

Lesson Plan Quick Look

Title of Lesson: Make a Piñata

Photo/Image: From “The Piñata Exhibit: Sure to be a Smash Hit!” at the NHCC, 2017

Author: Elena Baca, Educator and Program Coordinator, NHCC, ElenaD.Baca@state.nm.us and Paloma López, AmeriCorps member

Content Area(s): Visual Arts, Mathematics

Grade/Age level: All ages

Duration: 1 class period

Materials/Cost, if any: Page 2

Standards: Page 2

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Questions for Social Emotional Learning: Page 3

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Content Area(s):

Visual Arts, Mathematics

Grade Level/Age:

All ages

Duration:

1 class period

Materials Needed/Cost:

scissors, construction paper, glue, pencil, recyclable materials and household items such as small boxes, snack bags, tissue paper, junk mail, cardboard tubes etc. (Rinse or clean out containers and snack bags before use)

Handouts:

No handouts

Standard Addressed:

[Visual Arts](#): VA:Cr1.1, VA:Cr1.2, VA:Cr2.1, VA:Cr2.3.2a, VA:Cn10.1.4a, VA:Cn11.1

[Mathematics](#): Geometry K-1

Depth of Knowledge/Bloom’s Taxonomy:

Create, analyze

Background:

Historically, piñatas were made using a ceramic jar (an olla or jarro) as a base. Sometimes the olla or jarro was covered with natural reeds or paper and then decorated with tissue paper, foil, and other embellishments. Nowadays, piñatas are made around a papier mâché base from a mold or created by hand. Piñatas can be stuffed with candies, fruit, little toys, confetti, and sometimes money. The history of piñatas and how they came to be such an important art form is embedded in global and multi-cultural intersections. Chinese ceramic forms similar to piñatas were used in spring agricultural ceremonies. Clay shapes, including animals were decorated



with colored paper and ribbons, and were filled with seeds. When the Spanish arrived in Mexico early in the 16th century, a tradition similar to that of the piñata was already part of indigenous culture. In the centuries since, European and Indigenous practices from the Americas merged to become the global tradition we are familiar with today. While piñatas are used in a variety of celebrations all over the world, the art form is endangered. Often, the tradition of piñata-making is passed down over generations yet piñateros (piñata makers) are now finding that in the 21st century, few want to learn the artistic techniques of piñata-making. The activity included in this lesson plan is not an example of traditional piñata making but rather a modern take using recyclable materials.

Skill(s):

recognize, analyze, and combine three-dimensional shapes

Essential Question(s):

1. How did your materials influence your design? Were you able to arrange your materials in different ways to come up with other designs?
2. Which shapes did you use to create your piñata?

Questions for Social Emotional Learning:

1. How does it make you feel to participate in an art-making tradition with such a long and varied history?

Objectives:

Students will...

- Learn about the history of piñatas and their cultural relevance
- Design and make a piñata out of recyclable materials

Academic Vocabulary/Word Wall:

Indigenous: originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native

Origins: the history of how something came to be

Piñata: A decorated figure of an animal containing toys and candy that is suspended from a height and broken open by blindfolded children as part of a celebration.

Piñatero/a: piñata maker

Vessel: a container

Brain Drain or Warm Up Activity:

Fill a clear container with candy or other objects of a similar size, have students guess the number of candies/objects in the container just by looking at it. For older students, provide the dimensions of the container and the candies/objects inside of it, ask them to estimate the number of candies/objects inside by solving for volume. Encourage students to think about



volume as they make their piñatas. Ask them to think about how they can find the volume of their piñata if it is made up of many shapes and/or shapes other than a cylinder.

Basic Lesson Description and Procedure:

1. Gather your materials: After laying your materials out in front of you, observe what shapes you see? Play with your materials until you see an idea for a piñata begin to emerge. How do your materials inspire your design?
2. Make a sketch: Using a pencil and paper, sketch out design ideas for your piñata. Can you combine your materials in different ways to make different designs?
3. Build your piñata: Use your recyclable materials, scissors, tape and/or glue to build your piñata.
4. Decorate your piñata: Use the shiny side of snack bags, tissue paper, wrapping paper or other colorful paper to decorate the outside of your piñata. Using the scissors, cut your paper(s) of choice into long strips, then make several cuts along the long end of the paper strips to make fringe. Be careful to only make cuts halfway up the strip so that your fringe stays in one piece and is easier to glue on to your piñata. (For loopy fringe, cut wider strips of paper, fold them in half long ways, and cut the fringe along the folded edge). Glue your fringe to your piñata. Start from the bottom of your piñata and work your way to the top.
5. Fill your piñata: Fill your piñata with candy or little toys. You can smash your piñata with family or friends, or you can keep it as a work of art.

