



Welcome to Hispanic Heritage Month! This packet is full of engaging activities to help you explore Hispanic and Latino history and culture, as well as the diverse communities that make up our country.

The theme is “Unidos, Somos Más,” which means “Together, We Are More.” Inside, you’ll discover new signs, explore Hispanic art and create your own inspired piece, learn about historic communities built by Hispanic immigrants, discover folktales and the archetypes behind them, read about groundbreaking Hispanic scientists in botany, and learn to make your own aguas frescas.

This packet includes...

- “Same Idea, Different Signs” Activity
- “Aguas Frescas” Cooking Activity
- “Together, We Belong” Activity
- “Artist Style Study” Creative Activity
- “Folklore Focus” Activity
- “Plant Pioneers” Activity



Explore More



Research a Hispanic or Latino leader! Choose a Hispanic or Latino historical figure or contemporary leader (in science, politics, art, or sports) and research their impact. Create a short profile explaining who they are, what they accomplished, and how their work made a difference for others or their community.



Investigate a local connection! Research a Hispanic-owned business, cultural center, or historical site near your community or in a city you’re interested in. Find out its history, who founded it, and what role it plays in the community today.



Find a story by a Hispanic author! Visit your local library or bookstore and find a book written by a Hispanic or Latino author. Read a chapter, a short story, or the whole book!

