LOC TPS APWH

Benito Juarez and the Constitution of 1857

How important was Benito Juarez in shaping modern Mexico?

Grades 9-12

Paige Solomon, Norfolk Collegiate

This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

One class period of 45 – 60 minutes

Description of activity: Students learn about the role of Benito Juarez in shaping reform in Mexico, investigate the Constitution of 1857, and explore the long-term significance of both.

Focus Question: How important was Benito Juarez in shaping modern Mexico?

Context: The contentious relationship between Mexico and the US is an important highlight from Latin America in the long century (1750-1900). This period of reform and the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz are important to set up the understanding of the Mexican Revolution of the early twentieth century.

Objectives: Contextualize the Mexican Constitution of 1857, identify and explain its major protections, and evaluate the role of Juarez and the constitution in the history of Mexico.

AP World History
Time Period 1750-1900
Key Concepts 5.3.II, 5.3.IV
Thematic Learning Objectives CUL-2, CUL-4, SB-3

Historical thinking skills: causation, argumentation, sourcing, contextualization

Assessment: Supporting questions guide thinking and provide structure. Formative assessments check in on learning for accuracy and understanding. Summative assessments gauge the level of actual understanding and provide valuable practice on written assessments.

Activity Details
Primary Sources: find below

Procedure: Supporting questions guide student inquiry. Formative assessments check for understanding. The teacher should lead a class debriefing after completion of the formative assessments before asking students to move on to the summative assessment and action steps.
What you will need before implementing:
This lesson is dependent on computer and internet access for all students. The documents and directions should be shared digitally with all students (through Google Classroom or another format).
Take the links and examine each document carefully before answering the questions. Complete and post in Google Classroom.

Benito Juárez, Pres. Mexico
No date given
Reproduction Number: LC-USZ62-44545 (b&w film copy neg.) Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Read the information about Benito Juárez and answer these questions:
What were his background and education?
Describe his political views and biggest political accomplishments.

Pull up the picture and examine it closely.
How did Juárez want to be seen?
Explain your reasoning.

Constitución Federal de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. (The Constitution of the United States of Mexico, 1857.)

Read the information provided with this item.
https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044058928805;view=1up;seq=90

Skim over the Constitution of 1857.
What were some of its key provisions?
What were some key similarities to the US Constitution?
What might be some possible reasons for those similarities?
How did the Constitution of 1857 impact Mexican politics?
Make connections between the establishment of this liberal constitution and the political involvement of Juarez.
Take the link. Examine the painting carefully and read the background information.

The Execution of Emperor Maximilian
Edouard Manet
1868-9
https://learner.org/courses/globalart/work/44/index.html

What was the political situation surrounding this image?
How was Mexican politics impacted by these events?
Take the link. Examine the painting carefully.

Diego Rivera, *Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Central Park*, 1947


Find Benito Juarez in this mural painted by Diego Rivera in 1947. What was Rivera’s message? What statement was he making about Juarez here? Explain your thinking.

A class discussion/debriefing of all previous sources should take place before students complete the final tasks.

Summative Assessment Task
Create a poster or a brief video using Explain Everything that evaluates the importance of Benito Juarez and the Constitution of 1857 to the history of modern Mexico. Make a clear and specific argument and use evidence to back it up.

Taking Action
Write Benito Juarez a letter commenting on a particular action, reform, or failure of his government.