

CALAVERAS LITERARIAS

INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVE:

Students will learn about and discuss the practice of “calaveras literarias.” Calaveras literarias are a form of poetry that has become quite popular in Mexico during Día de los Muertos. These poems range from being teasing, joking, fun, satirical or critical as the writer highlights a particular quality or trait of the deceased subject of the poem. Initially these poems were meant to make fun of death itself, but later began to focus on politicians, government leaders, and other public personalities. Today they are often composed in ‘honor’ of a specific person or famous personality. They typically are written in metric verse with a rhyme scheme. An example, in Spanish, is included below (source: http://es.wikipedía.org/wiki/Calaveras_literarias and http://es.wikipedía.org/wiki/Calaveras_literarias).

“Mujeres juntas, ni difuntas!
Dijo la catrina llevándose a su galán,
Es más fácil que lloremos juntas
Que éste se pase de patán!”

In translation, the poem loses its rhyme scheme and some of its humor, but a loose translation could be:

“Women together, whether dead or alive!”
Said la catrina, taking her beau,
It’s easier to cry together
Than it is to deal with this jerk!”

RECOMMENDED GRADES:

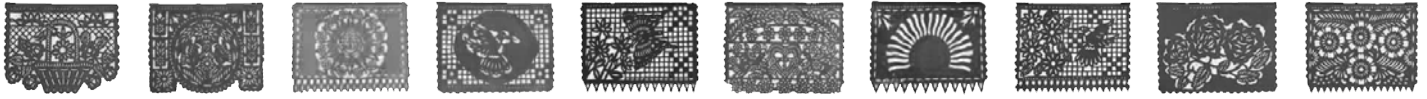
Adaptable for all grade levels.

ESTIMATED TIME:

1-1.5 hours

VOCABULARY:

- Satire
- Calavera literaria
- Muerte
- Death



MATERIALS:

- Pen
- Paper

PROCEDURE:

1. Introduce students to calaveras literarias through examples from the newspaper in Mexico, or examples found on the internet.
 - Examples/information can be found at <http://www.calaverasliterarias.net/> or http://es.wikipeDía.org/wiki/Calaveras_literarias.
2. Discuss the rules of this genre of poetry—rhyming, quatrain, satire, etc.
3. Model how to write this type of poetry by creating one as a whole class.
4. Then, have students write their own calavera literaria as individuals, partners, and/or small groups. An example of a way to display this is found at <http://lluvisnita.blogspot.com/2009/11/celebrando-Día-de-muertos-con-calaveras.html>

STANDARDS & BENCHMARKS:

Writing

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.