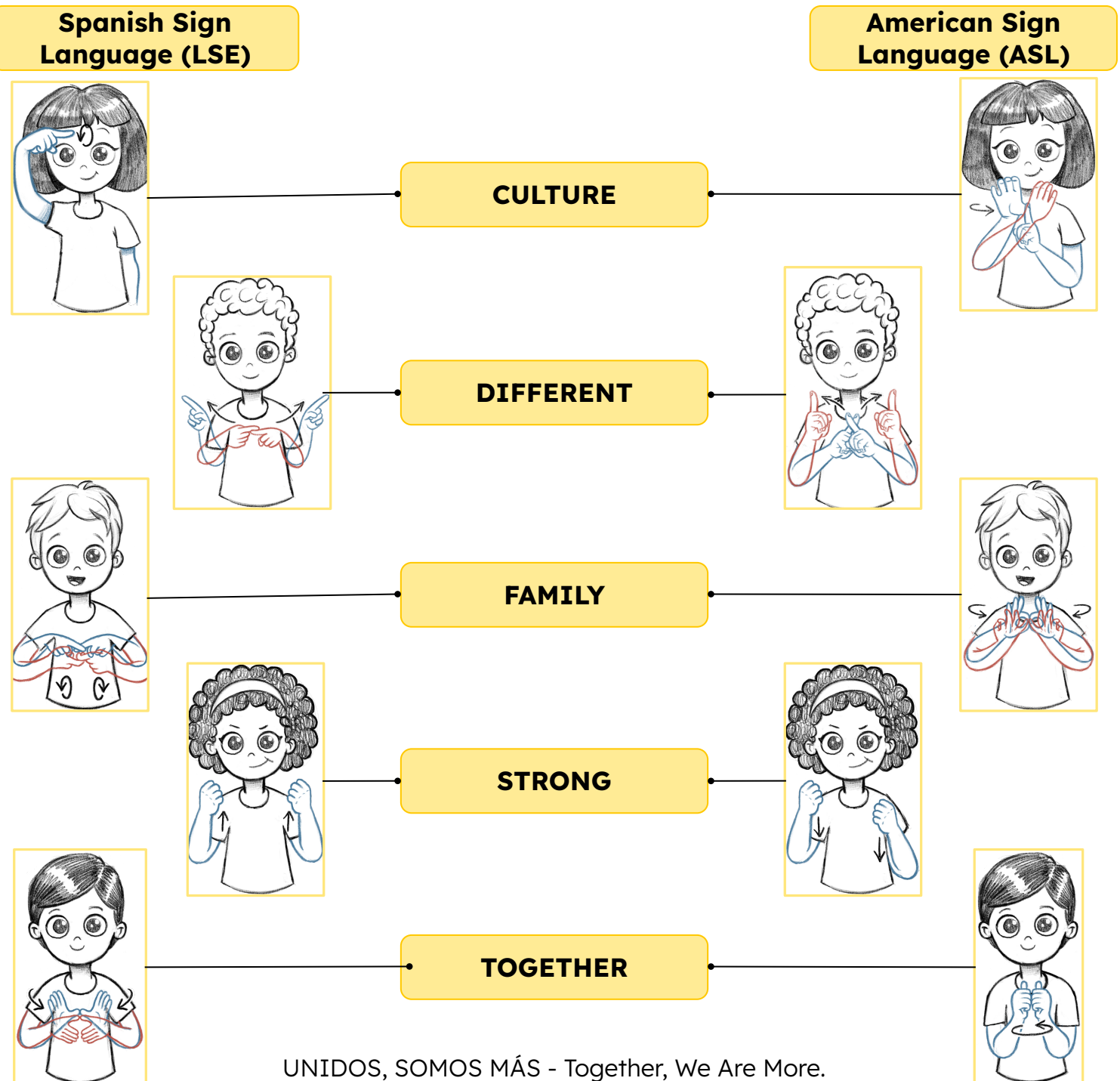


Activity Same Idea, Different Signs

Hispanic Heritage Month 6-8 Activities

Sign languages can express the same idea in different ways. **LSE** stands for **L**engua de **S**ignos **E**spañola, the name for Spanish Sign Language. **LSE** and **ASL** are different languages shaped by different Deaf communities, but both can express ideas like culture, family, togetherness, and strength.

Compare each Spanish Sign Language (LSE) sign with the American Sign Language (ASL) sign across from it. What looks similar? What looks different?



UNIDOS, SOMOS MÁS - Together, We Are More.



What Are Aguas Frescas?

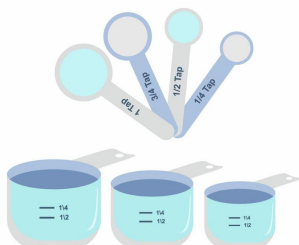
“Aguas frescas” means “fresh waters” in Spanish. They are yummy drinks made by mixing fresh fruit, water, and a little bit of sugar, and they come in lots of different flavors! People in Mexico have been making and enjoying these drinks for hundreds of years, and they are still a favorite today at markets, restaurants, and family parties.

Ready to make your own aguas frescas? Make sure to ask an adult for help with this activity!

Tools You May Need



Blender



**Measuring cups
and spoons**



Strainer



**Pitcher for
serving**



Agua de Mango - Sweet and tropical, with a smooth, juicy flavor

Ingredients (Serves 6 to 8)

- ☐ 3 ripe mangos, peeled and pitted
- ☐ 6 cups water, divided
- ☐ 1/3 cup sugar, or to taste
- ☐ Ice cubes

Steps

1. Blend the mango, sugar, and 4 cups of water until smooth.
2. Strain into a pitcher, pressing to extract as much liquid as possible.
3. Stir in the remaining 2 cups of water.
4. Chill and serve over ice.



Agua de Guayaba (Guava) - Sweet, fragrant, and unique flavor

Ingredients (Serves 6 to 8)

- ☐ 6 ripe guavas, quartered
- ☐ 5 cups water, divided
- ☐ 1/3 cup sugar, or to taste
- ☐ Ice cubes

Steps

1. Blend the guavas with 3 cups of water until smooth.
2. Strain into a pitcher to remove the seeds, pressing to extract the liquid.
3. Stir in the sugar and remaining 2 cups of water.
4. Chill and serve over ice.



Agua de Pepino (Cucumber-Lime) - Cool, light, and slightly savory taste

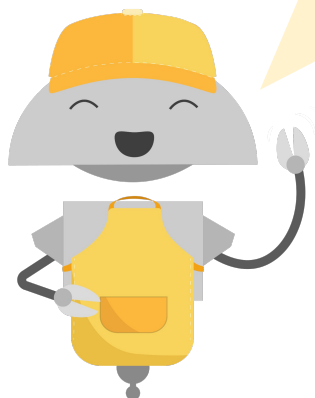


Ingredients (Serves 4 to 6)

- ☐ 2 medium cucumbers, peeled and chopped
- ☐ 4 cups cold water
- ☐ 3 tablespoons lime juice
- ☐ 3 tablespoons sugar or honey
- ☐ Pinch of salt
- ☐ Ice cubes

Steps

1. Blend the cucumber, water, lime juice, sugar, and salt until smooth.
2. Strain into a pitcher to remove the pulp.
3. Taste and adjust the lime or sweetness if needed.
4. Chill and serve over ice.



