**Mexico Culture & Crafts: Talking Points and Activities\*

Talking points: *Talavera***
Start the discussion by asking your students if they have ever heard of Mexico? Can they find it on a map? Has anyone been there? Ask them if there are any things they think of or imagine when they hear the word Mexico? Explain to the class that even though many people here think of Mexico and its beautiful sunny beaches, there are also many interesting towns and cities, many of which are in the mountains. One of these cities is called Puebla. Puebla is in the center of Mexico and it famous for its special sauce (salsa) called *mole* that is made with chocolate, spices and nuts—and many other ingredients too! Puebla is also famous for its beautiful hand-painted pottery called *talavera*. (Show the students pictures on your phone or tablet or ones you have pre-printed in color of the pottery and also of *mole*.) Explain that this type of pottery/tiles is so common that you can find *talavera* as part of floors, sinks, bathtubs, restaurants, and more. There are even entire streets in Puebla lined with people selling *talavera!*  You can find bowls, plates, candlesticks, and signs on these streets. Explain that today the students will be making their own mini *talaveras.* Start off by holding up the pictures again and asking what they have in common? (Shapes, patterns, colors) From here follow the supplemental Talavera craft sheet for directions.

**Follow up:**
**Book**: Ask your library if they can find you the book *The Pot That Juan Built* by [Nancy Andrews- Goebel](http://www.amazon.com/Nancy-Andrews-Goebel/e/B001K8AASI/ref%3Ddp_byline_cont_book_1). Even though it does not take place in Puebla it is about a Mexican potter.
**Craft**: Make a *talavera* tile (Use the enclosed craft sheet)
**Homework:** If this is a middle school aged class, have them go home and look up Puebla on the computer. Can they find anything else that is interesting? Can they print out a picture?

**Talking points: El zócalo**
Explain to your class that in Puebla and in almost every Mexican city or town there is a big square in the middle of the town that has a big church, park benches, trees, and a fountain. This square is called the *zócalo.* Families and friends gather here almost every single day to stroll and relax. This is often because very few Mexican houses have yards and also because most Mexicans like to spend time with family and friends. *El zócalo* is a very fun and busy place! There are also children and adults selling everything you can imagine-gum, balloons, tacos, jewelry, and many other things. One of the things you can often find is popcorn, *palomitas*. What makes Mexican popcorn different is that they often put salt, lime and even *chile* on it!

**Follow up:**
**Game:** Play the game *palomitas* using the palomitas supplemental sheet.
**Activity**: Try *palomitas* and have students respond *me gusta* or no *me gusta* accordingly.
**Book:** Ask your library to find you a copy of *Saturday Market* by Patricia Grossman. It takes place in Oaxaca and is a great cultural book about Mexico.
**Song:** Teach the students the popular children’s song in Mexico “Los Pollitos Dicen”. You can play the song for the kids from YouTube and then sing it together using gestures. <https://search.yahoo.com/search;_ylt=AqApkJ679oUk5Q9Z8yK1lHmbvZx4?fr=yfp-t-338-s&toggle=1&fp=1&cop=mss&ei=UTF-8&p=los%20pollitos%20dicen>

