

**Resistance through Folk Forms:  
Corridos and the Tejano Experience  
during the Texas Boom & Bust Period**

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# AGENDA

- I. Lesson Overview & Background Info (5)
- II. Lesson Format & Execution (5)
- III. Student & Lesson Outcomes (5)

# 5-E Lesson Overview

## OBJECTIVE:

SWBAT explain the South Texas Tejano experience during Texas's "boom and bust" period by analyzing and creating their own *corridos*.

## LESSON LENGTH:

- At least two days; flexibility depending on your goals, subject matter, and department restrictions.

## BY THE END OF THE LESSON:

- Explain that history is not always written down in history books, but created in everyday situations and forms of creative expression.
- Create their very own *corrido* that reflects their own life.
- Answer the question: in what ways do we record history in our everyday lives?

# 5-E Lesson Overview

## NOTE:

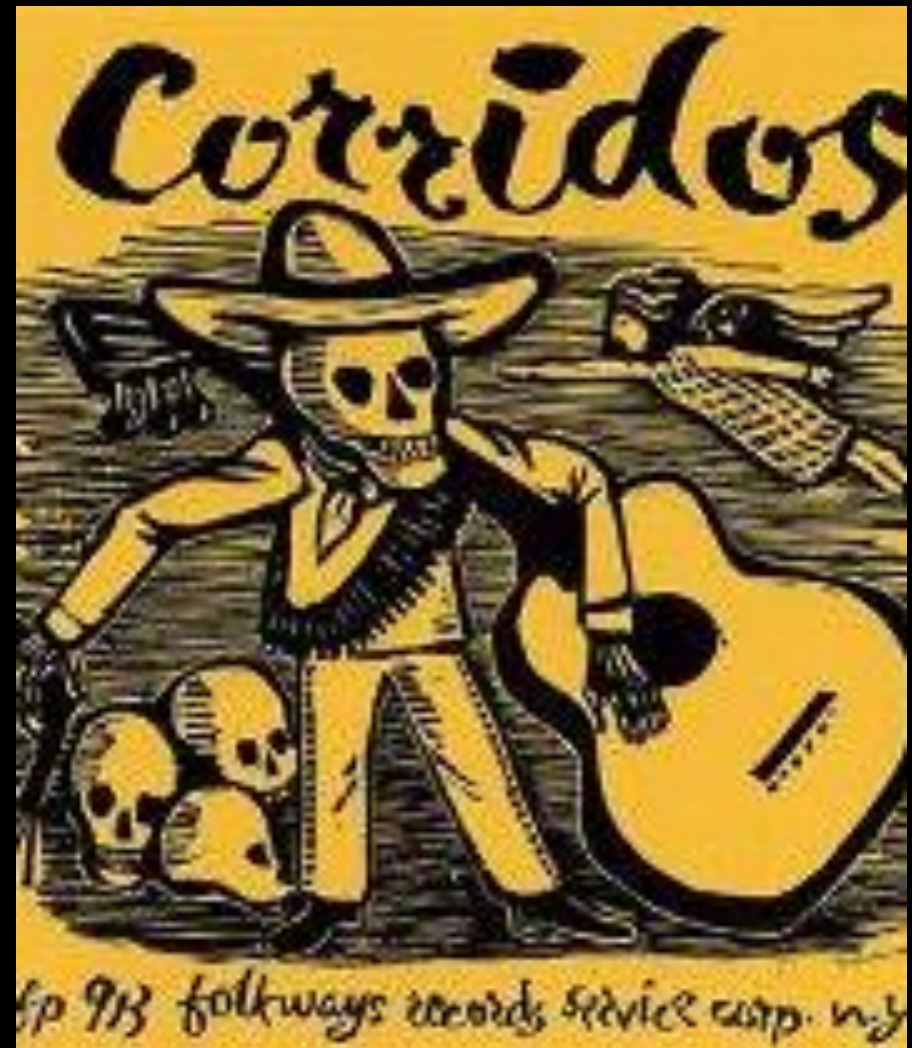
- **5-E Lesson:**
  - stands for Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate
  - “discovery” learning
  - a more student-centered lesson plan