Want to try other fruits? Mango, guava, and cucumber are just three of the many fruits people use to make aguas frescas. If none of these sound like your favorite, you can try swapping in a different fruit, like...

- Cantaloupe
- Strawberry
- Papaya
- Pineapple
- Watermelon

Just remember the basic idea: Blend your fruit with water, add a little sugar or honey, and squeeze in some lime if you want!



What does belonging really mean? Belonging isn't just about liking the same things as people around you; it's about feeling safe, valued, and connected to the people and places around you.

Think about your own life. What are two to three things that help you feel like you belong somewhere? (For example: being part of a sports team, celebrating traditions with your family, or having a close group of friends.) Write them below and explain why they make you feel safe, valued, or connected.

Now imagine this: Your family has to move to a country where you don't speak the language, you don't know anyone, and nothing feels familiar. What might help you feel more at home in this new place? What might help?

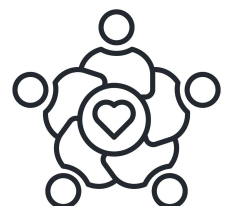
This is the experience many Hispanic immigrants have faced coming to the United States.

To build belonging in a new place, many communities came together to form neighborhoods, where people supported one another economically, socially, and culturally. These communities weren't just where people lived; they became engines of survival, identity, and pride.

As you read about three neighborhoods, analyze:

- **Economic Support:** How did people earn a living or help each other financially?
- **Cultural Preservation:** How did people keep their traditions, language, or customs alive?
- **Challenges and Response:** What challenges did the community face, and how did people respond?

Each of these neighborhoods proves the same idea: **Together, we belong.**





As you read, annotate the text using this key:

- **Economic Support:** In yellow, underline evidence of how families earned a living or helped each other financially.
- **Cultural Preservation:** In blue, underline evidence of how people kept traditions, language, or customs alive.
- **Challenges and Responses:** In red, underline evidence of a challenge the community faced and how they responded.

Little Havana, Miami, Florida: Building Belonging Through Community and Commerce

Starting in 1959, large numbers of Cubans began leaving Cuba after Fidel Castro's communist government took power. Many were forced to leave their homes and everything familiar behind, arriving in the United States as political refugees with little more than what they could carry. Miami, close to Cuba, became home to tens of thousands of Cuban families over the following decades.

Many settled in a neighborhood that became known as Little Havana. To rebuild their lives, Cuban families opened cafés, cigar shops, bakeries, and markets that served the community and created jobs for other Cuban immigrants. These businesses allowed people to earn a living while speaking their own language and staying connected to their culture.

Cuban families also worked to preserve their traditions. Along Calle Ocho (8th Street), residents built ventanitas (walk-up coffee windows), where people gather for cafecito (Cuban coffee), played dominoes in public parks, and celebrated Cuban music, food, and holidays.

Building Little Havana was not easy. Many Cuban refugees arrived with professional degrees or skills that were not accepted in the United States, forcing them to start over in lower-paying jobs. Others faced discrimination as new immigrants. Despite these challenges, the community continued to grow, and by the 1980s, Little Havana had become one of the most recognized Cuban American communities in the country.

Today, Little Havana remains a hub of Cuban American culture, business, and identity, built by people who turned being forced from home into belonging.



"Castle Shaped Building Calle Ocho Little Havana" from Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a5/Castle_Shaped_Building_Calle_Ocho_Little_Havana.jpg

This colorful, castle-shaped building sits on Calle Ocho, one of Little Havana's most recognizable streets.



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Pilsen, Chicago, Illinois: Building Belonging Through Art and Identity

Beginning in the mid-1900s, many Mexican families moved to Chicago for work. Some settled in Pilsen after highway construction and urban redevelopment displaced them from other parts of the city.

