

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

### Inquiry Based Civic Learning

As part of our vision for powerful, culturally-responsive, inquiry-based social science, we know our classes are where young people have the opportunities to examine, question, and challenge what is currently happening in their communities, and apply that learning to take informed action.

This year, the mini-inquiry yearlong Essential Question is: **How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?** We suggest following the inquiry arc process to support students in unpacking an important essential question. We also encourage you to find resources you can use with students while exploring the essential question, as well as having students find their own sources.

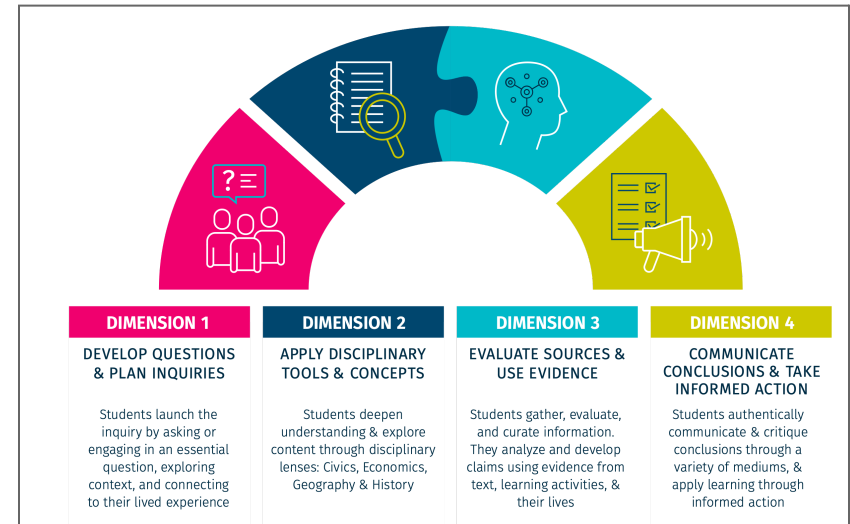
### What is provided in this mini-inquiry?

Art by @nerdybrownkid



Inquiry-based learning can be especially helpful when navigating difficult current events that are ever changing because it centers connecting content to our lived experiences, developing questions to inquire into our world, investigating varied sources, and taking informed action.

The following grade-banded mini-inquiry can be leveraged to engage students in learning connected to Latinx Heritage Month and centers story sharing as a way to build empathy across various experiences and deepen identity, community, and relationships within our classrooms and beyond. This mini inquiry includes exploration of immigrant/migrant stories and histories as a key issue directly impacting our classrooms and the communities we serve.



This mini-inquiry is aligned to our Illinois Social Science Learning Standards and includes the following:

- Teacher facilitation guide with instructional guidance and routines aligned to the inquiry arc ([beginning on page 2 of this document](#))
- An Essential Question to surface student thinking and curiosities on the current moment. This Question will guide the learning as students build and reflect on learning.
- Varied sources and texts to support student investigation into the essential question
- Integrated SEL strategies to support students in processing content, building empathy, sharing stories, and making connections to self
- Assessment suggestions for students to share their learning in creative ways

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

### Honoring Latinx Heritage Month

In 2023, the Latinx community accounted for nearly 20% of the total US population, establishing them as the second largest racial or ethnic group in the country ([source](#)). What's even more noteworthy is the composition of the Latinx community within Chicago Public Schools, where Latinx students make up almost half (46.9%) of our student body. These demographics, reflective of our nation, county, and district, strongly emphasize the need to do more than simply celebrate Latinx achievements for a single month. It's imperative that we integrate their voices, intricate identities, historical narratives, and life experiences into our curriculum throughout the entire year. When we limit the teaching of Latinx history or that of any other group to just one month, we inadvertently marginalize their stories and perspectives.

