Lesson plans for the New Mexico History Museum exhibition
Overview

The Threads of Memory: Spain and the United States (El Hilo de la Memoria: España y los Estados Unidos) gives classroom teachers a chance to help students understand the importance of Spain in the development of what is now the United States. Using primary documents from the exhibition, students can explore what Spanish explorers saw and experienced.

The Threads of Memory, an exhibition produced by the Archivo General de Indias in Sevilla, Spain, will travel to three U.S. museums in 2010 and 2011. An historic entity itself, the Archivo General de Indias holds more than 80 million pages of documents that cover more than three centuries of Spain’s history in this country.

The exhibition’s U.S. debut will be at the New Mexico History Museum from October 2010 to January 2011. This represents the first time that many of these rare documents of Spanish and U.S. history have been gathered into one place outside of Spain. They provide a far-ranging survey of the Spanish settlements in North America and speak to the importance of the Hispanic roots of U.S. cultures. This exhibition will change American perspectives on our founding history, shifting our nation’s origins from Colonial New England to the south and west.
Overview, continued

Goal
Goals include analyzing 16th- to 18th-century images from Spanish explorers and officials and drawing conclusions based on visual evidence (e.g., written letters, drawings, and maps) that explorers sent back to Spain to document their first contact in North America. These documents included information about geography/topography, wildlife, and contact with indigenous peoples. Historical references will be made through various activities (e.g., writing and drawing).

Student Learning
Students will examine a series of drawings, maps and letters from the exhibit. After observing each drawing and placing it in its appropriate century, they will compare and contrast the images and write personal interpretations.

Preparation
Understanding the discoveries of the first explorers through primary analysis will be a gateway for the research of historical records. Teaching with primary documents encourages the learning of history firsthand.

Website
The Threads of Memory is based on an outstanding collection of more than 130 documents highlighting the history of Spanish exploration, colonization, and diplomacy in North America, from the earliest explorers in the 1500s to the diplomats who helped America win the Revolutionary War. The website accompanying the exhibition extends the life of these rare documents beyond their short visit to the United States. As a continuation of the exhibition, the website will show the reach of Spain across North America through historic documents, maps, and drawings of the Spanish exploration and colonization of Florida, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The bilingual website has tremendous appeal to residents and educators of states that were once Spanish possessions and to New Mexicans for whom the Camino Real is a particularly strong symbol of cultural heritage and linguistic pride.
Military Uniforms
Then and Now

Pre-writing activity

These two pictures depict uniforms worn by Spanish military forces that traveled to the United States during the 18th century. Look at the pictures again. Do you think these soldiers were well prepared to protect and serve their country thousands of miles away from their home country (Spain)?

Writing activity

Place yourself in the 18th century. What if you led an expedition to another country miles away from home? What would your uniform look like? How would you get to your destination (transportation)? What type of weapons, food and supplies would you take with you? Briefly explain why you would choose to take these items and your choice of uniform.

Modifications

Provide for second language learners (ELL’s) a copy of vocabulary words in Spanish, pair ELL’s with a bilingual student to help them respond orally instead of in writing.

Goal

Military uniforms are important in our history. We can see they have differences in their significance today. Students can explore the symbolism found in military uniforms by comparing and contrasting the images provided.

Pre-activity

What did Spanish soldiers wear as a military uniform? What does it mean to wear a uniform? What type of weapons did they travel with and bring to North America? Study each drawing for two minutes. Form an overall first impression of the drawing. Who do you think they are? In what historical context can you place them? Then examine individual items (e.g., describe what they are wearing) and determine what function those items might serve.

Procedure

1. Based on what you have observed in the drawings, what questions do these drawings raise in your mind? Have students list at least six questions.
Military Uniforms Then and Now, continued

2. Where can you find the answers to these questions? List the places you would look for the answers to these questions.

3. Using a Venn diagram (find a sample here: http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/venn.pdf), describe the similarities with and differences between the drawings of the U.S. soldier and the Spanish soldier. Look at the drawings and list as many differences and similarities as you can find in the Venn diagram.

4. Now draw yourself with these items and share the pictures with your peers. As a class, categorize your pictures from the most to the least practical.

Assessment

Have students come back together and discuss some of their answers. Encourage students to explain why they responded as they did and turn their work in for evaluation.
Mounted forces stationed along the northern frontier of New Spain were known as “leather-jacket” soldiers because of the up to seven layers of leather they wore instead of armor.
Military Uniforms Then and Now, continued

Uniform Design for the Fixed Infantry Regiment of Louisiana, [1785]
Mapping the Unknown

Pre-writing activity
In pairs have one student verbally describe how to get from school to their house while the other draws a map of the journey. How does the description match up to the drawing?

Writing activity
Place yourself in the 17th century. What if you led an expedition to another country miles away from home? What would you use to record what you see? How would you get to your destination (transportation/directions)? What kind of map would you design to help others find their way around?

Modifications
Provide for second language learners (ELLs) a copy of vocabulary words in Spanish, pair ELLs with a bilingual student to help them respond orally instead of in writing.

Goal
Maps are important in our history. The maps provided in this lesson are very different from the kinds of maps we use today. Explore the symbolism found in these maps to interpret what these travelers were experiencing on their journeys. Take note that the map is oriented with east being the top and west the bottom. Why would a map maker do this?

Essential questions
What type of map is this? How would you interpret this map?

Pre-map history
The teacher introduces vocabulary and gives a brief explanation about this map from New Spain during the 17th century. The teacher talks about what information is important to include in the map.

Procedure

1. Observations
Observe the map for approximately three minutes and identify the physical qualities of the map.
Mapping the Unknown, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compass</th>
<th>Handwritten or painted</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notations</th>
<th>Name and map maker</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Map analysis**

Answer the following questions as you observe the map.

1. What date was the map created? What are the map’s title, scale, and orientation?

2. Who created the map, when, and for whom? How do you know these things?

3. Where was the map produced, and what was its purpose?

4. What items are included in the map and why? What items were left out and why?

5. List the natural and cultural features of the map in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural features (lakes, rivers, mountains, etc.)</th>
<th>Wildlife (animals, birds)</th>
<th>Cultural features (buildings, roads, trails, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
2. Activities

Activity A
Give the students a second chance to observe the map with a partner for three or more minutes. Give the following list of words and have them identify the items below.

How many of the following items can you identify on the map? Write the number of items you find on the spaces provided.

Share your answers with the rest of your classmates; write anything you missed next to your answers.

Activity B: It’s your turn
You’re the mapmaker. Draw a map that represents the state of New Mexico. What will you include and why? Think about the geography, and natural and cultural features. Give students a blank map of New Mexico and encourage them to include vital information in their maps. Remind the students that they can upload their images onto Flickr and tag the images “El Hilo Maps” for the New Mexico History Museum online (http://www.flickr.com/groups/nmhm/).

Use the coloring pencils to enhance the map and have the students include a key to make it easy to read and understand.

Assessment
After a set amount of time, have the students gather as a class and discuss some of their answers and map drawings. Encourage students to explain why they included what they did in their map and what they excluded and why.
This curious map of the west coast of New Spain illustrates secure ports in which ships could take refuge from surprise storms and attacks from enemy ships.
Exploring the Natural World

Pre-writing activity

Have students work in pairs. Ask one student to imagine an animal and describe it to the other. The second student should try to sketch what the other is explaining. Does it look like what the other student imagined? Have students switch roles.

Writing activity

When the Spanish explored the Americas they encountered animals they had never seen before and for which they had no names. Place yourself in the 17th century. Imagine you are in a foreign land with different kinds of wildlife. On paper, describe an animal to someone far away without using its name. Share your description with the other students. Can they guess which animal you wrote about?

Goal

European descriptions of animals and plants in the Americas were some of the first written descriptions of the West. The drawing of the bison (commonly known as the American buffalo) is known as a primary resource. Students can determine whether a primary resource is equal to the truth or if primary documents can potentially alter reality. Students can learn how perspective and past experiences can influence a primary document.

Essential questions

What type of animal is this? Does it look like a combination of animals? What is unique about this animal? Was this animal found in New Mexico? Does this animal exist today?

Procedure

1. Pre-Activity
   Identify the different animals that were abundant in New Mexico during the 17th century.

2. Activities
   Observe the drawings for 3 minutes.
   1. List adjectives that describe any emotion you feel while you look at the drawing.
   2. List adjectives you would use to describe this drawing.
   3. What cultures or groups of people would use this animal and for what reasons?
   4. Why would a person draw this animal and for what purpose?
Exploring the Natural World, continued

Today’s Wildlife in the Southwest. Have each student pick five living species they want to draw or model out of clay. For each drawing, the student must include a written description of where it lives, what it eats, etc.

3. Summary Activity and Assessment
Show the students the picture of a buffalo. Discuss what you know about the Spanish drawing of the buffalo. Help them apply this new information to their understanding of primary documents and perspective. Have the students write down their conclusions for assessment.

Information on the Spanish Drawing
The American buffalo is the largest American land mammal. It once populated parts of Mexico, the United States and Canada. Their great numbers decreased considerably, almost to extinction, with the advance from the east of Anglo-American colonists. The Spanish named them cíbols because they lived on the plains in the region where the explorers believed they would find the city of Cíbola (gold).

