

1. Lesson Title:

Raíces del Nopal: Telling Our Family Stories Through Art

2. Objectives:

Academic Objective(s):

- Students will explore personal and family migration stories using visual metaphors.
- Students will understand how family histories contribute to cultural identity and community belonging.

Artistic Objective(s):

- Students will create a mixed-media artwork using a nopal cactus as a storytelling device.
 - Students will learn the basics of collage and visual composition to express narrative.
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3. Standards:

Academic Standards:

- TEKS Social Studies 113.15 (3rd Grade): (b)(3) History. The student understands the concepts of time and chronology.
- TEKS English Language Arts and Reading: 110.15(b)(18) Writing/Expository and Procedural Texts.

Arts Standards:

- National Core Arts Standards (Visual Arts):
 - VA:Cr1.1.3a: Elaborate on an imaginative idea.
 - VA:Cr2.1.3a: Create personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.

4. Vocabulary:

Academic Vocabulary English:

- Migration
- Family Tree
- Ancestry
- Community

Vocabulario Académico:

- Migración
- Árbol genealógico
- Antepasado/a
- Comunidad

Artistic Vocabulary English:

- Collage
- Symbolism
- Composition
- Mixed Media

Vocabulario Artístico:

- Collage
- Simbolismo
- Composición

- Técnicas mixtas
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5. Materials/Resources Needed:

- Nopal templates (paddles and flowers)
 - Large butcher paper
 - Scissors, glue sticks
 - Markers, crayons, colored pencils
 - Reference artwork by Margarita Cabrera
 - Optional: felt and embroidery supplies for soft sculpture extension
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6. Lesson Introduction (5–10 minutes):

Begin by showing examples of Margarita Cabrera’s art and discussing how desert plants like the nopal can be used to tell stories. Ask students:

“What kind of stories do plants tell?”

Introduce the idea that the nopal grows in many ways—just like families grow in many ways. Explain that each paddle of the cactus will represent a family member, and the flowers will symbolize children. Introduce the metaphor of “taking root” in a new community.

7. Guided Practice (15–20 minutes):

1. **Discuss** the academic concept of family heritage and migration using accessible examples.
2. **Introduce** the nopal as a visual metaphor for families.
3. **Model** how to write names and dates on the paddles, and attach them to the nopal shape on butcher paper.
4. **Demonstrate** how to use color and symbolism to personalize each family tree.

5. **Support** students as they begin to assemble and decorate their collaborative family nopal with their family members' help.
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8. Independent Practice (15–20 minutes):

Students will work independently or in small groups to:

- Fill out their nopal with family information, using flowers for children and pads for each generation.
 - Decorate the background to reflect their family's culture and migration journey.
 - Add artistic elements such as symbols, flags, or food icons representing family traditions.
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9. Closing (5–10 minutes):

Invite students to share their completed artworks. Facilitate a class discussion using questions like:

- “What did you learn about your family through this activity?”
- “Did anything surprise you?”
- “How does your nopal show your family's journey or identity?”

Highlight the diversity of family structures and stories.

10. Assessment:

Academic Assessment:

- Exit slip: “What does it mean for a family to ‘take root’ in a new place?”

Artistic Assessment:

- Rubric assessing creativity, connection to theme, use of materials, and effort.
 - Participation in class sharing and reflective discussion.
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11. Differentiation Strategies:

- Provide bilingual instructions and sentence starters.
 - Offer visual cues and examples for emergent readers.
 - Allow for oral storytelling or peer collaboration for students with writing challenges.
 - Offer choice in art supplies for sensory accommodations.
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12. Reflection (Post-Lesson):

- Did students successfully connect artistic elements to their family narratives?
 - Did families engage meaningfully with the process?
 - How did the integration of visual art deepen student understanding of cultural identity?
 - What parts of the lesson sparked the most conversation or interest?
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Notes:

Additional Extensions:

- Have students create a collaborative mural of all the nopales to form a class “landscape of stories.”
- Introduce textile arts by creating felt versions of their nopal.
- Host a family night or gallery walk to showcase the projects.

Homework/Follow-Up Activities:

- Interview a family member to add more detail to their nopal.
- Taste or prepare a dish made with nopal or tuna (fruit of the cactus) and write a reflection.

Age Range:

Grades 3–5 and adaptable for older or younger students with scaffolding.

Community Cultural Wealth Objectives:

- Students will engage with **Familial Capital** by learning about their family histories.
- Students will explore how cultural knowledge and migration shape identity and belonging.