



## LIBERATED ETHNIC STUDIES MODEL CURRICULUM

# La Llorona & Cihuacoatl: The Story We Tell or Don't Tell

Grade Level: 7 - 12

### [Link to the Slides for this lesson Plan](#)

**Purpose:** This lesson was developed as part of a series of lessons (CA 7th Grade H/SS) showcasing stories of Meso-America (300 - 1490). In this lesson, students explore and examine contemporary narratives of La Llorona (The Crying Woman), while comparing them to various Aztec/Mexica stories of Cihuacoatl. Through this lesson, students will have the opportunity to dig into primary/secondary text and documents. Students will be challenged to use their content understanding developed within this lesson to answer questions such as: What is the story of La Llorona? Who is Cihuacoatl based on primary and secondary sources? Why do you think the story of La Llorona changed? Why do you think the story of Cihuacoatl isn't told? How does the "more common" narrative of La Llorona impact women compared to the story of Cihuacoatl? How does the story of Cihuacoatl remind us about the impacts of Spain and colonialism?

### [Unit Enduring Understandings Alignment:](#)

- Retelling the history of the "Americas," through an ethnic studies approach, requires one to be diligent at sourcing while centering Indigenous knowledge, experiences, and stories.
- Stories and storytelling is an ethnic studies pedagogy and practice authentically engaging the rootedness of oral traditions found in many of our communities.
- The history of the "Americas" is pre-colonial, colonial, and decolonial.
- We understand that stories of our "selves," others, and the social world around us are meaningful for individual and community sense of love and learning.
- We understand that while studying where we are from, it is also critical to engage ourselves in developing critical consciousness, sense of community, and reclaiming hope and healing.

### **Essential Questions:**



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- What is the story of La Llorona and how does it connect to the story of Cihuacoatl?
- To what extent does the story of La Llorona have an impact? Impact on women? To what extent does the story of Cihuacóatl have an impact? Impact on women?
- How does the story of Cihuacóatl remind us about the impacts of colonialism?
- Why is sharing the story of La Llorona/Cihuacóatl important?

### Essential Skills:

- Students will tap into prior knowledge.
- Students will watch a video and briefly recount the plot structure of the story.
- Students will source primary and secondary documents/images
- Students will read excerpts and answer questions
- Students will make claims and support with evidence
- Students will work cooperatively in groups
- Students will participate in small/large group discussions, while listening to their peers.

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

- **Resistant Capital** - refers to “those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality... This form of cultural wealth is grounded in the legacy of resistance to subordination exhibited by Communities of Color... Furthermore, maintaining and passing on the multiple dimensions of community cultural wealth is also part of the knowledge base of resistant capital” (p. 80)
- **Linguistic (pre-colonial) Capital** - includes “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style... Linguistic capital reflects the idea that Students of Color arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills. In addition, these children most often have been engaged participants in a storytelling tradition, that may include listening to and recounting oral histories, parables, stories (cuentos) and proverbs (dichos)” (p. 78-79).
- **Familial Capital** - refers to “those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition... This form of cultural wealth engages a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship. Acknowledging the racialized, classed and heterosexualized inferences that comprise traditional understandings of ‘family’, familial capital is nurtured by our



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‘extended family’, which may include immediate family (living or long passed on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends who we might consider part of our familia. From these kinship ties, we learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to our community and its resources” (p. 79).

### **Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment: Change these accordingly**

- **Celebrate** and honor Native People/s of the land by providing a space to share stories of struggle and resistance, along with their cultural wealth.
- **Center** pre-colonial, ancestral, indigenous, and familial knowledge.
- **Critique** patriarchy and other forms of power and oppression.
- **Connect** ourselves to past resistance movements.

