

MAPPING CORN

Focus Lesson: Mapping Corn

Materials:

Corn kernels
 Maps and atlases
 Large drawn or printed map to glue on
 Glue
 Yarn
 Various corn literature
 Journals
 Butcher paper
 Markers
The Honey Jar by Rigoberta Menchu.
The Life and Times of Corn by Charles Micucci

Optional: computers for research

Time: 50 minutes

***Common Core Standards:**
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1](#)

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.4](#)

Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

Thinking Skill: Locate, Sequence, Infer, Evaluate Information

Objective:

Students will understand that culture is a set of life and group values and customs including language, religion, tradition, and stories.
 Students will acknowledge the explanations of how and why certain natural phenomena came to exist through Mayan tales.
 Students will understand the interdependence of life forms, food, and the environment.
 Students will locate and present the impact of corn in other countries.

Connection:

Corn is one of the world's staple foods, meaning we use it and consume it a lot to sustain human life! Corn was first cultivated among the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas in Central America. While we have been learning about the ways our food is made and about how it gets to us, it is also important to look at the historical origins of our food. We are not the only students that have eaten or used corn.

Explicit Instruction:

A culture is a way of life for individual groups of people. In many cultures, people tell stories as a way to connect to and remember the past. In Rigoberta Menchu's book, we are offered a taste of Mayan culture and we can begin to understand what influence corn has in other areas of the world outside of The United States, specifically in Menchu's culture in Guatemala.

Guided Practice:

Optional: Pop some popcorn, pass it out, and chat with students about what they know about corn and how they use it in their lives. Any stories relating to corn they might like to share?

What does it take to bring corn from an American farm to our classroom? Growing corn is an interconnected process:

Assign several students a role in this process. With each role assignment, pass a ball of yarn around to make a web. When all roles are assigned, ask the farmer to tug on the web. Who felt the pull? Ask another to tug. Growing corn is a process that relies on many factors.

Farmer
Rain
Sun
Nutrients
Farm tools
Farm workers
Truckers
Packers
Grocery store workers

Introduce Mayan culture to the class and point on a map where Central America is located, specifically Guatemala.

Read *The Story of the Weasel Who Helped People Find Corn* in *The Honey Jar* by Rigoberta Menchu.

On a large drawn or printed map of the world glue corn kernels onto Central America. This map will represent our *kernels of knowledge* as we explore how corn impacts the world.

Independent Practice:

Using books about corn, or other online resources, have students research corn production around the world. Find facts about corn all over the world! Document facts on sticky notes and place on large butcher paper on board.

Next, students must locate their country on a world map.

On a large hand-drawn or printed world map, ask students to glue some corn kernels on top of their country where their corn fact takes place or concerns.

Have corn kernels in cup beside world map, as well as atlases, and other world maps.

Reflection – Group Share:

Continue to glue and map the use of corn around the world. Have students present what they discovered and point out location of countries found on the class map. We all rely on others and the environment for our food and for survival. In their journals, have students write a creative story about how corn gets from the farm to their tables. Use mythical or realistic creatures or animals.

Reading list:

The Honey Jar by Rigoberta Menchu.

The Life and Times of Corn by Charles Micucci

Teacher Note: