



## Latin America “Speaks,”

Guide for Curriculum Unit 90.01.04  
by Ruth M. Wilson

“Latin America ‘Speaks’” is a unit which delves into the life of a Cuban slave, Juan Francisco Manzano, who bought his freedom by writing narrative poems of his life as a slave. This unit was prepared to enlighten Hispanic students to their heritage. It deals mainly with the trials, tribulations, and injustices of human bondage. The narratives used in the unit were written by Manzano about his life as a slave and the treatment he received living under different masters and mistresses. He vividly writes accounts of how life was for him during his days of slavery. Also, the unit contains some material written by Richard Madden, translator of Manzano’s autobiography. Mr. Madden felt deeply about the evils of slavery, and so he wrote poignant passages about it and about the people who professed to be “good people.”

This unit was written with the month of February in mind. February, being Black History and Brotherhood Month, is usually the month for the “slavery” discussion which can turn students off when one group is singled out. “Latin America ‘Speaks’” attempts to involve both minority groups, the Hispanic and African-American students, in the process of learning to be proud of one’s heritage. Both students can compare the lives of American slaves to that of Caribbean slaves and see the similarities.

I am sure the teachers who will teach this unit will vary some from the planned lessons and this is to be expected. Teachers should gear their lessons to their class’s ability. You may embellish, improve, or use as is. I do hope those who do use this unit will have an enjoyable experience.

(Recommended for Literature, Social Studies, and Remedial Reading, grade 8)

### **Key Words**

*Hispanic Slave Narratives Literature Latin American*

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