



THE COLOURS OF MEXICO

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TEXT TYPE: Non-fiction: Description—Report

GUIDED READING LEVEL: T

SUMMARY: Mexico has a colourful history. It has been home to great civilizations and wealth. For hundreds of years it struggled for independence from foreign powers. Learn how Mexico's history has influenced its culture, and what life is like today in this beautiful country.

TEXT FEATURES

- table of contents
- glossary and index
- headings and subheadings
- sidebars
- bolded text

VISUAL LITERACY

- maps/keys
- pictures
- labels/captions

TEXT SUPPORTS

- familiar report format
- detailed photographs
- descriptive labels and captions
- content is compartmentalized
- word pronunciations given
- bolded words supported by glossary

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- reading and pronouncing Mexican/Spanish words
- challenging historical/political references
- specialized vocabulary, e.g., 'limestone,' 'plateau,' 'hieroglyphs'
- interpreting statistics

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- making connections: text to self, text to world

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

- synthesizing
- inferring

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- List/Group/Label strategy
- discussing with a group
- sharing ideas
- commercial promoting Mexico (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS

- language predictability: using textual definitions to work out word meanings
- word solving and building: using knowledge of root words to word solve

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student's ability to:

- use background knowledge to make connections
- make relevant connections to world and self
- connect facts and ideas into a cohesive whole
- use text and visual features to assist in comprehension

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Making Connections Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

BEFORE READING

Making Connections: Text to World

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Tell students the text they are going to read is about Mexico: its location, some of its history, what it is like to live there, and its culture, including arts, sports, and food. Provide each student with a sticky note and have them jot down what they know about Mexico in three minutes. Some guiding questions might include what they think its climate is like, what the landscape might be like, what people do for work, what sports people play and watch, and what kinds of food are enjoyed there. Remind students to think about movies, TV programs, news items, or holiday ads for Mexico they have seen or heard.

Text and Visual Literacy Features

Introduce supports and challenges

- Have students turn to page 4, and look for the bolded word ‘**isthmus**.’ Ask someone to read the word aloud. Have students then read the entire sentence. Ask, *Does reading the entire sentence tell you what the meaning of that word is? How might we find out?... Turn to the glossary, locate the bolded word ‘isthmus,’ and read its definition... Now let’s go back and reread the sentence and finish the paragraph, while thinking of the meaning of that word. Did reading this word’s definition found in the glossary help you make more sense of the paragraph?* Summarize that bolded words and their definitions found in the glossary are features that enable readers to quickly locate the meaning of unknown words, and thus better understand what they are reading.
- On pages 6 and 7 the author has provided subheadings that outline geographical regions in Mexico, as well as a labelled map that includes some of these subheadings. Ask students to discuss how these features work together to help the reader.

Language Predictability

- Say to students, *Often, when the author uses a Mexican/Spanish word, a definition of the word will follow in the sentence. That definition is there to help the reader find meaning in words they might not be familiar with. For example, on page 22, the word ‘Corridos’ is explained in the sentence as ‘folk songs that tell of revolution, bandits, and sheriffs.’ Using definitions like this found in the text is a great way to learn about words that at first are new and challenging.*

Word Solving and Building

- Words like ‘Colonization’ and ‘Independence’ (page 13) contain root words that give clues as to their meaning. Ask students to pay careful attention while reading—always alert to root words that might be seen inside a larger word. Often, these root words are very helpful in figuring out larger, unfamiliar words, both in terms of pronunciation and meaning.

ESL NOTE: Consider having your ESL students jot down any root words that they find while reading. This will allow you to gauge their understanding of root words.

Making Connections: Text to Self and Text to World

Set a purpose for reading

- Tell students they are going to read to learn about Mexico as a country. Say, *While reading about Mexico, think about what connections you can make to Canada or your own home country. Compare Canada or your home country to Mexico when you feel there is some connection to be made. Write these connections in your reader's notebook or on a sticky note, placing the sticky near the text that inspired your connection.*

Provide for early finishers

- If students complete the text early have them review their connections and elaborate a bit further by adding a few sentences to one or two connections they noted.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Listen to individual students read aloud. Provide comprehension prompts that highlight the focus strategy (making connections), e.g., *How many people live in the city (or nearest city) where you are from? Does this give you an idea of Mexico City's population size?*

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Making Connections Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.)

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

- As a List/Group/Label activity (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*) form small groups of students from the larger Guided Reading group and ask them to cluster common connections and ideas and create labels for them. For example, students might have made a connection to the content regarding hip-hop music, or music in general, on page 22 of the book. Students could then label these connections 'Music Connections.' Once smaller groups have done this students can then move to another group and view that group's connections and incorporate them under their own labels.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Are students having difficulties reading Mexican/Spanish words? Ask students to pronounce 'Chichén Itzá' (page 10) or 'Tenochtitlán' (page 11). Ask someone to share how they arrived at the pronunciation. Stress that reading the phonetic breakdowns provided is key to arriving at the correct pronunciations. Rereading and reading slowly are helpful as well.

Making Connections: Text to Self and Text to World

Making Connections: Text to World and Synthesizing

Making Connections: Text to World and Inferring

Synthesizing

Note successful strategy use

- Stop for a moment and give praise to a student who you've observed using a reading strategy to assist with understanding. For example, *Carson, I noticed when you turned to pages 18 and 19, you looked at the photographs first before you started reading. After reading the subheading 'On the Farm' you made a connection to your own family's farm by considering not only the heading but the pictures on these pages as well. Well done, you not only used the headings and pictures to preview what you were about to read, but made an excellent connection to your own background, which involved you more in what you were reading.*

FOCUSED REREADING

Three options are provided for focused rereading in the next Guided Reading lesson. Choose an activity that meets the needs of your students, or you might select a Reader Response activity from the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.

Written

- Assign paired students a two-page spread in this book and ask pairs to use their spread as a guide for creating two similar pages for inclusion in a classroom book entitled 'The Colours of Canada.' For example, reread page 16 and use the same heading and similar subheadings to reconstruct a Canadian version of 'City Life.' Under each subheading create a descriptive report featuring relevant information on Canada. Students can conduct further research for this activity. Have students critically review their work to determine if the research and content they wish to present is relevant and sufficient, or if more information is needed.

Artistic

- Ask students to review their reading and visualize the colours of Mexico and what they represent (e.g., 'Sport and Leisure' on page 24 might be black and white for Mexico's strong interest in soccer). Create a collage of shapes and colours that represent three headings or subheadings in the book. Then, students can use these three headings or subheadings and make connections to Canada. What shapes and colours might students choose for 'Sport and Leisure' in Canada or their own communities? Students can create their vision using available supplies.

Oral/dramatic

- In groups of two or three, students can write and present to the larger group a television commercial promoting Mexico. Each segment can be 2–4 minutes long and contain visual aids that will enhance the commercial. The content of the commercial should be informed by the content of 'The Colour of Mexico,' but presented in the students' own words and voice.