To support one another, families opened businesses such as panaderías (bakeries), markets, and restaurants that created jobs and kept the community connected to their language, food, and culture.

Pilsen residents also found a distinct way to preserve their identity: public art. Beginning in the late 1960s, local artists began painting large murals on buildings throughout the neighborhood, often depicting Mexican history, Indigenous heritage, and community pride, turning Pilsen's streets into what many now call an outdoor museum of Mexican American culture.

Like other immigrant communities, Pilsen has faced challenges. In recent decades, rising rents and new development have pushed out longtime residents and businesses. In response, artists and community organizations have worked to preserve Pilsen's murals and advocate for longtime residents to stay.

Today, Pilsen remains one of the most recognized centers of Mexican American culture in the United States.



"Public Art - Pilsen - Chicago - Illinois - USA - 04" from Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Public_Art_-_Pilsen_-_Chicago_-_Illinois_-_USA_-_04_\(32937591956\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Public_Art_-_Pilsen_-_Chicago_-_Illinois_-_USA_-_04_(32937591956).jpg)

This colorful mural shares words like “Hope,” “Respect,” and “Dignidad” (dignity), reminding neighbors what matters most in their community.



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El Barrio, New York City, New York: Building Belonging Through Pride and Culture

Starting in the mid-1900s, many Puerto Rican families moved to New York City in search of job opportunities and a better life. Because Puerto Ricans have been U.S. citizens since 1917, they could move to the mainland United States without immigration restrictions.

To support one another, families opened restaurants, bodegas, and botánicas (shops selling traditional herbs and religious goods) that created jobs and kept the community connected to their language and culture.

Residents also preserved their identity through art and music. Beginning in the 1970s, artists painted murals across the neighborhood celebrating Puerto Rican history and community pride, including *The Spirit of East Harlem*, one of the first NYC murals to feature portraits of real neighborhood residents. Musicians like Tito Puente, who grew up in the neighborhood, helped make El Barrio a center of Latin music and culture.

Despite being U.S. citizens, some Puerto Ricans in El Barrio faced discrimination, overcrowding, and economic hardship. In response, residents organized community centers and cultural institutions, including El Museo del Barrio, founded in 1969 to preserve and celebrate Puerto Rican and Latino art and history.

Today, El Barrio remains a center of Puerto Rican culture and pride, its murals and music still telling the story of the community.



"Muriel Morales's mural outside the Café Bustelo, a local institution in the Spanish Harlem neighborhood of New York City's Manhattan borough" by Carol M. Highsmith, photographer, from Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/highsm.53044/7st-image>, no known restrictions

This mural honors Tito Puente, a legendary musician from El Barrio (Spanish Harlem), painted outside Café Bustelo, a neighborhood coffee shop since 1928.



Response Journal: Building Belonging

Now that you've read about Little Havana, Pilsen, and El Barrio, choose **one** community and record your answers below.

Economic Support: How did families support one another economically?

Cultural Preservation: How did the residents preserve their cultural identity while adapting to life in the U.S.?

Challenges: What challenges did the community face, and how did they respond?



Want to go further?

Choose a second community and record your answers for that one, too!



Artists develop their unique style through the colors, subjects, and techniques they choose. In this activity, you will explore the styles of famous Hispanic artists and practice making art inspired by them!

Read about each artist and **look** at the examples of their work. Then, use the practice prompts to **draw and color** an image inspired by each artist.

