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LA SANTA CECILIA

STUDY GUIDE

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LA SANTA CECILIA

School Matinee

Thursday, October 30, 2025

Recommended for students in grades 6-12



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**All History and Social Sciences SOLs are based on the 2025 Instructional Guide revisions.*



WE WANT EVERYONE TO ENJOY THE SHOW

Please prepare your students for their visit to the Center for the Arts by practicing audience etiquette before you attend a live performance. The following guidelines will ensure that everyone can enjoy the show:

- Arrive early to find your seat and settle in before the show begins! This is for the safety of the students and artists, as the lights go down promptly at show time. If you happen to arrive after the performance has started, the ushers will help you find a suitable time to be seated without disrupting the experience for others.
- For the enjoyment of all, please turn off any devices that may create light or sound during the performance.
- While we love capturing memories, please note that photography, audio, or video recording are not permitted in the theatre.
- Food, gum, and beverages are not allowed inside the theatre.
- Buckle up! Keep all feet on the ground and hands, legs, and bodies in the seats at all times so everyone has a great view of the stage.
- Many performers enjoy engaging with the audience and may invite you to clap, sing along, or even dance in your seat! Feel free to join in and have fun, but save conversations for the journey back to school to maintain the magic for everyone.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

La Santa Cecilia

Named after the patron saint of music, La Santa Cecilia is the voice of a new bicultural generation — rooted in Latin American heritage, yet fully immersed in the evolving soundscape of modern music. La Santa Cecilia's unique sounds and colorful, passionate performances captivate audiences. Whether you're a longtime fan or discovering the band's magic for the first time, the music will move your heart and your feet.

La Santa Cecilia exemplifies the modern-day creative hybrid of Latin culture, rock, and world music. The group draws inspiration from all over the world, utilizing Pan-American rhythms, including *cumbia*, *bossa-nova*, *rumba*, *bolero*, *tango*, *jazz*, and *klezmer* music. Its unique sounds and the experience of its colorful, passionate performances continues to captivate both loyal fans and new listeners. La Santa Cecilia is composed of accordionist and requinto player Jose "Pepe" Carlos, bassist Alex Bendaña, percussionist Miguel "Oso" Ramirez, and vocalist La Marisoul. Singing about love, loss, and everyday struggles, the band voices Latin American influences through modern musical styles. La Santa Cecilia released its debut album, *Noche y Citas*, in 2011. The album was nominated at the Latin Grammy Awards for the single *La Negra*. 2012's *El Valor* was named one of the best albums of the year by NPR's *Alt Latino*. *Treinta Días* was released in 2013 and went on to win the Grammy for Best Latin Rock Album, Alternative or Urban. In 2016 *Buenaventura* was nominated for a Latin Grammy (Best Pop/Rock Album) and a Grammy (Best Latin Urban, Rock or Alternative).



ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY

Accent: An emphasis on a particular moment of music.

Accordion: A portable musical instrument with metal reeds blown by bellows, played by means of keys and buttons.

Artesanía: The art of traditional craftsmanship; a shop that sells traditional craftwork or handicrafts.

Beats: Repeated accents in music that stay consistent underneath the rhythm. Examples of a steady beat are the ticking of a clock, a heartbeat, or clapping along to a song.

Bicultural: Having or combining the customs of two nations, peoples, or ethnic groups.

Culture: The customs, art, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.

Día de los Muertos: Also known as Day of the Dead, this Mexican holiday is celebrated November 1-2, honoring and remembering deceased loved ones through festive traditions like building altars, visiting graves, and enjoying traditional foods and music.

Figurative language: A literary device used to create an image, association, or other effect in the reader's mind.

Frequency: The rate at which a vibration occurs that constitutes a wave, either in a material (as in sound waves), or in an electromagnetic field (as in radio waves and light), usually measured per second.

Genre: A category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.

Idiomatic: A phrase or expression whose meaning can't be understood by the individual words (e.g., "raining cats and dogs"). Understanding idioms helps bridge cultural gaps by revealing shared assumptions and historical references within a language and its speakers' culture.

Indigenous: Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; when applied to humans, it can mean people who have lived in a specific region before other individuals arrived, defined new borders, and began to inhabit the same land.

Literary devices: Techniques writers use to enhance their writing, convey meaning, and evoke emotion through stylistic and structural choices, such as metaphors, similes, and symbolism.

Oaxacan wood carvings: Often called *alebrijes*, these wood carvings are brightly colored, fantastical sculptures of animals and mythical creatures, traditionally made from copal wood and painted with intricate patterns by artisans in Oaxaca, Mexico.

VOCABULARY, cont.

Pan-American rhythms: The diverse and often syncopated musical rhythms originating from or characteristic of the Americas, encompassing styles from North, Central, and South America, as well as the Caribbean.

Percussion: A way of making sound by beating, striking, or shaking a musical instrument or other surface.

Talavera pottery: A type of tin-enamelled earthenware or majolica, this traditional Mexican and Spanish ceramic artform is known for its hand-painted designs, vibrant colors, and intricate patterns, and is particularly associated with the Puebla region of Mexico.

Tempo: How fast or slow a steady beat is played.

Vibration: The repeated back-and-forth (or up-and-down) motion of an object or particle around its resting position.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

English

Lyrics Analysis

Begin by asking students if they listen to music regularly and what their favorite songs are. Have a brief discussion about how lyrics, much like poetry, use literary techniques to convey emotion, message, and story. Write a popular song lyric on the board (for example, use lyrics from Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* or Billie Eilish's *Birds of a Feather*), as well as a fully printed copy of the song lyrics for students, and ask what the choice of words and the song's structure convey emotionally and literally. Point out clear use of tone, mood, figurative language (metaphors, similes), rhyme schemes, and repetition in lyrics. Guiding questions for your discussion are:

- What literary devices (metaphor, simile, personification, etc.) do you notice in the lyrics?
- How does the tone of the song change throughout?
- What is the main theme or message the lyrics convey?
- How does the rhyme scheme contribute to the overall flow and feeling of the song?

After students complete the analysis, invite them to share their thoughts with the class. Discuss how the literary devices and structure contribute to the meaning of the song.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Explain to students that they will now create their own song lyrics. They can write about any theme, but they should try to include literary devices such as metaphors, similes, rhyme schemes, repetition, and imagery. Have students brainstorm themes or ideas for their lyrics. Themes could include emotions (love, loss, hope), personal experiences, or social issues. Encourage students to consider the tone and mood they want to convey. Students will write their lyrics (verse and chorus) in a poetic form, focusing on structure and the use of figurative language. Optionally, students could also work in pairs or small groups to co-write lyrics or create a collaborative song.

Have a few students volunteer to share their lyrics with the class or in small groups. Encourage students to provide constructive feedback by focusing on the use of literary devices, overall structure, and theme. Student prompts could include:

- How effectively did the writer use imagery or metaphors?
- What emotions or themes do the lyrics convey?
- How did the rhyme scheme enhance the lyrics?

By focusing on literary devices, tone, mood, and structure, students will develop a deeper appreciation for the art of songwriting, as demonstrated by La Santa Cecilia, while also honing their skills in creative writing and literary analysis.

- ▶ **Virginia English SOLs:** 6RV.1e, 6RL.2b, 7RV.1e, 7RL.2a-b, 8RV.1e, 8RL.2a, 9RV.1e, 9RL.2a, 10RV.1e, 10RL.2a-b, 11RV.1e, 11RL.2c, 12RV.1e, 12RL.2a
- ▶ **VADOE Cross Curricular Learning:** Fine Arts

LEARNING ACTIVITIES,

Fine Arts

Genre Fusion

Begin class by asking students to list genres of music. Write the genres on the whiteboard in a circle, to the best of your ability. After listing out a variety of music genres, connect genres from across the circle with a line, asking students if they have ever heard songs with these two styles blended. Possible examples could include:

- [Latin Rock](#)
- [Country Pop](#)
- [Jazz Hip-Hop](#)
- [EDM Classical](#)

Play previews of clips (linked above) from a few genre-fusion songs. Ask students to identify the genres they think are being combined and what elements of their original styling are being blended to create a unique sound. Explain to students that many artists have blended musical traditions as a way to reach wider audiences or address social challenges.

Play a full song by La Santa Cecilia, showing how the band draws inspiration from a variety of Latin American and global music styles like *cumbia*, jazz, tango, and *bossa nova*. The group mixes these rhythms with contemporary genres like rock and world music, blending the old and the new in a unique, exciting, bicultural way. Explain to students how many people around the world, including performers in La Santa Cecilia, experience life through this dual lens, and like blending genres of music, it can be both a challenge and a strength to bridge the gap between two cultures and represent something new.

Ask students questions to prompt rich discussion, such as:

- What are the prominent instruments you hear in this song?
- Can you identify rhythms or beats from different genres?
- What stylistic features (vocals, melodies, harmonies) are used in each genre?
- How do these elements work together to create a new sound?
- How does genre fusion reflect cultural changes, globalization, and cross-cultural influences?
- How has technology (like digital production tools) influenced genre fusion in contemporary music?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

Ask students to pick two music genres they believe they could blend (for example, classical and hip-hop, rock and jazz, reggae and pop, etc.). Have students brainstorm the key elements from each genre, such as rhythms, instruments and melodic structures they would want to combine. Students will work in small groups to compose a short, 8 measure piece of music that blends elements of the two genres. If instruments are available, they can use them to create sounds. If not, students can create a basic structure using a free online music production tool (options are available in Additional Resources).

Each group will present their genre fusion piece to the class and explain the genres they blended and the creative decisions behind their composition. After praising the small groups for their creativity and composition, reflect on the lesson by asking students how they think genre fusion influences how we listen to and appreciate music today. Explain how La Santa Cecilia's music amplifies the voice of a generation that is often caught between different cultural worlds. Encourage students to think about how music can shape identity and spark conversations about important issues.

Before leaving, ask students to write a brief reflection for an exit ticket:

- In one sentence, describe how La Santa Cecilia represents the voice of a bicultural generation through genre fusion.
- In one sentence, what role does music play in expressing identity in your community?

► **Virginia Music SOLs:** 6.2b, 6.6b, 6.10, 7.1b, 7.2b, 7.6a-b, 8.2b, 8.6a-b, HM.2b, HM.3a-b, HIB.6, HII.1c, HII.6b-c

► **VADOE Cross Curricular Learning:** History and Social Science

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

Mexican Folk Art

Mexican folk art, a vibrant and diverse tradition, reflects the country's rich cultural and geographic variety. It blends ancient practices with modern techniques, creating unique pieces that range from everyday items to elaborate art. This art form, known as *artesanía*, is shaped by Mexico's Indigenous communities and has evolved over centuries, influenced by both pre-Hispanic cultures and European colonization.

Common themes in Mexican folk art include animals, mythical creatures, skulls, and religious figures. Materials like wood, ceramics, papier-mâché, and textiles are frequently used, with regional differences in styles. The art ranges from decorative Talavera pottery to Oaxacan wood carvings, from Día de los Muertos masks to colorful textiles and lacquerware.

Mexican folk art has roots in ancient civilizations like the Aztecs and Mayans, but it truly evolved during the Colonial Era and the Mexican Revolution, with a focus on national identity and local heroes. Today it remains an essential part of Mexico's cultural identity, celebrated through festivals and global exhibitions.

Show images of decorated sugar skulls used for Día de los Muertos celebrations, as well as Talavera pottery, explaining the use of color, floral patterns, and symbols. Ask students what they notice about the images (e.g., vibrant colors, nature-based motifs, symbolic use of animals or skeletons, etc.). Give your students the option of creating their own mask or pottery piece. Both activity instructions are listed below:

Día de los Muertos Mask

For the Day of the Dead Mask, students will draw or paint a skull on paper, using vibrant colors and floral or nature-inspired designs. Encourage them to incorporate intricate symbols that have significance to them or are representative of the Día de los Muertos holiday. Once the artwork is complete, have students reflect on their choice of symbols. Ask them to write a short paragraph about the meaning behind their design:

- Why did they choose those colors or symbols?
- How do they connect to the idea of remembering and celebrating life?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

Talavera Pottery

Show students images of Talavera pottery, explaining its roots in Spanish colonial Mexico and how it evolved to include bold geometric patterns, floral designs, and bright color palettes. Students will draw a geometric or floral pattern on paper that reflects the Talavera style. They can use colored pencils, markers, or paint to create their design. Emphasize the importance of symmetry, bold color contrasts, and the inclusion of texture, which are signature characteristics of Talavera pottery. After finishing their designs, students will explain the significance of their color choices and patterns: "How does their design reflect Mexican culture or their personal experiences with the art form?"

Invite students to share their artwork with the class, giving them an opportunity to explain their design choices, including the symbols, colors, and patterns they chose. To end the class, discuss with students:

- How does Mexican folk art reflect the values and traditions of Mexican culture?
- How does art serve as a way to connect people to their history, family, and culture?
- What was the most challenging or fun part of creating your piece?

► **Virginia Visual Art SOLs:** 6.4, 6.6b, 6.16, 7.4, 7.6, 7.16, 8.3e, 8.6a-c, 8.16, Al.6c-d, Al.17, All.6c, All.6b, AIV.6a

► **VADOE Cross Curricular Learning:** History and Social Science

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

History and Social Sciences

Latinx History

La Santa Cecilia is a dynamic Latin band known for blending traditional Latin genres with contemporary sounds. Their music often touches on themes like immigration, identity, and the rich cultural heritage of Latin America, focusing on the Mexican American experience. Their music offers a unique lens through which listeners can explore the intersection of music and history.

Formed in Los Angeles, La Santa Cecilia fuses *cumbia*, *bolero*, and *ranchera* with elements of rock, jazz, and pop. Its music speaks to present-day challenges, while connecting to cultural and historical roots. To deepen students' understanding, discuss several important historical events that form the backdrop of La Santa Cecilia's music. Topics could include:

- **The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920):** A turning point in Mexican history that shaped the political and social landscape of Latin America.
- **The Bracero Program (1942-1964):** A labor agreement that allowed Mexican workers to enter the U.S., as well as its corresponding implications on immigration.
- **The Chicano Movement (1960s-1970s):** A civic movement advocating for the rights of Mexican Americans and other Latinx communities.
- **Contemporary Immigration Issues:** Explore current reporting and the debate on immigration policy, as well as first-person experiences within Latin American migrant communities.

These historical events provide context for the themes La Santa Cecilia often addresses in its music, such as immigration, identity, and resilience.

Next, have students listen to a song by La Santa Cecilia or recall one from the performance. The band's music often includes references to personal and collective struggles, especially those tied to the immigrant experience. While listening, ask students to consider the following questions:

- What historic, present-day, or personal experiences are mentioned in the song?
- How does the music capture the emotions tied to these experiences (e.g., joy, pain, hope, etc.)?
- What is the song trying to convey about the Hispanic and Latinx communities or the immigrant experience?
- How do the musical elements (such as instruments or rhythm) contribute to the song's overall message?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

This exercise encourages active listening and critical thinking, pushing students to connect music with broader historical contexts.

Break students into small groups, assigning each group a historical or cultural topic related to Latin American or Mexican American history. Suggested topics include:

- The development and significance of *cumbia* in Latin American music
- *Ranchera* and *bolero* music and their importance in Mexican culture
- The role of music in the Chicano Movement
- How immigration policies have shaped the lives of Hispanic and Latinx communities in the U.S.

Each group will research its topic and then create a brief presentation explaining how the assigned subject connects to the themes present in La Santa Cecilia's music. Encourage students to use specific examples from the song they listened to earlier to support their findings.

Once the groups have finished their research, allow each group to present its findings to the class. After the presentations, facilitate a classwide discussion on how music, particularly La Santa Cecilia's work, serves as a reflection of historical and cultural experiences. Ask students to think about how different musical genres have been used as tools for social and civic expression throughout history.

Wrap up the lesson by discussing how artists like La Santa Cecilia use music to tell stories about history and culture. Ask students how their understanding of historical events changed through the lens of music, and how they think music can be a powerful vehicle for expressing societal struggles. As a final reflection, have students write a brief paragraph answering the following prompt: "How can music help people understand and reflect on history, and how did La Santa Cecilia use music to tell the story of the immigrant experience?"