### **Standards Alignment:**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI - Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH. - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. - Determine a theme or central idea of a text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CA H/SS Standards - Study the artistic and oral tradition of Meso-America

### **Modifications, Accommodations, Resources for Multilingual Students:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Translanguaging permitted in writing and speaking</li> <li>● All excerpts and texts can be translated into various student languages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use of movement, music and props to express universal concepts and enduring understandings.</li> <li>● Put captions on <a href="#">Beware of the Cries of La Llorona - Video</a></li> </ul>
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### **Critical Vocabulary (also found on Critical Concepts:**



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<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>Colonization</b>	<p>“One country/region takes control of another country/region establishing a settlement or permanent part of the colony in order to control the land and profit of the land, land’s resources, and people.”</p> <p>It is important to unpack this term because it frames the violent interactions of the Spanish with the people of the “Americas.”</p>	Display in classroom environment, and teach to the term as it arises in the lesson.
<b>victim</b>	<p>“Someone who is harmed (all forms of harm) by a person or group of people, or by a circumstance.”</p> <p>It is important to unpack this term because students can analyze the concept, “blaming the victim,” and what this means within the context of the stories.</p>	Display in classroom environment, and teach to the term as it arises in the lesson.
<b>Prophecy, prophesize</b>	<p>“An act of seeing into the future.”</p> <p>This term is used in one of the slides.</p>	Display in classroom environment, and teach to the term as it arises in the lesson.
<b>Omen</b>	<p>“A sign or warning of a future event.”</p> <p>This term is used in one of the slides.</p>	Display in classroom environment, and teach to the term as it arises in the lesson.



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### C1: Cultural Ritual and/or Energizer Slides 1

	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Slide 1-2 Slide 3	<p><b>Introduction Slides</b></p> <p><b>Land Acknowledgement - Turtle Island (See Slides)</b> Briefly introduce the concept of “Turtle Island” especially since the lesson has roots in current day Mexico (Tenochtitlan)</p>	<p><b>2 min</b> *These time-frames can help with your planning. But do not allow them to limit the important discourse and processing that occurs in ethnic studies classrooms.</p>
Slide 4	<p><b>Ancestor Acknowledgement (See Slides) (Feel free to adjust accordingly, and choose an ancestor in your family who was known for stories and storytelling).</b></p> <p>Cesar Roberto Medina (Father of the Lesson Developer) Born in Calexico, CA to Dolores Velasco Grijalva (Sonora) and Alfredo Valderama Medina (Mexico City)</p>	<p><b>2 min</b> *These time-frames can help with your planning. But do not allow them to limit the important discourse and processing that occurs in ethnic studies classrooms.</p>
Slides 5	<p><b>Cultural Energizer - (See SLIDE 5)</b> Think back to a character, mythical figure, and/or story that scared you when you were little or still scares you to this day. Many of these are cultural stories passed down from one generation to the next. Do <b>ONE</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Journal Entry</u> - Retell the story or any information you know about the “mythical/scary” character. What is their name? Where do they live? Why are</li> </ul>	<p><b>7 min</b> *These time-frames can help with your planning. But do not allow them to limit the important discourse and processing that</p>



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	<p>they scary? How did this character/story scare you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Illustration</u> - Sketch a picture of the “mythical/scary” character.</li> <li>● <u>Character Web</u> -Name of character (middle) and include: Setting? Character Traits? Other important details?</li> </ul> <p>*Distribute <a href="#">Student Processing Guide</a></p> <p><b>Share Out</b>- offer an opportunity for students to share their journal entry, illustration, and/or notes with the class.</p>	<p>occurs in ethnic studies classrooms.</p>
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### C2: Critical Concepts

Slide 6	DESCRIPTION	TIME
	<p><b>Let’s Discuss: Scary Stories</b> - Can scary stories and tales be fun and exciting to share? Do they leave us feeling a certain way? Are they always true? Can they teach a lesson?</p> <p>Ask: Raise your hand if you have ever heard of the story of La Llorona?</p> <p><u>*Rationale for this culminating part of the the Cultural Energizer:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allow for a discussion about the exciting and sometimes nerve-jumping feelings associated with “scary” stories.</li> <li>● Allow for a discussion that scary stories can be mythical and take on exaggerated and fictional tones to engage and entertain audiences.</li> <li>● Allow for a discussion that scary stories can also teach lessons; their purpose is not solely to create fear.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3 Min</b></p> <p>*These time-frames can help with your planning. But do not allow them to limit the important discourse and processing that occurs in ethnic studies classrooms.</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Transition into the story of La Llorona</li> </ul>	
Slide 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Define llorar or llorona</li> <li>● Any prior knowledge about who is La Llorona</li> <li>● Discuss definition and students’ prior knowledge</li> </ul>	<p><b>2 Min.</b> *These time-frames can help with your planning. But do not allow them to limit the important discourse and processing that occurs in ethnic studies classrooms.</p>
Slide 8	<p>Share the brief story of La Llorona on Slide 8. Allow time for students to transfer information into their <a href="#">Student Processing Guide</a>.</p>	<p><b>3 Min.</b> *These time-frames can help with your planning. But do not allow them to limit the important discourse and processing that occurs in ethnic studies classrooms.</p>
Slide 9	<p>Watch <a href="#">Beware of the Cries of La Llorona - Video</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who are the key players:</li> <li>2. What happens to the children and mother?</li> <li>3. How does the story end?</li> <li>4. How are you left feeling about the main character, La Llorona?</li> </ol> <p><b>*Optional Resource</b> - Use the <a href="#">Ethnic Study Praxis Story Plot</a> if time permits.</p>	<p><b>5-8 Min.</b> *These time-frames can help with your planning. But do not allow them to limit the important discourse and processing that occurs in ethnic studies classrooms.</p>
Slide 10	<p><b>Discussion</b> - How does this story do harm to women?</p>	



