

Lesson Plan for Maize Codex



Main Objective:

Students work in a group to make a codex, an ancient Mesoamerican folding book that relates the cultivation of maize in drawings and text

Students Learn:

- That codices are the folding books used by the Aztec, Mixtec, Zapotec and Maya peoples of ancient Mexico.
- That maize (corn) is one of the earliest plants to be cultivated and selectively bred by man.
- How to interpret ancient Mesoamerican drawing styles and motifs to borders and images.
- How to work in a group to create a book showing drawings, facts, and personal responses about maize.

Activities:

Show images from ancient codices illustrating corn; discuss linear quality and colors, realism and other characteristics of Mesoamerican style. Discuss corn in ancient Mexico and in the students' own preferences and traditions for eating corn. Research the evolution of corn from a wild grass called teosinte.

Demonstrate:

Place an 18" x 12" piece of brown craft paper horizontally on the table. Fold to lengthwise top edge down to about 4" from the bottom lengthwise edge. Crease the top fold firmly. Fold up the bottom lengthwise edge so that the fold overlaps at the bottom edge of the folded top portion. There will be a 4" high "hem" pocket running along the bottom of the book. Fold the book in half, open and bring each end of the book to the center. Crease the two end folds so that the fold is distinct. Open the book and fold the book in half at the center so you create an accordion or zigzag fold with the pocket hem on the inside of the

book. Open flat and glue with a glue stick or white glue at the open ends of the book and the folds of the pocket. This will create smaller sections of pocket which can hold cut out figures.

On the pocket write facts and/or responses to maize, Mexico or your own family traditions about corn. Draw figures and images of corn inside the book. Add small paper cut outs- these should be created on 4" x 6" color paper with color pencils, markers or crayons. They can be drawn from the reference study sheet or your own imagination.

Students will work in groups at their table to collaborate on the codex drawings and research information.

Materials:

- Brown craft paper 18" x12"
- Fine tip markers, water based cone tipped markers & color pencils
- Glue sticks or white glue
- Scissors
- 4" x 6" pieces of a variety of colored construction paper pieces.

Visuals:

Study worksheet for Mesoamerican motifs and figures.

Vocabulary:

Line, border, codex, codices, maize, corn, cultivate, horizontal, fold, accordion/zigzag, Mexico, Aztec, Mixtec, Zapotec, Maya, teosinte and selective breeding.

Standards for the Visual Arts:

- Know and use the elements and principles of art to create art works.
- Use art supplies safely.
- Apply traditional and contemporary technologies for producing art.
- Explain historical, cultural, and social context of an individual work of art.
- Relate arts to geographical regions.
- Classify works of art by forms.