

VIVA EL MARIACHI!

ALAMO CITY
Ballet Folklórico

ALAMO CITY
Mariachi Academy

Teacher's Guide





Arts Connect: Student Concert Series

VIVA EL MARIACHI!

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Arts Connect: Student Concert Series

VIVA EL MARIACHI!

CONCERT PROGRAM:

Viva El Mariachi

J. Martinez

La Negra

B. Galindo

Cielito Lindo

Q. Mendoza y Cortes

Cariño

J. Escamilla

La Raspa

P.D.

Niño Perdido

Arr. J. Ortiz

Cascabel

L. Barcelata Castro

La Bamba

P.D.

Instruments del Mariachi!



Violin: The violin is an instrument widely recognized across the world. The violin was developed in Europe, then brought to the New World by the Spaniards in the 15th century. The indigenous Mexican people quickly learned and adopted the violin after it was introduced to their society. The violin, harp, and the guitar were initially played during church services and religious events. Eventually, the violin in mariachi became the primary melodic instrument played by the local town musicians, which in many cases were known as the town mariachi. The violin, harp, and the Guitarra de Golpe first formed the beginnings of modern-day mariachi ensembles well over 100 years ago. This combination of instruments was common in southern Jalisco and Michoacán.



Trumpet: The trumpet was a controversial but ultimately transformative addition to mariachi music in the 1930s, becoming a permanent fixture and defining feature of the ensemble's modern sound, a change championed by trumpeters like Miguel Martínez and the popularization of mariachi through radio, films, and recordings. This brass instrument's bright, bold sound was well-suited for recording, unlike the earlier string-focused ensembles, and helped propel mariachi music into national and international popularity.



Guitarrón: The guitarrón mexicano or Mexican guitarrón is a very large, deep-bodied Mexican six-string acoustic bass guitar played traditionally in Mariachi groups.



Vihuela: The Mexican vihuela ([bi'we.la]) is a guitar-like string instrument from 19th-century Mexico with five strings and typically played in mariachi groups.



