

An Educator's Guide to Latin American Film
Granito

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide accompanies a documentary that takes place in and deals with an issue concerning Latin America. It was produced by Sheena Chakeres on behalf of the Latin American and Iberian Institute (LAI) at The University of New Mexico as part of a series of lessons for high school English or History students or advanced Spanish language students. The purpose of these lessons is to expose students to the politics, economics, history, and threats to Latin Americans and how their stories relate to the political history of the region.

ABOUT THE LAI

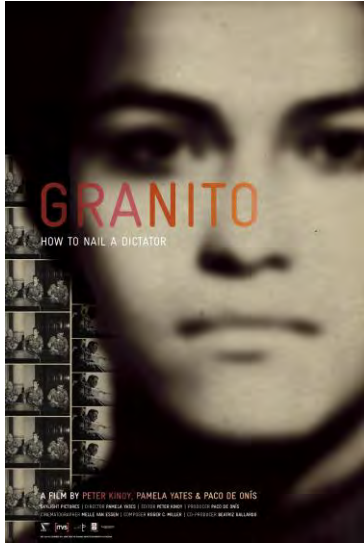
The LAI is an interdisciplinary resource center at The University of New Mexico. As part of its mission to promote a better understanding of Latin America among diverse constituents, it develops curriculum materials and related resources for teaching about Latin America in the K-12 classroom. To learn more about other classroom resources produced by the LAI, visit the [LAI website](#).

LESSON OVERVIEW

Granito traces how documentary footage from 1982 Guatemala becomes evidence against war criminals in the present. Using this film, this lesson plan will:

- 1) Open a dialogue with students about the Guatemalan Civil War.
- 2) Develop students' literacy skills, in English and/or Spanish
- 3) Deepen students' understanding of indigenous history in Guatemala and the genocide that would shape the country's identity
- 4) Introduce American politics with regards to our neighbors in the global south

Granito



Directed by Pamela Yates

Produced by Paco de Onís

Edited by Peter Kinoy

Trailer: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/granito/video-granito-trailer/>

Video: Available on PrimeVideo (as of April 2019)

SUMMARY:

In 1982, Pamela Yates visited Guatemala to document the guerrilla resistance. The footage would provide key evidence for bringing the indictment against former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt. *Granito: How to Nail a Dictator* shows how film, supporting a new generation of human rights activists, became a *granito* — a tiny grain of sand — that helped tip the scales of justice.

LEVEL:

Grades 10-12/ Spanish III, IV, AP/World History, Latin American Studies, Economics

THEMES:

Guatemala, justice, politics, indigenous rights, genocide, dictatorships

DURATION:

1 hour and 41 minutes

APPLICABLE STANDARDS

The English Language Arts Common Core Standards mirror the current Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (see [Skills Map](#)). Both encourage a long sequence of language study in grades K–12 to promote a high level of literacy and communication ability.

COMMON CORE STATE → LITERACY → Grades 11-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Note: This documentary is approximately 1 hour 38 minutes, and therefore, this lesson is designed for 3 days. The majority of the film is conducted in English and, when Spanish or a Mayan dialect are spoken, subtitles are in English. There are some violent elements that may require a permission slip for some teachers.

ENGLISH LESSON PLAN

This lesson plan works well as a follow up lesson to the LAll's related literature guide for I, Rigoberta Menchú.

Pre-viewing

To begin, introduce [Guatemala's civil war](#) and the genocide of indigenous people. Referred to as the "Silent Holocaust," a military counterinsurgency effort against leftist groups from 1960-1996 led to the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Maya peasants. In 2013, former military dictator General Efraín Ríos Montt (1982–1983) was indicted for his role in the most intense stage of the genocide. Follow ongoing information about the trials [here](#).

Then, go over the key terms with students (on worksheet). In addition to answering the questions during the film, ask them to write down any questions that arise for them as they watch.

SPANISH LESSON PLAN

Note: This lesson plan could act as a precursor for the LAll's podcast guide to the Radio Ambulante episode, "El Juez," and a follow-up to the chapter lesson on Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú.

