



LATIN AMERICAN  
& IBERIAN INSTITUTE

# Hispanic Heritage Month

begins September 15<sup>th</sup> and ends October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated in the U.S. each year to recognize and honor past and current Hispanics, Latinxs and their diverse cultures. This celebration began in 1968 under President Lyndon Johnson's administration as a week-long holiday; however, it was expanded into the month-long celebration it is today 20-years later by President Ronald Reagan. Although not all Latin American countries celebrate their independence from Europe during Hispanic Heritage Month, this 30-day period does include eight countries' independence days in addition to Indigenous People's Day, which is celebrated throughout the Americas, and Día de la Hispanidad, which is celebrated in Spain. This month-long celebration reminds Hispanics and Latinxs in the U.S. to cherish their cultures, histories, and identities. We hope that you enjoy this activity and that it helps your students learn about this special month.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES** This resource incorporates activities aligned to the following [Common Core Standards](#):

## 1. Reading Standards for Informational Text:

- **Key Ideas and Details & Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** Through the video and news article about Hispanic Heritage Month, students will analyze the evidence provided to discern the differences between terms like Hispanic and Latinx in addition to identifying the importance of this month-long celebration. (1) *"Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text;"* (2) *"Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas;"* (7) *"Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words;"* (9) *"Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take."*

## 2. Writing Standards:

- **Text Types and Purposes & Production and Distribution of Writing:** After watching the video and reading the video on Hispanic Heritage Month, students will reflect on their previous knowledge and apply evidence and details from the video and article to their creative writing presentation in the final activity. (1) *"Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence;"* (2) *"Write informative / explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content;"* (4) *"Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience;"* (5) *"Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach;"* (6) *"Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others."*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15<sup>th</sup> and ends on October 15<sup>th</sup>. In the following activities, you will learn about Hispanic Heritage Month, important Latinx figures, and more!

### **Before reading:**

1. What's the difference between being "Spanish," "Hispanic" and "Latino/Latina"?
2. Is "Latino" or "Latina" a race?
3. Which countries are in Latin America?
4. What languages are spoken in Latin America?
5. What does Hispanic Heritage month celebrate?

**Watch the video below from *Bustle on YouTube*, correct your responses above as needed, and answered the questions below. <https://youtu.be/gS2tdjzla8Y>**



What are 2 surprising things you learned from this video?

What is 1 question you still have about Hispanic, Latino, and Spanish identities?

## Hispanic Heritage Month Aims to Embrace Many Different Traditions

By Hanna Guerrero, adapted by Newsela staff

Published:09/13/2017



Alpha Cindy Avitia High School, East San Jose, California, students (from left) Cesar Lopez, Zuleyma Ponce, Abraham Espino, Itzel Linares and Michelle Ortega. photo by: Christina Pirzada

As students at Alpha Cindy Avitia High School in East San Jose, California, began the new school year, five students walked into a classroom. They were not there to take a class or study.

The Hispanic students had gathered to talk about Hispanic Heritage Month, which starts September 15.

After introductions, the conversation began: "Do you know what Hispanic Heritage Month is?" the students were asked. A resounding "no" filled the room.

Sophomore Michelle Ortega identifies as Mexican-American. She said that Hispanic Heritage Month sounded like a celebration of Hispanic heritage for those who are children of parents from Latin America. In other words, she felt it was not for her.

Hispanic Heritage Month is a national effort to pay tribute to Hispanic Americans who have contributed to and enriched the United States. Started in 1968, the event was initially only a week-long under President Lyndon Johnson but has since then turned into a month-long celebration. Every year, it begins on September 15 and goes until October 15.

### What is Hispanic Culture?

Hispanics themselves don't have a strict definition. They are a diverse group who share some aspects of their lives but differ in many ways. Hispanics come from 20 Spanish-speaking countries. There is no single narrative for Hispanic immigration to the United States. Each story is unique.

To Michelle and the other students at her school, Hispanic Heritage Month did not seem to celebrate all of their cultures. Celebrating the many different traditions of all the Spanish-speaking countries can be difficult. Day of the Dead is an example, as it is celebrated in several Latin American countries, but the way each celebrates it is different.

Zuleyma Ponce is from El Salvador. She says that Day of the Dead is not celebrated there like it is in Mexico. It is a more somber affair. The colorful altars and lively skull-filled festivities are scaled down to a simple cemetery visit to leave roses.

### Celebrating All Americans: Hispanic Heritage

From September 15 to October 15, we celebrate the histories, cultures and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

#### Who is Hispanic?

Hola, ¿Cómo estas?