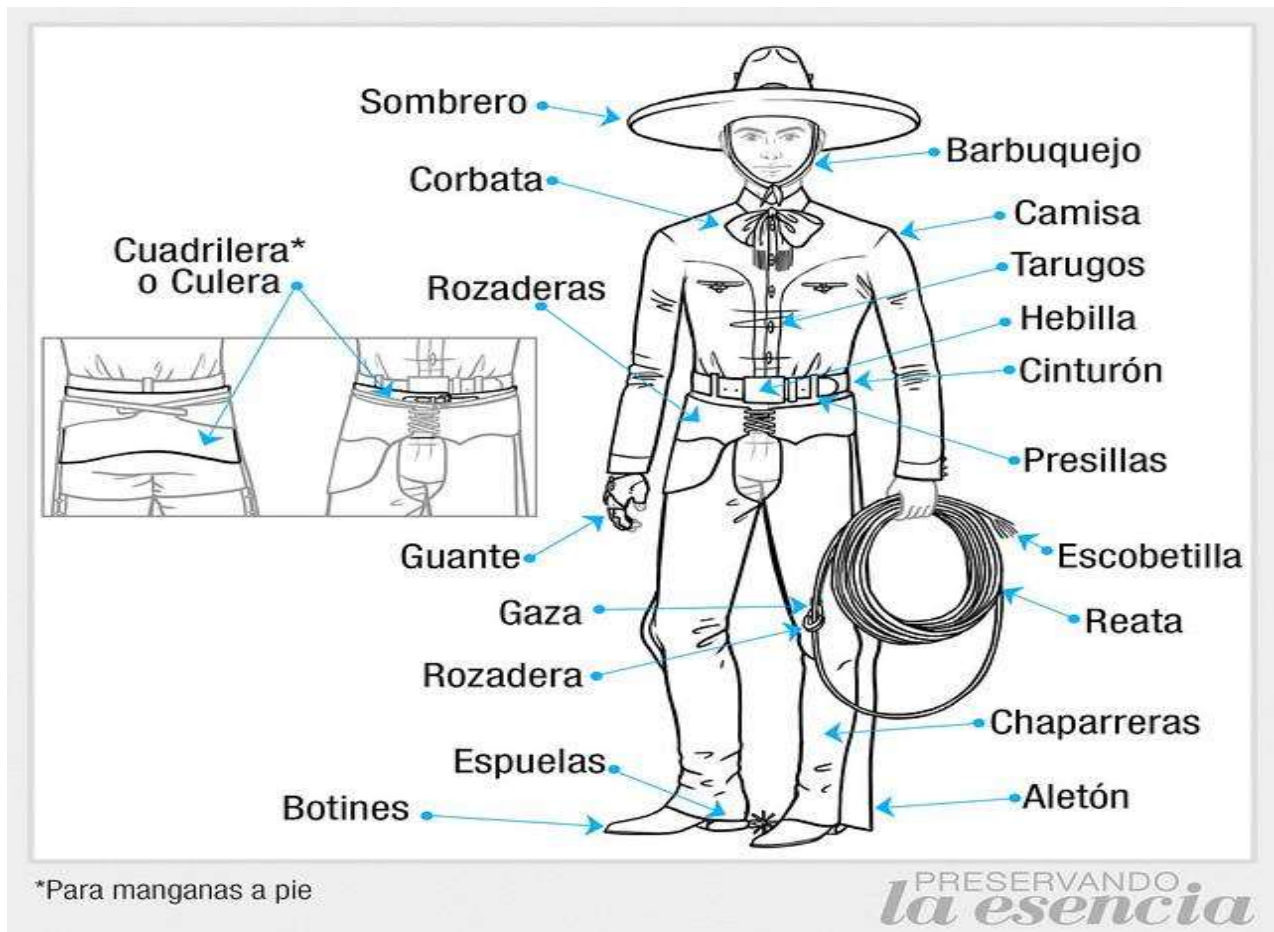
Guitar: An acoustic wooden string instrument with strings made of gut or nylon, it is a precursor of the modern steel-string acoustic and electric guitars.



Harp: Did you know that the Jalisco Harp was the original bass instrument in the mariachi ensemble? The Jalisco Harp was the instrument preferred by the mariachi harp players in southern Jalisco and Michoacán. One reason the Guitarrón eventually replaced the mariachi harp because it was easier to carry from place to place. Also, there were violins to play the melodic lines that the harp once played.

TRAJE DE CHARRO:

A charro or charra outfit or suit (*traje de charro*, in [Spanish](#)) is a style of dress originating in [Mexico](#) and based on the clothing of a type of horseman, the [charro](#). The style of clothing is often associated with [charreada](#) participants, [mariachi](#) music performers, [Mexican history](#), and celebration in festivals. The charro outfit is one that is associated with Mexico around the world. It is seen as a national emblem and a way to express personal pride in Mexican heritage. Charro outfits can be worn by men or women and have various levels of formality from work-wear to very expensive formal attire. The outfits consist of tight, decorated pants or a long skirt, short jackets, silk ties and are often worn with a wide-brimmed [sombrero](#) and other accessories as appropriate.



A Brief History of the Mariachi

The following information about Mariachi is from an article by Jonathan D. Clark that was originally published as an entry on the word *mariachi* in *The Latino Encyclopedia* (New York: Marshall Cavendish Corp, 1996).

What is Mariachi Music?

- (1) *noun* A specific type of Mexican musical group or ensemble.
- (2) *noun* An individual musician member of a mariachi group (synonym: *mariachero*).
- (3) *adjective* A genre or style related to the mariachi, e.g., *mariachi music*, *mariachi trumpet*.

Since the 1930s, the mariachi has been widely considered the quintessential Mexican folk-derived musical ensemble and has become an institution symbolic of Mexican music and culture. Mariachi groups are currently found in many countries around the world.

