

Lydia Mendoza: Tejano Music and Life on the Mexico / Texas Border

Est. Time: 60-120 minutes

Subjects: History, Social Studies, General Music

Age Range: High School

See the full lesson [here!](#)

★ *TEACHROCK* ★

How does Lydia Mendoza's Tejano music connect to the history of Texas and the influence Mexico has had on that state??

In this lesson you will:

- Identify how Lydia Mendoza pioneered the development and popularization of Tejano music
- Explore what Tejano identity is and the people, culture, and history connected to it
- Examine the unique history of Texas
- Investigate the phrase “six flags over Texas” and what it signifies

Write in the first two columns of [Handout – Texas KWL Chart](#) what you already know and would like to know about the three topics. Throughout the lesson you will write in the third column what you learned about each topic.

Examine the map featured and consider or ask a partner:

Note what you learned on your KWL chart.

- Where is the state of Texas on this map?
- What region of the United States is Texas located in?
- Which U.S. states share a border with Texas?
- What country shares an international border with Texas?
- Are you familiar with the phrase, “six flags over Texas”? If so, what does it mean?



“The strong Texas interest in flags is shown in public and private displays of the ‘Six Flags Over Texas,’ i.e., the flags of the six countries that have ruled over Texas: the Kingdom of France, the Kingdom of Spain, the Mexican Federal Republic, the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States of America.”

-Excerpted from the Texas State Historical Association, tshaonline.org

Read the quote and consider or ask a partner:

- According to the quote, what countries “have ruled over Texas”?

Note what you learned on the KWL chart.

Now you'll examine the history of Texas and how that history has influenced the development of regional culture and identity.

Open [Document Set - Texas Timeline](#). Cut out the flags, view each map, read its description, and then match the flag of the country that ruled over the territory now known as Texas with the corresponding historical map.

Consider or ask a partner:

- Can you describe the history of Texas chronologically, in terms of which nation claimed the area?
- What was one thing you noticed about one of the maps that you found interesting?
- Considering what you have just examined in the activity, how might the people of Texas, and their culture, reflect the influence of all of the countries whose flags have flown over it.

Note what you learned on the KWL chart.

“The term Tejano, derived from the Spanish adjective tejano or (feminine) tejana (and written in Spanish with a lower-case t), denotes a Texan of Mexican descent, thus a Mexican Texan or a Texas Mexican. It encompasses cultural manifestations in language, literature, art, music, and cuisine.”

-Excerpted from the Texas State Historical Association, tshaonline.org

Read the quote and consider or ask a partner:

- What might the quote mean by “cultural manifestations”?
- Are you familiar with any of the “cultural manifestations in language, literature, art, music, and cuisine” that the term Tejana/o is connected to? If so, what are you familiar with?

Note what you learned on the KWL chart.

Examine the collage and consider or ask a partner:

- What do you see in the collage? Are you familiar with any of the “cultural manifestations” seen in the collage?
- How are the images representative of Tejano culture?

Note what you learned on the KWL chart.



Now you'll explore one of Tejano's cultural manifestations – music. Below, you'll watch a video about the Tejano music pioneer, Lydia Mendoza and then answer some questions from one of the two handouts below (*the short handout covers less of the video than the long handout*):

- [Handout – Lydia Mendoza Comprehension Questions \(Long\)](#),
- [Handout – Lydia Mendoza Comprehension Questions \(Short\)](#)

Play the [YouTube video “Mother of Tejano Music’ | The lasting legacy of Lydia Mendoza”](#). While watching, follow along with the timecode listed in the handout, pausing at the appropriate moments to take time to answer the questions on the handout.

Consider or ask a partner:

- How would you describe Lydia Mendoza's contributions to Tejano history? What are some explanations, opinions, and facts about her contributions that inform your description?
- How might you relate Lydia Mendoza's life and music to the Texas Timeline activity? (Encourage students to recall the countries that occupied the territory of Texas.)



Note what you learned on the KWL chart

SUMMARY

- Lydia Mendoza was a pioneer in the development and popularization of Tejano music, a regional music originating in Texas that mixed Mexican folk styles with European dance rhythms
- A tejano or tejana means a Texan of Mexican descent, a Mexican Texan or a Texas Mexican. The term also refers to the culture of the tejano community, including art, cuisine, fashion, literature, and music
- Texas has a unique history that includes colonization and territorial control by various kingdoms, republics, and countries
- The phrase “six flags over Texas” stands for the six countries that have ruled over the territory we now know as Texas: the Kingdom of France, the Kingdom of Spain, the Mexican Federal Republic, the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States of America

BE CREATIVE

Create an infographic about Lydia Mendoza based on the media you viewed in the lesson and this [Library of Congress document](#).

Make a [Tejano dish](#) and write a short essay or create a video documenting your experience.

Create a Lydia Mendoza playlist.

BE CURIOUS

Watch the one-hour documentary [Chulas Fronteras](#), which features Lydia Mendoza and celebrates Tejano culture, via [Kanopy](#).

Read about the history of the Texas Flag and the Rules Governing the Use of the Texas Flag [here](#).

Identify what region of the U.S. your state is in according to the [Census Bureau](#) and research its historic origins and cultural legacy.

Explore the life of Selena, another Tejano music pioneer, with the following TeachRock resources:

- [Selena – Trace It Back biography](#)
- [Women’s Perspectives in Country and Tejano Music](#)
- [Third Wave: Women’s Rights and Music in the 1990s](#)

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