



# Ethnic Studies Lesson 3M: Latino American Civil Rights Effectiveness

**TOPIC:**

LATINO AMERICAN HISTORY

**GRADE LEVELS:**

11-12

**TIME:**

1½ HOURS

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

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**Themes:**

4. Social Movements and Equity

**Values and Principles:**

6. Connect ourselves to past and contemporary social movements that struggle for social justice and an equitable and democratic society, and conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for a post-racist, post-systemic-racism society that promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing.

## California English and Social Science Standards Alignment

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

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence. (RI.11-12.6)

**Writing—(W.11-12)**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (W.11-12.2)

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

Analyze the impact of social movements and reforms on changing societal norms and policies. (11.10)

Analyze the impact of landmark Supreme Court cases and legislation on the advancement of civil rights and liberties. (12.5)

## Lesson Purpose

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Students will investigate Latino/Hispanic cases, people, organizations, and events to determine what aspects of American democracy have been used to further Latino/Hispanic civil rights, and their effectiveness.

## Essential Questions

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*How did Latino/Hispanic Americans use the court system, legislative acts, the right to demonstrate, the right to form organizations, the right to vote, and other rights guaranteed in a democratic society to improve their civil rights, and how effective have these measures been?*

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

## Materials

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[State Bar of Texas: Hernandez v. Texas—Oyez, Oyez, Oh Yay!](#)

[League of United Latin American Citizens: LULAC Applauds a Landmark Court Victory for Bilingual Voters in Iowa](#)

[Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund \(MALDEF\): History](#)

[UnidosUS \(formerly National Council of La Raza\): History of UnidosUS](#)

[Britannica: What is National Hispanic Heritage Month?](#)

[Oyez: Sonia Sotomayor](#)

[KWL Chart for Unit 3](#)

## Vocabulary

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*Hernandez v. Texas*

Mexican American Legal  
Defense Fund (MALDEF)

League of United Latin  
American Citizens (LULAC)

UnidosUS (formerly National  
Council of La Raza)

National Hispanic Heritage  
Month

Chief Justice Sonia Sotomayor

## Lesson Steps

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### Step 1:

- As a class, ask students what aspects of a democratic culture allow the improvement of civil rights over time. Help students highlight the court system, legislative acts, the right to demonstrate, the right to form organizations, the right to vote, etc. Ask how the students have already seen this in what has been studied so far in this unit (the Mexican Land Grant movement using the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to pursue their claims, *Mendez v. Westminster* to open educational opportunities, demonstrations for the Chicano movement, the formation of United Farm Workers and their strike, etc.).
- Let students know they'll be watching a video about an important case that uses many aspects of the democratic system to improve civil rights for all Latino/Hispanic Americans. Students should watch [State Bar of Texas: Hernandez v. Texas—Oyez, Oyez, Oh Yay!](#) (video 13 minutes, 9 seconds). Students should take notes on what aspects of American democracy were used to advance civil rights. Students should also take notes on the who, what, where, when, and why of the event in order to create a class event card. As a class, when students have completed the video, have them share what notes they took.

Answers could include: The US Constitution; local, appellate, and Supreme courts; and laws on jury selection were aspects of the American democratic system that were used. Have students help create an event card for the timeline.

### Step 2:

- Let students know they will be looking at other people, organizations, and events that have used avenues of American democracy to advance Latino/Hispanic civil rights. Students will create a five-slide slideshow to show the who, what, where, when, and why of their topic. They should also be prepared to answer the question, “How did Latinos/Hispanics use the court system, legislative acts, the right to demonstrate, the right to form organizations, and other rights guaranteed in a democratic society to improve their civil rights, and how effective have these measures been?”
- Break students into the following groups:
  - [League of United Latin American Citizens: LULAC Applauds a Landmark Court Victory for Bilingual Voters in Iowa](#)
  - [Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund \(MALDEF\): History](#)
  - [UnidosUS \(formerly National Council of La Raza\): History of UnidosUS](#)
  - [Britannica: What is National Hispanic Heritage Month?](#)
  - [Oyez: Sonia Sotomayor](#)
- When student groups have completed their slideshows, students should present their slideshows to the class.

### Step 3:

- Ask students to complete an essay (five paragraphs or longer) summarizing their learning of “How has life changed for Latino/Hispanic Americans over the last 250 years?” All students should have access to the KWL chart for this unit, and all students should cite the sources of their information accurately.

## Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

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*How did Latino/Hispanic Americans use the court system, legislative acts, the right to demonstrate, the right to form organizations, the right to vote, and other rights guaranteed in a democratic society to improve their civil rights, and how effective have these measures been?*

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

## Additional Readings and Resources

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Bernstein, David E. *Classified: The Untold Story of Racial Classification in America*. Bombardier, 2022.

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

**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 3A: KWL Chart

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**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>