Mariachi Origins

Professional musicians accompanied Hernán Cortés when he arrived in what is now Mexico in 1519. Among their instruments were the harp and the vihuela, prototypes of those later used by the mariachi. Natives, who had their own highly developed musical traditions, quickly mastered European musical practices. With the importation of large numbers of black slaves, African music was also brought to Mexico during the early colonial period. Many regional traditions of mestizo folk music, including that of the mariachi, resulted from the ensuing cultural and musical blending of indigenous and foreign elements.

The mariachi is native to a region of western Mexico that includes what are today the states of Jalisco, Nayarit, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Michoacán, and Colima; extending as far north as Sinaloa and Durango and as far south as Guerrero. Despite frequent attempts to attribute it to a specific state or town, the exact birthplace of the mariachi remains unknown.

Early Mariachi Music History

The early development of mestizo folk music in Mexico is largely undocumented, making speculative any theories on the early evolution of the mariachi. The earliest known incontrovertible reference to a mariachi appears in a letter written by priest Cosme Santa Anna in 1852, although the word can be found earlier as a place-name. Mariachis documented during the second half of the nineteenth century in central western Mexico were commonly associated with the rural *fiesta* or *fandango*, and with the *tarima* or wooden platform upon which couples would dance *sones* and *jarabes*, the two most important genres of the early mariachi repertory.

Early mariachis wore peasant garb and had little concern for dressing alike. After the Revolution of 1910, however, modest uniforms began to appear. When for the first time mariachis could afford to outfit themselves elegantly, they chose the suit of the horseman or *traje de charro*. The gala version of this suit worn by contemporary mariachis – with its tightly-fitting ornamented pants, short jacket, embroidered belt, boots, wide bow tie, and sombrero – was once the attire of wealthy hacienda owners.

The Mariachi Etymology

The consensus of modern scholars is that the word *mariachi* is indigenous to Mexico. The now-extinct Coca language of central Jalisco is that most frequently cited as its probable source. Legend erroneously attributes the word to the French Intervention of the 1860s, explaining it as a corruption of the French word *mariage*, and citing a similarity between *mariachi* (or its archaic variant, *mariache*) and the French word for wedding. Historical documents prove that both the word *mariachi* and the ensemble it designates pre-date the French occupation of Mexico, making any similarity with the French word a phonetic coincidence.

Urbanization of Mariachi Music

While its roots are rural, the contemporary mariachi is an urban phenomenon associated with post-revolutionary Mexico City. It was in that nation's capital and principal metropolis that the urban mariachi was born and where most of its development took place. Vestiges of earlier types of mariachis may still be found in rural Mexico, but the urban mariachi has been the dominant model since the 1930s.

According to one version, around 1920 Cirilo Marmolejo moved his group from Tecolotlán, Jalisco to Mexico City, becoming one of the very first mariachis to establish itself permanently there. In 1923, the cantina Salón Tenampa opened on what is now Plaza Garibaldi, where the mariachis of Concho Andrade and Cirilo Marmolejo performed. The Tenampa soon became Mexico City's center of mariachi activity and attracted other groups from rural areas to that plaza.

Although mariachis had performed for official functions under Porfirio Díaz in 1905 and in 1907, it was not until after the Revolution of 1910 that the mariachi became widely adopted as a symbol of nationalism. Since Álvaro Obregón's administration (1920-1924), Mexican presidents have used mariachi music for political events, with Lázaro Cárdenas being the first to officially subsidize it during his term (1934-1940).

The role of the media was crucial to the popularization of the mariachi. During the 1930s, radio, cinema, and the phonograph came of age in Mexico, launching what had previously been a rural, regional music to national and international prominence. The principal role of the mariachi in the media became that of accompanying leading vocalists of the *ranchera* (country) genre, Mexico's most popular nationalistic musical expression.