Their appearance surprised those who saw them for the first time. Francisco López de Gómara, in his 1552 Historia general de las Indias, written after the Vázquez de Coronado expedition, wrote of them: “...these are oxen of the size and color of our bulls but their horns are smaller. They have a large hump over the withers and more hair from their mid-section forward than from their mid-section back, and it is wool. They have what seems like manes over their backbone and much hair, and very long, from their knees down. From their forehead hang large forelocks, and they appear to have beards because of the many hairs from the throat and jawbones. Males have very long tails and with a large fringe on the end; that is to say they have some features of lion and some of camel. They gouge with their horns; they chase, catch, and will kill a horse when enraged and angry. Finally, they are fierce and their body and face are ugly. Horses run from them because of their mean appearance and because they have never seen them before.”

They were also known as “humpbacked cows,” as expressed by Vicente de Zaldívar in his 1598 exploration of the New Mexico territory: “... we discovered ... a great number of humpbacked cows, that in the middle of their back they have a humpback bend and there are more than two hundred continuous leagues of them, we don’t know how many there are in the wide expanse of land. They are cattle, not very brave, run little, are the best meat to eat in this land and are the largest of the livestock of the land.”

Bison were fundamentally important to the region’s native inhabitants, who utilized the animal completely. As Gómara wrote: “These caretakers have no other riches or property. From them they eat, drink, dress, make shoes and many other things: from the skin,
Exploring the Natural World, continued

footwear, clothing and ropes; from their bones, awls; from the sinew and hair, thread; mouths and bladders, drinking vessels; from the dung, fire; and from the calves, waterskins in which they carried and contained water; they do in fact make so many of their own things which are necessary or which are enough for them to live."

From The Threads of Memory: Spain and the United States. (El hilo de la memoria: España y Los Estados Unidos)
New Mexico History Museum et al, © 2010

Extensions

Write a nature journal, including the wildlife you see in your state — insects, fish, birds, mammals, reptiles, etc.

Objective

Your objective is to include information with great descriptive detail.

Begin a wildlife journal, date it and document the wildlife you see around your school, home and neighborhood and on outdoors outings. Draw the animals and color the animals as you see them.

Look for and listen to birds; describe their sounds, colors, and shapes.

Include dates, times and seasons when the animal, insect, bird, etc., is seen.
Exploring the Natural World, continued

Drawing of a Buffalo, 1598

This drawing accompanies the “Account of the journey of the cows of Cibola” that Sergeant Major Vicente de Zaldivar made in the province of New Mexico. The Spanish named the buffaloes “cíbolos” because they lived on the plains in the region where they believed they would find the city of Cibola. This drawing forms part of the file of the discovery by Juan de Oñate.
A Letter from Coronado to the King, October 20, 1541

Goal

Fray Marcos de Niza’s reports fueled the Seven Cities of Cíbola myth. This motivated Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza to authorize Coronado’s new expedition. This letter describes in detail the situation in the province of Tiguex, in the vicinity of what is today Albuquerque. This type of document is known as a primary resource. Students can determine whether a primary resource is equal to the truth, or if primary documents can potentially alter reality. Students can learn how perspective and past experiences can influence a primary document.

Essential questions

Why was it important to document expeditions for the kings? What information was included in these letters and why?

Procedure

1. When you write a letter to a friend in a different country, what information do you include in the letter and why? Brainstorm what information you would include in a letter to a friend who has never visited your country. (Teachers: Encourage students to think about what topics they would write about.)

2. Read the first part of the letter from Coronado to the class. Explain the salutation and the tone of the letter used in the introduction. Guiding questions: How did Coronado address the King in the 16th century; why did he address the King as a Holy Catholic Caesarian Majesty; was this common?

Encourage students to verbalize their answers. (If this letter is being projected on a whiteboard, have the students underline the salutations and the date, circle the descriptive adjectives and put a box around information related to the wildlife.) Discuss what type of writing and paper were used to create this document.

3. Divide students into pairs and give each group a section of Coronado’s letter to the King. Have one student read the section out loud while the other takes notes. As they read through their assigned sections, encourage them to think about the following:
A Letter from Coronado to the King, continued

A. What information was described in the letter?
B. Why was the letter written?
C. What was the letter’s purpose?
D. What was the letter’s tone?
E. Why do you think this letter was important to write?
F. What type of information was left out of the letter and why?

Have students write their answers on post-it papers. Hang their answers around the room and do a walk-through in pairs to see the differences and similarities.

4. Re-read the section you received, but now look for the following:

A. Identify three stated aims of Coronado’s letter.
B. Characterize changes in Coronado’s purposes in writing the letter.
C. Describe the native people Coronado encountered and the results of their contact.
How did he describe the natives?
D. What seemed of particular interest to Coronado on his trip? What were his impressions of the places he visited? What ideas did he have about what might happen next?
E. Compare the goals of the early Spanish explorations with what happened.

