



Ethnic Studies Lesson 3D:

Latino Americans—Land Ownership and Political Rights

TOPIC:

LATINO AMERICAN HISTORY

GRADE LEVELS:

11-12

TIME:

1½ HOURS

California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Themes, Values, and Principles Alignment

Themes:

1. Identity
2. History and Movement
3. Systems of Power

Values and Principles:

1. Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
2. Celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by providing a space to share their stories of success, community collaboration, and solidarity, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth.
4. Critique empire building in history and its relationship to white supremacy, racism, and other forms of power and oppression.
5. Challenge racist, bigoted, discriminatory, and imperialist/colonial beliefs and practices on multiple levels.

California English and Social Science Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards (11th and 12th Grade):**Reading—Informational Text (RI.11-12)**

Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text, including investigating how Spanish and Mexican land grants, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and the legacy of land grant court cases impact modern Latino Americans. (RI.11-12.3)

Social Sciences Standards (11th and 12th Grade):**History-Social Science Content Standards—(Grades 9-12)**

Evaluate the significance of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the casta system in shaping the historical experiences and cultural identities of Hispanos, Tejanos, and Californios, as well

as their relevance to contemporary Latino American communities. (History-Social Science Content Standard 4.2)

Lesson Purpose

Students will investigate Spanish and Mexican land grants. Students will also research the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and what it offered Mexican Americans after the war, as well as the legacy of the land grant court cases and its impact on modern Latino Americans.

Essential Questions

How does studying the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and subsequent land rights acts help us understand modern Latino/Hispanic Americans?

How has life changed for Latino/Hispanic Americans in the last 250 years?

Materials

[The National Park Service: A history of Mexican Americans in California](#)

[National Archives: Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo \(1848\)](#)

[An Act to Ascertain and Settle Private Land Claims in the State of California](#)

[Worksheet](#)

[AP Explains: Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo Remains Hot Topic](#)

[KWL Chart for Unit 3](#)

Vocabulary

land grant

squatting

secular

presidio

privatizing

rancho

ethnogenesis

pueblos

missions

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- As a whole class, ask students what rights a US citizen has in terms of land. Record their answers on the board. This may include buying private land that only your family owns, owning property and buildings on that land, passing that land down to family, etc. Let students know they'll be researching how land was handled for Latino/Hispanic people before and after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
- As a whole class, use a popcorn method or other class-wide structure to read [The National Park Service: A history of Mexican Americans in California](#). Let students know that the purpose of reading is to discover what a land grant is. Stop the reading periodically for students to take notes. When the

reading is complete, ask students to share their ideas of what a land grant is and to cite evidence from the reading to support their claims. Make sure students understand the difference between buying private property and being granted land. Additional information could include the two types of land grants: those that were for private individuals and those that were for a community. Also, let students know that land grants were often not marked by a surveyor but were marked with natural boundaries. This was very different from how private property laws worked in the United States.

Step 2:

- Show students the online link to the [National Archives: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo \(1848\)](#) (or provide a paper copy). In pairs, ask students to read Article VIII and IX. Students should make notes of what rights the treaty granted to Mexicans in the conquered territories and what requirements they might have to get those rights. Students should make note of where they found the information.
- Also have students read the summary of [“An Act to Ascertain and Settle Private Land Claims in the State of California”](#) and take notes. Let students know that there were similar subsequent acts in other states.
- When students have completed their reading, have them meet with another pair. The group of four should complete the worksheet found [HERE](#).

Step 3:

- As a whole class, have groups of students share their worksheet answers. Students can use appropriate supporting dialogue such as, “I agree with what you said, and I would add...” or “I understand what you said, but I saw something a little differently...” Make sure students understand that even though most of the Mexican and Spanish land grants were upheld in court, many people may have found that court costs were too high, language barriers were difficult, deeds were lost, or deed landmarks had changed (question content from [Steinbeck in the Schools Lesson Plan: Land Grants and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#)).

Step 4:

- As a whole class, ask students if they think that the treaty settled the land grant issue fairly and completely. Print the Associated Press news article: [AP Explains: Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo Remains Hot Topic](#). Ask four volunteers to read the news article out loud by alternating readers and using their best “newscaster” voice. Ask students to pay attention to the who, what, where, when, and why of the article. When the reading is complete, ask students to answer this lesson’s questions: “How does studying the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and subsequent land rights acts help us understand modern Latino/Hispanic Americans?” and “How has life changed for Latino/Hispanic Americans in the last 250 years?” Add to this unit’s KWL chart on what was learned.

Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

Ask students to interview someone they know who owns a house or owns land. Students can ask that person how they purchased the land, who owns it, how that person can prove that they own it, and what they hope happens with the property in the future. Let students know that the purpose of this activity is to understand the US process of private land ownership, and that the perspective of the Mexican Americans during this time can also be seen in many other civilizations around the world during times of war or conquest. Students should write a short paragraph that highlights their interview questions, the responses, and what the student learned.

Additional Readings and Resources

[California Missions Foundation](#) (for descriptions of ranchos, presidios, missions, and pueblos)

Gardner, Richard. *Grito! Reies Tijerina and the New Mexico Land Grant War of 1967*. Bobbs-Merrill, 1970.

Julian, George W. "Land Stealing in New Mexico." *North American Review* 145 (July 1887): 17-31.

Knowlton, Clark S. "Land Grant Problems Among the State's Spanish Americans." *New Mexico Business* 20 (June 1967): 1-13.

Sowell, Thomas. *Ethnic America: A History*. Basic Books, 1981, 244-270.

[Steinbeck in the Schools Lesson Plan: Land Grants and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#)

NOTE TO EDUCATORS REGARDING ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES: America is a pluralistic country, ethnically. It is also a pluralistic country politically—left, right, and center. Ethnic studies educators have ready access to resources from the left-of-center in the [2021 California Model Curriculum](#) and in the [Liberated Model Curriculum](#). This Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum favors teachers exposing students to views from across the political spectrum. Educators often lack guidance to materials from outside the left-of-center. Therefore, in the sections on Additional Readings and Resources, the Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum alerts educators to credible resources that provide an alternative to the other Model Curricula. In doing so, this curriculum encourages educators to acquaint students with evidence-based views from left, right, and center.

Ethnic Studies 3D: Latino American Land Ownership

After reviewing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and An Act to Ascertain and Settle Private Land Claims in the State of California, answer the following questions.

1. How long did Mexicans have to choose to become American citizens or to remain Mexican citizens?
2. What could Mexicans do to the lands they had held before the treaty?
3. How did the Mexicans get their land before the treaty? How old might some of these land claims have been?
4. What evidence can you find that some of the land grants were disputed?
5. What are several things that Mexicans might have had to do to prove their land grants?
6. What are some things that might have made proof difficult?

Some question content from: <https://www.steinbeckintheschools.com/lesson-plans/red-pony-treaty-guadalupe-hidalgo>

Ethnic Studies 3A: KWL Chart

KNOW

WONDER

LEARNED

What do we think we already know about this topic?

What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.

After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.

<i>What do we think we already know about this topic?</i>	<i>What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.</i>	<i>After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.</i>