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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1994 Volume III: Understanding the Ancient Americas: Foundation, Flourishing, and Survival

An Excursion to Cities of Mysterious Pasts

Guide for Curriculum Unit 94.03.06
by Diane Platt

This unit examines two cities of Mexico by taking the students on a tour from take-off at JFK/New York to landing at Benito Juarez/Mexico. By visiting contemporary Mexico City, the past becomes visibly present as we look at the ancient ruins uncovered through the subway excavations and the evidence of Tenochtitlan, the ancient metropolis buried under the heart of the historic district. We then travel northeast to another mysterious city in Mexico's ancient past, Teotihuacan.

The facts are woven into the narrative text and the teacher using this unit could actually become the tour guide in the classroom setting, using the slides accompanying this unit to create the feeling of an actual visit to Mexico. The art activities provided utilize the Mesoamerican collections at the Yale University Art Gallery and the Peabody Museum of Natural History. The hands-on nature of the activities use the slides of artifacts and architecture to focus on creating relief sculptures, mold making, and mural painting. The Spanish and Social Studies classes at the middle and high school could easily use this unit with (the materials are easily accessible and not costly) or without the art activities.

(Recommended for Art, Social Studies and Spanish, grades 7-12)

Keywords

Art Mesoamerican Teotihuacan Mexico Instruction Murals Sculpture Tenochtitlan

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