5. Summary Activity and Assessment: It’s your turn
Students will write a letter to the King describing the world of today, using a calligraphic alphabet (http://calligraphyalphabet.org/) as a model. Note: Teachers will provide a calligraphic pen and paper for the students’ final copies of their letters.

Each letter must include:
A. The introduction — a restatement of the purpose of the expedition as explained to the King and Queen of Spain — primarily the sentence beginning, “Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians, and princes who love and promote the holy Christian faith …”
B. The entry for April 20, the day of the expedition.
C. Descriptions of the native peoples Coronado encountered. (Students can do individual research on the native groups and see if they are still in the Southwest.)
D. Descriptions of wildlife and the extinct animals once here.
E. Description of natural resources. Include descriptions of food and plants of today.
On the twentieth of April of this year [1541] I wrote to Your Majesty about this provincial of Tiguex in response to a letter from Your Majesty dated in Madrid on the eleventh of June last year [1540]. I gave you a detailed report and account of this expedition (which the viceroy of Nueva España ordered me to make in Your Majesty’s name) to this land which fray Marcos de Niza, the provincial of the Order of Lord San Francisco, discovered, [I also reported] everything about what [the provincial] is and the character of its people, which Your Majesty has probably ordered reviewed from my letters.

While I was overseeing the subjugation and pacification of the natives of this provincial, some native Indians from other provincias beyond these gave me a report that in their land were much grander towns and buildings, better than those of the natives of this land. [They reported] that there were lords who ruled them, that they ate out of golden dishes, and other things of magnificence.

However, as I wrote to Your Majesty, since it was a report from Indians mostly by signs, I did not give them credence until I could see it with my own eyes (their report seeming very extravagant to me). Because it seemed important to Your Majesty’s service that it be examined, I decided to go with the company I have here to see [it].

I left this provincial [Tiguex] on the twenty-third of this past April, [going] by the route on which the Indians chose to lead me. After I traveled nine days I reached some plains so extensive that whatever I traveled on them I did not find their end, even though I traveled across them [for] for more than three hundred leagues. On [the plains] I found such a multitude of [bison] that to count them was impossible. [I say this] because never for a single day did I lose sight of them as I traveled through the plains, until I returned to where I [first] found them. [These are the cattle] which I told Your Majesty in writing there [are] in this land.

After seventeen days of travel I came upon a ranchería of Indians who traveled with these [bison], whom [the guides] call Querechos. These [people] do not plant [crops] and they eat...
A Letter from Coronado to the King, continued

the meat [of the bison] raw and drink the blood of the [bison] they kill. These [Indians] dress in the hides of the [bison], with which all the people in this land clothe themselves. The have very well made pavilion-like tents made of dressed and greased [bison] hides, in which they have their privacy. They travel behind the [bison], moving with them. They have dogs which they load [and] which they transport their tents, poles and lesser effects. The people are the best disposed I have seen in the Indies up until now.

These [Querechos] did not know how to give me a report about the land to which the guides were taking me or the route by which they wished to lead me. I traveled another five days until I arrived at some plains so without landmarks that it was as if we were in the middle of the sea. There the [guided] became confused, because on all of [the plains] there is not a single stone or hill or tree or bush ....

Last page

....settlements along it are not [such] as to allow [the Spanish] to settle [here] because they are more than four hundred leagues from the Mar del Norte and more than two hundred leagues from the Mar del Sur. It is impossible to have any sort of communication [from] there [either ocean]. As I have written to you Your Majesty, the land is so cold that it seems impossible that we can pass the winter in it, because there is no firewood or clothing with which the men could protect themselves from the cold, except with hides with which the natives clothe themselves and some cotton mantas [which are] in short supply.

I am sending the viceroy of Nueva España a report about everything I have seen in the lands [where] I have traveled. Because don García López de Cárdenas (who has worked diligently and served Your Majesty very well on this expedition will soon kiss Your Majesty's hands, he, as a man who has seen it himself, will give Your Majesty an account of everything about this place. I defer to him [in this].

May Our Lord preserve the Holy Catholic Imperial person of Your Majesty with an increase of grander kingdoms and dominions, as we your royal servants and vassals, desire.

From the provincial of Tiguex, the 20th of October in the year 1541.

Holy Catholic Imperial Majesty
Your Majesty's Humble Servant
and vassal who kisses Your royal feet and hands,
Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, 20th of October 1581

Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to be His Subjects. Edited, translated and annotated by Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint. Southern Methodist University Press, Dallas 2005.
A Letter from Coronado to the King, continued

Letter Signed by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, October 20, 1541, Province of Tiguex

Fray Marcos de Niza's reports fueled the Seven Cities of Cíbola myth. This motivated Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza to authorize Coronado's new expedition. This document describes in detail the situation in the province of Tiguex, in the vicinity of what is today Albuquerque.