- ▶ **Virginia History and Social Science SOLs:** USII.1d, USII.3g, CE.6e, WGe, WG.4d, WG.14a-b
- ▶ **VADOE Cross Curricular Learning:** Fine Arts, World Language

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

Pan-American Rhythms

Music plays a key role in Hispanic and Latinx cultures, with genres like *salsa* and *tango* achieving global success. Spanish-language music is now the second most consumed worldwide, after English. The term “Latin music” has become a broad label for music from Spanish and Portuguese-speaking regions, though it covers a wide variety of genres. So, what’s the story behind them?

Latin music began with Indigenous styles and instruments, evolving through various cultural influences. A significant portion of Latin music stems from the fusion of cultures during the Spanish and Portuguese colonization of the Americas. European instruments, such as guitars, mixed with African and Indigenous instruments like congas, drums, maracas, and flutes, created new musical forms.

For example, when Christopher Columbus came to the Americas in 1492, he encountered Indigenous cultures such as the Mayan, Aztec, and Inca civilizations. Although little is known about their music, we know it was closely linked with dance. Aztec drums were sacred, and Mayans used flutes capable of producing harmonies. Incan music, often associated with religious rituals, featured panpipes. Early Spanish accounts also describe music-dance ceremonies in the Caribbean, featuring chants and rhythmic instruments. Significantly, during the colonial period, European languages, instruments, and religious music were introduced to the Americas, all of which influenced Latin music. Gregorian chants and sacred polyphony blended with the traditions of Indigenous peoples, shaping the Latin music we recognize today.

As the fusion of Indigenous, African, and European cultures continued, the resulting rhythms became known as Pan-American Rhythms. This term reflects the diverse cultural influences that shaped music across the Americas. For instance, Cuban *rumba* and Brazilian *samba* blend African rhythms, Indigenous instruments, and European melodies to create unique musical traditions. These rhythms became an important way for people to preserve and express their cultural identities, particularly during periods of colonization and oppression. The fusion of these influences gave rise to powerful new musical traditions that continue to define Latin music today.

Split students into small groups, assigning each group a specific example of a Pan-American rhythm:

- Afro-Cuban *rumba*
- *Tango*
- *Bossa nova*
- Brazilian *samba*
- *Bomba*

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

Small groups will research the origins of the style and analyze primary source materials (such as photographs, historical documents, or quotes) that relate to these music forms. Groups will discuss how these musical styles are reflected in historical events such as slavery, colonization, and independence movements. Examples of table discussion prompts include:

- How did this genre of music help unify people and give them a sense of pride in their cultural heritage?
- What cultures are infused in this genre of music?
- Did this genre of music play a role in the shaping of national identities?

After discussion, students will work individually to write a brief reflection (three to five sentences) in response to one of the following questions, being sure to cite at least one primary source:

- What are the historical roots, significance, and cultural impact of the Pan-American rhythm your group was assigned?
- How did Pan-American rhythms contribute to cultural identity in the Americas?
- What role did music play in shaping the social and civic movements in Latin American and Caribbean countries?

► **Virginia History and Social Science SOLs:** USII.1d, USII.9b, CEe, CEh, WG.3 - WG.4, WHI.12c, WHII.3b

► **VADOE Cross Curricular Learning:** Fine Arts, World Language

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

Science

According to the Accordion

Featured in La Santa Cecilia's performance at the Center for the Arts, the accordion is a unique and captivating musical instrument that has evolved over centuries, playing a significant role in both folk and classical music. As a wind instrument that uses a system of bellows to force air over reeds, the accordion's sound production can be analyzed through several scientific lenses. By examining the mechanics of the accordion, students can gain a deeper understanding of both the artistic and scientific aspects of this iconic instrument.

Originating in the early 19th century, the accordion is a central instrument in various musical traditions around the world, including Balkan folk, Cajun, and mariachi music. The instrument's ability to produce both rhythmic and melodic elements allows for nuanced expression.

The four main components of the accordion are the bellows, reeds, keys/buttons, and the air pressure system. The bellows' movement play a key role in regulating air pressure, which in turn affects the volume and intensity of sound. When the bellows compress and expand, the resulting airflow over the reeds causes vibrations that produce sound waves. The length of the reeds determines the frequency of vibrations, and consequently, the pitch of the note (longer reeds produce lower pitches, while shorter reeds produce higher ones). The reed material (typically brass or steel) also significantly affects sound quality,



LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

as the materials' flexibility, thickness, and tension shape the tonal characteristics of the instrument.

Inform your students that the design of an accordion is deeply rooted in the physics of sound waves. Mathematical principles, such as the relationship between frequency, wavelength, and reed length, help explain how pitch is produced. Additionally, the vibration of the reeds generates harmonics, which contributes to the richness of the sound. These complex interactions of sound waves can be quantified and analyzed through mathematical models, allowing for a better understanding of the accordion's acoustic properties.

Divide students into small groups and challenge them to design and build a simple, functioning model of an accordion or similar air-powered instrument. Have them hypothesize which materials will function best for the bellows and the reeds. Using simple household materials such as cardboard, rubber bands, and straws, encourage students to explore how different air pressures, reed sizes, and material choices affect sound production. Guide them in understanding how their prototypes can replicate the mechanics of sound generation in an accordion.

Once the prototypes are built, students will measure the dimensions of their air chambers or reed lengths, discussing how different physical characteristics, such as chamber size or reed length, influence the pitch of the sound produced. Have each group present their accordion prototype. Ask them to explain the engineering principles they applied, such as how they mimicked the function of the bellows, air pressure, and reed vibration to produce sound. Engage the class in a discussion about the relationship between engineering and music: "How does the physical design of the instrument influence its sound, playability, and musical potential?"

By exploring the accordion's engineering and acoustics, we not only learn about its mechanics but also appreciate its role in global musical traditions. Whether through the study of material science, mathematics, or physics, the accordion exemplifies the beautiful synergy between art and science.

- ▶ **Virginia Science SOLs:** PS.5b, PS.6, PS.8, PH.1, PH.4b, PH.5c
- ▶ **VADOE Cross Curricular Learning:** Fine Arts, Mathematics, History and Social Science

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

Social Emotional Learning

What Defines Us?

Begin by discussing the concept of identity with the class. What does it mean to be defined by different factors (e.g., culture, emotions, relationships, etc.) and how does what we define ourselves as affect our community? Introduce La Santa Cecilia, a band that blends Latin music with other genres, offering a unique perspective on culture and identity. Briefly discuss the group's background and cultural significance. For example, La Santa Cecilia combines *cumbia*, *bossa nova*, and rock with traditional Latin rhythms and instruments.

Refer to the matinee performance and ask students to reflect on how the songs made them feel:

- What emotions did the performance evoke?
- How did the lyrics relate to the themes of identity and personal experience?

Display the lyrics (in English, Spanish, or both) for one of the group's most popular songs, *El Hielo*, which addresses struggles with personal hardship and finding resilience. Encourage students to analyze specific lyrics in small groups, asking questions such as:

- How does this song express emotions tied to identity?
- What are the key themes (e.g., resilience, overcoming challenges, etc.)?
- If you had to define this song, what word would encompass it fully?

Provide students with journals or paper. Ask them to write a brief personal reflection answering the question, "What defines me?" Encourage students to think about various aspects of their identity, including cultural background, values, passions, and emotions. Have them connect these reflections to a song or piece of music that makes them feel understood or that represents their experiences. If students feel comfortable, have them share their reflections with the class in a supportive environment.

Identity is a multifaceted concept — there are many things that define us, including our culture, experiences, and emotions. Music is a powerful tool for expressing and understanding emotions and identity; this social emotional learning helps us reflect on who we are and understand how we connect with others. Encourage your students to continue exploring different types of music and how they express their identity and emotions.

- ▶ **Virginia SEL SOLs:** SeA2: 5-6c, DeM2: 5-6a, SeA2: 7-8d, DeM2: 7-8a, SeA2:9-10c, DeM2:9-10a, SeA2:11-12c, DeM2:11-12a
- ▶ **VADOE Cross Curricular Learning:** English

LEARNING ACTIVITIES, cont.

World Languages

Translation Station

Start with a brief introduction to the connection between language and music, discussing how songs can serve as a window into the culture, history, and values of a language-speaking community. Explain to your class the importance of understanding cultural nuances in language learning and how music often contains idiomatic expressions, slang, and emotional depth that reflect cultural identity.

