



EDUCATION @ MESA ARTS CENTER

WHAT MY CALACA DID AT NIGHT

Introduction & Objective: Students will learn about calacas in the context of Día de los Muertos and create their own stories, in the process learning about multi-paragraph paper writing.

Materials:

- Paper and pencils
- Individually-made calaveras (See this lesson for templates and ideas: <https://lail.unm.edu/info/k-12-educators/assets/documents/dia-de-los-muertos/calaveras.pdf>) OR images of typical Día de los Muertos objects (i.e. calacas, calaveras, ofrendas, catrinas, etc.)

Procedure:

1. Ideally, students should create their own calaca prior to writing their story. Provide as many different types of art materials as are have available-construction paper, crepe paper, tissue paper, sequins, glitter, yarn, fabric, ribbon, etc. Allow students to be as creative as they want in decorating their skeleton. If you are pressed for time, students can look at pictures of calacas or Jose Posada's calaveras to help them imagine their own calaca.
2. Once the students are ready to begin writing, explain to them that they're going to write a story about what their calaca did the night of Día de los Muertos. This will require students to have some background information on the celebration and an understanding of what people do when they observe Día de los Muertos. Encourage students to recall events from the musical Sugar Skull, as well as from any other information they may have learned in class or from their own experience. From here you can use whatever writing process you're teaching your students. One approach would involve starting with brainstorming and creating the web, then moving on to rough drafting, editing, revising, and creating a final copy.
3. It may be beneficial to give students the first few sentences from the book to start their story. Adapted for Día de los Muertos, you could use the following sentences: "One fall day, I made a calaca very long and loose (you could substitute other adjectives). The next day when I saw him (or her), he was not the same at all. His hat had slipped, his arms drooped down, he really looked a fright-it made me start to wonder: what do calacas do at night?"
4. Once the stories and skeletons are completed, you can display them in the room both to provide a sense of 'publishing' and decoration for the fall.