



# LIBERATED ETHNIC STUDIES

MODEL CURRICULUM CONSORTIUM

## Changing the American Workforce Forever: The Role of Rosita The Riveter in World War II

Time: 1-2 weeks  
Grade Level: 6-8

### [SLIDES THAT GO WITH THIS LESSON PLAN](#)

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this lesson is to examine and analyze the roles of Mexican American / Chicana women during World War II, specifically, those who worked in the defense industry while their husbands, uncles, sons, and brothers were fighting on the frontlines.

The lesson will provide students with inclusive accounts of the various ways in which the women of World War II changed the American workforce, served the nation, and how their narratives and contributions have remained absent from history books. Students will understand the importance of representation and explore the counter narrative tool to center the voices and lives of “Rositas the Riveter” by engaging in a “book dig” and/or reframing the traditional art poster.

#### **Enduring Understandings Alignment:**

- **Stories:** *The collective narratives of my people*
  - 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.

- **Systems:** *The experiences of my people with systems of power and oppression*
  - We understand and critique the relationship between white supremacy, xenophobia, patriarchy, capitalism, ableism, anthropocentrism, and other forms of power and oppression.
  - We understand and challenge all forms of oppression and their manifestations by conceptualizing and enacting transformative projects of agency and resistance.
  - We understand that while studying forms of oppression, it is also critical to engage ourselves in developing critical consciousness, reclaiming hope and healing.

**Lesson Guiding Questions:**

- How did Chicana women support the United States during World War II?
- What message does the iconic “Rosie the Riveter” poster send about women workers during the war?
- What were the conditions facing Chicana workers during World War II and what types of labor did they perform?
- How did the United States show their appreciation for Chicana labor during that time?
- Why is it important to use counter-narrative to reveal missing histories of Chicana women?
- How did Chicana women stand in solidarity with Black women workers in the defense industry?

**Essential Skills:**

- Critical Reading, Writing, and Speaking
- Individual and Group Collaborative work
- Primary and Secondary Source Analysis
- Analysis and Interpretation of *Levels of Solidarity*.
- Understanding & Utilization of *Counter Narrative*

**Learning & Language Objectives:**

Learning Objectives	Language Objectives
1. Students will analyze the role of Chicana women and their support of the United States during World War II.	1. Students will use describing language to state and write complete sentences about the role of Chicana women during WWII using sentence frames.
2. Students will analyze the primary source: “Rosie the Riveter,” use counter narrative to construct an alternative poster, and assess how the US showed Chicana women appreciation for their labor.	2. Students will use describing language and language to compare and contrast, to state and write in complete sentences about the primary source “Rosie the Riveter” and ideas for an alternative poster

	using sentence frames.
3. Students will analyze labor duties and conditions of Chicana women, solidarity with Black women, and the importance of counter narrative.	3. Students will use persuasive language to state and write in complete sentences about Chicana women’s solidarity with Black women and the importance of the counter narrative using sentence frames.

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

- Aspirational Capital - refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers.
- Linguistic Capital - includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style.
- Familial Capital - refers to those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition.
- Social Capital - can be understood as networks of people and community resources. These peer and other social contacts can provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions.

**Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment:**

- Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native peoples and people of color.
- Critique empire and its relationship to white supremacy, racism, patriarchy, and cis-heteropatriarchy
- Connect ourselves to past and contemporary resistance movements that struggle for social justice on the global and local levels.
- Conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for post-imperial life that promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing.

**Standards Alignment:**

CA History/Social Studies Standards, 6th-8th

*Research, Evidence, and Point of View*

- Standard 2: Students distinguish fact from opinion in historical narratives and stories.
- Standard 4: Students assess the credibility of primary and secondary sources and draw sound conclusions from them.
- Standard 5: Students detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the contexts in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked, sources used, author’s perspectives).

*Historical Interpretation*

- Standard 1: Students explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.
- Standard 4: Students recognize the role of chance, oversight, and error in history.
- Standard 5: Students recognize that interpretations of history are subject to change as new information is uncovered.

