

Lesson 2: *Malintzin: Indigenous Women Discover Spain*

Estimated Timeframe: 1 Day (90-minute class session)

Brief Description of Lesson	In this lesson, students will analyze images to compare the role of indigenous women in Mesoamerica before and after the Spanish colonization. They will consider how Malintzin, a Nahua woman from Coatzacoalcos, contributed to this process and how women resisted or adapted to the changes introduced by the Spaniards.
Additional Supporting Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did Mesoamerican Indigenous women address/confront the Spanish colonization? • What was the importance of language and translation in the colonization of the Aztec empire? • How did women adapt to the changes imposed by the Spaniards? How did they resist them?
TEKS & C3 Frameworks	<p>World History Studies:</p> <p>(6) History. The student understands the characteristics and impact of the Maya, Inca, and Aztec civilizations. The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) compare the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments of the Maya, Inca, and Aztec civilizations and explain how prior civilizations influenced their development; and</p> <p>(B) explain how the Inca and Aztec empires were impacted by European exploration/colonization.</p>
Learning Objectives	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State the main characteristics of the life of Indigenous women before the Spanish colonization 2. Explain the changes introduced by the Spaniards in the lives of Indigenous women 3. Discuss the importance of language in the process of colonization through the figure of Malintzin 4. Create their own codex showing how Indigenous women faced the Spanish colonization using color, images and Nahuatl ideograms to portray their understandings 5. Evaluate the fairness of Malintzin's contemporary representation

Introduction: Focus relevant to students' lives	Give students a list of day-to-day activities and ask them to write next to it the name of the person in charge of doing that task/activity in their home. Then have the students discuss how their families determine who oversees each activity. Ask students: Do certain activities have more value over others? For example, is it more important for your family to cook or to work for money? (Class Discussion)
Introduction: Access student's prior learning/knowledge	<p>Have students watch one of these videos before class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How Interpreters Helped Topple the Aztec Empire</i> (English): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWtQznfkDHU • <i>Minibiografía: La Malinche</i> (Spanish): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2qVIH61qlw <p>Questions to think about while watching the video:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did Malintzin meet Cortes? 2. Which languages did she initially speak? 3. Why was language important for the conquest and resistance? 4. Why is she known by so many different names (Malinalli, Malintzin, Malinche and Doña Marina)? 5. How was she remembered by the Mexican people?
Introduction: Preview of lesson/day's agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of the <i>Tlaxcala Canvas</i> in teams. 2. Read about the changes imposed by the Spaniards and reconsider findings. 3. Create your own codex portraying the changes in indigenous women's lives including symbols in Nahuatl. 4. Interpret a classmate's codex. 5. Discuss the limits and opportunities of primary source interpretation. 6. Quick write.
Body: Detail of activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Separate class in teams. 2. Give students both images of <i>Tlaxcala Canvas</i> (featured source) and ask them to identify important characters, groups, symbols and activities. (You can have students complete a chart with these categories) 3. Students read the information on the handout and they discuss their new findings with their team. They answer the question: How has my understanding of this topic changed after I considered this information? 4. Show students the two remaining images of Malintzin, from the Biblioteca del Niño Mexicano (featured source) and discuss how she is being portrayed in all the images they saw in class. Talk about why her role in the colonization process has been described in so many ways (e.g. hero, traitor, victim, translator, mistress, slave, negotiator, mother of the mestizo).

	<p>5. Talk to students about what a codex is and how they were used in Mesoamerica.</p> <p>6. Give students materials and ask them to create their codex portraying the lives of indigenous women before and after the Spanish colonization, individually. (Depending on the time and your students' abilities, you may ask them to include more or less elements. It may be interesting for them to use Nahuatl ideograms and words to portray their ideas. If possible, it would also be important for teachers to create a model of a codex for students to look at.)</p> <p>7. Students choose a partner from another team and try to interpret their classmate's codex without receiving previous information from them. Their partner will then explain what they were trying to portray. Then, they switch roles and repeat the activity.</p> <p>8. As a class, lead a brief discussion on what happened when they tried to interpret their classmate's codex. The class may be separated in groups and students may lead the discussion by themselves using the following questions as a guide: Were their interpretations accurate? Why or why not? How may this be like studying primary sources? How should we study primary sources, then?</p> <p>9. Ask students to answer the prompt on the term "malinchista" writing 3-4 sentences.</p>
Conclusion	<p>Write 3-4 sentences to answer the following question:</p> <p>Inspired by Malintzin's key role in the conquest of the Mexicas, Mexican people use the term "malinchista" to refer to someone who prefers foreign customs over Mexican traditions, someone who does not value their own heritage because they think that other countries are superior. Now that you know Malintzin's story, do you think the term "malinchista" is fair? Why?</p>
Assessment	<p>Students create their own codex portraying the situation of women before and after the Spanish colonization, giving a place to Malintzin and Cortes in their representation. A classmate tries to interpret and explain what they see in their peer's drawing and why they came to that conclusion. Then, have a group discussion on the interpretation of primary sources.</p>

