

NAFTA Lesson Plan

9th Grade World History Benchmark:

SS.912.W.9.6: Analyze the rise of regional trade blocs such as the European Union and NAFTA, and predict the impact of increased globalization in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Directly Correlated 11th Grade U.S. History Benchmark(s):

SS.912.A.7.12: Analyze political, economic, and social concerns that emerged at the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century.

SS.912.A.7.14: Review the role of the United States as a participant in the global economy (trade agreements, international competition, impact on American labor, environmental concerns).

Learning Goals/Objectives:

- Students will be able to evaluate the impact of NAFTA.
- Students will be able to discuss various viewpoints about NAFTA.

Essential Question(s):

- What are the positive and negative effects of free trade agreements such as NAFTA?

Key Vocabulary: *(terms in **BOLD** also appear in 11th grade U.S. History item specs)*

Globalization, **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**, tariff, **trade agreements**, trade bloc, agribusiness

Materials Needed:

Attachment A: Persona index cards

Attachment B: Guided reading questions

Attachment C: Paper Slide rubric

Time: 100 minutes

Steps to Deliver the Lesson:

*This lesson has been adapted from a NY Times Learning Network lesson plan.

Introduction/HOOK: Prior to class, arrange student desks into seven groups and place one of the persona index cards (Attachment A) in the center of each group. Post the following prompt for students to discuss in their groups upon entering class: “In 1992, the United States, Canada and Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This trade pact would gradually eliminate most tariffs and other trade barriers on products and services passing between the countries, establishing free trade among them. Imagine that you are the person written on the index card given to your group. Then, as a group, speculate both positive and negative effects that NAFTA may have on you in this persona. One person in your group should take notes.” After a few minutes, ask each group to introduce their persona and share their speculations. In general, what can students list as benefits of free trade to all countries involved? Do they think there are inevitable drawbacks, and if so, what are they? (15 min.)

Activity:

1. Have students work in pairs or individually to read and discuss “In Corn’s Cradle, U.S. Imports Bury Family Farms” (http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20020227wednesday.html), focusing on the guided reading questions (Attachment B). (20 min.)
2. Have students return to the same groups from the initial class activity to prepare for and participate in a simulated town hall meeting in Manzanillo, Mexico. All of the different people whom they are representing will be discussing the impact of NAFTA on Mexico’s economy as a whole, on them as individuals, and on the city of Manzanillo. To prepare for the town hall meeting, each group should discuss the following questions, and then create a brief “Paper Slide” presentation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qf6L1PTG3p4>) to share their viewpoint at the meeting. (30 min.)
 - Has NAFTA been financially beneficial to you? Why or why not?
 - How has NAFTA impacted your family? How has it impacted the city or town where you live? How has it impacted the city or town where you work?
 - In what ways do you feel that NAFTA helps support your nation’s economy? In what ways do you feel it does not?
 - In what ways do you feel that NAFTA helps support the global economy? In what ways do you feel it does not?
 - Which of these related issues apply to you, and what is your opinion on NAFTA’s success in addressing them? (environmental clean-up in Mexico, improved

worker safety in Mexico, greater job availability, higher wages in Mexico, improved health along the border.)

3. As a culminating activity, conduct the town hall meeting simulation, allowing representatives from each of the seven groups to share their Paper Slides and discuss their points of view. Have students evaluate each other's Paper Slides using the rubric (Attachment C). At the end, readdress the two discussion questions posed at the beginning of this lesson: With their new "first-hand" understanding of free trade and better knowledge of NAFTA, what do students think are benefits of free trade to all countries involved? Do they think there are inevitable drawbacks, and if so, what are they? (20 min.)

Closure:

Give each student a copy of the NAFTA preamble (www.worldtradelaw.net/nafta/preamble.pdf). Have students in their groups each select a different objective listed in the preamble that they feel applies to the persona examined in class and create a visual representation of that objective. (15 min.)

Optional Extension Activity/Home Learning:

- Have students create their own political cartoon to represent their viewpoint about NAFTA, and write a brief explanation of its meaning.
- Have students research a regional trade bloc other than NAFTA (European Union, African Union, Arab League, etc.) and create a presentation on its advantages and disadvantages.

Persona Index Cards

Give one card to each of the 7 groups

<p>Mexican corn farmer operating a very small farm in a central Mexican town</p>	<p>Owner of a large animal feed company in Mexico that imports most of the corn used in the feed from the United States to cut costs</p>
<p>Owner of an animal feed company in the United States moving your company near the Mexican border to lower your labor costs</p>	<p>Factory worker in an animal feed company based in the United States that has just announced that it is closing your factory and moving to Mexico to lower its labor costs</p>
<p>Owner of an animal feed factory in Mexico that was bought out by a larger American company</p>	<p>Worker in an animal feed factory in Mexico that was just bought out by a larger American company</p>
<p>Farmer in the United States wanting to buy the best feed for your livestock for the least amount of money</p>	

“In Corn’s Cradle, U.S. Imports Bury Family Farms” Guided Reading Questions

1. In what ways is corn a central item in Mexico’s culture, history and economy?
2. The third paragraph states that “the modern world is closing in on the little patch of maize, known as the milpa, that has sustained millions of Mexicans through the centuries.” How, according to the article, is this happening? How is American agribusiness seemingly portrayed in this article?
3. How many Mexicans farm corn, and how many family members are supported by it?
4. Why is Lorenzo Rebello’s “story” similar to others’ stories all over Mexico?
5. How much of the corn in Mexico is imported from the United States, and how has this impacted corn growing in Mexico?
6. How has NAFTA affected the corn agribusiness in Mexico and in the United States? How do free trade and farm policies differ in this industry in the two countries?
7. Why does this article use the term “survival instincts” to describe how Mexican corn growers must act?

8. What have been and will be some of the effects of the United States being “able to export all the corn it wants to Mexico, duty free, by 2008”? What did NAFTA’s drafters say would happen, and what has happened?

9. Why do the small farmers in Mexico “have little political clout under the government of President Vicente Fox”? Why is this mentioned?

10. What was predicted about the effect of American imports on Mexican agriculture when the trade pact took effect? What was not foreseen?

11. Why is “the importation of bioengineered corn from the United States ... a separate but heated issue”?

12. The last three paragraphs of the article offer different opinions on what Mexican farmers will need to do in the future. How do you interpret these different views?

Paper Slide Rubric

*Time limit for final video: _____ min.

Slide #	Required Content	Poor - 2	OK - 3	Good - 4
1	<u>Introduction Slide</u> : Include presentation title, group names, class period, date, and an illustration.			
2	<u>Background / Foundational Information</u> : What basic facts should people know about your topic? Include a related illustration.			
3	Same as above			
4	<u>Importance</u> : Why is your topic important? Include a related illustration.			
5	<u>Open Ended Answer</u> : Provide answers to one or more of the open ended questions for your topic. Include a related illustration.			
6	Same as above			
7	<u>Conclusion</u> : List any sources used and share a concluding statement or question.			

Total Points: _____/28

Comments: