

A BADA RETELLING OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION**

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

This activity is inspired by Ben Thompson's BadA** descriptions of important historical figures. His site can be found at <http://www.badassoftheweek.com/index.cgi>. We're particularly fond of his entry on Pancho Villa which can be found at <http://www.badassoftheweek.com/villa.html>. Please be aware: There is liberal use of profanity in Thompson's writing; it is not appropriate for all audiences and should be pre-screened before any part of it is used in a classroom setting or with students.

The purpose of this activity is to provide students a more detailed overview of the events and people of the Mexican Revolution through reading the provided hand-out "Bad** Retelling of the Mexican Revolution." This is a simplified version of the Mexican Revolution that has been written in a more 'teen-age friendly/reader-friendly' style. It can be used in conjunction with textbook readings or other materials written about the Mexican Revolution.

MATERIALS

- ☞ Copies of the Hand-out "Bada** Retelling of the Mexican Revolution" for each student
- ☞ Pens, pencils or highlighters
- ☞ Optional paper and markers for the timeline

PROCEDURE

25. Provide a copy of the "Bada** Retelling of the Mexican Revolution" to each student. In preparation for this activity, you may want to divide the document into sections or setting stopping points where the class can discuss what occurred in the reading and ask questions about the events of that specific section.
26. Ask students to read the "Bada** Retelling of the Mexican Revolution". Students can read this individually, in pairs, or small groups or it can be used as a read aloud activity. As students move through the reading, they should highlight or underline anything they think is important or significant.

EXTENSION

Once students have completed the reading, have them create a timeline of the major events of the Revolution. The reading purposefully doesn't focus on dates, but the description of people and events. The created timeline wouldn't have to include dates, the purpose would be to assess

student understanding of the major events of the Revolution. As a whole class, ask students to identify the major events of the Revolution in the order they occurred using the reading. Once a major event is correctly identified, designate a student to write that event on the provided paper and hang it up. Continue this until the timeline is complete. Leave the timeline up as a reference resource for students.

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The Mexican Revolution, one of the most epic wars ever fought by guys with awesome moustaches, began in 1910 during the perennially crappy rule of one Porfirio Díaz, whose moustache was weak. Life during this period sucked equally for rural and city dwellers. Lands that traditionally belonged to indigenous peoples were taken by the state and transferred to a tiny group of Díaz's ridiculously wealthy friends and allies. City dwellers worked twelve hour days for next to nothing, while rural indigenous peasants were essentially slaves on their own land. These conditions pissed off a peasant from Morelos, rightfully so, named Emiliano Zapata and he began raising an army in southern Mexico. More on that later.

While Díaz had originally come to power in Mexico by running on a campaign of “no-reelection,” he stayed in power for decades and was re-elected president like a billion times. One day, an upper-class politician named Francisco I. Madero decided it would be a great idea to run against Díaz in the 1910 elections. Díaz soiled himself when he heard the news. He immediately had Madero arrested and thrown in jail, warning him beforehand that “snitches get stitches.” Madero was none too pleased. He orchestrated a jailbreak and fled to San Antonio, Texas, where he drafted the inexplicably named Plan of San Luis Potosí, which basically called Díaz a total jerk and set a date for the Revolution to begin.

It was on. Díaz mustered up his federal troops and began crushing Madero and his followers in battle after battle in northern Mexico. Madero, who apparently couldn't fight his way out of a paper bag, needed some serious help. Luckily, a bandit from Chihuahua by the name of Francisco “Pancho” Villa joined Madero's cause and started smoking federales left and right. Villa teamed up with an arms dealer named Pascual Orozco and together the two were unstoppable.

At this point, Díaz was tired of getting his a** kicked and decided that it was time to negotiate with Madero. The two agreed to meet. However, Villa and Orozco pretty much ignored the message that the a** kicking was on standby. They stormed into Ciudad Juárez, guns blazing, leaving a trail of death and destruction in their wake. The loss of Juárez was so bad that Díaz stepped down from the presidency and ran away to Europe where he would die uneventfully after a long life of ruining Mexico. Madero was now president.

Madero's first act as President of Mexico was to get overthrown and assassinated. It all started when he refused to return indigenous lands, which caused Zapata to issue his Plan of Ayala and lead his army into the federal district, kicking some serious tail. Meanwhile, as Madero concentrated on Zapata's uprising, the U.S. state department decided that it didn't like Madero. Am-

bassador Henry Lane Wilson started pulling some strings and organizing a coup that would put Madero's General Victoriano Huerta in power. With some instruction from Ambassador Wilson, Huerta arrested Madero, killed him on the way to the prison, and seized power for himself. The Huerta dictatorship was underway.