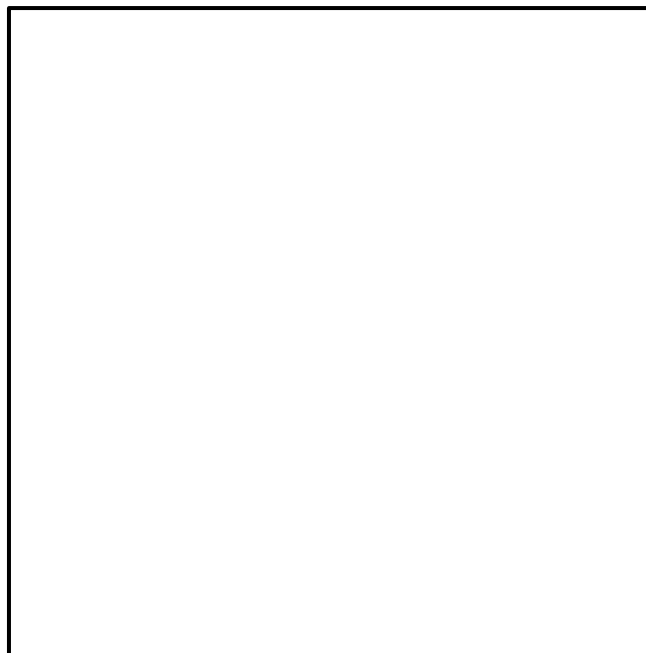


José Guadalupe Posada was a Mexican artist best known for **relief printing**, which is a technique where the artist carves an image into wood, metal, or rubber, applies ink onto the carving, and then presses the image onto paper or fabric.

Posada often used “calaveras,” or skeletons, as subjects in his art, including the one below, titled *La Calavera Catrina*.



"La Calavera Catrina J Guadalupe Posada" by Jose Guadalupe Posada, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_Calavera_Catrina_J_Guadalupe_Posada.jpg



Notice the close parallel lines on the flowers and feathers on the calavera's hat. Artists use this technique, called **hatching**, to create shading or texture. Compare those details to the overlapping lines along the brim of the hat. This is called **cross-hatching**, and it is also used to create texture or darker shadows.

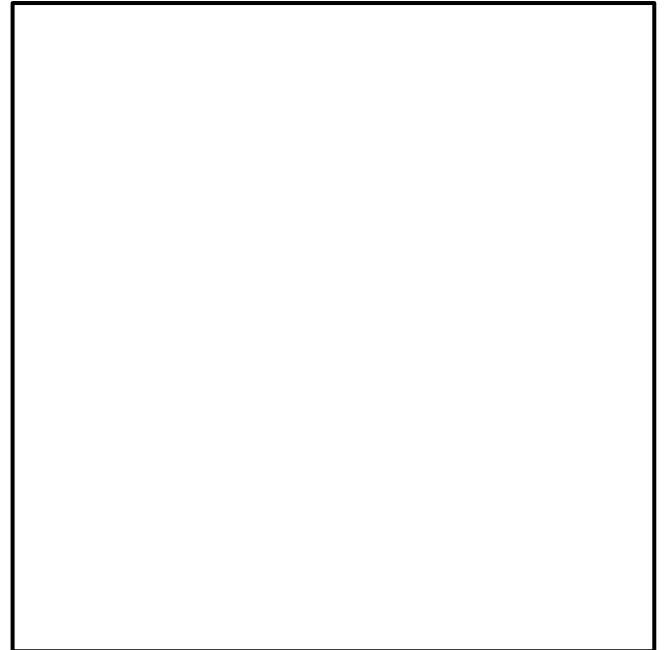
Practice prompt: In the space above, draw a bouquet of flowers and add hatching or cross-hatching to achieve a similar effect.



María Blanchard was a Spanish artist who often painted images of women, mothers, and children. She was born with physical disabilities that affected her spine and made it difficult to walk, so creating art was a way for her to express the physical and emotional pain she experienced.



"1917 Blanchard Frau mit Gitarre" by Maria Blanchard, Public Domain,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1917_Blanchard_Frau_mit_Gitarre.JPG

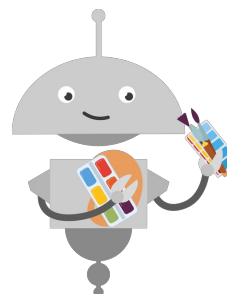


Notice how Blanchard used simple lines, shapes, and colors to create the image of a woman playing the guitar. This is a style she adopted called **cubism**, which was popularized in the early 20th century. Cubist artists utilize bold colors and geometric shapes to create **abstract** imagery, or images that are more conceptual rather than realistic.

Practice prompt: In the space above, draw your favorite animal using a cubist style. Think about simple shapes you can use to create the animal. Then, color the entire image using only three colors!

With a trusted adult's permission, explore the artwork of more Hispanic artists, like...

