



Mexico: El Dia de los Muertos
Post-visit Activity: Quick Write

Name: _____

Date: _____

Use the word bank below to write a Quick Write about Dia de los Muertos

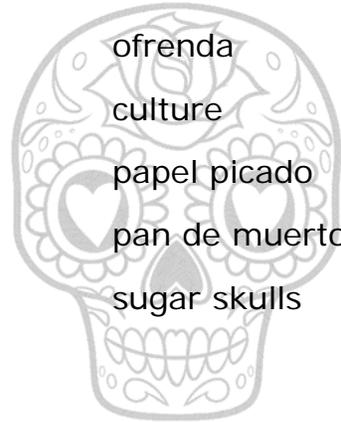
El Dia de los Muertos

Aztec

conquistadors

holiday

celebrate



ofrenda

culture

papel picado

pan de muerto

sugar skulls

deceased

flowers

All Saints Day

blended culture

November 1

A large, empty rounded rectangular box intended for the student to write their Quick Write response.



Mexico: El Dia de los Muertos Post-visit Activity: Quick Write

Information included in the student Quick Write should include some of the following:

The Mexican celebration **El Dia de los Muertos** means Day of the Dead. It is a **holiday** that honors family members who have passed away. It is a special way for families to remember their loved ones without being afraid of death.

El Dia de los Muertos is celebrated in Mexico and some regions of the United States. This unique holiday came from a **blending** of two **cultures**: the **Aztec** and Spanish. The Aztecs were an indigenous group that lived in Mexico thousands of years ago. They observed death with special rituals and ceremonies that took place over the course of a month. When the Spanish **Conquistadors** came to Mexico in the early 1500's, they tried to convert the Aztecs to the Catholic religion. One result of the blending of the two religions was the creation of the celebration now known as El Dia de los Muertos.

How do people **celebrate** Dia de los Muertos? The celebration typically takes place on November 1. On that day, people visit the grave sites of the **deceased** in order to clean and decorate the graves. Making and decorating **sugar skulls** is another activity associated with Dia de los Muertos, as is sharing a family meal to eat traditional foods such as **Pan de Muerto** and mole. Another custom is to create an ofrenda to honor deceased loved ones.

The **ofrenda** is placed in homes and sometimes in public locations such as parks. A traditional ofrenda is built in the shape of an Aztec pyramid with three to four tiers. The ofrenda has special objects placed on it to represent earth, wind, fire and water. **Papel picado** is used to represent wind, candles represent fire, and food and **flowers** represent the earth. A glass of water is placed on the ofrenda to quench the thirst of the weary soul. Because it is believed that the alter helps to welcome the soul back to earth during the celebration, family members choose items that represent the deceased. Family members and friends gather around the ofrenda to share happy memories of the deceased loved one.