**Storytelling and Perspective: Art as a Form of Language**

**Prepared By:** Benita Arguéllez

**Course:**  Spanish 3

**Duration:** 3-4 weeks

**Description:** This unit will introduce art as a form of language considering intent, perspective, and audience. The unit will tie together the idea of art as form of storytelling/ visual language beginning with ancient Mesoamerican legends, the presence of Mesoamerican cultures in Mexican art, and how this form of storytelling still exists in urban street art today.

**Essential Questions:**

* How can art be a form of language?
* How can art tell a story without text?
* How are images and text related?
* How does the artist express him/herself in ways a writer doesn’t/ can’t?
* What story is being told in the codices? Mexican art pieces? Urban street art?
* Who is telling the story of each? To whom?
* Why is it important for their stories to be told?
* What is being expressed about identity?
* How is Mesoamerican culture represented in the artworks of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo?
* What is different/similar about the murals we observe?
* What themes have remained consistent throughout?
* What do Chicago’s murals say about the city? Its residents?
* Who is telling YOUR story?
* What story do YOU want to tell?
* What perspective does language give you about history and culture?

**Objectives**

* **Students will know or recall:**

- art vocabulary, styles, and movements

- background knowledge of the artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo

- rules and conventions of the preterit and imperfect form

* **Students will be able to:**

- analyze art as visual language

- reflect on art as a form of language and storytelling

- think about the relationship between images and text and the impact of each

- consider perspective, intent, and audience for each art piece presented

- consider art as a search of voice

- identify the representation of Mesoamerica in the works of Diego Rivera

and Frida Kahlo

- identify what Chicago murals say about the city

- draw their own codex with images telling a story

- write a manuscript in the preterit and imperfect to accompany their codex

**Components & Content:**

* **Week 1- Ancient legends told by codices**

a.) Intro to Pre-Columbian writing systems (codices and symbols)

*Activity/Resources:* Deciphering Maya Glyphs (based on Marc Zender’s Exercises); search for the word "Zender" on this web page, and download the exercise:  
<http://blogs.uoregon.edu/mesoinstitute/about/curriculum-unit-development/codices/languagewriting/>

b.) Alphabetic vs. pictorial manuscripts

*Activity/Resources:* Compare the Codex Magliabecchiano with the Selden Codex; here is the Magliabecchiano on the FAMSI website: <http://www.famsi.org/research/graz/magliabechiano/>;   
and here is the Selden Codex on the FAMSI website:  
<http://www.famsi.org/research/pohl/jpcodices/selden/>

c.) Indigenous vs. European story (perspective) of the Spanish Conquest of Mexico

*Activity/Resources:*

🡪 Read Indigenous Perspective: Florentine Codex, “Visions of Empire: Picturing the Conquest in Colonial Mexico” <<http://www.kislakfoundation.org/publications_visions.html>>, noticing, especially, the Toxcatl Massacre.

The fuller account of the Nahua view of the Spanish invasion and seizure of power is here:  
[http://enl.uoregon.edu/mapas\_bycategory.lasso?&searchField=calc\_creationCenturyPeriod&searchTerm=16th&results\_display\_title=Manuscripts from the Sixteenth Century](http://enl.uoregon.edu/mapas_bycategory.lasso?&searchField=calc_creationCenturyPeriod&searchTerm=16th&results_display_title=Manuscripts%20from%20the%20Sixteenth%20Century)

🡪 Spanish Perspectives: “Moctezuma stoned by his own people,” “Greeting by La Malinche,” Lienzo de Tlaxcala

* **Week 2- The presence of Mesoamerican cultures in Mexican art**

a.) Mexican muralism (considering message, intent, and audience)

*Activity/Resources:* Los Tres Grandes: Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros (analyze message, intent, and audience)

b.) Art pieces of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo: Presence of Mesoamerican culture in history of Mexico

*Activity/Resources:* Art critique of works of each

*Possible Alternative Activities:* Reading & Interpreting Image Question Card,

20 Questions, Art Collector Game, Press Play, Mixed Media Self Portrait

* **Week 3- Modern world issues depicted in urban street art**

a.) Art in the streets of Oaxaca 2006 Movement (history and context)

*Activity/Resources:* Personal notes and “Imagenes de Rebelión y Resistencia: Oaxaca 2006” by Arnulfo Aquino Casas

b.) Contemporary Urban street art (including the missing 43 students of Ayotzinapa)

*Activity/Resources:*

🡪 Oaxaca: Personal photographs and <http://arteurbanoenoaxaca.tumblr.com/>

🡪 U.S.: Atlanta, Georgia (murals made by Latin American & Spanish artists): <http://zachary-jones.com/zambombazo/gustos-y-colores-arte-urbano-en-atlanta/>

Community of Pilsen in Chicago: <http://frugalfrolicker.com/street-art-pilsen/>

\*Students share murals from their own neighborhoods

**Assessments:**

* Reflection journal responding to essential questions
* Illustrated codex using codex and mural techniques
* Written manuscripts using preterit and imperfect

**Assignment details:**

Students consider:

* What do you want to share about your own history?
* Your identity?
* Your daily life?
* Your community?
* A global issue that is important to you?