### CA College & Career Readiness Standards for Reading, 6th-12th

#### *Key Ideas and Details*

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it, cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

#### *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

#### *Reading Range and Level of Text Complexity*

- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

### CA College & Career Readiness Standards for Writing, 6th-12th

#### *Text Types and Purposes*

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

#### *Production and Distribution of Writing*

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### *Research to Build and Present Knowledge*

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### *Range of Writing*

- Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### CA Visual and Performing Arts Standards, K-12

#### *Convey Meaning Through the Presentation of Artistic work*

- 8.VA Analyze why and how an art piece may influence ideas, beliefs, and experiences.

*Relate Artistic Ideas and Works with Societal, Cultural, and Historical Context to Deepen Understanding*

- 8.VA Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity.

**Materials:**

<p><u>Art Materials:</u> Materials for counter poster design (white paper, crayons, markers, construction paper, etc.) Copy of Poster “Rosie the Riveter”</p>	<p><u>Presentation Materials:</u> Lesson Slides Article “Rosita the Riveter: Midwest Mexican American Women During World War II, 1941-1945” (R. Santillan) Book: From Coveralls to Zoot Suits (Escobedo)</p>
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**Modifications, Accommodations, Resources for Multilingual Students :**

<p><u>Modifications:</u> Students learning to read and/or write will find support in choral readings of certain sections of texts, teacher read aloud, vocabulary analysis and development, metacognitive markers, partner talk, collaborative group work, and modified assignments utilizing art and shortened writing, as well as differentiated texts made available using “Diffit.”</p>	<p><u>Accommodations:</u> Any students with accommodations as documented in IEPs or 504s will receive these accommodations as specified.</p>
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Resources for Multilingual Students:  
To satisfy the language objectives noted in the objectives section above, multilingual students will be provided with vocabulary terms conveying language functions such as describe, compare & contrast, and persuade. Students will utilize metacognitive markers as well as leveled sentence frames as needed. Students will also work collaboratively with other fluent speakers and will have access to translated captioning on any videos used.

**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>
	A woman who worked for the United States defense industry during World War II. The war inevitably created a demand for more	Vocabulary Routine: Look at the word. Listen to the word.

<p><b>defense worker</b></p>	<p>workers to build munitions since many men were away, serving in the military.</p> <p><i>The poster "Rosie the Riveter" depicts a woman defense worker as a white women, however, the American government's campaign to employ vast numbers of specifically Mexican American women had more to do with an Americanization campaign and the stories of these women need to be included in a "Rosita the Riveter" counter narrative that students learn in schools.</i></p>	<p>Repeat the word. Listen to the word in a sentence: <i>Several Mexican American defense workers found themselves in dangerous conditions.</i> T: The word ___ means _____. (Read definition aloud) Write the word and its definition. Word Work (<i>defense is a derivation of defend - what does it mean to defend?</i>) Use the word in a meaningful sentence. (Offer leveled frames for emergent bilinguals) Find and insert a picture that represents the word.</p>
<p><b>representation</b></p>	<p>The description or portrayal of a group of people in a certain way.</p>	
<p><b>gender discrimination</b></p>	<p>When someone is treated unequally or unfairly based on their gender, sex, gender identity, or gender expression. It is a part of interpersonal oppression.</p> <p><i>In the defense industry, there was a lot of sexual harassment, women had to write "female" qualifications on their job applications which led to them making less money than their male counterparts, they had to put up with male resentment, especially when doing tasks like heavy lifting.</i></p>	<p>See vocabulary routine above.</p>
<p><b>racial discrimination</b></p>	<p>When someone is treated unequally or unfairly based on their race, ethnicity, skin color, or ancestry. It is part of interpersonal oppression.</p>	<p>See vocabulary routine above.</p>

	<i>The racial discrimination prevalent during the time of World War II is evidenced in the number of Mexican American youth sent to war, the English only movement, the Zoot Suit Riots, the Americanization campaign juxtaposed with the “Mexican problem,” the displacement of Mexican Americans, and the tracking of Mexican American women into secretarial work and defense industry work.</i>	
<b>solidarity</b>	Mutual support among groups experiencing similar kinds of discrimination and oppression.  <i>The four levels of solidarity are: symbolic, transactional, embodied, and transformative.</i>	See vocabulary routine above.

