



**MEXIC  
ARTE  
MUSEUM**

ARTE PARA TODOS:

**EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS**

**PAPEL PICADO LESSON PLAN**



**Papel picado** are decorative paper banners that are an integral part of the altars. The fluttering tissue-paper cut-outs move with the slightest breeze, representing the element of air or wind. They are made with a chisel that cuts through several layers of paper at a time and hung on the altar to create decorations that remind the viewer of the impermanence of life, highlighting the fragility of the tissue paper, which will eventually disintegrate with time.

<b>Arte Para Todos Lesson:</b>	<b>Dia de los Muertos</b>	
<b>Concepts</b>	Cultural Awareness	
<b>Subject Area</b>	Art & Social Studies	
<b>Lesson</b>	Papel Picado	
<b>Examples:</b>		
<b>TEKS Correlations</b>	<p>Art: 117.102-117.303</p> <p>(1A)(1B) The student considers concepts and ideas from direct observation, original sources, experiences, and imagination for original artwork and identify and understand the elements of art, including line, shape, color, texture, form, space, and value, as the fundamentals of art.</p> <p>(2A)(2B)(2C) The student integrates ideas drawn from life experiences to create original works of art; create compositions using the elements of art and principles of design; and produces modeled forms.</p> <p>(3A)(3B)(3C)(3D) The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture by analyzing artistic styles, historical periods, and a variety of cultures. The student develops global awareness and respect for the traditions and contributions of diverse cultures.</p> <p>(4A)(4B)(4C) The student responds to and analyzes artworks of self and others, contributing to the development of lifelong skills of making informed judgments and reasoned evaluations.</p>	
<b>Essential Question</b>	What is culture? How do various individuals, communities, and groups describe the characteristics of culture?	
<b>Abstract</b>	The lesson incorporates elements of a Dia de los Muertos celebration, a historically rich tradition that integrates both pre-Columbian and contemporary Mexican customs. Through learning about each element of the celebration and ofrendas, students will gain respect for the traditions and contributions of Mexican culture.	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	The student will be able to identify the cultural roots of Day of the Dead and list traditional components that are associated with the celebration. The student will understand and apply the principles of design to create their own papel picado.	
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Dia de los Muertos Papel Picado Pre-Columbian Ofrenda	Artisan Symmetry Elements of Art Principles of Design
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three 8 1/2" by 11" sheets of colored tissue paper (or more if making a longer banner)</li> <li>• Thicker paper (loose-leaf or copy paper)</li> <li>• Scissors</li> <li>• A yard of string</li> <li>• Glue stick</li> <li>• Straight pins</li> </ul>	

**Lesson Components**

Photocopy the pattern on a sheet of paper (8 1/2" x 11") or have students design their own pattern on paper. Students will only need to draw half of the design, as the tissue paper will be folded in half and cut symmetrically.

Cut pattern page in half (5 1/2" x 8 1/2").

Cut three sheets of tissue paper to 8 1/2" x 11". Fold the three sheets of tissue paper in half length-wise (5 1/2" x 8 1/2") and pin the pattern on top.

Carefully cut out your design. Make sure to leave a little space (about an inch) on the top of your design so that you can attach a string there.

Now remove the pins and unfold your paper carefully and lay the tissue paper out horizontally next to each other, 1" apart.

Lay your string horizontally across the top of the paper.

Fold the top of the paper over the string and glue it down so that it stays.

Lift up your banner by either end of the string and find a place to hang it.

**Accomodations**

Students may need assistance from an adult or a responsible peer walking through the steps of the process. Allow for extended time or a modified design. Try a variety of drawing tools (e.g., ergonomically designed pens/pencils, gel pens, soft lead pencils, weighted pencils and pens), use pencil grips as well as spring loaded or loop scissors when cutting.

**Final Product**



**Additional  
Essential Questions**

What is cultural identity? How does my culture influence identity?

What is culture and how does it influence identity and learning?

How is art infused in our life and culture?

How do one's experiences influence artwork?

What can artwork tell us about a culture or society?

How are belief systems represented and reproduced through history, literature, art, and music?

How can teachers learn about culture from their students?

What are examples of artifacts of my culture (imagery, music, food, clothing, ceremonies, pop culture icons, etc.)?

How do these visions and elements of culture influence my life?

What is my own cultural identity in relation to my family and community?

How does family play a role in shaping our values and beliefs?

How do our values and beliefs shape who we are as individuals and influence our behavior?

What can we learn from different generations?

How do artists use tools and techniques to express their ideas?

**Resources**

*Papel Picado Lesson Video*, Mexic-Arte Museum Education Department

*Dia de los Muertos Lesson Powerpoint*, Mexic-Arte Museum Education Department

[Dia de los Muertos Education Guide](#)

[Mexic-ArteMuseum.org](http://Mexic-ArteMuseum.org)

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