Mariachi Instrumentation

At the turn of the century, a typical mariachi consisted of four musicians. While precise instrumentation could vary with each group, regional tendencies existed. The two most prominent mariachi regions were that of central Jalisco, which preferred two violins, *vihuela* (a small, guitar-like instrument with a convex back and five strings), and *guitarrón* (a large, six-string bass version of the vihuela); and that of southern Jalisco and Michoacán, which preferred two violins, harp, and *guitarra de golpe* (the original mariachi guitar).

After the Mexican Revolution, mariachi groups tended to grow in size. Instruments previously associated with specific regional traditions were combined in the same group, and existing instruments were doubled. Following a period of experimentation, the instrumentation of the urban mariachi music became standardized. The modern classical guitar was adopted, and the vihuela and the guitarrón were retained, while the guitarra de golpe and the harp fell into general disuse.

In the early 1900s, wind instruments were frequently added to the traditionally all-string ensemble. By the 1920s, mariachis in different parts of Mexico were using the cornet. In the 1930s, however, the trumpet had replaced the cornet and had gained a permanent foothold in the mariachi. By the 1940s, the trumpet had become a mariachi institution. The two-trumpet combination popularized by Mariachi Mexico de Pepe Villa in the early 1950s is the most recent innovation to take place in the standard mariachi instrumentation.

The standard contemporary instrumentation for a full mariachi is two trumpets, three or more violins, a vihuela, a guitar, and a guitarrón. A harp, and an additional guitar and/or trumpet are sometimes added, and the basic ensemble is often reduced for economic reasons. All members may sing.

Mariachi Vargas

The most important group in the history of mariachi music is Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, founded in 1898 by Gaspar Vargas in Tecalitlán, Jalisco. In the 1930s, its leadership was taken over by his son, Silvestre Vargas, considered the greatest mariachi organizer and visionary of all time. In 1934, the group moved permanently to Mexico City, where it played a leading role in the evolution of mariachi music. The majority of influential musicians in this genre have passed through its ranks, including arranger Rubén Fuentes and trumpet player Miguel Martínez. Since

the 1940s, Mariachi Vargas has been the model ensemble for the urban mariachi tradition, in which its trajectory and influence are without parallel.

Mariachi Music in the United States

Mariachi music has become deeply rooted in the United States, where it has taken on unique characteristics and even influenced its Mexican counterpart. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, a number of organized mariachi groups immigrated to Los Angeles, an urban area that has in many ways become to the United States what Mexico City is to Mexico as an urban Mecca of mariachi music. In 1961, Nati Cano organized Los Camperos, which became the best-known U.S. mariachi and the country's pioneer group in popularizing this music among non-Hispanics. In 1969, Los Camperos opened La Fonda restaurant in Los Angeles, the world's first venue designed to showcase a mariachi. Other U.S. groups followed suit, and eventually this concept was adopted in Mexico.

Mariachi Uclatlán, founded in 1961 at the University of California at Los Angeles Institute of Ethnomusicology, pioneered the academic mariachi tradition, and today educational institutions throughout the United States, particularly in the Southwest, offer classes in mariachi music. Mariachi Cobre, founded in Tucson, Arizona in 1971, was the first prominent Mexican-American mariachi group.

In 1979, a U.S. mariachi movement was born at the First international Mariachi Conference held in San Antonio, Texas. Since then, mariachi festivals and conferences have proliferated in the United States; Mexico celebrated its first international mariachi festival in 1994. Linda Ronstadt's 1987 album, *Canciones de mi padre*, heralded the creation of a new audience for mariachi music among non-Hispanics. While Ronstadt is a traditionalist, mariachis such as Sol de México in Los Angeles embrace innovation.