**C1: Cultural Ritual and/or Energizer**

**Title of Cultural Ritual/Energizer: “Representation Matters!”**

**Description:** Students will view either or both of the following videos on representation and discuss why representation matters. Teachers can engage students in questions such as *Can you name some movies or TV shows where your identity group is featured? Do they play main roles or minor roles? How would it feel to see someone who looked like you to be represented in a movie or a TV show? Why does representation matter? Why does it matter in media like film, posters, advertisements, art, etc?*

Preceding the cultural energizer the teacher and/or student will facilitate the land acknowledgement.

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Land Acknowledgement</b> The teacher and/or students will facilitate the land acknowledgement. <b>Resources:</b> <a href="#">What Indigenous Land Are You On?</a> <a href="#">A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement</a>	<b>5 min</b>

<b>Step 2</b>	<p><b>Ancestor Acknowledgement</b>  <b>Sophie Antonia “Toni” Flores Goff</b>  <b>July 5, 1927 - March 23, 2019</b></p> <p>Toni Goff worked in an army depot in Azusa, CA at a base which was a depository for bombs which contained nerve gas. Her job was to go around and test the bombs to see if they were leaking. On one occasion, she became ill when coming upon a bomb that was actually leaking. When the war ended, she lost her job. She found another job on a base at China Lake in Ridgecrest near Bakersfield and spent the rest of her years working there until she retired in Tehachapi. Here, she holds a picture of her son, Duane Goff, as he served in Vietnam.</p>	<b>5 min</b>
<b>Step 3</b>	<p><b>Cultural Energizer</b></p> <p>Teachers can engage students in questions such as <i>Can you name some movies or TV shows where your identity group is featured? Do they play main roles or minor roles? How would it feel to see someone who looked like you to be represented in a movie or a TV show? Why does representation matter? Why does it matter in media like film, posters, advertisements, art, etc?</i></p> <p><a href="#">The Power of Representation</a>  <a href="#">Young Black Girls React to The Little Mermaid</a></p>	<b>10 min</b>

**C2: Critical Concepts**

**Title of Lecture, Slidedeck/Presentation, and/or Activity: “Changing the American Workforce Forever: The Role of Rosita the Riveter in World War II**

**Description:** Students will analyze the original Rosie the Riveter poster, closely read, analyze, and discuss the history of Rosita the Riveter, critique videos which perpetuate the dominant narrative, examine the four levels of solidarity and apply them to the interactions between Mexican American and Black women defense workers, and engage in a book dig and poster redesign to better represent Mexican American women to offer an artistic counter narrative to the traditional history of women workers during World War II.

<b>STEP</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>TIME</b>
<b>Slide/ Step 1</b>	<p><b>Lesson Vocabulary</b></p> <p>After the cultural energizer, teacher will guide students through vocabulary development utilizing the vocabulary development routine.</p> <p><i>Defense worker</i> - A woman who worked for the United States defense industry during World War II. The war inevitably created a demand for more workers to build munitions since</p>	<b>20 min</b>



