



kidstir®

# Homeschool Lesson Plan

Día de los Muertos





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## Intro

Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is called “Mexican Halloween,” but it’s actually a very different kind of holiday. In a joyful celebration that lasts several days, families sing, dance and eat together in honor of loved ones who have passed away. Bright marigold flowers and sugar skulls are some of the hallmarks of the holiday, along with delicious traditional foods, like delicious Mexican chocolate! Get in the spirit of Día de los Muertos as we explore Mexico’s natural landscape, the amazing history of the Aztecs and Mayas, and the beautiful science of symmetry.





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## Math

### Beginner:

- Sing along and learn about the basics of [reflectional symmetry](#)!
- Use some graph paper to draw and decorate a sugar skull that is symmetrical on both sides. Label the number of squares around each part of the [perimeter](#).
- Play a game of [Mexican train dominoes](#)! If you don't own a set, try these [printable dominoes](#).

### Intermediate:

- Dive a little deeper into bilateral [reflectional symmetry](#) and see how it applies to objects all around us.
- Did you know that in Mexico, cooks measure ingredients using the metric system? Take a stab at these [gram-to-kilogram](#) conversions.
- Do you know [how to count](#) in Spanish? Now learn how to count [by 10's](#)!

### Advanced:

- Take your studies of symmetry to the next level with a look at [fractals](#).
- Review your metric [measurements of volume](#) and take a stab at this [tea party word problem](#).
- Take a survey of your family and friends to find out which kind of chocolate they like best: dark, milk, white, or spicy? Make [bar graph](#) and a [circle graph](#) of your results. Challenge question: Why wouldn't you use a line graph for this kind of data?



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## Science & Geography

### Beginner:

- Can you find [Mexico on a map](#)? This beautiful nation actually ranks 4th in the world in [biodiversity](#).
- Mexico also has some of the most venomous animals in the world! These venomous [beaded lizards](#) have a gentlemanly wrestling match to see who gets the best territory.
- Our skeletons are made up of [bones](#) that protect our bodies and help us move. See if you can [match the bones](#) to the areas they protect.

### Intermediate:

- Take in the sights from the incredible [Baluarte Bridge](#) in Mazatlan, Mexico, the highest suspension bridge in the world according to Guinness.
- How exactly does [suspension work](#) to keep a bridge stable?
- Did you know that our skulls are made of [22 different bones](#)?

### Advanced:

- Explore the amazing variety of land formations in Mexico, including the [deepest underwater cave](#) (or cueva) in the world, and the incredible [crystal cave](#) in eastern Yucatan.
- Watch [Flight of the Butterflies](#) and find out how you can help keep monarch butterflies safe on their annual journey to Mexico!
- How well do you know your bones? Try this [anatomy quiz](#)!



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## Languages & Literature

### Beginner:

- [Día de lo Muertos](#) by Hannah Eliot

This colorful board book explains the traditions of Día de los Muertos in a small Mexican town.

- [Calavera Abecedaria](#) by Jeanette Winter

Generations of the same family carry on Day of the Dead traditions as they craft skeletons in silly costumes from A to Z.

- [Day of the Dead](#) by Tony Johnston

Children learn about patience and family as they wait for all the food to be cooked for Día de los Muertos.

### Intermediate:

- [A Gift for Abuelita](#) by Nancy Luen

After her grandmother dies, a young girl searches for her in the Andes, and returns for Day of the Dead with a greater understanding of life and family.

- [Uncle Monarch and the Day of the Dead](#) by Judy Goldman

The yearly tradition of watching the monarch butterflies arrive helps a young girl heal from her loss.

### Advanced:

- Read [The Boxcar Children "Day of the Dead Mystery."](#) Discussion topic: How are the children able to relate Día de los Muertos traditions to their own experiences?
- Did you know that Spanish and English are both Indo-European languages? Learn more about what they [share in common](#).
- Watch the movie "[Coco](#)." Writing prompt: What role does music play in the story of Coco and her family? What emotions do the different characters experience as they relate to the songs?



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## History & Culture

### Beginner:

- Explore the [origins of Día de los Muertos](#), and learn about other fun ways that people celebrate the holiday in Latin America, like this annual [kite festival in Guatemala](#).
- Did you know that some of our favorite foods [originated in Mexico](#)? These [food vocabulary words in Spanish](#) are delicioso!
- Did you know that the [Aztecs of ancient Mesoamerica](#) built large cities with pyramids and plumbing, and even wrote poetry?

### Intermediate:

- Dive into some famous Mexican dishes that have [influenced the world](#), and find out how Mexican cuisines vary by region.
- Spotlight on chocolate: Follow the incredible history of the [cacao bean](#) from its origins in ancient Mesoamerica to the modern world.
- Spanish isn't the only language spoken in Mexico. These young people are finding creative ways to keep the [native languages of Mexico](#) alive. Family project: Can you find out which ancient native languages were once spoken where you live?

### Advanced:

- Learn more about how Día de los Muertos traditions vary throughout Mexico, through the lens of one of the holiday's iconic pastries: [pan de muerto](#).
- Listen to the beautiful sounds of the [major Mexican musical styles](#): mariachi, banda, norteño, ranchera, and corridos.
- The [ancient Maya](#) had a sophisticated society, renowned for its art, architecture, and astronomy. Family discussion topic: What do you think contributed to the Maya's collapse, and if you could go back in time, what advice would you give them?



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## Arts & Crafts

### Beginner:

- Follow along with paper and markers, and draw your very own [sugar skull](#)!
- Decorate the dinner table in sunny marigolds with this simple crepe paper and pipe cleaner [flower craft](#). Note: supplies needed.
- Brighten up your home with colorful [papeles cortados](#) to get in the holiday spirit. Note: supplies needed.

### Intermediate:

- Try one of these adorable Day of the Dead crafts for kids, like [sugar skull throw pillows](#) or [paper mache ofrendas](#). Note: supplies needed.
- Mexican weaving is famous the world over! [Watch this video](#) about Oaxacan rug weaving, and try making your own [ojo de dios](#), or God's eye craft. Note: supplies needed.
- Mexico City's famous [Palacio de Bellas Artes](#) museum was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987. Make [tissue paper stained glass](#) inspired by the Palacio's world-famous windows! Note: supplies needed.

### Advanced:

- Explore the art and life of famed Mexican painter [Frieda Kahlo](#). Here are some tips for [drawing a self-portrait](#) in her iconic style.
- The popular [street art scene in Mexico](#) is inspired by a rich past in public murals. Find a clean, safe outdoor space and carry on the tradition by making a [flower with sidewalk chalk](#). Note: supplies needed.
- It's time to dress up! Take turns [painting faces](#) in the style of the calavera Catrina. Note: supplies needed.



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## Field Trips

- Travel back in time to the [ancient Aztec capital of Tenotichtlan!](#)
- Watch the [monarch butterflies](#) in the mountains of central Mexico.
- Celebrate at Nicaragua's [Los Agüizotes](#) festival honoring Día de los Muertos.
- Join chef Ruben Ortega as he makes [Mexican chocolate](#) from scratch!