Music of the Chicano Movement:
A Smithsonian Folkways Learning Pathway for students in grades 5–8.

Teacher’s Guide
Lesson 1:
What Is Chicana/o?
Exploring Cultural Identity through Music

Lesson Overview

Chicana/o is a term that gained popularity in the late 1960s and early 1970s during a period we now call the Chicano movement. In some cases, the term Chicana/o is used very generally to describe people of Mexican heritage living in the United States. However, the term’s true meaning is much more complex and deeply personal (it means different things to different people). People of Mexican heritage who live in the US sometimes use the term Chicana/o to express the pride they feel about this part of their cultural identity.

The Chicano movement (sometimes called the Mexican American civil rights movement or El Movimiento) can be understood as a collective response to issues of discrimination, oppression, exploitation, and injustices faced by the Mexican American community. The primary goal of the Chicano movement was to “create a more just and equitable society” (Montoya, 2016, p. xiii). During this time (roughly the late 1960s-1970s), people developed deeper awareness of past oppression and exploitation, and took social action in order to fight for justice and equal rights.

The learning experiences included in this lesson are designed to help students actively engage with music from the Smithsonian Folkways collection, while achieving a deeper understanding of what it means to self-identify as “Chicana/o”.

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**Lesson Components and Student Objectives**

1. **What Is Chicana/o?** (approx. 30 minutes)
   - Students will identify textual and musical clues about Chicana/o identity.
   - Students will identify the typical instrumentation of *música norteña*.

2. **What Was the Chicano Movement?** (20-25 minutes)
   - Students will describe several rationales for the Chicano movement.

3. **Exploring Cultural Identity through Music** (45+ minutes)
   - Students will explain why certain songs became anthems to people who identified as Chicana/o during the Chicano movement.
   - Students will explain how music can celebrate/re-affirm cultural identity and serve as a symbol of cultural pride.
   - Students will use music to describe important aspects of their own cultural identity.

*Note: The learning icons used above signify the type of learning used in each Component. Keep in mind that these Components are not intended to be sequential; rather, teachers or students may choose which Components they’d like to use from each Lesson.

While all learning types (📖 History and Culture, 🎧 Music Listening, 🎵 Music Making and Creation, and 💡 Creative Connections) fulfill 2014 National Music Standards, non-music teachers will be able to use 📖 History and Culture and 💡 Creative Connections Components without specific musical knowledge.
Teaching Plan

1. Component One: What Is Chicana/o?

To prepare:
- Preview Component 1 of the Lesson 1 Slideshow.
- Print the “Chicano” song lyrics for each student (find below).

Process: Guide student learning while facilitating the student slideshow
- Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson landing page. If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow” link, which will not show the notes.

1. Discussion: What is Chicana/o?
- Ask students what they think the word Chicano means before starting the lesson in order to assess prior knowledge on the topic.
- Address the discussion points that are embedded in the slideshow.

2. Attentive Listening Activity: “Chicano”
Listen to the recording of “Chicano” by Rumel Fuentes and Los Pingüinos del Norte.
- While listening, students should fill in missing words on the lyrics document (which provide clues about Chicana/o identity).
- Consider leading a short class discussion based on student responses (discussion points are embedded in the slideshow).

3. Attentive Listening Activity: “Chicano”
What do the musical sounds communicate about Chicana/o identity?
- Listen to several short excerpts from this recording (about 30–45 seconds at a time) and ask the following questions after each excerpt:
  - Where (geographically) would you be most likely to hear this music?
    - Música norteña (MOO-see-kah nor-TEHN-ya) is a musical genre that originated in northern Mexico.
    - It is one of many regional traditions heard in south Texas and along the US/Mexican border (both sides . . . conjunto is the term usually used on the Texas side of the border).
  - What instruments do you hear?
    - Accordion, steel-string guitar, 12-string guitar, tololoche (contrabass)
4. **Connections:**
   - *Who are the musicians?*
     - Rumel Fuentes and Los Pingüinos del Norte
     - Contextual information is provided within the slideshow.
   - Show the short video clip of Rumel Fuentes/ Los Pingüinos del Norte playing this song.

5. **Attentive Listening Activity:** “Chicano”
   Listen to another short excerpt while thinking about this question:
   - *What do you notice about the language?*
     - Throughout the song, English and Spanish are intertwined (this is sometimes called “Spanglish”).

6. **Discussion:**
   *Why do you think some people in the Mexican American community have (and continue to) identify as Chicana/o?*
   - Important points are highlighted within the slideshow.
2. Component Two: What Was the Chicano Movement?

To prepare:
• Preview Component 2 of the Lesson 1 Slideshow.
• Print the “Yo soy tu hermano, yo soy Chicano” song lyrics for each student (find below).