To begin, introduce [Guatemala's civil war](#) and the genocide of indigenous people. Referred to as the "Silent Holocaust," a military counterinsurgency effort against leftist groups from 1960-1996 led to the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Maya peasants. In 2013, former military dictator General Efraín Ríos Montt (1982–1983) was indicted for his role in the most intense stage of the genocide.

Then, go over the key terms with students (on worksheet). In addition to answering the questions during the film, ask them to write down any questions that arise as they watch.

Name: _____

Film: *Granito*

KEY TERMS

A **guerrilla** is a member of a small independent group taking part in irregular fighting, typically against larger regular forces.

EGP- Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (Guerrilla Army of the Poor)

A **death squad** is an armed group that conducts extrajudicial killings or forced disappearances of persons for the purposes such as political repression, assassinations, torture, genocide, ethnic cleansing, or revolutionary terror.

A **counterinsurgency** is a military or political action taken against the activities of guerrillas or revolutionaries.

To **extradite** is to hand over (a person accused or convicted of a crime) to the jurisdiction of the foreign state in which the crime was committed.

Impunity is exemption from punishment or freedom from the injurious consequences of an action.

PART 1 (0-32:11)

1. What is Yates' framing question for this documentary?
2. What is Almudena Bernabeu's role? What would be her challenges?
3. What evidence exists in official U.S. documents that explains how genocide occurred in Guatemala?
4. How does Fredy Peccerelli's (the forensic anthropologist) work contribute to the investigation? What does he tell us?
5. Why did Gustavo Meoño found and lead the guerrilla resistance? (If you've read I, Rigoberta Menchú, what parts of his statements connect with that chapter?)
6. Who is Benedicto Lucas García?

PART 2 (32:12-1:05:10)

7. How does Rigoberta Menchú qualify Ronald Reagan's statements?
8. What happened in 1996?
9. What evidence was needed to prove that Ríos Montt was directly responsible for the massacres of thousands of indigenous people?
10. What is the Association for Justice and Reconciliation?

11. Describe what Antonio Caba Caba witnessed when he was 11.
12. Why did Menchú and others go to Spain to seek justice for the war crimes?
13. What was *Operación Sofía*?
14. How did the military displace blame for and/or justify the massacres?
15. How did Guatemala avoid the Spanish court's involvement in the case?

PART 3: (1:05:13-1:41)

16. After the war, how has the Guatemalan government continue to exploit indigenous people?
17. Why does Antonio not leave for more opportunity in another country?
18. Explain what "disappeared" means for families and to Fredy's work. Why is Fredy being threatened?
19. Describe Alejandra's hope and the journey.
20. According to Rigoberta Menchú, what does being a "granito de arena (grain of sand)" mean?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Yates discusses how the United States supported military governments in Guatemala. How has U.S. support in Latin America shaped politics there?
2. How does the footage of the guerrillas contrast how you thought of them?
3. What elements of injustice are presented?
4. Does justice exist?
5. Part 2 begins with a juxtaposition of Ronald Reagan and Rigoberta Menchú. Describe how this echoes throughout the film.
6. Discuss: "There's nothing you can do to take away the privilege from the privileged."
7. Currently, thousands of Guatemalans are fleeing the country, not just as U.S. asylum seekers, but also to Mexico. Why do you believe this is happening?
8. How does this documentary show the continuation of colonialism in Latin America?

GO FURTHER

- ❖ Write a 2-4 page paper that compares/contrasts the Sandinista movement in Nicaragua with the EGP in Guatemala.
- ❖ Compare Augusto Pinochet (or another Latin American dictator) with Ríos Montt.
- ❖ Guatemala continues to suffer today, as gangs, drugs, violence (linchamientos) and poverty plague the country. Research one of these issues and relate it to the Civil War and create a presentation or podcast.
- ❖ Trace the roots of Guatemalan immigration to the United States in a 5-8 minute presentation.
- ❖ How does the United Fruit Company tie into the Civil War? Write a 3-page research paper.

Nombre: _____
Granito

Filme:

KEY TERMS

Un **guerrillero** es un miembro de un grupo civil armado que no pertenece al ejército nacional y que lucha contra las fuerzas regulares.

EGP- Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (Guerrilla Army of the Poor)

Un **Escuadrón de la muerte** es una banda paramilitar que realiza asesinatos, amenazas, robos, sabotajes, secuestros, y torturas para combatir la disidencia política fuera de los márgenes de la legalidad.