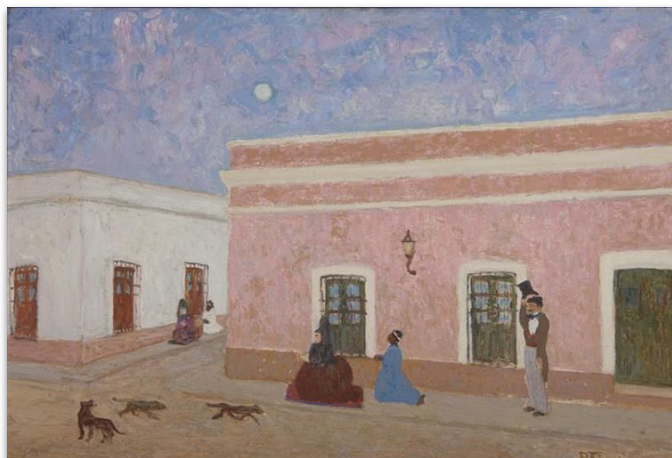
- Salvador Dalí (Spain)
- Frida Kahlo (Mexico)
- Amelia Peláez (Cuba)



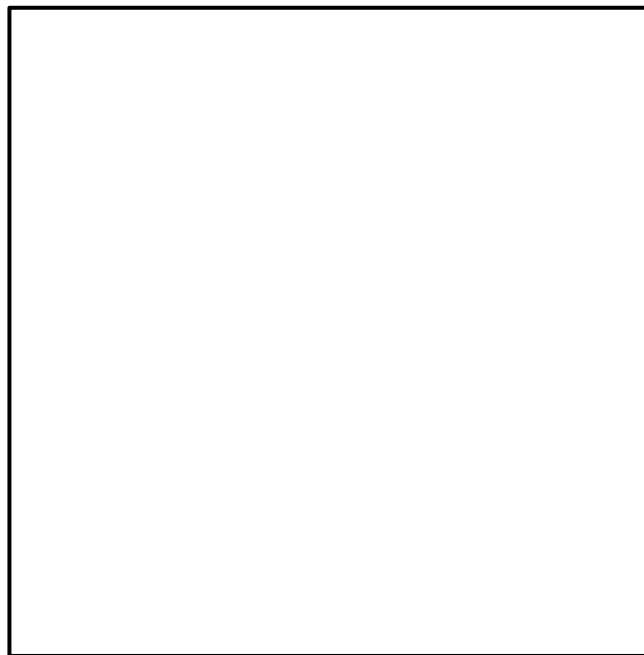
Move on to the
next page to
learn more!



Pedro Figari was a painter from Uruguay who spent most of his career as a lawyer and didn't pursue art until later in life. He did not paint in a realistic way and instead focused on the ideas and emotions he wanted to capture. His paintings are known for depicting everyday moments and joyous celebrations.



"Pedro Figari - Toque de oracion" by Pedro Figari, Public Domain,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pedro_Figari_-_Toque_de_oracion.png



Notice the movement in Figari's painting: the dogs running, the women's dresses dragging behind them as they walk, or the man lifting his hat. This makes the painting feel more like a snapshot of a real moment rather than an intentionally arranged image.

Practice prompt: In the space above, draw a moment from your daily life: eating breakfast in the morning, completing schoolwork, or hanging out with friends. Add in one or more elements that convey movement.

Artistic Reflection: What artistic technique or style would you like to learn more about? Why?



Every culture tells stories to explain the world and to pass down what matters most. Across most legends, the same kinds of characters show up again and again: a trickster who outsmarts the powerful, a guardian who protects what's sacred, and a person transformed by love or a lesson learned. Let's meet three of them.



The Trickster: El Cipitío (El Salvador)

In the villages of El Salvador, children grow up hearing about a boy that never ages. He's forever 10 years old, with a huge straw hat and a big round belly. His feet point backward, so no one can ever follow his footprints. He's mischievous and hides in trees near rivers, and he tosses pebbles and flowers to get attention. He's also known to sneak into kitchens at night and eat leftover ashes. He's the reason grandmothers blame someone for the mess by the stove each morning.