While handing out printed copies of the lyrics in Spanish, play La Santa Cecilia's song, *Vámonos*. Ask students to write a brief description of the overall feeling evoked by the song's rhythm and melody. Next, have students go through the lyrics and underline or highlight unfamiliar vocabulary. Finally, break down the lyrics together. As a class, discuss the following aspects:

- Identify and define challenging vocabulary or phrases.
- Highlight any grammar structures that are interesting or unique.
- Discuss any cultural references or historical events mentioned in the song. What emotions does the song convey?

In pairs or small groups, students will work on translating the song's lyrics into English. Encourage students to discuss the meaning of idiomatic phrases and cultural references while translating. After they complete their translations, have the groups compare their translations with the original Spanish lyrics and discuss any discrepancies. Which translations might be less accurate? Why? What changes were made for cultural accuracy or rhyme?

Lead a class discussion about the song's meaning and the cultural context behind it. Ask students:

- What aspects of culture are reflected in the lyrics?
- Are there any cultural references or sayings in the song that don't have a direct translation in English?

Optional Extensions

- To further challenge your students, have them paraphrase the song in English, then translate their paraphrase to Spanish.
- Incorporate formal linguistic analysis by focusing on tense usage, word choice, and poetic devices (e.g., alliteration, metaphors, etc.).

- ▶ **Virginia World Language SOLs:** SI.5.5, SI.6.2, SII.3.1, SII.6.2, SII.8.1, SIII.3.1, SIII.6.2, SIV.3.1
- ▶ **VADOE Cross Curricular Learning:** English

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Community Resources

[Casa Latina](#)

Casa Latina is a 501(c)3 nonprofit agency that addresses the needs of the local Spanish-speaking community in the Roanoke Valley. Based in Roanoke, Casa Latina's reach goes far beyond the city's limits, providing resources and programs to contribute to the well-being of native Spanish-speakers through education, cultural activities, and direct access to services.

[El Centro](#)

El Centro is the Cultural and Community Center for the Hispanic and Latinx community at Virginia Tech. This is a support space for people that identify as Latinos or Hispanos, people interested in the culture, and allies. El Centro works with the Latinx Library and hosts over 500 texts in multiple languages for all ages.

[ESL Classes](#)

The YMCA at Virginia Tech has a rich history. During the past 149 years, the Y has served the New River Valley with diverse programs to enhance the quality of life in the area. Its community programs include ESL classes, which are free of charge and held in partnership with Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley. Free childcare is provided.

[Local Colors](#)

Local Colors is a nonprofit organization based in Roanoke that celebrates international cultures, fosters the values of inclusion, and builds multicultural understanding through events and programming.

[The Music Lab](#)

Located at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke, the Music Lab is dedicated to the educational practice and development of all parts of music performance and production. The facilities include full access to a state-of-the-art multitrack recording studio, multiple sound-controlled practice rooms, and all necessary professional-level equipment and software.

[Southwest Virginia Songwriters Association](#)

The Southwest Virginia Songwriters Association exists to support each member in their efforts to be better songwriters. This group meets regularly to present and critique works of all genres, including folk, Americana, blues, rock, jazz, zydeco, pop, country, and bluegrass.

Please note that the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech does not officially affiliate or partner with all the above organizations; the above list is merely a sample of local opportunities that may prove valuable to you and your students.

RESOURCES, cont.

Literary Resources (Grades 6-8)

- *Dreams From Many Rivers* (Margarita Engle)
- *Experiencing Latin American Music* (Carol A. Hess)
- *Latinitas: Celebrating 40 Big Dreamers* (Juliet Menendez)
- *Tales Our Abuelitas Told: A Hispanic Folktale Collection* (Alma Flor Ada and Isabel Campoy)
- *Yes! We Are Latinos* (Alma Flor Ada and Isabel Campoy)

Literary Resources (Grades 9-12)

- *The House on Mango Street* (Sandra Cisneros)
- *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* (Erika Sánchez)
- *The Book of Salsa* (César Miguel Rondón)
- *The Latin Beat* (Ed Morales)
- *The Latin Tinge* (John Roberts)

Online Resources

- [Audacity](#)
- [Bi-Culturalism: Where the Heck Do I Go?](#)
- [Chrome Music Lab](#)
- [Day of the Dead](#)
- [Digital Dialects](#)
- [How Does the Accordion Work?](#)
- [La Santa Cecilia: Bridging the Gap](#)
- [List of Literary Devices](#)
- [Mexican Music](#)
- [What Genre Is Hamilton the Musical?](#)
- [Who Is Carlos Santana?](#)

Bibliography

- [Accordion: How Is it Made?](#)
- [Biculturalism and Context](#)
- [Exploring the History of Latin Music](#)
- [K-12 Standards of Learning](#)
- [Kids' Picture Dictionary: Accordion Photo](#)
- [Who Was St. Cecilia?](#)
- [Mexican Folk Art](#)
- [Social Emotional Learning Standards](#)



WHAT TO KNOW

Changing Your Reservation

If your group size changes or you cannot attend, please notify Bethany Costello, engagement manager, at bethanycostello@vt.edu so that your seats may be released to those on the waitlist. Failure to notify a change in headcount may result in limited registration in future seasons.

Accessibility

The Center for the Arts is committed to being accessible to all of our patrons. Those with disabilities and their companions are accommodated through wheelchair seating, parking, and other special requests throughout the center at all levels. Assistive listening devices are available. Service animals are permitted. Sign interpretation and large-print programs are available with advance notification. If you or your students have questions regarding accessibility or would like assistance, please contact Jamie Wiggert at wiggertj@vt.edu.

Bus Parking: Guide and Notes

Buses will drop off at the Alumni Mall loop in front of the Center for the Arts (190 Alumni Mall). Please keep students on the bus until a volunteer arrives to collect your headcount and bus number from a chaperone. Arrive 15-30 minutes before the show; larger groups should allow extra time. After drop off, buses will be staged at the Chicken Hill Parking Lot (Football Lot 5) at Virginia Tech, easily accessible from Southgate Drive. No parking passes are required. Buses may not park or pull into the Turner Street Entrance. Please provide your bus driver with the Center for the Arts Bus Parking Guide; hard copies will be available in the Grand Lobby on the day of the performance.

Cars, Vans, and Personal Vehicle Parking: Guide and Notes

Those driving cars and vans may park in the North End Center Garage (300 Turner Street NW), which is one block from the center's Turner Street entrance. A valid university parking permit, a validation from one of the retail tenants, or payment of the daily fee is required to park in the North End Center Garage. Please allow adequate time for parking and walking to the Center for the Arts from your vehicle; the estimated walk time is seven minutes. Please reference [this additional parking guide](#) for personal vehicles.

WHAT TO KNOW, cont.

Checking In

Public School Groups/School Bus Groups: Upon arrival, check in at the Public School Group table with your headcount (students and adults), as well as your bus number. Staff and volunteers will assist you with directions, restrooms, and questions.

Private School Group/Homeschool Groups: Before arriving, decide on a group meeting spot (e.g., the upper gallery, the Grand Lobby elevators, etc.) If you are the first in your group to arrive, you can pick up a sign with your group's name to display for other party members. Wait at your meeting spot until your full party arrives, then head to the Private School Group/Home School Group check in table together. Be ready to provide your headcount (students and adults); staff and volunteers will assist with directions, restrooms, and questions.

Individual Homeschool Families: Upon arrival, check in at the Individual Homeschool Family table with your headcount (students and adults). Staff and volunteers will assist with directions, restrooms, and questions.

If you have any questions about check in, please email bethanycostello@vt.edu.

Performance Etiquette and Expectations

The performance will take place in the Street and Davis Performance Hall's Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre. A performance etiquette guide will be provided for you to review with your students at your convenience.

Dismissal

Buses should return to the Center for the Arts 15 minutes before the end of the show. After the performance, please remain seated; staff will dismiss school groups and families to ensure a smooth departure for all.

Feedback

Please take the time to fill out the post-matinee survey that will be emailed after the performance. Doing so could significantly improve our many educational programs for you and future visitors!

For More Information About Our Programs

For more information about the Center for the Arts' PK-12 educational programs, please subscribe to the center's [mailing list](#) and select PK-12 and school-day events.