



# La Frontera--Barrier or Gateway?

## An Introductory Unit to the US-Mexico Borderland

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**Grade Level** High School  
**Duration** 3 class periods

### National Standards

#### GEOGRAPHY

##### Element 2: Places and Regions

4. The physical and human characteristics of places

##### Element 4: Human Systems

11. The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on the Earth's surface  
13. How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface

##### Element 6: The Uses of Geography

17. How to apply geography to interpret the past  
18. How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future

### AZ Standards

#### ELA

##### Reading

##### Key Ideas and Details

11-12.RI.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

##### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

11-12.RI.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in print in order to address a question or solve a problem.

##### Writing

##### Text Types and Purposes

11-12.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

c. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

### Arizona Social Science Standards

#### GEOGRAPHY

**Human-environment interactions are essential aspects of human life in all societies.**

HS.G2.2 Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

**Examining human population and movement helps individuals understand past, present, and future conditions on Earth's surface.**

HS.G3.1 Analyze the reciprocal nature of how historical events and the diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultural practices have influenced migration patterns and the distribution of human population.

**Global interconnections and spatial patterns are a necessary part of geographic reasoning.**

HS.G4.1 Take an active stance on a geographic issue reflecting its scale (local, regional, state, national, or global)

HS.G4.2 Analyze patterns of global power and influence in respect to trade, demographics, politics, and resource availability and use.

#### HISTORY

**Cycles of conflict and cooperation have shaped relations among people, places, and environments.**

HS.H2.1 Explain multiple causes of conflict.

HS.H2.2 Analyze approaches to conflict management and resolution.

**Economic, political, and religious ideas and institutions have influenced history and continue to shape the modern world.**

d. Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.  
e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

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

**11-12.W.9** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

HS.H3.1 Analyze how societies, leaders, institutions, and organizations respond to societal needs and changes.

## Overview

La Frontera is the Spanish word for frontier, and throughout history the frontier has always been a borderland area. The United States-Mexico borderland is unique in the sense that it has shifted over time, but still has an impact on the policies of both nations. This lesson will help introduce students to the borderland's geography, history, and issues.

## Purpose

In this lesson students will use maps, visuals, and written text to raise their awareness of the U.S.-Mexico borderland.

## Materials

- Computer and projection device
- U.S.– Mexico Border States (labeled)  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-MX\\_border\\_names.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-MX_border_names.pdf)
- U.S.– Mexico Border States (unlabeled)  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-MX\\_border.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-MX_border.pdf)
- The U.S. – Mexico Border 1803 map  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-Mex\\_1803.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-Mex_1803.pdf)
- The U.S. – Mexico Border 1819 map  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-Mex\\_1819.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-Mex_1819.pdf)
- The U.S. – Mexico Border 1845 map  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-Mex\\_1845.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-Mex_1845.pdf)
- The U.S.-Mexico Border 1848 map  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-Mex\\_1848.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-Mex_1848.pdf)
- History of the Border reading
- History of the Border Chart and Answer Key
- PowerPoint on U.S. Changing Borders

- PowerPoint of Images of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands
- Borderlands Issues Introduction
- Borderlands Issues Chart and Key
- Borderlands Assessment and Key
- Borderlands Writing an Argument and Scoring Guide

## Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Label a map of the borderlands area.
2. Create a timeline.
3. Identify current key issues relating to Mexico-U.S. borderlands.
4. Write an argument supporting or not supporting a borderlands program or policy.

## Procedures

### SESSION ONE

1. Introduce the lesson by distributing the blank version of U.S. – Mexico Border States map.  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-MX\\_border.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-MX_border.pdf)
2. Project the labeled version of this map.  
[https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-MX\\_border\\_names.pdf](https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/US-MX_border_names.pdf)
3. Project the series of historical maps (1803-1848) to show students how the U.S. grew. Have students color and label their maps to show the changes.
4. Distribute the History of the Border (Background Information for Maps) and the History of the Border Chart. Have students read independently or as a class the information and then complete the chart.
5. Show the PowerPoint on U.S. Changing Borders. Show several times so the students can see the changes in the borderlands. Discuss who was affected most by the changes.

## SESSION TWO

6. Project the PowerPoint on U.S. Changing Borders so students will have a visual representation of the area.
7. Distribute the Borderlands Issues Introduction and the Border Issues Chart. Have students read, as a class, the Borderlands Issues Introduction and record important facts on the Borderlands Issues Chart.
8. Take the Borderlands Assessment quiz.

## SESSION THREE

9. Assign the Borderlands—Writing an Argument and explain the Scoring Guide.
10. Remind students about looking for unbiased sources and evaluating bias in websites dedicated to one point of view.

## Assessment

### Geography

The mapwork can be assessed for accuracy and completeness. Mastery will be considered a score of 80% or higher.

### ELA and Social Science

The History of the Border Chart can be graded for accuracy. Mastery will be considered a score of 100%.

The Border Issues Chart can be graded for accuracy and completeness. Mastery will be considered as score of 90% or higher.

The Borderlands Argument can be scored with the Scoring Guide. Mastery will be considered 64 points or higher.

## Extensions

Using the same concepts and procedures, this lesson could be adapted to look at the United States-Canada border.

## Sources

Arizona Geographic Alliance Advanced Summer Institute-Borderlands

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico%E2%80%93United\\_States\\_barrier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico%E2%80%93United_States_barrier)

The Arizona Republic

Changing Course-The International Boundary, United States and Mexico, 1848-1963, Robert M. Utley, Southwest Parks and Monument Association, 1996