



La Frontera--Barrier or Gateway? An Introductory Unit to the US-Mexico Borderland

Students learn about the geography, history, and economic issues concerning U.S.-Mexico border area.

Author	Dennis Rees
Grade Level	High School
Duration	3-5 class periods

National Geography Standards

ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS

4. The physical and human characteristics of places.

ELEMENT FOUR: HUMAN SYSTEMS

11. The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.

13. How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.

ELEMENT SIX: THE USES OF GEOGRAPHY

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

Arizona Geography Strand

Concept 2; Places and Regions

PO 6. Analyze how a region changes.

Concept 4: Human Systems

PO 2. Analyze push/pull factors that contribute to human migration.

PO 3. Analyze the effect of migration on places of origin and destination.

Other Arizona Standards

Strand 1: American History

Concept 9: Postwar United States

PO 3. Describe aspects of post World War II American society: immigration pattern change.

ELA Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details

11-12.RH.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Production and Distribution of Writing

11-12.WHST.4 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

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

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

- Pictures of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands (PowerPoint provided with lesson).
- Animated PowerPoint on U.S. Changing Borders
- Computer and LCD projector to show PowerPoints
- U.S.– Mexico Border States (labeled and unlabeled)
- The U.S. – Mexico Border 1803 map
- The U.S. – Mexico Border 1853 map
- The U.S. – Mexico Border 1819 map
- The U.S. – Mexico Border 1845 map
- The U.S. – Mexico Border 1848 map
- Transparencies of the maps of the borderlands (optional)
- Atlases
- History of the Border (for teacher use only)
- History of the Border Chart and Key
- Borderlands Issues Information Sheet
- Borderlands Issues Chart and Key
- Borderlands Assessment and Key
- Borderlands Writing Prompt

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Label a map of the borderlands area.
2. Record how the U.S.-Mexico border evolved to what it is today.
3. Identify current key issues relating to Mexican immigration to the U.S.
4. Analyze the pull factors of why people migrate from Mexico to the U.S.

Procedures

Session One

1. Have students label the blank version of the map, U.S. – Mexico Border States. They may check this against a transparency shown by the teacher.
2. Show the historical map transparencies and use information from the History of the Border Information Sheet to describe how the border evolved to what it is today. Students will record this information on the Border History Chart.
3. Show the animated 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

4. Show pictures of the borderlands so students will have a visual representation of the area. A PowerPoint presentation is included.
5. Have students read the Borderlands Issues handout and record important facts on the Borderlands Issues Chart. This may be done as a whole class guided reading activity, with a partner, or individually.
6. Take the Borderlands Assessment quiz.

Session Three

7. Assign the Borderlands Writing Prompt.
8. Have students use the checklist to guide their work.

Assessment

1. To assess their knowledge of border issues, students will take a ten-question true-false test. A score of 8 out of 10 will be considered mastery.
2. To assess their understanding of pull factors, the newspaper article will be evaluated using the Six Traits Rubric focusing on the traits of Ideas and Content, and, Conventions. A score of 4 or higher for each trait will be considered mastery.
3. The map work may be evaluated for accuracy.
4. The Border History Chart and Borderlands Issues Chart can be evaluated for completeness and accuracy.

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 2000

The Arizona Republic

Fresh Produce Association of the Americas

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