

The background of the entire page is a photograph of several colorful sugar skulls (calaveras) arranged on a wooden surface. The skulls are painted in various colors including blue, purple, pink, and grey, with intricate designs and patterns. The lighting is soft, highlighting the glossy finish of the paint.

eva

ELEMENTARY VISUAL ARTS

Park City Education Foundation • Kimball Art Center

LESSON

3

Mexican Folk Art

Sugar Skulls

Verbal Directions

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will learn about the Day of the Dead holiday including the history, symbols, colors, rituals and culture. They will also study the color wheel and use warm and cool colors in their artwork. Students will create two skulls using oil pastels on black drawing paper and explore how colors are a powerful expression of cultures, holidays and traditions.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Understand the history of Day of the Dead holiday and Sugar Skulls.
- Learn about art from different cultures.
- Recognize and use warm and cool colors.
- Understand that color can create an emotional response and that colors and symbols are associated with holidays, traditions and cultures.
- Create Day of the Dead inspired skulls.

SUPPLIES

- Images
- White art drawing paper two sheets 8.5" x 11", or 12" x 18" per student or black construction paper.
 - Oil Pastels, Markers, and/or bright paints for cool and warm colors
- Metallic Markers
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Glitter/decorative embellishments (optional)

SUGAR SKULLS & DAY OF THE DEAD



Day of the Dead (Spanish: Día de Muertos) is a Mexican holiday where family and friends get together to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died. The celebration takes place on October 31, November 1 and November 2. Traditions connected with the holiday include building private altars at the graves called ofrendas, honoring the deceased using sugar skulls, marigolds, flowers of the dead, skeletons, tissue paper decorations, fruits and nuts, incense, and the favorite foods and beverages of the departed. The idea behind visiting the graves is to encourage visits by the souls, so that the souls will hear the prayers and the comments of the living directed to them. Celebrations can be humorous or somber as celebrants remember funny or serious events and anecdotes about the departed. [Learn More](#)



LESSON PLAN

1. Introduce students to Day of the Dead, the history, and Mexican Sugar Skulls. Show images of Sugar Skulls to students. Give students a few minutes to respond to the images.

- Who knows about Day of the Dead and can explain it?
- What colors do you see? How would you describe them?
- What objects or symbols do you see repeatedly?
- How can you tell this is a celebration?

Some of the most popular Day of the Dead symbols are skulls and skeletons. They are usually bright, colorful, whimsical and presented in a lighthearted fashion. They represent mortality and the life cycle. The Day of the Dead Skulls appear in many forms such as Sugar Skulls, in bread, souvenirs, papel picado and on alters. Other symbols include marigold flowers, bread, tissue paper decorations and papel picado. The art itself is vibrant, detailed and rich in history.

2. Show a color wheel. Point out primary and secondary colors. Yellow, orange and red are called the warm colors on the color wheel. Blue, green and purple are often labeled cool colors. Ask students:

- How can colors give this impression of temperature? Is it based on scientific fact or is it based on how those colors make us feel?

Warm and cool colors evoke emotional responses. Colors on opposite sides of the color wheel give opposing feelings. The warm colors; reds, and yellows, are often associated with fire and sun, which suggest warmth. On the other side, cool colors; blues and greens, are often associated with water, sky, and spring, which suggest coolness. Psychologically, cool colors are said to be calming, whereas warm colors energize. Optically, cool colors appear to recede, and warm colors give the impression of being closer.

3. Give each student two sheets of rectangular white paper and have students draw a skull and spine with a black oil pastel on each sheet. Use oil pastels, markers or paint to add lines, patterns, flowers, and any other decorative lines to the skulls and spines. One will be colored in cool colors, the other in warm. Along the sides of the skulls, draw large and small flowers like you saw in the Day of the Dead pictures. Use oil pastels, markers, or brightly colored paints to paint or color the flowers. To finish, students can cut out the skulls and paste them on a black background for display.

EVA+: Students create calavera wearable masks using heavy cardstocks, colorful markers, whole punch and string.





KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS:
Based on National Core Arts Standards Visual Arts Requirements (Kindergarden).

VA:Cr1.1.4a:

Brainstorm multiple approaches to a creative art or design problem.

VA:Re.7.2.4a:

Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.

VA:Cn10.1.4a:

Create works of art that reflect community cultural traditions.

VA:Cn10.1.4a:

When making works of art, utilize and care for materials, tools, and equipment in a manner that prevents danger to oneself and others.



STUDIO HABITS OF THE MIND

Express: Learning to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Click on links to learn more.

- <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/destinations/north-america/mexico/top-ten-day-of-dead-mexico/>
- <https://illustrationchronicles.com/Jose-Guadalupe-Posada-Skulls-Skeletons-and-Macabre-Mischief>
- <https://www.mexican-folk-art-guide.com/catrina.html#.XQpfEVNKgWo>
- <https://www.mexicansugarskull.com/history-of-day-of-the-dead/>

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