Featured Sources:



Fragment of the Tlaxcala Canvas, Native Kingdom of Tlaxcala, circa 1530–1540. Ex-Stendahl Collection, Benson Latin American Collection. For more information on this fragment and its depictions, see <https://curriculum.llilasbenson.utexas.edu/lesson/lesson-conquest-perspectives/>



Fragment of the Tlaxcala Canvas, Native Kingdom of Tlaxcala, circa 1530–1540. Ex-Stendahl Collection, Benson Latin American Collection.



El abismo de las flores de sangre o Malinche y Xicotencatl [The abyss of the blood flowers, or, La Malinche and Xicoténcatl], José Guadalupe Posada, 1900. Rare Book Collection, Benson Latin American Collection.



Historia de la bella Malintzin o Doña Marina [Story of the beautiful Mallitzin, or, Lady Marina], José Guadalupe Posada, 1900. Rare Book Collection, Benson Latin American Collection.

Lesson 2 Handouts and Keys
Women's situation before and after the Spaniards

Read the following table carefully. WARNING: This table shows information gathered under a specific approach called “gender parallelism”. These are some examples of changes introduced by the Spaniards provided by that methodology. The colonization period is very complex and all its nuances cannot be shown in this brief table. These are just some examples useful to our lesson.

	Situation before the Spanish colonization	Changes introduced by Spaniards	Indigenous women's reaction
Property rights	Women owned land and were included as such in legal documents.	When legal documents were translated to Spanish, they omitted women's names.	Some women still inherited property.
Political activity	Women could participate as advisors in political decisions. Certain roles were reserved for men. Women went to school and worked as teachers.	Indigenous women were considered as “legal minors” instead of “legal adults” under Spanish law. This meant that they needed their husband's permission to attend to legal issues.	In some regions, women still held the title of <i>cacicas</i> and actively sued husbands, local leaders and Spaniards.
Economic activity	Women participated in economic activities such as textile production and exchange. Their work was deemed as valuable as that of their male counterpart.	Economy shifted from an exchange model to generating surplus for Spanish conquerors.	Women participated in small economic activities to sustain themselves such as agriculture, working in stores, hospitals or convents, taking care of animals or domestic services. Some even owned and operated printing presses and textile workshops.
Religious practices	Women and men had different religious rites. There were feminine deities and women were priests. Women were responsible for domestic labor such as cleaning, weaving and cooking. However, these activities had a sacred connotation, equal in importance to war.	Catholic priests prohibited indigenous practices such as women's ritual sweeping of their homes. They designated women as inferior and sinful.	Women continued to practice ritual sweeping in the privacy of their homes.

Information retrieved from: Twinam, A. (2007). *Women and gender in colonial Latin America*. Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association.

Lesson plan by Cinthia S. Salinas & Maria Jose Ramirez. Structure based on Austin Independent School District's template.

Example of words in Nahuatl that may be used for students' codex:



Words and Ideograms in Nahuatl

(moon, sun, cloud, moon serpent (Milky Way), star, night)

(fire, earth, sacred, movement, wind, water)

(maguey cactus, hill, river, smoke, wave, stone)

(bird, heron, grasshopper, hummingbird, ant, lizard)

(glutes, heart, tooth, hand, feet, blood)

(metal/ax, house, flag, bed, pot, rope)

(mushroom, maize, peyote, chili pepper, prickly pear, pulque)

Retrieved from: <http://neomexicanismos.com/cultura-mexico/nahuatl-palabras-vocabulario-aprende/attachment/nahuatl-basico-2/>

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