	<p>many men were away, serving in the military.</p> <p><u>Patriotism</u> - A perceived sense of devotion toward a country or nation-state. It can often precede feelings of nationalism.</p> <p><u>Gender discrimination</u> - When someone is treated unequally or unfairly based on their gender, sex, gender identity, or gender expression. It is a part of interpersonal oppression.</p> <p><u>Racial discrimination</u> - When someone is treated unequally or unfairly based on their race, ethnicity, skin color, or ancestry. It is part of interpersonal oppression.</p> <p><u>Solidarity</u> - Mutual support among groups experiencing similar kinds of discrimination and oppression.</p> <p><b>Vocabulary Routine:</b></p> <p>Look at the word.</p> <p>Listen to the word.</p> <p>Repeat the word.</p> <p>Listen to the word in a sentence: <i>Several Mexican American defense workers found themselves in dangerous conditions.</i></p> <p>T: The word ___ means ___. (Read definition aloud)</p> <p>Write the word and its definition.</p> <p>Word Work (<i>defense is a derivation of defend - what does it mean to defend?</i>)</p> <p>Use the word in a meaningful sentence. (Offer leveled frames for emergent bilinguals)</p> <p>Find and insert a picture that represents the word.</p>	
<p><b>Slide/ Step 2</b></p>	<p><b>Introduction: Rosie the Riveter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher will present the original Rosie the Riveter poster on the board and lead students in a discussion of “What do you see / What do you wonder?”</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Rosie the Riveter Poster</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher will read aloud the one-page article “Inspiration Behind a Wartime Poster” to give students background information on how the poster was originally designed. Students should discuss how the original photo is based on a young teen who was not actually a riveter during World War II. This can lead to a discussion about what/who gets used to create propaganda in American society. This is also a good time to make connections to Americanization, beauty standards, and dominant narratives. <a href="#">Inspiration Behind a Wartime Poster</a></li> <li>• For final context, students will critique the video “Rosie the Riveter” to get a better understanding of the messaging used during the time of World War II and how white women were deemed heroic. <a href="#">Rosie the</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>30 min</b></p>

<b>Slide/ Step 3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u><a href="#">Riveter</a></u></p> <p><b>Whole Class Read with Metacognitive Markers</b>  <u><a href="#">Rosita The Riveter: Midwest Mexican American Women During World War II</a></u></p> <p>The teacher will facilitate a whole class read of “Rosita the Riveter: Midwest Mexican American Women During World War II” (Santillan, 1989). After the whole class read, the teacher will have the students <u>individually</u> complete metacognitive markers within the text.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Insert the following metacognitive markers in the text during/after reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Question mark</u> (?) - for questions you may have about the text.</li> <li>● <u>Circle</u> (O) - around important numerical information.</li> <li>● <u>Underline</u> ( ) - for key ideas, concepts, and/or words.</li> <li>● <u>Exclamation</u> (!) - for identifying any “aha” moments in the text</li> <li>● <u>Asterisk</u> (*) - next to the text where you would like to comment.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Be prepared to share your where and why you placed metacognitive markers.</li> </ol>	<b>2-3 days</b>
	<b>Slide/ Step 4</b>	<p><b>Video Viewing</b></p> <p>Students will take notes as they begin to compare the dominant narrative of Rosie the Riveter with the counter narrative Rosita the Riveter.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Mexican American Women in WWII</a></u></p>

<b>Slide/ Step 5</b>	<b>Levels of Solidarity</b> The “Four Levels of Solidarity” will be used as a framework for students to use as a lens to analyze the interactions between Mexican American and Black women defense workers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Symbolic Solidarity</b> - verbally expressing solidarity, out/signing into statements, wearing symbols/logos of solidarity.</li> <li>2. <b>Transactional Solidarity</b> - Often done between organizations/groups, an even exchange.</li> <li>3. <b>Embodied Solidarity</b> - Individuals literally embodying and living their visions/beliefs of the world.</li> <li>4. <b>Transformative Solidarity</b> - When masses of oppressed communities choose to forgo something that would benefit them, and do not take it because it comes at the expense of other oppressed communities.</li> </ol>	<b>15 min</b>
<b>Slide/ Step 6</b>	<b>Quick Write</b> Having learned vocabulary, examined the dominant narrative in video, art media, and written form, analyzed the counter narrative in video and written text, and applied the four levels of solidarity, students will engage in a quick write about the role of Mexican American women defense workers in the United States during WWII. They should partner up to discuss first, then write. They should be prepared to share their thoughts when finished.	<b>20 min</b>

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

**Title of Main Activity(ies): Book Dig and Counter Narrative Through Art: Redesign the Poster “Rosita the Riveter”**

**Description:** Students will work in groups to complete two tasks. One will be a book dig into Elizabeth Escobedo’s book *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits: The Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Homefront*. The other task will be to redesign the wartime poster into one that more accurately reflects the Mexican American Rosita The Riveters of World War II.

