondaga, The Tuscarora, The Oneida, and The Mohawk. It possessed an “inclusive” character that stood in stark contrast to the hierarchical decision-making processes popular in Europe. The Confederacy’s decision making processes were governed by this constitution, which possessed many of the attributes that influenced the US Constitution. ; Rationale- Challenging settler colonial myths and centering contributions of Indigenous Peoples</p>	<p>Asses for prior knowledge through discussion. Show a visual along with definition.  Students will write on their google doc. handout.</p>
<p><b>Standing Rock Resistance</b></p>	<p>In 2016 and 2017, indigenous people from six continents came together at Standing Rock in North Dakota in an effort to stop an oil pipeline that threatened an essential water source; Rationale- Stewardship and Solidarity for protecting the sacred</p>	<p>Asses for prior knowledge through discussion. Show a visual along with definition.  Students will write on their google doc. handout.</p>

## C1: Cultural Ritual and Energizer

Title of Cultural Ritual/Energizer: Connected with and through Maiz

Description: Students will share a memory/experience when they connected with someone through a maíz/corn.

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 1	<p>Slides 1-2: Title Pages</p> <p>Slide 3: Land Acknowledgement: We acknowledge the land we are on is indigenous/native land. This is the ancestral land of the _____, and they are still here. They have called this place home for over ten thousand years. _____ is the original Tongva name of the area we now call _____.</p>	3 minutes
Step 2	Slide 4: Ancestor Acknowledgement: Berta Caceres! Presente!	3 minutes
Step 3	<p>Slide 5: Cultural Energizer: Read Paula Domingo Olivares' "Human beings are like Kernels of Corn." Think about your relationship with maíz(corn). What is a memory or experience with corn where you connected with others?</p> <p>Response Frame Support: A memory/experience I have with maíz is _____. I remember feeling_____.</p>	7 minutes

## C2: Critical Concepts

Title of Lecture, Slidedeck/Presentation, and/or Activity: Follow the Corn/Gente de maíz

Description: We will define and visualize critical concepts on the Google Doc Handout [Follow the Corn/Gente de Maiz.](#)

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Slide/ Step 1	Slide 6: Teacher defines “New World” and allows time for students to write down the definition and find an image to add to their google doc .	4 min
Slide/ Step 2	Slide 7: Teacher defines “Settler colonialism” and allows time for students to write down the definition and find an image to add to their google doc .	4 min
Slide/ Step 3	Slide 8: Teacher defines “exploitation” and allows time for students to write down the definition and find an image to add to their google doc .	4 min
Slide/ Step 4	Slide 9: Teacher defines “steward” and allows time for students to write down the definition and find an image to add to their google doc .	4 min
Slide/ Step 5	Slide 10: Teacher defines “Haudenosaunee Constitution” and allows time for students to write down the definition and find an image to add to their google doc .	4 min
Slide/ Step 6	Slide 11: Teacher defines “Standing Rock Resistance” and allows time for students to write down the definition and find an image to add to their google doc .	4 min

## C3: Community Collaboration and/or Critical Cultural Production

### Title of Main Activity(ies):

1. Pre-read art analysis Dulce Lopez painting, “Alla, Donde Palpita mi Corazón” [handout](#)
2. Dr. Roberto Cintli Rodriguez “Follow the maíz” video clip excerpt [handout](#)
3. Reading/Writing “Follow the Corn” Essential Questions-Critical Writing [handout](#)

### Description:

1. Student will start with a Pre-read Art Analysis of Dulce Lopez’ “Alla, Donde Palpita mi Corazon” and then students will share with their neighbor. Teacher will call on students to share their pre-read analysis responses and questions.
2. Students will watch/listen to a video clip featuring Dr. Cintli’s findings on maiz origins, trade, and migration patterns. Students will find evidence on the origins of corn, trade,

and migration patterns. Teacher will have student share with each other and then the class.

3. Teacher will read aloud Chapter 1 “Follow the Corn” of Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz’s An Indigenous People’s History of the United States. Students will annotate the text as the teacher chunks the readings to help students identify evidence for their claim-evidence-reasoning paragraphs.

*Make sure to include links to handouts and worksheets.*

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Slide 12: Pre-read art analysis of Dulce Lopez art piece. Teacher will display the painting for students to observe and identify symbols and interpretations. Students will also write down questions about the painting and its symbolism. Have students share their responses with each other and then call on students to share out with the class.</b>	<b>10 min</b>
<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Slide 13: For the video excerpt with Dr. Cintli, the teacher will play the video and have students write down pieces of evidence using the handout on what they learned about corn origins, ancestral migrations, and trade patterns. After the video, have students share their findings with each other and then call on some students to share with the class. (Think-Pair-Share)</b>	<b>15 min</b>
<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Slide 14: Teacher will have students open up their copy of “Follow the corn” <a href="#">PDF</a> and the google doc <a href="#">handout</a> to go over the essential questions.</b>	<b>5 min</b>
<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Slide 14: The teacher can choose to read aloud the chapter, have students read in a group, or have students read independently. If the teacher is reading, use think-alouds to chunk and chew the text and refer back to the essential questions. Guide students to identify evidence for their CER responses. (It may be helpful to embed Kami to allow annotation on the PDF file)</b>	<b>30 min</b>
<b>Step 5</b>	<b>Slide 14: After reading the chapter, have students refer to their <a href="#">handout</a> to write their responses. Teacher will guide</b>	<b>20 min.</b>

	<p>students through the CER process for each of the essential questions using the sentence starters. Give students time to write their claims and call on students to share out. For the evidence, have students share what they found. After they embed their quotes from the readings, allow students to write down their interpretations (Meaning). Then have students write down their reasoning. Have students share their CER paragraphs to model for others.</p>	
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## C4: Conclusive Dialogue/Critical Circular Exchange

<p><b>Connection:</b> How is this relevant to students? How is it relevant to the unit? How do you bring back to the PURPOSE of the unit?</p>	<p>Slides 15/16: Talking Circle</p> <p>Teacher will have students form a circle around the classroom and display the Dulce Lopez painting and go over the prompt and sentence frames. Then the teacher will display the image from native-land.net to have students share their understanding of the pre-colonial North and South American landscape using the provided sentence frames.</p> <p>These activities will serve as closure and assessment of what students learned about the origins of corn and its proliferation, ancient migration and trade, and the complexity of nation states and civilizations of the pre-colonial era.</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> How will the students be assessed?</p>	<p>Teacher will assess students based on student responses and contributions in the talking circle. Students will also have written responses on their <a href="#">handout</a>.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation:</b> How will the effectiveness of this lesson plan be evaluated?</p>	<p>Teacher will evaluate students based on participation in the various activities that elicit student participation, such as the Cultural Energizer, pre-read art analysis, video evidence findings, writing CER paragraphs, and closing talking circle.</p>



## RESOURCES AND NOTES

- **Resources**
  - Chapter 1 “Follow the Corn” from *An Indigenous People’s History of the United States (For Young Readers)* by Roxxane Dunbar Ortiz adapted by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese
  - Excerpts featuring Dr. Roberto Cintli Rodriguez from *America Unearthed: Underwater Aztec Pyramids Found in Wisconsin (S2, E8)*, History Channel
  - Paula Domingo Olivares’ “Human beings are like Kernels of Corn.”
  
- **Notes**
  
- **Worksheets and Handouts:**  
Follow the Corn/Gente de Maiz [handout](#)

Include Links to Background Information, Project Instructions, Tests, Handouts, Worksheets, and Images.

Lesson Plan Contributors: Alfred Mendoza