The Guardian: Yacumama (Peru)

Deep in the rivers of the Amazon lives a giant serpent spirit known as the Yacumama, or the "mother of the waters." The Yacumama is said to protect everything that lives beneath the surface. If fishers take too much or travelers disrespect the river, then she makes herself known. She's not cruel, but serves to remind that some things are borrowed, not owned, and the river remembers how it's treated.



A Transformation: Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl (Mexico)

Long ago, a warrior loved a woman very deeply. He was sent to battle and promised his love he would return. The woman was told, falsely, that he had died. Heartbroken, she did not survive the grief. When the warrior came home and found her gone, he carried her body to a mountaintop, stayed beside her, and promised to keep watch forever. The gods were so moved by his devotion that they turned them both into mountains. Iztaccíhuatl became the mountain of the sleeping woman, and Popocatepetl became the smoking volcano that still watches over her today.





Build Your Own Legend: Most legends are built from a few key ingredients: a memorable figure, a meaningful setting and a lesson passed down through generations. Use the menu below to build your own legend!

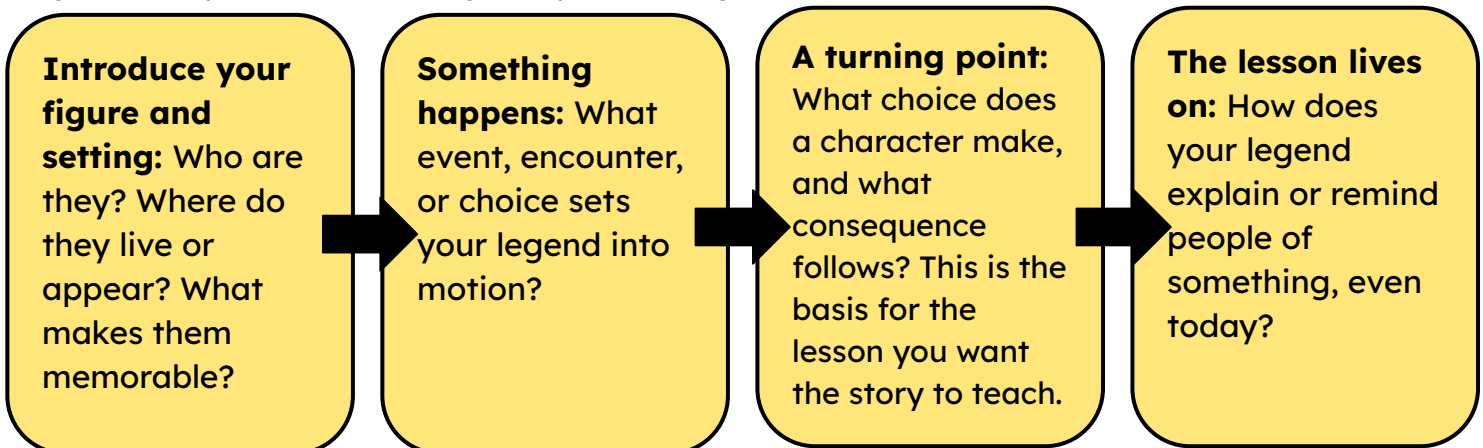
Step 1: Choose Your Ingredients

Mark one option from each column below (or invent your own for any column!).

Figure	Setting	Lesson
A clever trickster (small, mischievous, outsmarts someone bigger)	A river or lake	Being clever outlasts size or strength.
A protective guardian spirit	A forest or mountain	Some things deserve respect, not taking.
A person transformed by love, loyalty, or a lesson learned	A village or marketplace	Loyalty/love leaves something behind.
Create your own! _____ _____	Create your own! _____ _____	Create your own! _____ _____

Step 2: Build the Story

Use the structure below to draft your legend. You don't have to include everything in your legend, but you can use it to guide your writing.



Tip: Try adding in a few phrases real legends use to sound like they've been passed down for generations, like...

- "Long ago, in a village near..."
- "Some say..."
- "To this day, people still..."

[illegible]



Meet two scientists who dedicated their careers to studying plants: one who traveled the globe collecting specimens and one who researched and classified hundreds of different cactus species. **Read** about each scientist, then **choose** one project to try inspired by their work!