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Book Dig</b> Groups of students will be provided the book, “From Coveralls to Zoot Suits” by Elizabeth Escobedo. Students will choose a quote from either Chapter 2, 3, or 4 to share with the class. They will prepare slides and present answers to these questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What quote did you choose?</li> </ol>	<b>30 min</b>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Why did you choose this quote?</li> <li>3. What does it reveal about Mexican American women during WWII?</li> <li>4. How does it contribute to the counter narrative of Rosita the Riveter?</li> <li>5. How does it convey solidarity and which level of solidarity does it utilize?</li> </ol>	
<b>Step 2</b>	<p><b>Counter Narrative: Poster Redesign</b></p> <p>Students can choose to work in groups or alone for this task. They will apply knowledge learned about Rosita the Riveter to design a new poster conveying the counter narrative and centering the lived realities of Mexican American women in WWII.</p>	<b>1-2 class periods</b>
<b>Step 3</b>	<p><b>Student Presentations</b></p> <p>Groups will share their slides and their posters.</p>	<b>45 min.</b>

**C4: Conclusive Dialogue/Critical Circular Exchange**

Students will engage in a talking circle about what they’ve learned and processed about Mexican American women defense workers. They will answer the following questions:

1. What lessons were learned about women defense workers during WWII?
2. How did this time in history affect Mexican American women?
3. Why does representation matter?
4. What levels of solidarity took place?
5. What implications does this have for us today?

<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?	This is relevant to students because it impacts many of their families, especially those with grandparents alive during the time of WWII. It also sheds light on the stories of Mexican American people, and women, who are left out of history books, giving students more examples of how their histories are often absent and need to be told.
<b>Assessment:</b> How will the students be assessed?	Students will be assessed during the talking circle, in their quick writes, and in their final slide presentations.
<b>Evaluation:</b> How will	The success criteria include students understanding and being

the effectiveness of this lesson plan be evaluated?

able to articulate why representation matters and the effect it has on future generations. Students should be able to contrast the dominant narrative of Rosie the Riveter with the counter narrative of Rosita the Riveter. Students will be able to list the effects of WWII on Mexican American women with regards to labor, job treatment, discrimination, job tasks, economic impacts, lifestyle changes, and solidarity with Black women. Students can articulate implications for society today.

## RESOURCES AND NOTES

- <https://native-land.ca/>
- <https://nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YM7t6Pa5KOc&ab\\_channel=ABCNews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YM7t6Pa5KOc&ab_channel=ABCNews)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsjLK3WW54&ab\\_channel=TheRecount](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsjLK3WW54&ab_channel=TheRecount)
- [https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;\\_ylt=AwrOtOeZdkFmF7kPL8tXNyoA;\\_ylu=Y29sbwNncTEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3BpdnM-?p=rosie+the+riveter&fr2=piv-web&type=E210US0G0&fr=mcafee#id=2&iurl=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.editorial.aetnd.com%2Fuploads%2F2010%2F04%2Fwe-can-do-it-rosie-the-riveter-wallpaper-2.jpg&action=click](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;_ylt=AwrOtOeZdkFmF7kPL8tXNyoA;_ylu=Y29sbwNncTEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3BpdnM-?p=rosie+the+riveter&fr2=piv-web&type=E210US0G0&fr=mcafee#id=2&iurl=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.editorial.aetnd.com%2Fuploads%2F2010%2F04%2Fwe-can-do-it-rosie-the-riveter-wallpaper-2.jpg&action=click)
- <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2010-dec-31-la-me-geraldine-hoff-doyle-20101231-story.html>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iI8uVeh0RCU&ab\\_channel=AleidaRojas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iI8uVeh0RCU&ab_channel=AleidaRojas)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_8dKX96S\\_L0&ab\\_channel=GreciaBenitez](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8dKX96S_L0&ab_channel=GreciaBenitez)
- [https://repository.arizona.edu/bitstream/handle/10150/623019/pmas\\_02\\_11\\_5\\_146.pdf?sequence=1](https://repository.arizona.edu/bitstream/handle/10150/623019/pmas_02_11_5_146.pdf?sequence=1)

Lesson Plan Contributors: Belen Carrasco, derived from a draft lesson by members of Kern County Educators for Ethnic Studies.