Process: Guide student learning while facilitating the student slideshow.

• Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson landing page. If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow” link, which will not show the notes.

• Scroll to the Component Menu slide (slide 3) and click on Component 2.

1. Discussion:
What were the primary goals of the Chicano movement?
• Unpack the discussion points provided on the slides.

2. Attentive Listening Activity: “Yo soy tu hermano, yo soy Chicano”
• Listen to “Yo soy tu hermano, yo soy Chicano” by Conjunto Aztlan.
• Ask students to underline or circle words that provide clues about why people in Mexican American communities felt like an ‘uprising’ was needed during the time of the Chicano movement.

3. Discussion: “Yo soy tu hermano, yo soy Chicano”
Lead a short class discussion based on student responses to the listening exercise.
• Discussion points are embedded in the slideshow.

4. Optional Extension Activity: Issues and Images
In this optional activity, students will find and print historical images that illustrate several specific goals of the Chicano movement: rights for farm workers, restoration of land, and education reform.
• After students collect the images, the teacher can create a class collage using the prints.
• Alternately, this could become a group or individual creative writing activity that comes out of deeper consideration of the images. Either students can develop a skit based on characters from the images, or individual students can write about the views of the person in a short statement. Encourage students to consider their situation from the first-person perspective. This will encourage students to empathize with the individuals and their goals and reasons for joining the
movement. In a group activity, students could create a short conversation or skit based around the historical events they learned about in the lesson. Alternately, they could make an individual statement in the first person, a kid of character portrayal of a person in one of the photos. Encourage them to interpret the photo by thinking about the context and Chicano movement goal (farm worker rights, land restoration, or education reform).

- **NOTE:** Farm worker rights are covered more deeply in **Lesson 6**, education reform in Lessons **7** and **12**, and land restoration in Lessons **3** and **8**.
3. Component Three: Exploring Cultural Identity through Music

To prepare:
- Preview Component 3 of the Lesson 1 Slideshow.
- Print the “Yo soy Chicano” song lyrics for each student (find below).
- Print the “My Multicultural Self” worksheet¹ for each student (find below).
- Print the “Exploring Cultural Identity through Music” worksheet for each student (find below).

Process: Guide student learning while facilitating the student slideshow.
- Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson landing page. If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow” link, which will not show the notes.
- Scroll to the Component Menu slide (slide 3) and click on Component 3.

1. Discussion: What is an anthem?
   - Unpack the discussion points provided on the slides.

2. Attentive Listening Activity: “Yo soy Chicano”
   - While listening, students will circle or underline words as they identify song lyrics that celebrate/re-affirm Chicana/o cultural identity.

3. Discussion: “Yo soy Chicano”
   - Lead a short class discussion based on student responses to the listening exercise.

4. Discussion:
   Cultural identity is complicated!
   - Unpack the discussion points provided on the slides.

5. Creative Activity 1: My Multicultural Self
   Students will identify important aspects of your cultural identity.
   - Explicit instructions are provided in the slideshow and on the worksheet.
   - NOTE: This can be completed during class or as homework.

6. Creative Activity 2: Music and Cultural Identity
   Students will choose an anthem that reflects one aspect of their cultural identity and will explain their choice.
   - NOTE: This can be completed during class or as homework.
   - A rubric for this activity is provided below.

¹ Reprinted with permission of Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center www.tolerance.org.
2014 National Music Standards Connections

**MU:Re7.1.a** Select or choose music to listen to and explain the connections to specific interests or experiences for a specific purpose.
- Can I select an anthem that reflects one facet of my cultural identity?

**MU:Re7.2.a** Describe how the elements of music and expressive qualities relate to the structure of the pieces.
- Can I describe how the musical elements used in the recording of the song “Chicano”?

**MU:Re7.2.b** Identify the context of music from a variety of genres, cultures, and historical periods.
- Can I explain the context of these musical recordings?

**MU:Re8.1.a** Describe a personal interpretation of how creators’ and performers’ application of the elements of music and expressive qualities, within genres and cultural and historical context, convey expressive intent.
- Can I interpret how the musicians featured on these musical recordings convey what it means to identify as Chicano?

**MU:Cn10.0.a** Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
- Can I explain why the anthem I chose reflects my cultural identity?

**MU:Cn11.0.a** Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.
- Can I explain how the songs in this lesson were used during the Chicano movement?
- Can I describe how music functions as an expression of cultural identity and a symbol or cultural pride?
Additional Reading and Resources


Worksheets

“Chicano” song lyrics
by Doug Sahm; Recorded by Rumel Fuentes and Los Pingüinos del Norte

While you listen to this song, fill in the blanks with words that provide clues about Chicana/o identity.