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### C3: Critical Cultural Production

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Slides 11</b>	<p>Say: Do you know the “original” story of La Llorona? It is documented that the actual character, La Llorona, may perhaps be a woman by the name of Cihuacoatl. We know this because of the references made in the codices.</p> <p>Codices are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Primary sources</li> <li>● Ancient manuscript using text, imagery, and book form</li> <li>● To be used with caution (Who developed it? What expertise and knowledge did they have in order to create? What perspective/s did they have?)</li> </ul>	<p><b>5 Min</b></p> <p>*These time-frames can help with your planning. But do not allow them to limit the important discourse and processing that occurs in ethnic studies classrooms.</p>
	<p><i>Preparation for Activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Option #1 - Collaborative Work Activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Put students into small groups of 3.</li> <li>○ Students take notes on <a href="#">Student Processing Guide</a></li> <li>○ Post 10 “stations” around the room. These “stations can be found on SLIDES 13 - 26. For example, Station #1 is on Slide 13.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Option #2 - Independent Work Activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students take notes on the <a href="#">Student Processing Guide</a>.</li> <li>○ Post 10 “stations” around the room. These “stations can be found on SLIDES 13 - 26. For example, Station #1 is on Slide 13.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Option #3 - Group or Independent Work through La Llorona &amp; Cihuacoatl Google Form (Internet Activity)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Post 10 “stations” around the room. These “stations can be found on SLIDES 13 - 26. For example, Station #1 is on Slide 13.</li> <li>○ Students visit stations around the room and complete the <b>La Llorona &amp; Cihuacoatl Google Form</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	





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Here are screenshots of the Google Form to re-create if you choose this option.




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### Stations #5 & #6 - The Florentine Codex - Book 8

Station #5 - The Florentine Codex - Book 8 - What do you think it means when it says, "My beloved children, I'm going to leave you now?"

Your answer

#### Unscramble Letter Station #5



Station #6 - The Florentine Codex - Book 8 - How does this story/version of Cihuacoatl portray her?

Your answer

#### Unscramble Letter Station #6



### Stations #7 & #8 - Duran Codex

Station #7 - Duran Codex - When was it written? Who wrote this? Why was it written? Is this source reliable - Why or Why not?

Your answer

#### Unscramble Letter #7



Station #8 - Duran Codex - Why do you think this was included in the Duran Codex?

Your answer

#### Unscramble Letter #8



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Clear form

### Stations #9 & #10 - La Historia de Tlaxcala

Station #9 - La Historia de Tlaxcala - When was it written? Who wrote this? Why was it written? Is this source reliable - Why or Why not?

Your answer

#### Unscramble Letter #9



Station #10 - La Historia de Tlaxcala - Does this version of "La Llorona" make you think differently of her compared to the story that is told about her today (similar to the video we watched)?

Your answer

#### Unscramble Letter #10



### Final Question

Fill in the blanks: Today's popular versions blames La Llorona for her own tears and \_\_\_\_\_ the Spaniards. It does not mention the foretold destruction of Tenochtitlan and arrival of the Europeans. It is important to understand that La Llorona is not just a story or folklore, it is part of Mexico's historical record.