**Hispanic**  
People who speak Spanish as their first language

**Latino/Latina**  
People in the U.S. who are from, or descendants of people from, Latin America



Spanish is a gendered language. Adjectives end in -o or -a depending on whether you're talking about a boy or a girl. In order to include people of all gender identities, the term "Latinx" is often used.

#### Latin America

All of the countries in Central and South America, as well as Mexico which is part of North America.

Not everyone in Latin America speaks Spanish. For example, Brazil is a Latin American country, but people there speak Portuguese. Also, millions of people in Latin American countries speak an indigenous language, such as Quechua or Aymara.

The students echo a common feeling among most Hispanics in the United States. A Pew study found that 71 percent of Hispanics say they each have a different culture. It may not be a surprise that during Hispanic Heritage Month, much of the focus is on Mexican history and culture. The United States has a history with its southern neighbor that goes back more than two centuries. After all, the majority of the Hispanic population in the United States is of Mexican origin, 63.4 percent to be exact. Another 9.5 percent is Puerto Rican, 3.8 percent Salvadoran and 3.7 percent Cuban.

### Terms Coined for the U.S. Census

The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" can be confusing because they are often used interchangeably. Hispanic refers to Spanish-speaking individuals including those from Spain and most of the communities in South America, with a few exceptions. Brazil, the largest exception, is home to 207 million people who speak Portuguese, not Spanish. Latino refers to people from countries in Latin America including countries like Brazil that do not speak Spanish. It does not, however, include all Spanish-speakers, such as people who come from Spain.

Both of the terms were coined in the United States for the U.S. Census, a count of the U.S. population that takes place every 10 years. In 1976, U.S. Congress passed a law that created the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" to make it easier for the Census Bureau to collect the information of U.S. residents of Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Central American, South American and European descent.

Tenth-grader Abraham Espina believes the two terms are an easy way to include people from Latin America or who speak Spanish, but he doesn't identify as either. "Referring to me as a Latino can be anyone. I can be called Latino even though I'm Mexican," he explained. None of the students called themselves Latino or Hispanic, and tenth-grader Cesar Lopez identifies himself as Honduran.

The Spanish language comes from the Spanish conquistadors. It is one thing Hispanics have in common, although different regions speak differently. Cesar speaks about his experience while making his journey to the United States. The Honduran had to drop his native accent and adopt Mexican slang to blend in while in Mexico, and now that he is in the U.S., he is often mistaken for being Mexican.

Zuleyma, who is from El Salvador, shares that she, too, is often mistaken for being Mexican, as it is often assumed that all Spanish-speakers are from Mexico.

### A Language in Common

Although Spanish is common, there are many languages in Latin America. Abraham is from Mexico and said there are indigenous people like the Maya who speak Zapotec. Indigenous people lived in Central and South America before the arrival of Spanish conquistadors. Is it accurate to name these communities with words that were created in the U.S.?

#### Did you know...

- ▶ There are **470 million** native Spanish-speakers.
- ▶ Spanish is the official language of **20 countries**.



- ▶ There were probably around **1,750 languages** spoken in Latin America at the time that European colonization began.

#### Why is it in the middle of the month?

Several countries celebrate their Independence Day during the month of September.

**September 15:**

 El Salvador	 Costa Rica	 Guatemala
 Honduras	 Nicaragua	
<b>September 16:</b>		<b>September 18 :</b>
 Mexico		 Chile

"I sincerely think they have been there since the beginning and that is where we trace our roots from," Abraham said. Therefore, the terms we have created don't apply accurately to these communities, since we do not have the right to rename them. Abraham noted that many Latinos and Hispanics have culture and traditions that date back to their indigenous ancestors.

If language, culture and traditions are different among Hispanics and Latinos, is there anything that unifies them? Michelle believes that Latinos in the United States share values that brought them to the U.S., such as "hard work, education and better opportunities."

Michelle herself has big dreams. She hopes to become a lawyer in order to give back to her community. Other students hope to pursue engineering, criminology, veterinary medicine and professional soccer.

### **Learning a New Language Can Be Difficult**

Students who speak English with an accent can be subject to ridicule, and Zuleyma and Cesar said other students have made fun of them. Cesar says it's easy to learn a new language as a child, but when you get older, learning a language can be difficult. He wishes his peers understood that.

"They don't understand. They don't put themselves in our shoes and see how difficult it is to learn (the language)," he said.

Michelle feels similarly, voicing that she feels most comfortable practicing speaking in English in a bilingual class, where she has the option of using Spanish as well, when needed. Michelle appreciates different languages and loves the challenge of learning a new one. It was one of the biggest differences she noted when she moved to the United States from Mexico.

