

**Book: *Cuban Americans: Exiles from an Island Home***  
**Chapter One: E Pluribus Unum: Of Many One**

**Subject area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts**

**Amount of time needed: One 40-minute period**

**Objectives: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:**

- 1) Define the terms Hispanic and Latino and explain why most immigrants from Central and South America and the Caribbean prefer one over the other.
- 2) Define cultural identity, acculturation, and assimilation.
- 3) Explain why Cuban Americans have been more successful in maintaining their cultural identity than any other immigrant group.

**Materials needed:**

- ✓ Writing paper
- ✓ Pen, pencil

**Activities:**

- 1) The teacher will explain that this chapter contains many terms that are important to the study of groups of people. It is imperative to understand terms such as culture, cultural identity, acculturation, and assimilation before studying immigrant groups.
- 2) Using the information from the text, students will write an essay addressing the following questions:  
Define the terms Hispanic and Latino. Which do people from Central and South America and the Caribbean prefer and why?  
Define cultural identity and explain why Cuban Americans have largely been more successful than other immigrant groups in preserving their cultural integrity against the forces of acculturation and assimilation.

**Assessment:**

- ✓ Did the student correctly define terms such as Hispanic, Latino, cultural identity/integrity, and acculturation and assimilation?
- ✓ Did the student explain which term is preferred by people from Central and South America and the Caribbean, Hispanic or Latino, and why?
- ✓ Did the student explain the reasons for the success of the Cuban American community in maintaining their cultural identity?

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**Chapter Two: An Island Home: From Spanish Conquest to American Domination**

**Subject area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts**

**Amount of time needed: One 40-minute period**

**Objectives: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:**

- 1) Compare and contrast the first groups of Cuban exiles to the United States.

**Materials needed:**

- ✓ Writing paper
- ✓ Pen, pencil

**Activities:**

- 1) The teacher will explain that most people think of Cuban immigration to the United States as a fairly recent occurrence. However, Cuban exiles first started coming to the United States in the 1800s to escape Spanish persecution and make plans for a revolution that would finally bring about Cuban independence.
- 2) Using the information from the text, students will write a paragraph contrasting the Cuban exiles to the United States during the 1840s and 1850s and the 1850s and 1860s. Where were the two groups centered? How did they differ in their beliefs in how Cuban independence should be achieved? Which group ultimately triumphed?

**Assessment:**

- ✓ Did the student correctly identify New York as the base for the earlier group of exiles and New Orleans as the base for the later group?
- ✓ Did the student correctly explain that the earlier group favored a peaceful, diplomatic break from Spain and annexation of Cuba by the United States?
- ✓ Did the student correctly explain that the later group armed insurrection by Cuba's people against Spain to achieve independence?

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**Chapter Three: A New Revolution and International Crisis**

**Subject area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts**

**Amount of time needed: One 40-minute period**

**Objectives: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:**

- 1) Describe the events that led up to the Bay of Pigs invasion and how this in turn led to the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- 2) Describe the impact that these two events had on U.S.-Cuba relations and U.S.-Soviet Union relations.

**Materials needed:**

- ✓ Writing paper
- ✓ Pen, pencil

**Activities:**

- 1) The teacher will explain that two events during the 1960s that involved the United States, Cuba, and the Soviet Union dramatically impacted the histories of these three nations for years to come—the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- 2) Using the information from the text, students will write an essay that describes the events that led up to the Bay of Pigs invasion, the invasion itself, how this led to the Cuban Missile Crisis, and how these two events impacted Cuba.

**Assessment:**

- ✓ Did the student accurately describe the events leading up to the Bay of Pigs invasion? (increasing diplomatic relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union, bombings of Cuban sugarcane fields by Cuban exiles, the explosion and sinking of a French ship in the port of Havana, and finally, U.S. economic sanctions against Cuba)
- ✓ Did the student accurately describe the Bay of Pigs invasion? (1,400 mostly Cuban exiles trained by the United States invade Cuba expecting the populous to join them in an uprising against Castro; when the uprising did not happen, invading forces were surrounded and forced to surrender)
- ✓ Did the student correctly explain how the Bay of Pigs invasion led to the Cuban Missile Crisis? (Cuba solidified its relations with the Soviet Union and officially became a communist state, the Soviet Union offered to build a nuclear missile base on Cuba and Castro agreed)
- ✓ Did the student describe the effect these two events had on Cuba? (economic nosedive, loss of political freedom, and 400,000 Cubans defecting to the United States)

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**Chapter Four: Triumphs and Changes: “Golden Exiles,” “Marielitos,” and “Raft People”**

**Subject area(s): World History**

**Amount of time needed: One 40-minute period**

**Objectives: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:**

- 1) Identify and define the three waves of Cuban immigration to the United States.
- 2) Compare and contrast the three groups by means of a table.

**Materials needed:**

- ✓ Copies of the table for each student

**Activities:**

- 1) The teacher will explain that a table is an excellent tool for comparing and contrasting events in history. The teacher will hand out the tables and explain that students will be comparing the three groups who immigrated from Cuba to United States in terms of who the immigrants were (racially, financially, professionally), when they came to the United States, why they came to the United States, how they traveled to the United States, and how many came in each wave of immigration.
- 2) Using the information from the chapter (and from the previous chapter), students will fill in the table and answer the following questions:  
What (if any) were the similarities between the three groups?  
What differences were there among the three groups?

**Assessment:**

- ✓ Did the student accurately fill in the table?
- ✓ Did the student make accurate comparisons and contrasts?

|   | <b>Golden Exiles</b> | <b>Marielitos</b> | <b>Raft People</b> |
|---|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Who made up the majority of this group?</b>            |                      |                   |                    |
| <b>When did this wave of immigration occur?</b>           |                      |                   |                    |
| <b>Why did these people leave Cuba?</b>                   |                      |                   |                    |
| <b>How did these people travel to the United States?</b>  |                      |                   |                    |
| <b>How many people came to the U.S. during this wave?</b> |                      |                   |                    |

**Answer Key**

|   | <b>Golden Exiles</b>                                      | <b>Marielitos</b>  | <b>Raft People</b>  |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Who made up the majority of this group?</b>            | <b>White, educated professionals</b>                      | <b>Working class<br/>40% black<br/>Some mental patients, criminals</b> | <b>Desperate poor</b>   |
| <b>When did this wave of immigration occur?</b>           | <b>1959–1970</b>  | <b>April to October 1980</b>   | <b>1990–1999</b>  |
| <b>Why did these people leave Cuba?</b>                   | <b>Loss of economic opportunity and political freedom</b> | <b>Prospect of a better life in the U.S.</b>                           | <b>Economic collapse in Cuba after the fall of the Soviet Union</b> |
| <b>How did these people travel to the United States?</b>  | <b>Flights from Havana to Miami</b>                       | <b>Private fishing and pleasure boats</b>                              | <b>Homemade boats and rafts</b>                                     |
| <b>How many people came to the U.S. during this wave?</b> | <b>400,000</b>  | <b>125,000</b>   | <b>30,000+</b>  |

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**Chapter Five: Ties to the Past, Eyes on the Present: Cuban American Culture Today**

**Subject area(s):** Social Studies, Language Arts

**Amount of time needed:** One 40-minute period

**Objectives:** At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- 1) Describe the practice of quince and explain how this acts as “cultural glue” to help Cuban Americans maintain their cultural identity.

**Materials needed:**

- ✓ Writing paper
- ✓ Pen, pencil

**Activities:**

- 1) The teacher will review with students the concepts of cultural identity and integrity and “cultural glue” from the first chapter. Explain that the quince is one example of the “cultural glue” that enables Cuban Americans to maintain their cultural identity and integrity.
- 2) Using the information from the text, students will write a diary/journal entry from either the point of view of Carlos (the man at the beginning of the chapter) or his 15-year-old daughter who has just celebrated her quince. Imagine that this is the event that has brought Carlos’ mother to the United States for her first visit. The diary/journal entry should describe the events of the day as well as how this event was important in maintaining cultural bonds between the Cuban immigrant community and those who remained in Cuba.

**Assessment:**

- ✓ Did the student accurately describe all the events associated with the celebration of a girls’ quince?
- ✓ Did the student demonstrate, using information from the text, how this practice acts as “cultural glue” enabling Cuban Americans maintain their unique cultural identity?

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**Chapter Six: Making America: Cuban Americans Who Have Touched Our Lives**

**Subject area(s):** Social Studies, Language Arts

**Amount of time needed:** One 40-minute period

**Objectives:** At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify three famous Cuban entertainers and explain the impact Cuban performers have had on the American entertainment industry.

**Materials needed:**

- ✓ Writing paper
- ✓ Pen, pencil

**Activities:**

- 1) The teacher will point out that three of the four Cubans profiled in the chapter are entertainers/musicians.
- 2) Using the information from the text, students will write an essay identifying these three people, outlining their achievements and explaining the impact they, both individually and collectively along with other Cuban artists and musicians, have had on American music and entertainment.

**Assessment:**

- ✓ Did the student accurately profile Desi Arnaz, Celia Cruz, and Gloria Estefan?
- ✓ Did the student explain the impact these people along with other Cuban artists and musicians have had on American music and entertainment?

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**Chapter Seven: What Does the Future Hold?**

**Subject area(s): Social Studies, Language Arts**

**Amount of time needed: One 40-minute period**

**Objectives: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:**

- 1) Explain how the political tensions between Cuba and the United States have impacted both Cuban immigrants and those still in Cuba.

**Materials needed:**

- ✓ Writing paper
- ✓ Pen, pencil

**Activities:**

- 1) The teacher will explain that for months Elian Gonzalez, the five-year-old found floating in the water of the coast of Florida in a failed escape attempt, captured the attention and the hearts of Americans. His story focused attention on the continuing tensions between the United States and Cuba as well as raised difficult questions about what is more important for a child—economic security or the love of a parent.
- 2) Using the information from the text, write a brief position paper either defending the Supreme Court decision to return Elian to his father in Cuba or the position of his mother's relatives that he would be much better off remaining with them in the United States.

**Assessment:**

- ✓ Did the students accurately outline their position and defend their position using information from the text?