Your answer



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	<p><b>Unscramble Challenge:</b> Each station offers an unscramble letter. There will be a total of 10 letters at the end of the activity that the students will need to unscramble to make a word. This word “fills in the blank” of the final question.</p> <p>Today’s popular versions blames La Llorona for her own tears and _____ the Spaniards. It does not mention the foretold destruction of Tenochtitlan and arrival of the Europeans. It is important to understand that La Llorona is not just a story or folklore, it is part of Mexico’s historical record.</p> <p><b>Answer: exonerates</b></p>
<p><b>Slide 12 - 26</b></p> <p>*Modify based on the the Option/s you use</p>	<p><b>Activity</b> - Students work to complete their <a href="#">Student Processing Guide</a> and/or <a href="#">Group Activity Google Form</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Option #1 - Collaborative Work Activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ You will be in small groups of 3.</li> <li>○ Take notes on <a href="#">Student Processing Guide</a>.</li> <li>○ Visit the 10 “stations” around the room.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Option #2 - Independent Work Activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take notes on <a href="#">Student Processing Guide</a>.</li> <li>○ Visit 10 “stations” around the room.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Option #3 - Group or Independent Work through La Llorona &amp; Cihuacoatl Google Form (Internet Activity)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Visit the 10 “stations” around the room.</li> <li>○ Complete the the <b>La Llorona &amp; Cihuacoatl Google Form</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Unscramble Challenge:</b> Each station offers an unscramble letter. There will be a total of 10 letters at the end of the activity that the students will need to unscramble to make a word. This word “fills in the blank” of the final question.</p> <p>Today’s popular versions blames La Llorona for her own tears</p>

**30 Min.**  
 \*These time-frames can help with your planning. But do not allow them to limit the important discourse and processing that occurs in ethnic studies classrooms.



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	<p>and _____ the Spaniards. It does not mention the foretold destruction of Tenochtitlan and arrival of the Europeans. It is important to understand that La Llorona is not just a story or folklore, it is part of Mexico’s historical record.</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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Pair Share:</b> Based on the primary and secondary sources, what did you learn about La Llorona</li> <li>● <b>Group Discussion:</b> Why do you think the story of La Llorona changed? Why do you think the story of Cihuacoatl isn’t told? How does the “ more common” narrative impact women? How does the story of Cihuacoatl impact women? How does the story of Cihuacoatl remind of the impacts of Spain and colonization in the Americas?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> How will the students be assessed?</p>	<p>Use the <a href="#">Student Processing Guide</a>, <b>La Llorona &amp; Cihuacoatl Google Form</b>, and discussions to assess students’ understanding of concepts and content.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation:</b> How will the effectiveness of this lesson plan be evaluated?</p>	<p>See Slide 23 for Questions:  <b>Teacher Reflection Questions</b>                  After teaching this lesson or at the end of the day, take some time to reflect on the following questions. You can think about your answers as you plan for the next class period and/or record your ideas in writing on your lesson plan or in a teacher journal so you can refer to them later in the year and when planning next fall.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you feel went well today?</li> <li>2. If you could teach this lesson again, what would you change?</li> </ol>



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3. What did you observe about students' reading skills today (individuals and the class as a whole)?
4. What did you observe about students' writing/listening/speaking/reading skills today (individuals and the class as a whole)?
5. What do the assessment tools reveal about what your students need from you and from each other? How will you communicate to students that you understand their needs? How will you communicate to students what others need from them in this class?

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### Citations & RESOURCES

- (2019). Padilla Aguilar, A.G. The Origins of La Llorona. Latino Book Review - <https://www.latinobookreview.com/the-origins-of-la-llorona--latino-book-review.html>
- <https://journals.openedition.org/nuevomundo/optika/4/pages/presagio6.html>
- <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/smithsonian-latino-center/2018/10/23/ay-mis-hijos-llorona-story/>
- <https://arqueologiamexicana.mx/mexico-antiguo/presagio-de-la-caida-de-tenochtitlan>

### Materials:

<p>Slides:</p> <p><a href="#">SLIDES</a></p>	<p><b>Worksheets and Handouts:</b></p> <p><a href="#">Student Processing Guide</a></p> <p><b>Llorona &amp; Cihuacoatl Google Form (Internet Activity)</b></p>
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Lesson Plan Contributors: Ricardo Medina