Conclusion

Mariachi music reached its peak in popularity during the 1950s and 1960s. Since then, it has become increasingly marginalized by the communications media that initially catapulted it to fame. With the exception of isolated attempts to infuse new vitality into the tradition from outside sources, relatively little new mariachi music is composed or performed today. Nevertheless, the mariachi remains in demand for social functions in Mexican and Mexican-American communities, where it has become a deeply rooted cultural tradition. Its recent revival in the United States has helped give new life to the mariachi, whose appeal transcends ethnic groups and national borders.

Brief History of Ballet Folklórico

Ballet Folklórico is a traditional Mexican folk dance that blends dances from Indigenous, Spanish, and African influences, celebrating Mexico's rich regional cultures. The modern form was advanced by artists like Amalia Hernández, who founded a famous dance company in 1952, and the style was promoted by the government in the 1920s through the teaching of dances like the "jarabe tapatío" (hat dance). Today, Ballet Folklórico is performed in Mexico and around the world as a vibrant expression of Mexican heritage, with dancers wearing colorful, traditional costumes that vary by region.

What is Ballet Folklórico?

- It's a combination of music, dance, and costumes from different parts of Mexico.
- It has been around for a very long time, with influences from ancient Indigenous dances, European traditions, and even African movements.
- Each region of Mexico has its own unique dances, costumes, and music, which makes Ballet Folklórico a celebration of diversity.

How Did it Become Famous?

- In the 1920s, the Mexican government helped promote the "jarabe tapatío" (the Mexican hat dance) in schools to create a unified national culture, according to Dance Spirit.
- Amalia Hernández founded the Ballet Folklórico de México in 1952, which helped bring Mexican folk dance to the world stage, performing at international events and festivals.

How do we See Ballet Folklórico Today?

- It is performed by dance companies and in festivals and parades.
- Dancers wear beautiful, colorful costumes that are unique to each region of Mexico.
- Learning Ballet Folklórico helps people connect with their Mexican heritage and feel proud of their culture.

Useful Vocabulary

- **Armonía:** The rhythmic section of a mariachi ensemble, typically consisting of the *vihuela*, *guitarrón*, and guitar.
- **Vihuela:** A five-string, high-pitched guitar that is smaller than a standard guitar and provides rhythmic and harmonic elements.
- **Guitarrón:** A large, deep-bodied, six-string bass guitar that provides the rhythmic and harmonic foundation for the ensemble.
- **Guitarra de golpe:** A smaller, five-string rhythm guitar, traditionally used in mariachi music but now less common.
- **Trompeta(s):** Trumpet(s), which add a bright, bold sound to the music.
- **Violín(es):** The violins, which provide the primary melodic and harmonic elements.
- **Cuerda(s):** Strings, referring to either the instrumental strings or the melodic parts played by the strings.

Music Forms and Techniques

- **Canción ranchera:** A 2/4, 3/4, or 4/4 musical style that is a hallmark of mariachi.
- **Son:** A generic term for a regional music style, often characterized by intricate rhythmic patterns and instrumental flourishes. Examples include *Son Jalisciense* and *Son Jarocho*.
- **Bolero:** A romantic musical form, typically in 4/4 time, often featured in mariachi repertoire.
- **Corrido:** A musical ballad that tells a story, with no repeating chorus.
- **Jarabe:** A medley of instrumental sections from different regional *sones*.
- **Huapango:** A style of *son* from the Huasteca region, characterized by complex rhythms and often featuring falsetto vocals.
- **Falsete:** The high-pitched, falsetto vocal technique common in *son huasteco*.
- **Mánicos:** The different strumming patterns and techniques used on the *vihuela* and guitar.
- **Apagón:** A rhythmic strumming technique where the player mutes the strings to create a percussive sound.
- **Adorno:** A musical embellishment or flourish, often played by the violins and trumpets.
- **Entrada:** The instrumental introduction of a song.
- **Remate:** A musical ending or cadence at the end of a phrase.