"Portrait of Ynés Mexía." Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ynés_Mexía.jpg, Mexico/USA, L.jpg

Ynés Mexía (1870-1938) - Mexican American Botanist

Ynés became interested in botany, the study of plants, at age 51 when she joined a group called the Sierra Club. The group worked together to explore and protect wild places, like forests, mountains, and deserts. She enjoyed observing plants so much that she started taking science classes at a local university.

In 1925, she started taking expeditions to collect plant samples and take detailed notes. She and her team collected 6,100 samples in Alaska. She spent two and a half years travelling down the Amazon River by canoe and collected 65,000 samples!

During her career, Ynés collected nearly 150,000 total samples. Scientists still use the plants she collected to learn about nature today. Some of the plants she found had never been seen before. She discovered about 500 new species that we might not know about otherwise!

Project 1: Create a Plant Card

Ynés collected plant samples and took detailed notes so other scientists could learn from her work. Now it's your turn to collect a plant and document it like a scientist!



You will need...

- ☐ A flower, leaf, or plant
- ☐ Paper and a heavy book
- ☐ Tape or glue
- ☐ A ruler or measuring tape



Directions:

1. With help from a trusted adult, go outside and collect a flower, leaf, or plant that you like.
2. Press your plant flat by placing it between two pieces of paper and putting a heavy book on top of it. Let it set for two to three days, until it is flat and mostly dried out.
3. Once your plant is flat, tape or glue it onto the next page.
4. Record the name of the plant and the date you found it. If you don't know what your plant is called, create your own name for it!
5. Measure your plant's length and width. Record the measurements.
6. Write a detailed observation (three to four sentences) describing your plant's color, texture, shape, and any other notable features.



Plant Name: _____

Date collected: _____

Plant Measurements

Observations:



Dr. Helia Bravo-Hollis (1901-2001) - Mexican Biologist

Helia loved taking nature walks with her parents as a child. She studied hard and became Mexico's first certified biologist in 1927, a scientist who studies living things like plants and animals.

Soon after, Helia was put in charge of creating an herbarium (a collection of preserved plants) for her university. She was also assigned to study one specific group of plants: cactuses! Cactuses are uniquely adapted to survive in the desert, where water is scarce and temperatures can be extreme. Their thick, fleshy stems store water for long periods without rain, and their spines reduce water loss and protect the plant from animals looking for a water source. Helia traveled all across Mexico studying cactuses. She took photos, collected samples, and carefully described what she found.

In 1937, she published a book about Mexican cactuses that became famous around the world. Because of her incredible work, several types of cactus were even named after her! Over her career, Helia identified and classified more than 700 kinds of cactus, including many brand-new species!

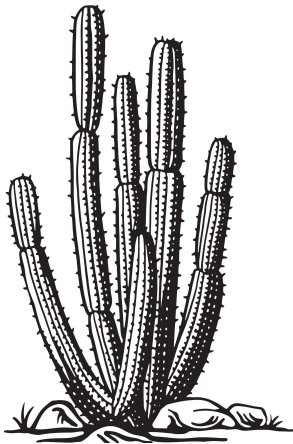


"Polaskia chende," Amante Darmanin, CC BY 2.0, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polaskia_chende_\(5741007534\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polaskia_chende_(5741007534).jpg)

Polaskia chende, a cactus species Dr. Bravo studied in Mexico

Project 2: Design a Desert Plant

Helia traveled Mexico studying cactus plants, which survive in hot, dry places. Now you get to design your own cactus!



Directions:

1. Draw a plant that could survive in a hot, dry desert.
2. Give your plant at least two adaptations (for example, a thick stem, spines, or waxy skin).
3. Label each adaptation on your diagram and write one to two sentences explaining how that adaptation helps your plant survive in the desert.
4. Draw the desert habitat around your cactus, including at least two other features you might find there (sand, rocks, sun, other desert life, etc.)
5. Give your cactus a name, and explain why you chose it. You could name it based on one of its features or even name it after yourself or someone else, the way real cactus species were named after Dr. Bravo!



My cactus species is named _____
