



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1998 Volume III: Art and Artifacts: the Cultural Meaning of Objects

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## **Artifacts: Bringing the Past Back to Life - The Mexican Case**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.03.10  
by Luis A. Recalde

In this curriculum unit I have chosen a city - Tenochtitlan - as the cultural object to bring the past back to life. Bringing the past back to life is a difficult task that requires knowledge of the past and identification of objects of culture necessary to make this happen. We want to center on the city of Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City) to bring back some of the past at the time that the Conquistadores penetrated into the Mexican highlands in 1519 in this unit directed to students of the fifth grade level. Our media are writing, drawing, painting and building models of the city with the help and collaboration of other teachers and students. The use of chronicles, books, maps, paintings, codexes and models is essential for the reconstruction of the most important parts of the city. One of our objectives in undertaking these tasks is to address historical issues proper to the academic development of the student. We also address academic issues of literacy and mathematics together with the arts. Our purpose is to instill critical thinking in the student, to promote research and writing skills, to tap the artistic talents of students and to utilize mathematical thinking in the reconstruction of models. Further, we want students to have a sense of how history is made and how it works. We include assessment lists that give the student the opportunity for reflection and growth.

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