Needless to say, Huerta was the worst guy ever and everyone knew it. Zapata really didn't give a damn who was in power if indigenous people weren't getting their land back. When Huerta sent some "peace commissioners" to secure Zapata's allegiance, Zapata murdered them with his own hands. Without batting an eye, he prepared to wage his third war against a Mexican president. Meanwhile, in the north, Villa, who had recently picked up the appropriately cool nickname "Centaur of the North," formed a triple alliance with two other northerners: Álvaro Obregón and Venustiano Carranza. The three raised armies and marched toward Mexico City with their sights set on Huerta. It was about to get real.

While all of this was going on, some wayward U.S. sailors landed in Veracruz, got totally wasted, and stumbled on to a restricted dock. This was a serious affront to whatever bureaucrat was stationed at the dock, and he would not stand for it. The sailors were arrested and thrown in jail. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson was livid. He fired a hastily written text message to Huerta, which read "Oh hell no!," to which Huerta responded, "LMAO." This meant war.

The U.S. invaded Veracruz, killing a bunch of innocent people and making a bunch of snarky comments in American newspapers. Faced with the U.S. occupation, and fighting on two fronts against Zapata in the south and the triple alliance in the north, Huerta resigned in embarrassment.

The leaders of the revolution sent delegates to meet at Aguascalientes where they would set forth their plans for Mexico. As it turns out, these guys had nothing in common other than the shared fact that they all thought Huerta and Díaz totally sucked. They bickered for a while until Venustiano Carranza decided that he too could fail as president of Mexico. He stated his intentions in his Plan of Guadalupe, which curiously made no mention of land reform. Big mistake. When Zapata heard that another jackass was going to "bring liberty" to Mexico without a word about land, he prepared to wage his fourth war against a Mexican president.

This time, the stars aligned and the long awaited alliance between Villa and Zapata was finally formed. The two met at a school near the capital and had a raging party where the most bada** photo in Mexican history was taken. Obregón decided to remain allied to Carranza and the new battle lines were thus drawn. Zapata went back to southern Mexico and penned some open letters to Carranza, calling him a hater. Villa and Obregón went to war in the north and met on the field of battle in Celaya, where Obregón's strategically placed machinegun nests cut Villa's Division of the North to pieces.

Villa was PISSED OFF. Apparently the U.S. had pledged its support to Carranza and supplied Obregón with the previously mentioned machineguns. Villa loaded his trusty rifle, waxed the tips of his trusty moustache into fine points, and crossed the U.S. border with his remaining army to randomly attack Columbus, New Mexico, in the only land invasion against the United States in the twentieth century. Guy had some serious cajones.

In typical U.S. fashion, President Wilson sent a fleet of unmanned attack drones, commanded by General John Pershing, on an expedition into Mexico to hunt Villa down. Meanwhile, Carranza decided it was time to get rid of Zapata, who had recently acquired his own appropriately cool nickname, “Atilla of the South.” Carranza sent one of his colonels to Morelos to gain Zapata’s trust and assassinate him. The Zapatistas had been to too many rodeos to fall for this bush league tactic, and they forced Carranza’s colonel to kill a bunch of Carranza’s own soldiers before he would be trustworthy enough to set foot anywhere near Zapata. Unfortunately, the colonel executed this grisly task and was allowed to meet with Zapata at the Hacienda de Chinameca. There he assassinated Zapata in cold blood. As he lay dying, Zapata made some totally sweet quotes that can be read on T-shirts worldwide today.

In a final plot twist, Álvaro Obregón decided that it was his turn to be president of Mexico and he announced his Plan of Agua Prieta, switched sides, rode into Mexico City and chased that punk Zapata-killing Carranza out of town. In a shining example of pure Karma, Carranza was later killed in his sleep by some unknown assassin in a mystery that remains unsolved to this day (Obregón killed him).

It turns out that Obregón was pretty good at actually forming a political base and doing the things that presidents of countries are supposed to do. He signed a peace agreement with Villa—who was still on the lam from General Pershing—implemented some land reform, and gained the respect of Zapata’s followers. Obregón thus brought stability to Mexico and ended the decade-long Revolution that had been marked by backstabbing, assassinations every ten minutes, and the misguided aspirations of dozens of politicians who couldn’t seem to figure out that the war was about land.