Mariachi Attire (*Traje*) – See page 6

- Traje de Charro: The iconic mariachi suit, featuring a short jacket and trousers with silver embellishments (*botonadura*).
- Sombrero: The wide-brimmed mariachi hat.
- Botonadura: The ornamental silver or metal buttons worn on the sides of the trousers and sleeves of the *traje de charro*.
- Moño: The necktie or large bow worn with the charro suit.
- Cinto pitado: A braided or embroidered belt, often worn with the *traje de charro*.

Ballet Folklórico Terms

Dance Movements

- Zapateado: A rhythmic and percussive footwork technique, similar to tap dancing, used to accentuate the music.
- Golpe: A basic foot stomp on the floor.
- Remate: A sequence of foot stomps used to end a musical phrase.
- Sencillos/Dobles: Single or double foot stomps.
- Faldeo: The manipulation and movement of the skirt by female dancers.
- Pasos: Steps or foot movements.
- Hemiola (Sesquialtera): A rhythmic device often found in *sones*, where the dancers create alternating 6/8 and 3/4 meters.
- Caballito: Literally "little horse," a quick, rhythmic footwork technique used in *sones* to mimic a galloping effect.
- La bruja: A dance from Veracruz in which female dancers perform with lit candles balanced on their heads.
- Danza de los machetes: A dance from Nayarit where men perform with and toss machetes.

Costumes and Accessories

- Traje(s): Costumes or outfits worn for performances.
- Falda: The large, vibrant skirt worn by female dancers.
- China Poblana: An iconic and traditional costume for women, featuring a vibrant, sequined or embroidered skirt.
- Rebozo: A shawl, often worn by female dancers.
- Machete: A prop used in certain regional dances, particularly those from Nayarit.
- Huichol fan: A fan used as a prop in some regional dances, such as those from Nayarit.
- Peinado: The traditional hairstyle, which often features braids, ribbons, and flowers.

Regional Variations

- Jalisco: A region known for large, ribbon-filled skirts and classic *sones* like the *Jarabe Tapatío* (Mexican Hat Dance).
- Veracruz: A region known for its white, lacy costumes and the quick, brisk style of the *son jarocho*.
- Nayarit: A region known for the *Danza de los Machetes*, involving rhythmic clashing of blades.



Teaching Activities

Activity #1; Making a Maraca!

Materials needed:

1. Anything that can hold something. Ex. empty water bottle, empty small box
2. Smoothing small that can make noise when shaken. Ex. beans, rice, uncooked popcorn, small pebbles

Instructions:

1. Place the beans or whatever you have inside the container and close.(yes that simple)
2. Students can color or design their maraca as they please

Lesson:

Play different Mariachi music for the kids and have them shake the Maracas to the beat.

Questions to Ask:

1. Is it a slow song or fast song?
2. What is the feel of the song? Is it happy or is it sad?
3. How are you shaking the Maraca? Is it different in each song or the same

Activity #2: La Raspa!

Use this YouTube link:

https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=VMTwXc_zyX0&feature=shared&feature=xapp_share

1. Listen to the song.
2. During the quiet parts first time Clap' next time stomp. You can also have them do other things at your discretion.
3. During the second part of the song, have them walk in a circle or dance in a circle.
4. Repeat the song changing to different movements and rhythms.

Activity #3: Color the Mariachi

Have students color the drawings on the following pages.







TEKS Objectives

All numbers refer to the Knowledge and Skills section of the TEKS

3rd Grade: Fine Arts – Music -

(b) 1(A, B), 3(A, B, C), 5(A, C, D), 6(A, D)

3rd Grade: Social Studies – Culture -

(c) 10(A, B)

4th Grade: Fine Arts – Music -

(b) 1(A, B), 2(A,B), 3(C), 5(A), 6(A D)

4th Grade: Social Studies – Culture -

(c) 17(A, B)

5th Grade: Fine Arts – Music -

(b) 1(A, B), 3(A, B,-C), 5(A,B, C, D), 6(A, D)

5th Grade: Social Studies – Culture –

(c) 21(A, B)