**Essential Question:** *How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?*

### Dimension 1: Develop Questions & Plan Inquiries

#### Standards

**SS.K-2.IS.1.** Create questions that are relevant to self as they relate to the content of Social Science Standards.

#### Overview

Introduce the Essential Question in a way that helps ignite students' curiosity and build connections. Provide opportunities for students to develop their own questions and document their thinking, process, and knowledge about the Essential Question. Position students to be active Social Scientists (as investigators or problem-solvers) throughout the inquiry and in collaboration with their classmates.

#### Learning Targets

**In these Dimension 1 lessons, students will...**

- Identify their feelings and practice mindfulness.
- Formulate initial ideas, connections, and wonderings about the essential question.
- Create supporting questions related to the inquiry essential question.

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

**Essential Question:** *How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?*

### Dimension 1

Day 1  
30 minutes

**Grounding (SEL Pre-work) Routine:** *Creating Space in Your Heart and Mind for Learning Together*

#### Setup:

- **Students:** Sitting at their desks/tables with paper and crayons/pencils ready.  
**Teacher:** Standing or sitting at the front of the room, modeling each step slowly. Lights can be dimmed for calm focus, then turned back on for drawing.

#### Facilitator Script & Student Procedures:

##### 1. Settle & Breathe (1 min)

- **Teacher:** "Put both feet on the floor and sit tall in your chair. Place your hands on your lap."
- **Students:** Sit quietly at desks.
- **Teacher models:** "Let's take 3 slow breaths together. Breathe in through your nose like smelling a flower... (pause) ...and out through your mouth like blowing bubbles. Let's do that 3 times."

##### 2. Notice Feelings (1 min)

- **Teacher:** "Now, put one hand on your heart. Think about what's inside your heart and mind right now. Maybe you feel happy, or tired, or excited, or worried. Whatever you feel is okay. Our feelings are important because they are part of our identities. When we talk about our histories and communities in social studies, strong feelings might come up too. That's okay. We make space for feelings so they don't get in the way of our learning."
- **Students:** Quietly think of a word, color, or picture that matches how they feel. The teacher may share 1–2 examples.

##### 3. Draw & Sort Feelings (2–3 min)

- **Teacher:** "Now turn on your brain for drawing. Take your paper and draw a big circle. This circle is your heart and mind."
- **Students:** Draw a circle.

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

**Essential Question:** *How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?*

- **Teacher:** “Inside the circle, draw or write what you are feeling and thinking about. It could be a smiley face, a color, a word, or a picture.” **Give students~ 2 minutes to draw**
- **Teacher:** “Sometimes we carry feelings that make it hard to focus. Look at your circle. If there are any feelings you don’t need for learning right now, draw an arrow and move them outside your circle.” (*model on paper as needed*)
- **Students:** Move some drawings or words outside the circle.
- **Teacher:** “Now, look at the feelings or thoughts you want to keep with you to help you learn. Circle or color them so they stand out.”
- **Students:** Highlight the ones they want to keep.

### 4. Transition to Social Studies (30–45 sec)

- **Teacher:** “You just made space in your heart and mind to learn. Our feelings are part of our identities, and when we notice them, we are honoring ourselves. As we study history and community, we may feel many different things. Remember, making space for our feelings helps us learn and build a classroom community where everyone belongs.”
- **Teacher:** “Let’s keep those circled thoughts with us as we begin social studies together.”

### Launching the Inquiry Process!

**Activate Prior Knowledge & Engage with Essential Question:** *How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?*

- Ask students to share ideas they have about how people use their voice in their community on sticky notes. They can write or draw. **Add these to the class [KWL chart](#).**

**Engage: Read Aloud (Video):** [Until Someone Listens by Estela Juarez, Lissette Norman, and Teresa Martínez](#)

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

**Essential Question:** *How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?*

- Read a children’s book to spark student interest, connection, and discussion on topics related to civic engagement. *If you don’t have a copy of the book, use the video as the read-aloud.*
- Ask students to look for examples of how people honor their identities and histories, and how those actions help build or strengthen a sense of belonging in their community, as you read the book aloud. Students in Grades 3–5 can write down examples on sticky notes or in their notebooks as they listen. Do stop-and-checks to pause and discuss how these examples connect back to the Essential Question.