Chicano, soy Chicano
‘Cause I’m ______ and I’m ______
And I’ll make it in my own way.
Some people call me ______
But I know that is the real world
‘Cause to me all I am is Mexicano.

Chicano, soy Chicano
All my brothers ______ right now.
And all across the USA
I just woke up and say
Chicano, soy Chicano
Right On!

Chicano, soy Chicano
I can fly just as high and
As long as I want to.
Some people call me ______
‘Cause I’m no longer the ______
Pobrecito Mexicano.

Chicano, soy Chicano
‘Cause I’m ______ and I’m ______
And I’ll make it in my own way.
Some people call me ______
‘Cause I’m no longer the ______
Disempowered Mexican.

Chicano, soy Chicano
Soy café, tengo orgullo
Y yo solo se que soy puro Mexican!
¡Pa’ que sepan!

Translation:

Chicano, I’m Chicano
‘Cause I’m ______ and I’m ______
And I’ll make it in my own way.
Some people call me ______
But I know that is the real world
‘Cause to me all I am is Mexican.

Chicano, I’m Chicano,
All my brothers ______ right now.
And all across the USA
I just woke up and say
Chicano, I’m Chicano
Right On!

Chicano, I’m Chicano
I can fly just as high and
As long as I want to.
Some people call me ______
‘Cause I’m no longer the ______
Disempowered Mexican.

Chicano, I’m Chicano
All my brothers ______ right now
And all across the USA
I just woke up and say
Chicano, I’m Chicano
Right On!

Chicano, I’m Chicano
‘Cause I’m ______ and I’m ______
And I’ll make it in my own way.
Some people call me ______
‘Cause I’m no longer the ______
Disempowered Mexican.

Chicano, I’m Chicano
‘Cause I’m ______ and I’m ______
And I’ll make it in my own way.
Some people call me hippy
Others call me a bum
But all I am is pure Mexican.
Now you know!

Keep filling in the blanks with words that relate to Chicana/o identity.
“Yo soy tu hermano, yo soy Chicano” song lyrics
Recorded by: Conjunto Aztlan

When you listen to this song, underline or circle words that provide more clues about why people in Mexican American communities felt like an ‘uprising’ was needed during the time of the Chicano movement.

Dicen que ando alborotando
Porque con mi raza quiero despertar.
Tanta injusticia me está rodeando
Ya no me aguanto, yo quiero pelear.

(Refrain)
I am your brother, I am Chicano.
Give me your hand, let’s fly.
As the saying goes: If my brother bleeds,
I also bleed, the wound is the same.

(Refrillo)
Yo soy tu hermano, yo soy Chicano.
Dame tu mano, vamos a volar.
Bien dice el dicho: si sangra mi hermano,
Yo también sangro, la herida es igual.

Roban las tierras, roban trabajos,
Mataron a mi hermano allá en Vietnam.
Perdón le pido a la Guadalupana:
Tanta injusticia, me hicieron pelear.

(Refrilio)
Like Zapata and Pancho Villa,
I want to punish the tyrants.
Hunger and poverty are killing me,
I cannot stand it; I want to fight.

(Refrillo)
Como Zapata y Pancho Villa,
A los tiranos quiero castigar.
Hambre y pobreza me están matando,
Yo no me aguanto, yo quiero pelear.

(Refrilio)
I am your sister, I am Chicana.
Give me your hand, let’s fly.
As the saying goes: if my sister bleeds,
I also bleed, the wound is the same.

(Refrillo)
Ya estoy cansado de voltear la cara,
Ya mi paciencia ya se me acabó.
Chotas y rinches son muy desgraciados,
Y la ley gringa se burla de mí.

(Refrilio)
I am tired of turning my cheek,
My patience has just run out.
Cops and Rangers are disgraceful,
And gringo law mocks me.

(Refrillo)
Yo soy tu hermana, yo soy Chicana.
Dame tu mano, vamos a volar.
Bien dice el dicho: si sangra mi hermana,
Yo también sangro, la herida es igual.
¡Yo soy Chicano!

(Refrilio)
I am your sister, I am Chicana.
Give me your hand, let’s fly.
As the saying goes: When my sister bleeds,
I also bleed, the wound is the same.
I am Chicano!
“Yo soy Chicano” song lyrics
Recorded by: Los Alvarados

While you listen to this song, circle or underline words that celebrate Chicana/o cultural identity.

(Estribillo)
Yo soy Chicano, tengo color,
Puro Chicano, hermano con honor.
Cuando me dicen que hay revolución,
Defiendo a mi raza con mucho valor.

