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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2010 Volume I: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Consumer Culture

Assembling the Latino Consumer

Guide for Curriculum Unit 10.01.09
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As the largest minority group in the country, Latinos might be assumed to be accommodated in the United States simply because of their numbers. However, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Colombians and so forth historically were less often perceived to fall into a single category, as opposed to the way they may commonly be viewed today. In this unit, students will see how the U.S. census helped to create a homogeneous label for many people of Latin American/Spanish origin or descent and how Spanish-language television networks have assisted in establishing and maintaining those labels. Categorizing Spanish-speakers in this manner combined their purchasing power and allowed Anglo politicians and companies to look at and target people from various national, generational and racial backgrounds as a singular demographic group.

Through analysis of the U.S. census questionnaire, advertisements and various forms of media, students will experience first-hand the impact of Latinos as consumers in America and the influence that their growing presence has had on American culture as a whole. Students will examine an assortment of television commercials, Internet sites and market research data to see how and why advertisers market to the Latino population and will notice that the cultural variations within the group are often ignored. Focusing on such differences will force students to refine their stereotypical views of Latinidad.

(Developed for Spanish 1B, grade 8; recommended for Spanish 1B, grade 8, and Spanish 1, grade 9)

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