Una **contrainsurgencia** es un conjunto de técnicas y prácticas aplicadas por el gobierno con el objetivo de detectar y destruir a los miembros y bases de apoyo de los grupos insurgentes.

Extraditar- to extradite is to hand over (a person accused or convicted of a crime) to the jurisdiction of the foreign state in which the crime was committed.

Impunidad es una excepción de castigo o escape de la sanción.

PARTE 1 (0-32:11)

1. ¿Cuál es la pregunta que plantee el documental para Yates?
2. ¿Qué papel toma Almudena Bernabeu'? ¿Cuáles serían sus desafíos?
3. ¿Qué pruebas (evidence) existen en los documentos oficiales de los EE.UU. que explican cómo ocurrió el genocidio en Guatemala?
4. ¿Cómo contribuye el trabajo de Fredy Peccerelli (el antropólogo forense) a la investigación? ¿Qué nos cuenta?
5. ¿Por qué fundó y lideró Gustavo Meoño la resistencia guerrillera? (Si has leído un capítulo de Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú, ¿cómo relacionan sus declaraciones con las de Menché?)
6. ¿Quién es Benedicto Lucas García?

PARTE 2 (32:12-1:05:10)

7. ¿Cómo matiza Rigoberta Menchú las declaraciones de Ronald Reagan?
8. ¿Qué pasó en 1996?
9. ¿Qué prueba se necesitaba para probar que Ríos Montt fue directamente responsable por los masacres de personas indígenas?

10. ¿Qué es la Asociación de Justicia y Reconciliación?
11. Describe de lo que Antonio Caba Caba fue testigo cuando tenía 11 años.
12. ¿Por qué pidieron Menchú y otros que España ayudara a buscar justicia para los víctimas de los crímenes de la guerra?
13. ¿Qué era *Operación Sofía*?
14. Describe las acciones del ejército para justificar y desplazar la culpa de las masacres.
15. ¿Cómo evitó Guatemala el involucramiento de España en el caso?

PARTE 3: (1:05:13-1:41)

16. Después de la guerra, ¿cómo siguió explotando el gobierno guatemalteco a la gente indígena?
17. ¿Por qué no sale Antonio para buscar oportunidades en otros países?
18. Explica lo que significa “desaparecido” para las familias y para el trabajo de Fredy. ¿Por qué ha sido amenazado Fredy?
19. Describe la esperanza y el paso de Alejandra.
20. Según Rigoberta Menchú, ¿qué significa “ser un granito de arena (grain of sand)”?

PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN

1. Yates explica el apoyo del gobierno estadounidense en los gobiernos militares de Guatemala. ¿Cómo han influido los EE.UU. en la política allí?
2. ¿Cómo se contrastan el metraje de los guerrilleros con cómo los imaginabas?
3. ¿Qué elementos de injusticia se presentan?
4. ¿Existe la justicia?
5. Parte 2 empieza con la yuxtaposición de Ronald Reagan y Rigoberta Menchú. ¿Cómo se repite esta imagen durante todo el documental.
6. Discute: “No hay nada que se pueda hacer para quitarle el privilegio de los privilegiados.”
7. Actualmente, miles de guatemaltecos se están huyendo del país, solicitando asilo no sólo en los Estados Unidos, sino también en México. ¿Por qué crees que sucede esto?
8. ¿Cómo muestra este documental la continuación del colonialismo en América Latina?

SIGUE INVESTIGANDO

En una presentación de 5 a 8 minutos, presenta uno de estos temas:

- ❖ Hoy en día, Guatemala sigue sufriendo, mientras las pandillas, las drogas, la violencia y la pobreza plagan al país. Investiga uno de estos asuntos y explica su relación con la Guerra Civil.
- ❖ Compara/contrasta el movimiento Sandinista de Nicaragua con el EGP de Guatemala.
- ❖ Compara Augusto Pinochet (u otro dictador de América Latina) con Ríos Montt.
- ❖ Investiga las raíces de la inmigración guatemalteca en los Estados Unidos.
- ❖ ¿Cómo está ligado la United Fruit Company con la guerra?