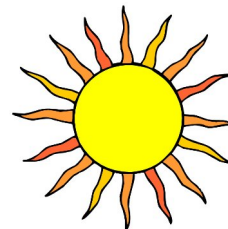


Please print this study guide and distribute to all teachers participating in the program. Thanks you.

## Teacher Study Guide

Tersi Bendiburg,  
Storyteller



### Meet the Artist

Tersi Bendiburg, a bilingual storyteller, was born in Cuba and she tells how leaving Cuba affected her life:

“I was ten years old when my family left Cuba and moved to Decatur, Georgia. This event changed our lives forever. The process of acculturation is difficult, joyful, and at times, painful. Change usually is. For me, stories made, and continue to make this process easier. Growing up, I heard folktales, legends, and family stories from my parents and from the close knit Cuban community in Decatur. Now that I am an adult, and a teller of some of these tales, I understand how these stories nurtured my fragile roots, allowing them to grow deep and strong in the red Georgia clay. Many of my personal and family stories reflect the blending of these two cultures.

### About the Program

Tersi tells stories, legends and folktales that draw on her memories of Cuba and travels (as an adult) to Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama. Through her research and reading, she also tells myths and legends of the Taino, Carib, Aztec, Maya and Inca cultures. Her storytelling presentations include songs from the different regions accompanied by different instruments such as gourds, castanets, maracas and thumb piano. Tersi involves students in the stories through song, dance and hand motions, and intermingles words from the Spanish language throughout the stories.

Folk tales often provide insight into the people of a culture – their values, their humor and the way they live. Some tales reinforce cultural beliefs and values while others provide descriptions of the plants and animals who populate a certain region. Stories often change and grow as they are passed along since they are rarely told the same way twice.

### Objectives

- To use storytelling to learn about the cultures of Central and South America, the Caribbean, Mexico, Spain and Southwestern United States
- To encourage listening of family stories and traditional tales
- To identify visual elements of stories

### Spanish Vocabulary

Cacao – a bean that produces chocolate

Abuelita/o – grandmother, grandfather

La Llorona – The Wailing Woman

Sopapillas – flour tortillas, fried and drizzled with honey butter

Delfin – dolphin

Pescador – fisherman

El Coco – bogey man

El Carlanco – Monster in Spain

Arbol – tree  
Tia Miseria – Aunt Misery  
Panecillo – a little loaf of bread

Las abejas – the bees  
Mar – sea

The MAYA are native people who live in parts of Mexico and Central America. In Guatemala in Central America, over half of the population is Mayan, speaking 21 Mayan languages. They speak Spanish as a second language. In the ancient Mayan culture, the people had tremendous respect for nature. Birds were considered the “living colors of the world.” Tales about the trickster rabbit and etiological stories of how the buzzard got his mission of cleaning the world and how the small ant discovered corn, are characteristic of Mayan folklore.

TAINO is the term preferred by archeologists and anthropologists to identify the North American culture that developed on the larger Caribbean islands, the Greater Antilles. The Taino sometimes are referred to as the Arawak. They were the first Americans to welcome Christopher Columbus in 1492. The Tainos slept in hammocks, ate pineapple, fish, peanuts, and corn and beans along with other foods. We still use some words that came out of the Taino language – maize, potato, barbecue, maraca and canoe.

AZTECS inhabited the Valley of Mexico, the site of modern day Mexico City. It was a great city with stone temples, wide streets, plazas and market places, and houses of white washed mud brick. Aztecs spoke their native language, Nahuatl, still spoken in some areas today. Two volcanoes looking down on the city, Popocatepetl (Poh-poh-kah-THE-petl) meaning “the smoking mountain” and Ixtaccihuatl (Iks-stah-see-wah-tl) meaning “the woman lying down”, are the subjects of many stories in Aztec folklore.

### Curriculum Connections

#### Social Studies:

Using a map or globe, locate Central America. Locate Mexico, the Caribbean, Spain and the states of the Southwestern United States. Research the Mayan, Taino and Aztec cultures.

Talk about the places where the stories come from and find them on a map. What languages are spoken there? What animals, fruits, vegetables, vegetation, and style of dress are mentioned in the stories? What if an animal such as a tiger is mentioned in a story from Jamaica, and this is not its natural habitat? How did it get there? What does it mean? Play detective to discover what has happened.

#### Language Arts:

Storytelling is a part of our everyday life. Throughout the day, we often recount something that happened and no matter how small the incident, it is, indeed, a story. Students can tell stories about things that have happened during the day and then write them down.

Tell favorite or familiar stories. How might the story be changed? If only the beginning or the end of the story were changed, how would that affect the story?

Grandparents or older neighbors have lived many years with many experiences. Ask them to relate a story from his/her life. Tell the story again to classmates. Is there a favorite family story that gets told over and over again (the day of a birth, a funny incident)? Perhaps

it is told during family gatherings or holidays. Does the story change, depending on who is telling it? Family members will remember events very differently at times. These memories should be respected and honored. Has the story been passed down through the generations? Gather family stories and write them down in a journal.

#### Art:

Stories often inspire visual images of people, places and animals. After listening to the stories, think of an image in a story. Listen for details or descriptions in a story, visualize how something would look, and then paint or draw and illustration.

#### Bibliography

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Spence, Lewis. MEXICO AND PERU: MYTHS AND LEGENDS. Senate, an imprint of Studio Edition Ltd., England, 1994.

Sherlock, Philip. WEST INDIAN FOLKTALES. Oxford University Press, Oxford, England. 1966.

Wolkstein, Diane. THE MAGIC ORANGE TREE. Schocken Books, Inc., N.Y., 1978.

Young, Richard Alan with Judy Dockary Young. STORIES FROM THE DAYS OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. August House Publishers, Inc., Arkansas, 1992.

#### How to Prepare for the Artist's Visit

One microphone is needed if the auditorium or audience is large as well as a small table to display artifacts. Please have drinking water available for the artist.