LOC TPS APWH Exploring the Mexican Revolution

What forces brought on the Mexican Revolution? What was the impact of the Mexican Revolution?

Grades 9-12
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This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

Two class periods of 45 – 60 minutes
Description of activity: Students investigate an array of sources to discover the causes, major figures, and results of the Mexican Revolution. If desired, students could work in pairs to complete just one or two assigned portions of the inquiry. Then those groups who completed each section could help lead the class discussion for their portion. Once all sections were discussed thoroughly in class, students would move on to complete the summative task and action step on their own.

Focus Question: What forces brought on the Mexican Revolution? What was the impact of the Mexican Revolution?

Context: This inquiry belongs in a study of the early twentieth century and will help students prepare to compare and contrast the Mexican Revolution with other revolutions of the period such as the Bolshevik Revolution and the Chinese Revolution.

Objectives: AP World History, Time Period 6: 1900 - present
Key Concepts 6.2 Thematic Learning Objectives SB-2,3,4; CUL-2
Historical thinking skills: causation, continuity and change, 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).
I. The administration of Porfirio Diaz

Read the excerpt below and answer the analysis questions.

“President Diaz: Hero of the Americas,” James Creelman (1908)

Interview with President Porfirio Diaz

"The railway has played a great part in the peace of Mexico," he continued. "When I became President at first there were only two small lines, one connecting the capital with Vera Cruz, the other connecting it with Queretaro. Now we have more than nineteen thousand miles of railways. Then we had a slow and costly mail service, carried on by stage coaches, and the mail coach between the capital and Puebla would be stopped by highwaymen two or three times in a trip, the last robbers to attack it generally finding nothing left to steal. Now we have a cheap, safe and fairly rapid mail service throughout the country with more than twenty-two hundred post-offices. Telegraphing was a difficult
thing in those times. To-day we have more than forty-five thousand miles of telegraph wires in operation.

"We began by making robbery punishable by death and compelling the execution of offenders within a few hours after they were caught and condemned. We ordered that wherever telegraph wires were cut and the chief officer of the district did not catch the criminal, he should himself suffer; and in case the cutting occurred on a plantation the proprietor who failed to prevent it should be hanged to the nearest telegraph pole. These were military orders, remember.

"We were harsh. Sometimes we were harsh to the point of cruelty. But it was all necessary then to the life and progress of the nation. If there was cruelty, results have justified it." The nostrils dilated and quivered. The mouth was a straight line.

"It was better that a little blood should be shed that much blood should be saved. The blood that was shed was bad blood; the blood that was saved was good blood.

"Peace was necessary, even an enforced peace, that the nation might have time to think and work. Education and industry have carried on the task begun by the army." . . .

"And which do you regard as the greatest force for peace, the army or the schoolhouse?" I asked. The soldier's face flushed slightly and the splendid white head was held a little higher.

"You speak of the present time?"

"Yes."

"The schoolhouse. There can be no doubt of that. I want to see education throughout the Republic carried on by the national Government. I hope to see it before I die. It is important that all citizens of a republic should receive the same training, so that their ideals and methods may be harmonized and the national unity intensified. When men read alike and think alike they are more likely to act alike." "And you believe that the vast Indian population of Mexico is capable of high development?"

"I do. The Indians are gentle and they are grateful, all except the Yacquis and some of the Mayas. They have the traditions of an ancient civilization of their own. They are to be found among the lawyers, engineers, physicians, army officers and other professional men.

Over the city drifted the smoke of many factories.

"It is better than cannon smoke," I said.

"Yes," he replied, "and yet there are times when cannon smoke is not such a bad thing. The toiling poor of my country have risen up to support me, but I cannot forget what my comrades in arms and their children have been to me in my severest ordeals."

There were actually tears in the veteran's eyes.

"That," I said, pointing to a hideously modern bull-ring near the castle, "is the only surviving Spanish institution to be seen in this landscape."

"You have not noticed the pawnshops," he exclaimed. Spain brought to us her pawn-shops, as well as her bull-rings." . . .
There are nineteen thousand miles of railways operated in Mexico, nearly all with American managers, engineers and conductors, and one has only to ride on the Mexican Central system or to enjoy the trains de luxe of the National Line to realize the high transportation standards of the country.

So determined is President Diaz to prevent his country from falling into the hands of the trusts that the Government is taking over and merging in one corporation, with the majority stock in the Nation's hands, the Mexican Central, National and Inter-oceanic lines-so that, with this mighty trunk system of transportation beyond the reach of private control, industry, agriculture, commerce and passenger traffic will be safe from oppression.

This merger of ten thousand miles of railways into a single company, with $113,000,000 of the stock, a clear majority, in the Government's hands, is the answer of President Diaz and his brilliant Secretary of Finances to the prediction that Mexico may some day find herself helplessly in the grip of a railway trust.

Curiously enough, the leading American railway officials representing the lines which are to be merged and controlled by the Government spoke to me with great enthusiasm of the plan as a distinct forward step, desirable alike for shippers and passengers and for private investors in the roads.

Two-thirds of the railways of Mexico are owned by Americans, who have invested about $300,000,000 in them profitably.

As it is, freight and passenger rates are fixed by the Government, and not a time table can be made or changed without official approval.

It may surprise a few Americans to know that the first-class passenger rate in Mexico is only two and two-fifths cents a mile, while the second-class rate, which covers at least one-half of the whole passenger traffic of the country, is only one cent and one-fifth a mile--these figures being in terms of gold, to afford a comparison with American rates.

I have been privately assured by the principal American officers and investors of the larger lines that railway enterprises in Mexico are encouraged, dealt with on their merits and are wholly free from blackmail, direct or indirect. ...