(Refrain)
I am Chicano, of color,
Pure Chicano, a brother with honor.
When they tell me there is revolution,
I defend my people with great valor.

Tengo todita mi gente
Para la revolución.
Voy a luchar con los pobres
Pa’ que se acabe el bolón.

(Refrain)
I have all my people
For the revolution.
I am going to fight alongside the poor
To end this oppression.

(Estribillo)
Tengo mi par de pistolas
Para la revolución.
Una es una treinta y treinta,
Y otra es una treinta y dos.

(Refrain)
I have my pair of pistols
For the revolution.
One is a thirty-three,
And the other is a thirty-two.

Keep circling or underlining words that celebrate Chicana/o identity, but see if you can also find the words in Spanish.

(Estribillo)
Tengo mi par de caballos
Para la revolución.
Uno se llama “El Canario,”
Y otro se llama “El Gorrión.”

(Refrain)
I have my pair of horses
For the revolution.
One is called “El Canario” (The Canary)
The other is called “El Gorrión” (The Sparrow).

(Estribillo)
Tengo mi orgullo y machismo,
Mi cultura y corazón.
Tengo mi fe y diferencia,
Y luchó con gran razón.

(Refrain)
I have my pride and my manliness,
My culture and my heart.
I have my faith and differences
And I fight with great conviction.

(Estribillo)
Tengo todita mi gente
Para la revolución.
Voy a luchar con los pobres
Pa’ que se acabe el bolón.

(Refrain)
I have all my people
For the revolution.
I am going to fight alongside the poor
To end this oppression.

Tengo mi orgullo, tengo mi fe.
Soy diferente, soy color café.
Tengo cultura, tengo corazón,
Y no me lo quita a mí ningún cabrón.

I have my pride, I have my faith.
I am different, I am of brown color.
I have culture, I have heart.
And no son-of-a-gun will take it away from me.
My Multicultural Self
MIDDLE/UPPER GRADES ACTIVITY

Place your name in the center. Choose five different aspects of your identity and write each of them in the identity bubbles provided.
Exploring Cultural Identity through Music Worksheet

Name:___________________________________________________

1. Which “identity bubble” did you choose to focus on for this part of the activity?

2. Which song did you choose as your anthem for this facet of your identity?

3. Write out the lyrics to the song you chose in the space provided below:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

4. Can you find a place (or places) in the lyrics that “celebrates” this facet of your identity? (Underline it)

5. Can you find a statement (or statements) in the lyrics that is “inspiring”, “motivating”, or “uplifting”? (Circle it)

6. Write 2-3 sentences that describe why this song serves as a symbol of pride (an anthem) for this facet of your cultural identity.
Exploring Cultural Identity through Music Assignment Rubric

2014 National Music Standards Documentation for this Learning Experience (5th-8th Grade):

MU: Re7.1.a Select or choose music to listen to and explain the connections to specific interests or experiences for a specific purpose.
- Select an “anthem” that reflects one aspect of your cultural identity.

MU: Cn10.0.a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
- Explain why this song reflects your cultural identity and serves as a symbol of cultural pride.

Suggested Rubric for Standards Documentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 = Exceeds Standard</th>
<th>3 = Meets Standard</th>
<th>2 = Approaching Standard</th>
<th>1 = Does Not Meet Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The song selected by the student clearly connected to the facet of identity they were trying to reflect.</td>
<td>The song selected by the student connected to the facet of identity they were trying to reflect.</td>
<td>With assistance, the student selected a song that connected to the facet of identity they were trying to reflect.</td>
<td>The song selected by the student did not connect to the facet of identity they were trying to reflect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student identified several places in the lyrics that “celebrated” this facet of their identity.</td>
<td>The student identified one place in the lyrics that “celebrated” this facet of their identity.</td>
<td>With assistance, the student identified a place in the lyrics that “celebrated” this facet of their identity.</td>
<td>The student did not identify a place in the lyrics that “celebrated” this facet of their identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student identified several places in the lyrics that were “uplifting”, “inspiring”, or “motivating.”</td>
<td>The student identified one place in the lyrics that was “uplifting”, “inspiring”, or “motivating.”</td>
<td>With assistance, the student identified a place in the lyrics that was “uplifting”, “inspiring”, or “motivating.”</td>
<td>The student did not identify a place in the lyrics that was “uplifting”, “inspiring”, or “motivating.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student’s response artistically and imaginatively included specific reference to interests, values, prior knowledge and/or experiences.</td>
<td>The student’s response included specific reference to interests, values, prior knowledge and/or experiences.</td>
<td>The student’s response included general but not specific reference to interests, values, prior knowledge and/or experiences.</td>
<td>The student’s response did not include references to interests, values, prior knowledge and/or experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>