Teaching Resources about Latin America and the Caribbean
Curriculum Materials Center
David & Lorraine Cheng Library, William Paterson University

This is a selected list of materials for teaching about Latin American and Caribbean culture in Grades PreK-12. Titles include picture books, novels, folklore, poetry, and biographies. Factual books on individual countries are also available in the Curriculum Materials Center.

Many titles have won the Pura Belpre medal which is awarded to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work celebrates Latino culture. For more information go to http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal

Teacher Resources

  Call Number: Cur.Mats. PC4118 .M37 2011

  Call Number: Cur.Mats. PC4118 .M374 2011

  Call Number: Curr.Mats. GT4803 .M45 2000


Latin America & Latinos in the US

A cumulative folktale in which the sun sets off a chain of events which results in the cleaning of Rooster’s beak in time for his uncle’s wedding.
Call Number: j398.3 Ada

A series of poems celebrate the events that made up the life of the labor leader, Cesar Chavez.
Call Number: j811.54 Ber

Two Latino boys experience carefree camaraderie despite one boy’s disability.
Call Number: PJ Ber

As Maya’s blanket becomes old and worn, it is made into a dress, then over the years it is made into smaller items until it becomes a bookmark.
Call Number: PJ Bro

A vibrant bilingual picture-book biography that portrays the musical and cultural phenomenon of Tito Puente, Mambo King.
Call Number: PJ Bro

Marisol, a biracial, nonconformist, soccer-playing pirate-princess with brown skin and red hair, celebrates her uniqueness.
Call Number: PJ Bro

An anthology of Latino stories and poems about growing up in a bilingual, bicultural environment.
Call Number: j860.8 Rid

A collection of nursery rhymes and games in Spanish and English.
Call Number: j398.8 Arr
A retelling in English and Spanish of fifteen traditional tales from a variety of Latin American countries.
**Call Number: j398.2 Des**

A young fan of lucha libre Mexican wrestling makes a connection to his battling hero.
**Call Number: J Gar**

This book showcases Hispanic and Latino American men and women who have made outstanding contributions to the arts, politics, science, humanitarianism, and athletics.
**Call Number: j920 Her**

‘Maria’ on Sesame Street delivers a coming of age memoir of a girl with a dream.
**Call Number: j791.4502 Man**

When Mia’s Abuela comes to live with Mia and her family, she helps her learn English while Mia learns Spanish, both with the help of a parrot named Mango.
**Call Number: P J Med**

Merrill, Y. Y. (1997). *Hands-on Latin America: Art activities for all ages.* Salt Lake City, UT: KITS. (Grades 4-8).
More than 30 authentic art projects for pre-Columbian civilizations and contemporary folk art with instructions and pictures.
**Call Number: j980 Mer**

Learn about Christmas foods and holiday traditions from different Latin American countries.
**Call Number: j782.42 Mor**

Angelica’s grandma teachers her about family traditions, foods, and helps her learn Spanish.
**Call Number: j973.0468 Mor**

Presents a brief history of the countries of Central and South America and Cuba, along with instructions for creating craft items relating to Hispanic culture.

**Call Number:** j973.0468 Pet


Tata Gus teaches his grandson Aaron how to use natural healing remedies, and helps the members of his family and neighbors.

**Call Number:** PJ Riv


Maria tries on her mother’s wedding ring while helping make tamales for a Christmas family get-together. Panic ensues when hours later, she realizes the ring is missing.

**Call Number:** PJ Sot


Babies enjoy the colorful fiesta with singing and dancing.

**Call Number:** PJ Taf


A little girl discovers all the bright colors in her Hispanic American neighborhood.

**Call Number:** PJ Tho


Years before Brown v. Board of Education, Sylvia Mendez played an instrumental role in Mendez v. Westminster, the landmark desegregation case in California.

**Call Number:** j379.2 Ton


A young Latina girl accidently breaks her grandfather’s vihuela and while searching for someone to fix it finds out he was a mariachi.

**Call Number:** PJ Tor


Miguel sees the results of his father’s faith and generosity when although his own family is needy he gives away baked pastries.

**Call Number:** PJ Tos


A cumulative tale of a farm maiden who, aided by a group of animals, prepares “arroz con leche,” or rice pudding.

**Call Number:** PJ Vam
Caribbean

Alvarez, J. (2002). *Before we were free*. New York, NY: A. Knopf. (Grades 6-12).
Anita learns that her family is involved in the underground movement to end the bloody rule of the Dominican Republic dictator, General Trujillo.

**Call Number:** J Alv

A bilingual portrait of the “Queen of Salsa” describes her childhood in Cuba, her musical career, and her move to the United States.

**Call Number:** jB Cru

A seed from a mangrove tree floats on the sea until it comes to rest on the shore of a faraway lagoon where, over time, it becomes a mangrove island.

**Call Number:** PJ Che

Maria leaves her mother and their Puerto Rican home to live in the barrio of New York with her father, feeling torn between the two cultures in which she has been raised.

**Call Number:** J Cof

Junior tells of the games he played in his mind during the eight days he was trapped in his house after the devastating January 12, 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

**Call Number:** PJ Dan

Describes the social life and customs of the people living in the Caribbean area.

**Call Number:** j306.09729 Das

Margarita Engle, the first Latina woman to receive a Newbery Honor, tells of growing up as a child of two cultures during the Cold War.

**Call Number:** J Eng

History in verse creates a lyrical portrait of Cuba through three wars for independence.