More than $1,200,000,000 of foreign capital has been invested in Mexico since President Diaz put system and stability into the nation. Capital for railways, mines, factories and plantations has been pouring in at the rate of $200,000,000 a year. In six months the Government sold more than a million acres of land.

In spite of what has already been done, there is still room for the investment of billions of dollars in the mines and industries of the Republic.

Americans and other foreigners interested in mines, real estate, factories, railways and other enterprises have privately assured me, not once, but many times, that, under Diaz, conditions for investment in Mexico are fairer and quite as reliable as in the most highly developed European countries. The President declares that these conditions will continue after his death or retirement.

Since Diaz assumed power, the revenues of the Government have increased from about $15,000,000 to more than $115,000,000, and yet taxes have been steadily reduced.
How did Diaz change Mexico?
How was he able to stay in power for 3 years?
What tactics did he use against his people?
How did his time in office help bring on the onset of the Mexican Revolution?
What can you surmise about the interviewer and his attitudes regarding Diaz? Provide specific examples to back up your assertion.

II. Key figures

Take this link and review the timeline.
Pay close attention to Porfirio Diaz, Francisco Madero, Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, General Victoriano Huerta, Alvaro Obregón

A. Explore the collection The Mexican Revolution and the United States in the Collections of the Library of Congress
Identify the involvement and significance of each individual in the list above.

B. Examine this map

Atlas of the Mexican conflict : containing detailed maps showing the territory involved, pertinent statistics of Mexico and the United States, summary of recent events in Mexico.
https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4411sm.gct00282/?sp=7
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mexican-revolution-and-the-united-states/civil-war-constitutionalist-view.html#obj005

What does it show about the geography of the revolution in 1913 (particularly areas of support for specific leaders)?
What are some possible limitations of this as a source?
III. Main events

A. Take this link and review the timeline.
Build your own timeline of only the most important events for a basic understanding of the Mexican Revolution.

B. How were the indigenous peoples involved in the revolution?
Find examples of involvement by indigenous groups. Briefly explain their involvement in the struggle.

IV. The involvement of women

Review these sources to explore the role of women in the revolution.

[Soldaeras holding rifles] Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-25760
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mexican-revolution-and-the-united-states/viewpoints-on-women.html#obj001

Read the commentary posted along with this image.

For what purpose do you think this picture was taken? By whom?
What are some clues that led you to your conclusions?
Improving Historical Thinking Skills through Source-Based Instruction
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Adelita
http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/6729
Transcript

http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mexican-revolution-and-the-united-states/viewpoints-on-women.html#obj004

Watch the short movie.
Read the additional information.
According to the author, how were soldaderas treated after the war?
What reasons did he or she offer?

Answer these questions and include specific evidence to back up your assertions:
How were women involved in the Mexican Revolution?
To what extent did they benefit from it?
V. Results

Identify and list key provisions in the new constitution.

Mexican constitution of 1917.
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mexican-revolution-and-the-united-states/constitution-of-1917.html#obj001

Identify and list key provisions in the new constitution.


Go to http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042345/1920-05-23/ed-1/seq-1/

Read the article “Carranza Fourth Ruler of Mexico in Tragic Death.”

Then read this commentary taken directly from The Mexican Revolution and the United States in the Collections of the Library of Congress, Álvaro Obregón’s Vision for Mexico

Revolt against Carranza, His Death, and Obregón’s 1920 Presidential Campaign
On 1 June 1919, Obregón began his campaign for the presidency because he believed Carranza had lost touch with state governments and the Mexican people. Obregón’s neutrality after he left the
government earned him widespread support, while his main rival, General Pablo González, gained the enmity of the agrarian sector by fighting the Zapatistas, and assassinating their leader. Obregón presented himself as a liberal-centrist trying to unite the country against repressive and egotistical “war-lords.”

Carranza had picked Ignacio Bonillas, Mexican Ambassador to the U.S., to succeed him in 1920, and paid for an expensive campaign. Tensions erupted on 11 April 1920, when Carranza tried to arrest Obregón, after jailing several Obregonistas. By 23 April 1920, Obregón, Adolfo de la Huerta, and other revolutionaries signed the Plan of Agua Prieta, which reaffirmed the 1917 Constitution, demanded the reinstituting of law and order, the resignation of Carranza and a provisional government to run Mexico until elections were held. Obregón, de la Huerta, and Plutarco Elías Calles became known as the Sonoran Triangle or Dynasty because all hailed from Sonora. They incited uprisings in the north of Mexico and forced Carranza to flee Mexico City for Veracruz in early May 1920.

Carranza never arrived; he met with rebel deserter Rodolfo Herrero in the mountains of Puebla. Herrero offered to protect Carranza who was unaware that his subordinate Governor Alfonso Cabrera Lobato had recently ordered that Herrero’s father be executed. In the early hours of 21 May 1920, Herrero attacked Carranza’s camp and Carranza was killed. Herrero was later arrested in Mexico City but he was released because of lack of evidence. On 1 June, Adolfo de la Huerta took over as interim-president and planned national elections. Pancho Villa surrendered during de la Huerta’s interim presidency now that Carranza was gone. In return, de la Huerta gave Villa a ranch and a guard of 50 men. Obregón accepted that de la Huerta’s negotiations promoted peace with Villa, Zapatista leaders, and other revolutionaries.

What big point does this make regarding political leadership in Mexican politics in this period?

SAQ as Summative Assessment Task:

A. What motivated the Mexican Revolution? What interests were represented?
B. What changes resulted from the Mexican Revolution?
C. In what ways were Mexican politics unchanged?

Taking Action
In your opinion, was the Mexican Revolution successful? Why or why not? To what extent did it bring social and economic equality?
Record a radio broadcast or write a song that reflects your views.