### **Share and Document: Partner and Whole Group Discussion**

- Ask students to share examples they saw in the book with a partner and then share with the whole group.
- As students share, ask students, “How does the text honor Latinx identity? How does it demonstrate how a community creates belonging?”
- As students share, document their ideas on what they learned about how people in the book used their voice on the class KWL chart.

**Dimension 1**

Day 2  
30 minutes

### **Launch the inquiry Process**

Engage students in a [Question Storming Gallery Walk](#) activity using our curated sources and facilitation guide linked [here](#) .

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

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**Add what students share to the class KWL chart..** Students use the KWL (Want to Learn, Learned) to record new learning and reactions/reflections as they explore the EQ. *This can be done as a class!*

### Dimension 2- Apply Disciplinary Tools & Concepts

#### K-2nd Grade Standards:

**SS.K-2.IS.3.** With guidance and support, gather relevant information from multiple sources to analyze information.

**SS.K.H.2.** Identify and describe the purpose of the national holidays of the United States, the major holidays of diverse groups, and the bravery or achievements of the diverse people who make these days special holidays.

#### Overview

Students learn foundational content in **civics** and **history** to build background knowledge on the essential question. We have provided options of topics related to Latinx Heritage Month and civic action and arts that students can explore.

**Based on your students' questions and background knowledge, select the appropriate sources to engage student groups for a day of centers.** As you go through one or more of the readings/sources with your students, they will be developing content knowledge while also deepening their understanding of the Essential Question.

#### Learning Targets

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

**Essential Question:** *How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?*

**SS.2.G.2.** With guidance and support, identify some cultural and environmental characteristics of your community and compare them to other places or regions.

### **I3: Inclusive, Inquiry-Based Social Studies for Illinois Mandates Units of Study - Social Studies**

"The inquiry-based and disciplinary skills within the standards, alongside the Illinois Inclusive American History Mandates have the potential to create culturally sustaining and justice-centered teaching and learning experiences in K-12 Social Science classrooms in Illinois."

**In these Dimension 2 lessons, students will...**

- Explore how art, music, and protests in these events are used to express cultural pride, share community stories, and fight for social justice.
- Explain the importance of public celebrations, like parades and festivals, and public protests in making Latinx culture and concerns visible to the wider community.

### Learning in Dimension 2

Dimension 2		Essential Question: How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?
Dimension 2	Days 3 & 4	<b>Introduction Mini-lesson</b>  Choose 1-3 of these short videos to watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hispanic Heritage Month for Kids!</a> (youtube)</li> <li>• <a href="#">What is Protest Art?</a> (Youtube)</li> <li>• <a href="#">How to Look at Public Art: A Six Year Old Explains</a> (Youtube)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Puerto Rican Day Parade for Kids</a> (youtube)</li> </ul>
	30 min./Day	
	Day 3	

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

**Essential Question:** *How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Sesame Street: Hispanic Heritage Fiesta Compilation with Rosita, Elmo, and more!</a> (youtube)</li> </ul> <p><b>Activity:</b> Ask students to share with a partner, a small group, or whole group: “What is one thing you learned? What is one question you have?” Have small groups share out loud. Collect answers on a big sheet or board.</p> <p><b>Closure:</b> Add what students share to the whole class KWL (Learned column).</p>
	<p><b>Essential Question:</b> How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?</p>
Day 4-5	<p><b>Exploring Sources through Centers</b></p> <p>Read through <a href="#">Teacher-Facing Instructions and Student Materials for Centers</a></p> <p><b>Engage students in source investigation through centers.</b> <i>This may take longer than 1-2 days.</i></p> <p><b>Center 1:</b> <a href="#">A Tale of Two Parades: Mexican Independence Day Parades in Chicago</a> [article]</p> <p><b>Center 2:</b> <a href="#">Dia de Los Muertos in Pilsen</a> at The National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago [video/article]</p> <p><b>Center 3:</b> PBS Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum: United Farm Workers, <a href="#">Cesar Chavez</a> and <a href="#">Dolores Huerta</a> (choose one) [reading and activity]</p> <p><b>Center 4:</b> <a href="#">Celebrate the Work of Key Figures in Latino History</a> (read biographies and look at the images) [website]</p> <p><b>Center 5:</b> PBS Latino Voices: <a href="#">Interview with Daniel Flores, Peruvian Musician</a> [video interview]</p> <p><b>Closure:</b> Ask students to share with a partner, a small group, or whole group: “What is one thing you learned about the essential question? What is one question you have?” Add what students share to the whole class KWL Chart. <i>(You may repeat this closure</i></p>



## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

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*after each day that you engage in the centers , if it takes longer than one day. Closure is the same as the one found in the Teacher Facing Instructions.)*

### Dimension 3- Evaluate Sources & Use Evidence

#### Standards

**SS.K-2.IS.3.** With guidance and support, gather relevant information from multiple sources to analyze information.

#### Overview

Now that students have learned more about topics related to Latinx Heritage Month, identity and belonging, and taken notes on what they have learned, they will go back and draw on evidence from the sources in Dimension 2 and their lives to develop a claim to address the Essential Question.

#### Learning Targets

In Dimension 3, students will...

- Reflect on their learning about the essential question and their own questions.
- Develop a claim to answer the essential question.
- Support their claim with evidence from sources.

#### Dimension 3

Days 5 -7  
30 min./Day

#### Return to the KWL: Gallery Walk

#### Gallery Walk Procedures:

- Explain to students that now that we have learned more about the different ways people celebrate and honor their heritage and use their voice and what the effects are on their community, we are going to reflect on our learning.
- Students do a gallery walk of the whole class KWL in small groups to see how their thinking has evolved and if their questions are answered.
- With guidance, invite them to return to the questions that they posed in Question Storming and consider if their questions were answered and record any new questions they have on

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

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their KWL chart.

- **Think Aloud:** Teacher models thinking about synthesizing evidence to share findings of the Essential Question.
- **Have students make claims and use evidence to answer the essential question using one of the following templates:**
  - What do you think?: [Template 1](#) (Written Response)
  - What do you think?: [Template 2](#) (Drawing)
- If time allows, consider using a [4 corners protocol](#) using student-created claims as the statements for the activity. Before engaging in the activity, model movement throughout the room and having discussions with classmates.

### Dimension 4- Communicate Conclusions & Take Informed Action

#### Overview

##### Dimension 4: Communicate Conclusions

In this stage, students will create a poster, either individually or in groups, based on their learning about the following topics:

- Mexican Independence Day Parade
- Día de Los Muertos
- Puerto Rican Festival and Parade
- Historical Figures in the Latinx Community
- Arts and Culture in the Latinx Community

The goal is for students to answer the question: "How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?"

#### Standards

**SS.K-2.IS.5.** With guidance and support, students will share their findings on the asked and answered questions with peers.

## Latinx Heritage Month Mini-Inquiry, Grades K-2

**Essential Question:** *How do we honor our identities and histories to build and strengthen communities of belonging?*

### Dimension 4

Days 6-9  
30 min./Day

Inform students that they will create a poster that reflects their understanding of Latinx identity and belonging in relation to the events they studied. Emphasize that they should focus on the role of being a civic actor in their community or beyond. Allow students to express their ideas in a creative format. Suggest different elements they can use, such as:

- Drawings or illustrations
- Captions or short explanations
- Images, photos, or printed materials
- Collage-style arrangements of different elements

Give students time to plan and create their posters, either individually or in groups. Encourage them to think critically about what they've learned and how they want to communicate it visually.

#### **Prepare for Presentations:**

Once students have completed their posters, each student or group will present their work to the class. During their presentations, students should explain how their poster answers the essential question.

This activity provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of civic engagement and reflect on the impact of community events.

If needed, use the following [rubric](#) to help assess students' posters and presentations.