She pointed out that when she came to the U.S., she got to learn about other cultures, too.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15 to mark the independence days of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. On September 16 Mexico celebrates its independence. On September 18 Chile celebrates its independence.

On October 12, Columbus Day is celebrated in the United States. Some Spanish-speaking countries such as Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Venezuela celebrate their culture instead of honoring the Italian explorer who colonized the region.

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**Main idea statement:** In 1-2 sentences, summarize the main idea of this article using your own words.

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**Comprehension check:** After reading the text, answer the following questions. Be sure to mark in the text where you find your answers.

1. What is the author’s purpose for writing this article?
  - a. To provide definitions for the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino”
  - b. To explain how schools can celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month
  - c. To give information about the different cultures celebrated during Hispanic Heritage Month
  - d. To encourage readers to travel to Latin America and other Spanish-speaking regions
  
2. Read the following sentence from the section “Language Beyond Spanish”:

“I sincerely think they have been there since the beginning and that is where we trace our roots from,” Abraham said.

How does Abraham’s perspective point out a problem with the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino”?
  - a. It proves that students from different Latin American countries struggle to connect with each other.
  - b. It proves that many Latino students have a lot of pride in their family’s original country of origin.
  - c. It shows how “Hispanic” and “Latino” can mean many different things to different people.
  - d. It shows how some believe that their true identities are not accurately reflected in these terms.
  
3. Which sentence from the article is BEST supported by the article’s second image “Celebrating All Americans”?
  - a. Hispanics themselves don’t have a strict definition.
  - b. Hispanics come from 20 Spanish-speaking countries.
  - c. Celebrating the many different traditions of all the Spanish-speaking countries can be difficult.
  - d. A Pew study found that 71% of Hispanics say they each have a different culture.
  
4. How does the infographic on page 3 contribute to the reader’s understanding of why some Latino students do not relate to Hispanic Heritage Month?
  - a. The graphic illustrates how many of the first languages spoken in Latin American are neglected.
  - b. The graphic illustrates how broad and vague terms like “Hispanic” and “Latino” actually are.
  - c. The graphic illustrates the significant geographic distance between Latin America and Spain.
  - d. The graphic illustrates how little Hispanics and Latinos have in common.

**Reflection activity:** Use the text and video to support your answers to the questions below.

In your own words, what is the difference between “Hispanic” and “Latino”?

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What does Hispanic Heritage Month celebrate? And, why is this month special?

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**Creative writing activity:** Now that you have learned about the differences between “Hispanic” and “Latino,” and about Hispanic Heritage Month, research an important Latinx figure to celebrate this special month. There are some options in the table below; feel free to choose someone that was not included on this list and conduct research online to answer the questions below about your important Latinx figure. Use the space below to take notes about your person; feel free to add any other interesting and surprising details about the person you choose! Lastly, use your notes to create a poster or digital poster to present your person and to argue why they are important and deserve to be celebrated during this month.

**Latinx figures:**

<b>Activists:</b>	<b>Art, Film &amp; Music:</b>	<b>Athletes:</b>	<b>STEM:</b>	<b>Writers:</b>
César Chávez	Yalitza Aparicio	Saul “Canelo” Álvarez	Stephanie Castillo (Latina Girls Code)	Isabel Allende
Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales	Diane Guerrero	Fabiana Claudino	Jaime Escalante	Julia Álvarez
Dolores Huerta	Salma Hayek	Oscar De La Hoya	Nicole Hernández Hammer	Luis W. Álvarez
Alexandria Ocasio Cortez	Frida Kahlo	Laurie Hernández	Ellen Ochoa	Jorge Luis Borges
Oscar Romero	Diego Luna	Al Horford	Severo Ochoa	Sandra Cisneros
Sonia Sotomayor	Maluma	Mariana Pajón	Carlos Slim Helú	Junot Diaz
	Ozuna	Alex Rodríguez	Mirna Román	Reyna Grande
	Diego Rivera	Amy Rodríguez		Piri Thomas

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Place of birth (city &amp; country):</b>	
<b>Current age <u>OR</u> Dates of birth and death:</b>	
<b>Career(s):</b>	
<b>Passions, interests, and/or hobbies:</b>	
<b>Interesting fact about this person:</b>	
<b>Notable accomplishment or way in which they have been influential:</b>	
<b>In your opinion, why is this person important for the Latinx community?  Why does this person deserve to be celebrated during Hispanic Heritage Month? <i>(be sure to include relevant evidence to defend your response)</i></b>	