## NOTE:

- Assumed that the students have already been taught about the systematic land loss of Tejanos in the Rio Grande Valley during Texas’s “boom and bust” period, as well as their relationship with the Texas Rangers
- Fit this into the boom and bust unit after students learn about the cattle and oil industries.
- Fit in after examining the “necessary” curriculum

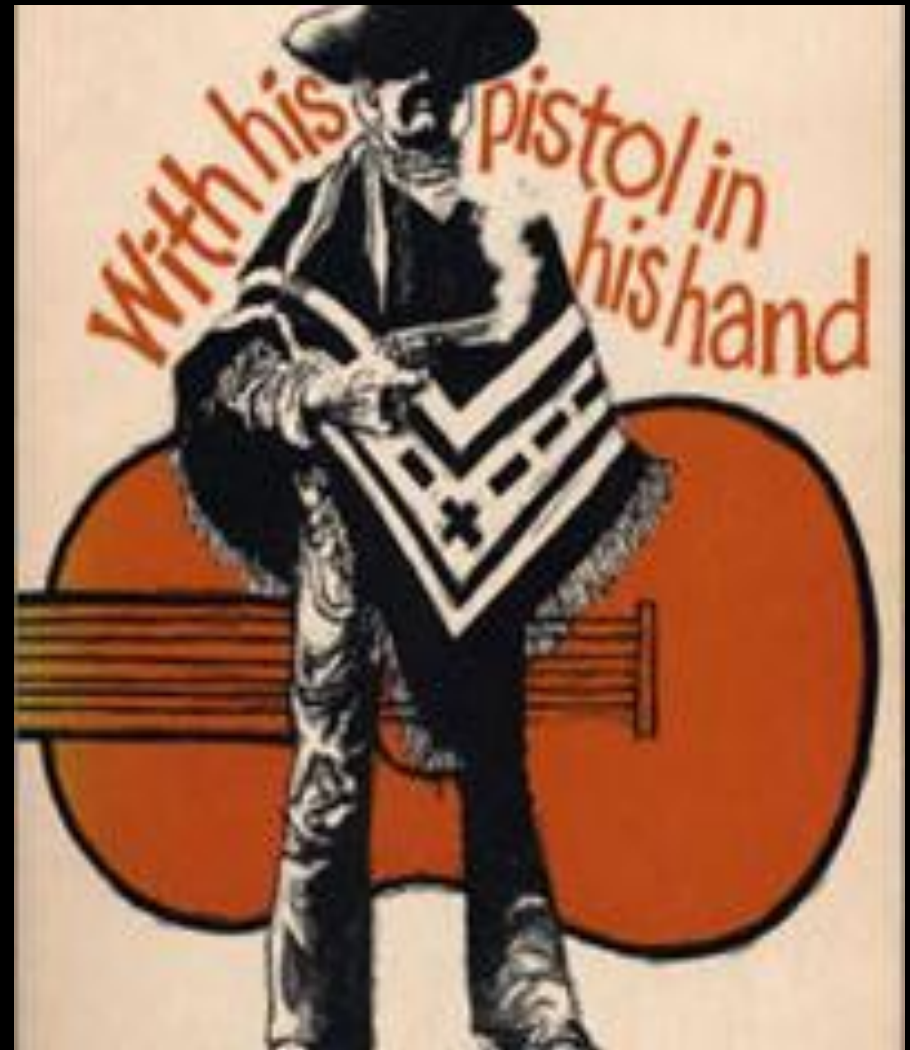
# Why is this lesson important?

- It connects the experiences of everyday people to major events and eras in history.
- Specifically connects the “boom and bust” period to how it affected race relations between Tejanos and Anglo-Americans at the time.
- Can be used as a connection while learning about the Civil Rights Movement



# Lesson Origins & Background Information

- *With His Pistol in His Hand* by Americo Paredes
- *George Washington Gomez* by Paredes
- *Chulas Fronteras del Norte* (1976)
- *Border Bandits* (2003)



# “Los Rinches”

“The Ranger did make a name for himself along the Border. The word *RINCHE*, from ‘ranger,’ is an important one in Border folklore. It has been extended to cover not only the Rangers but any other Americans armed and mounted and looking for Mexicans to kill. Possemen and border patrolmen are also *rinches*...”

-Americo Paredes, *With His Pistol in His Hand*



# Resistance through Oral History – specifically, corridos!

- During this time, many Tejanos did not have access to education, mainstream media, and other forms of written records, so they had to record their history in different ways.





# Lesson Format / Agenda

- I. Engage (5)
- II. Explore (20)
- III. Explain (10)
- IV. Elaborate (20)
- V. Evaluation (5) \*\*

\*\*Typically, "Evaluation" is five minutes, but in this case, writing the corrido is the evaluation and it will take much longer than five minutes

## I. ENGAGE

### DO NOW

- How do you learn about history?
- Who can teach you about history?
- How do we learn about history in school?
- What types of histories do we learn in our textbook? Be specific.
- Etc.

\*\*This should serve as an introduction to the idea that not all history can be found in just history books, internet websites, or in class.

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## II. Explore (20)

- Provide students with a paper copy of the lyrics to "The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez."
- You may use the English/Spanish copy of the song from Americo Paredes's *With His Pistol in His Hand*, however you could use any variation of the song if you like.
- In order to provide more structure for students, you may also give them a structured handout for analysis.

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## II. Explain (10 – 15)

### Step 1:

- Focus on the questions: What can this story tell us about social issues and injustices during this time in history?

### Step 2:

- Now, read the synopsis of Gregorio Cortez (as a class) in order for students to acquire a full understanding of the story.
- You could ask them: what are some similarities and differences between the *corrido* and this summary? What new things have we learned from this summary about Gregorio?

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## II. Explain (10 – 15)

### Step 3

- Explain that this is a CORRIDO!
- Explain that this is also ORAL TRADITION!
- Transition: we are going to be learning about *corridos* by learning how they are written – and writing our own!

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## III. Elaborate (20)

### Step 1:

- Have students read “What is a Corrido?” handout.
- Provide some type of review questions to ensure 100% participation and understanding of the handout.

### Step 2:

- Provide students with other examples of corridos in order for them to become familiar with their structure, as well as to provide inspiration for their own corridos. You could play the song as they read the lyrics, and the fill out a worksheet independently.

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## III. Elaborate (20)

Some suggested sources for corridos or inspiration:

- Los Tigres del Norte
- Jenni Rivera
- Chalino Sanchez
- Los Alegres de Teran
- Ramon Ayala

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## III. Evaluation (varies)

- The rubric you use to grade their corridos is variable based on your content area and focus. Do you want to focus on the technicalities of a corrido or the content?
- Timing is flexible and ideally this corrido writing project would be at least three days. At the middle school level, it is very difficult to write creative pieces, much less follow a strict format.

# Lesson Outcomes

- Higher classroom investment, which can lead to better grades and classroom management
- Awareness of their ethnicity and region
- A developed social conscience
- A deeper, more meaningful relationship with teacher



# Student Outcomes

## Topics of Produced Corridos:

- Immigration: undocumented family members, “la migra,” etc.
- Drugs & Gangs
- Violence in Mexico / longing to return to “Mexico querido”
- Family members & stories
- Womanhood & Respect
- Ethnic Identity: i.e. “Maria not M-u-r-i-uh”
- Customized Trucks
- Stripes Tacos
- Learning to sing corridos

# Questions?

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