Assessment/Observation Activity:

Written or oral response: Write a short paragraph or tell a teacher/caregiver/peer about your piñata. What steps did you take to create your piñata? What materials did you use? How did you combine your materials to make your piñata's shape? What theme did you choose and why? How did you feel making your piñata?

Lesson Conclusion/Potential Practice at Home:

Students can take their piñatas home to either break with family or friends or keep as artwork.

Accommodations & Modifications:

Younger learners and others who have trouble using scissors can tear pieces of paper and glue them on to their piñatas instead of cutting fringe. This method is also recommended for very small piñatas.

Culturally Responsive Instruction and Modifications:

Discuss the history of piñatas, their origins, and the evolution of their cultural purposes. Keep in mind that not everyone celebrates birthdays and/or holidays.

Relevance to families and communities:

Ask students to think about and share the different ways in which they celebrate holidays, special occasions, and/or achievements. Who do they celebrate with? Do they have any special traditions?



Cross-Curricular Connections:

world history, cultural studies, art

Additional Resources:

1. Ancona, George. *The Piñata Maker/El Piñatero*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1994.
2. Thong, Roseanne Greenfield. *One is a Piñata: A Book of Numbers* (John Parra, Illus.). San Francisco: Chronicle Books LLC, 2019.
3. [History of the Piñata](#)
4. [Piñatas to Break Open](#)

Extension:

[Mathematics](#): Geometry 6-8

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.6.G.A.2, CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.6.G.A.4,
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.8.G.C.9

- Ask students to find the volume and surface area of the materials used for their piñatas. What is the piñata's total volume?

[Social Studies](#): History, Geography K-4

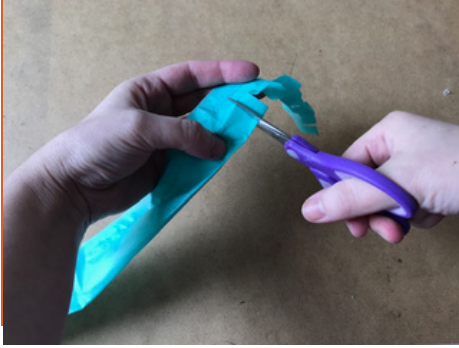
- Share the history of piñatas (see link in 'additional resources') to start a dialogue about the how different cultures can influence customs, or have students write a reflection on how customs and traditions start, how they are shared from culture to culture, and how and why they change.
- Ask students to draw a world map or make a timeline. Trace the piñata's journey from China to New Mexico. How did traditions surrounding the piñata change along the way and why?

Feedback:

[Take this survey to share your feedback on this lesson plan.](#)

Add a little Fringe to your Fiesta!

¡Pon un poquito de franja a tu Fiesta!



1

Cut paper into long strips $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1" wider than you want the fringe to be. Make sure to leave more space at the top of the paper strips for the little ones. This is a great activity for younger children to practice using scissors!

Corta el papel en tiras largas de $\frac{1}{2}$ " a 1" más anchas de lo que deseas que sea la franja. Asegúrese de dejar más espacio en la parte superior de las tiras de papel para los más pequeños. Esta es una gran actividad para que los niños más pequeños practiquen el uso de tijeras!

2

Make several cuts along the long end of your strips of paper. Be careful to leave space on the top of your strips; don't cut all the way through or you will have confetti.

Haz varios cortes a lo largo del extremo largo de sus tiras de papel. Ten cuidado de dejar espacio en la parte superior de tus tiras; no cortes todo el camino a través o tendrás confeti.

3

For loopy fringe, cut wider sections of paper, fold your strips of paper in half lengthwise, and cut the fringe along the folded edge.

Para flecos en bucle, corta secciones más anchas de papel, dobla tus tiras de papel por la mitad a lo largo y corta el fleco a lo largo del borde doblado.

4

Glue the fringe to your piñata. Start from the bottom of your piñata and work your way to the top. Make sure your strips of fringe overlap. Layer different colors of fringe to make things colorful!

Pega tu franja a tu piñata. Empieza desde abajo de tu piñata y trabaja hasta que llegues arriba, asegurate que tus tiras de franjas se superponen. Capa diferentes colores de flecos para hacer las cosas coloridas!

5

Rub the fringe tissue softly to ruffle it up.

Frote el tejido de los flecos suavemente para enrollarlo.