**Call Number:** j811.54 Eng
A girl strives to be a drummer in Cuba in 1920, when only boys can play drums. Story based on Millo Castro Zaldarriaga and Anaconda who formed an all-girl dance band.
**Call Number:** PJ Eng

A young boy and his family try their best not to let the rebel soldiers keep them from traveling to Santiago, Cuba to celebrate Christmas with their relatives.
**Call Number:** PJ Fig

When unrest hits the streets of Havana, Julian’s parents send him and his two brothers to Miami via the Pedro Pan Operation.
**Call Number:** J Flo

A bossy rooster dirties his beak when he eats a kernel of corn and must find a way to clean it before his parrot uncle’s wedding.
**Call Number:** j398.2 Gon

During the early days of the depression, New York City’s first Puerto Rican librarian, Pura Belpré, introduces the public library to immigrants living in El Barrio.
**Call Number:** PJ Gon

A collection of five traditional tales from the Caribbean region, accompanied by a song and dance steps.
**Call Number:** j398.209 Hal

Malaika fears she will not be able to dance in the parade without a costume. She comes up with an idea to use scrap fabric to create a patchwork rainbow peacock outfit.
**Call Number:** PJ Hoh

Following the death of her papa, Sophia fears that her mama will never find another dance partner for the carnival in Havana.
**Call Number:** J Lei
French West Indies traditional tale in which two friends encounter love, zombies, and danger on the island of Martinique.

**Call Number:** j398.21 San

The author describes Christmas at his grandmother’s apartment in the year she introduced him to Diego Velazquez’s portrait of Juan de Pareja.

**Call Number:** PJ Vel

After many futile attempts to plant a tree in honor of his new baby sister, a young Haitian boy discovers the perfect solution.

**Call Number:** PJ Wil

When Thulani, a Jamaican teenager, helps Ysa who has been raped, it frees him from the grief of losing his mother. He learns from Ysa the horrors of her boat journey from Haiti.

**Call Number:** J Wil

**Central and North America**

In this cooking poem, Jorge Argueta brings us a fun and easy recipe for a yummy salsa from El Salvador made the way a young boy and his sister’s ancestors used to.

**Call Number:** j861.64 Arg

The life and works of the artist Diego Rivera told through chronological poems.

**Call Number:** j759.972 Ber

Her grandmother teaches Esperanza, a young Guatemalan girl, how to weave on a backstrap loom.

**Call Number:** PJ Cas

The ecology of tropical forests that grow at high altitudes is described through the eyes of scientists who live and work at the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve in Costa Rica.

**Call Number:** j577.3 Col
Francisco misses his village in El Salvador, and especially flying a kite, but Mamá can’t buy a kite, so he makes one from discarded items he finds around his apartment building.
**Call Number: PJ Kle**

After her grandmother dies, Rosalita, hopes to be reunited with Abuelita’s spirit as she prepares a gift to give her when her family celebrates the Day of the Dead.
**Call Number: PJ Lue**

Lupita’s mother has cancer so she takes on more responsibility for her house and seven younger siblings and finds refuge in acting and writing poetry.
**Call Number: J McC**

Read-alouds for Mexico’s Children’s Day. Includes facts about this annual celebration.
**Call Number: PJ Mor**

This book examines the creative process of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo.
**Call Number: jB Kahlo**

A young girl describes activities that her great grandmother, grandmother, and mother did for their daughters.
**Call Number: PJ Rei**

Chato decides to throw a “pachanga” for his friend Novio Boy, who has never had a birthday party. When it is time to party he can’t find Novio Boy.
**Call Number: PJ Sot**

Two cousins one in Mexico, the other in New York City, write to each other and learn the differences of their daily lives.
**Call Number: PJ Ton**

Funny Bones tells the story of how the amusing calaveras, skeletons performing every day or festive activities, came to be.
**Call Number: j769.92 Ton**
An introduction to the life, career, and influence of the Mexican painter, Diego Rivera.
Call Number: jB Rivera

**South America**

A collection of more than two dozen nursery rhymes in Spanish with English translations.
Call Number: j398.8 Pio

When Chile is taken over by a militaristic, sadistic government, Celeste is sent to America for her safety and her parents must go into hiding before they “disappear.”
Call Number: J Ago

Introduction to Brazil and Brazilian storytelling, includes magical and animal tales from the rain forest.
Call Number: j398.2 Alm

The picture-book biography of Gabriel Garcia Marquez traces the Nobel Prize-winning novelist’s life from his childhood in Columbia to today.
Call Number: jB Garcia Marquez

A collection of Latin American tales from Chile, Guatemala, and Peru.
Call Number: j398.2 Bru

Kidnapped when she was very young a Mayan girl endures an abusive life, always wishing she could return to her parents.
Call Number: J Cam

Uses the alphabet to present the plants, animals, and the discovery of the olinguito found in the cloud forest on the western slopes of the Ecuadorian Andes.
Call Number: j599.76 Del
The story of a Paraguayan youth orchestra who made their instruments from recycled garbage in a local landfill.
**Call Number: j784.206 Hoo**

This book follows the children as they travel all over southern Peru to the city of Cusco to celebrate the Inti Raymi Festival with feasting.
**Call Number: j394.26 Kre**

Maria Luz and her family have a small farm in Honduras, but may not have enough food to sustain them for the year. Her father leaves home to find work and Maria must tend the garden.
**Call Number: PJ Mil**

A brave young Mitsko Indian follows his wife from the land of the living to the spirit world.
**Call Number: j398.2 Roh**

A fictionalized biography of the Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, who grew up painfully shy and became one of the most widely-read poets in the world.
**Call Number: J Rya**

The story of Saint Martin de Porres; an endearing tale of perseverance, faith, and triumph over racial and economic prejudice.
**Call Number: j282.092 Sch**

Because one of her grandmothers lives down the street and the other in a faraway country, Liliana experiences two very different ways of life when she visits them.
**Call Number: PJ Tor**

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