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Music in World Cultures: Flamenco Unit

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Music in World Cultures
Flamenco Unit



By Whitney Krogstad-Yambrick

Flamenco Unit



At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Identify new academic vocabulary words related to the flamenco
2. Use academic vocabulary words related to the flamenco accurately
3. Compare and contrast cultural norms and issues
4. Collaborate in small group and whole group discussions
5. Design a presentation on a tradition music genre from their home culture

Flamenco Unit

This is a content-based course called Music in World Cultures. The course is meant to educate students on international music genres. This specific unit presents the flamenco dance. It is intended for adult learners of English with a B2 level on the CEFR scale. The goal of this unit is to inform students about the flamenco and to encourage them to think critically.

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Day 1 Introduction to the Topic

Introductory Activity, Think-Pair-Share

Answer these questions with a partner.

1. Do you enjoy music? (*Yes, I do. My favorite genre is... / No, I prefer to...*)
2. Have you ever played an instrument, sung, or danced? (*Yes, I have played the piano for 10 years... / No, I have never played an instrument because...*)
3. Are there any traditional, musical genres or instruments from your home culture? (*Yes, it is not well-known internationally, but a traditional genre from my home country is...*)
4. Have they developed and/or changed over time? Or, have they remained traditional? (*This genre has changed a lot over time because... / This genre has remained traditional because...*)

Vocabulary Build Day 1

- A. Below are words and phrases that are used in *The Flamenco: A Multicultural Genre*, the article in this chapter. Highlight the words you understand and circle the words you have used before.

Key Words		
Genre (n)	Reconquest (n)	Commodifying (v)
Hybrid (n)	Oppressive (adj)	Profitable (adj)
Multicultural (adj)	Minority Group (n)	Realization (n)
Stability (n)	Desperation (n)	Sophisticated (adj)
Diversity (n)	Persecution (n)	Institutionalize (v)

- B. In preparation for the article, define these key vocabulary words with a partner.

Genre: *a category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.* _____

Hybrid: _____

Multicultural: _____

Stability: _____

Diversity: _____

Reconquest: _____

Oppressive: _____

Minority Group: _____

Desperation: _____

Persecution: _____

Commodifying: _____

Profitable: _____

Realization: _____

Sophisticate: _____

Institutionalize: _____

Getting to Know the Flamenco

Do you like music, dance, and guitars? The flamenco is the perfect music genre for you. This passionate, Spanish genre dates back to the 18th century, and was created by all of the sub-cultures living in the southernmost region of Spain, Andalusia. Originally, the singing was the most important part, but now the dance and guitar are equally important and make the traditional music genre stand out. Did you know November 16th is International Day of Flamenco? After this unit, you might be able to participate in some of the day's festivities.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nQYQQcxHFo>

Reading Activity

- A. Read the article below with a partner for the gist.

The Flamenco: A Multicultural Genre

1. The flamenco is a famous **genre** of music and dance that was created collaboratively in the 18th century. It originates from the southernmost region of Spain, called Andalucía. The cultures that participated in the creation of the flamenco are the Moors, Sephardic Jews, the Romani, and southern Spaniards. This **hybrid** music creation was possible because of the **multicultural** acceptance in the Iberian Peninsula.



2. In the year 711, Moorish armies, from northern Africa, crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and dominated the Iberian Peninsula. For years, the Moors controlled the peninsula. During this time, it flourished for many reasons. First and most important, there was **stability** across the region. The citizens were not fearful for their lives and were able to live peacefully. Although the Moors practiced Islam, there was not really a dominant religion in the region. In fact, the Christians, Jews, Romani, and Muslims all lived harmoniously and respected each other's religions. Another reason the region flourished under Moorish rule, was the cultural influence on learning. Architecture, libraries, colleges, and literature were encouraged and developed during this dynasty. Although every religion lived harmoniously while the Moors ruled the peninsula, the Christians

still wanted to gain back control. For this reason, they spent many years battling with the Moors to take back control of the peninsula. This was finally done in 1492, when the city of Granada fell.

3. Although the Christians were not as accepting of religious views as the Moors were, there was still cultural **diversity** in the region that was out of their control. A great example of this is the flamenco. This hybrid dance and music genre was created in Spain by elements from the diverse group of cultures that lived in the Andalusian region. For example, the Moors that remained in Andalusia after the Catholic **reconquest**, brought an Arab- and African-influence to Spain. The polyrhythmic and percussive beats used as the base for the music are contributed to the Moors and other African nations. Meanwhile, elements of music scales in Sephardic music have also been found in flamenco music.

4. The third culture that influenced the flamenco is the Romani people, commonly referred to as Gypsies, who originated in the Indian subcontinent. While fleeing their own **oppressive** culture, they found happiness and security further west. This group had a direct influence on the creation of the flamenco. While moving to the west, the Romani people brought their musical instruments with them. A few of these eastern instruments were tambourines, bells, and wooden castanets. Also, they brought their scroll-like hand movements, which resembled traditional Indian dancing styles from the east. Both the instruments and hand movements have been used in traditional and contemporary versions of the flamenco.

Wooden Castanets



Figure 3

Tambourine



Figure 4

5. The flamenco finally became an official form of song, dance, and instrumental music during Catholic control. At first, the music was only practiced by these **minority groups** living in Spain and looked down on by the rest of society. Therefore, a majority of the songs and lyrics expressed **desperation**, struggle, hope, and pride of the people during this time of

persecution. These songs were expressing their current struggle in Catholic Spain, and their historical struggle in their home countries. Due to the societal distaste of the flamenco, practices and performances were generally done in the privacy of one's home. Homes were safe spaces that gave these minority cultures a place to express themselves freely.

6. In the 19th century, the flamenco began gaining popularity across Europe. Flamenco dancers, singers, and musicians were encouraged to perform publicly in the streets and in concert halls, instead of in their homes. People traveled across the world to see Spanish flamenco dancers. The music seemed exotic, lively, and like a mystery to be solved to the outside world. It was as if flamenco became a public attraction, and Spain was interested in **commodifying** it.

7. After this **profitable realization**, the flamenco took off on an international level throughout the 19th and 20th century. In 1922, Spain hosted a flamenco singing contest. It was held in the Plaza de los Aljibes in Granada's Alhambra, and welcomed 4,000 guests to observe. This promoted the flamenco as a **sophisticated** genre of music and helped to further the thoughtful development of the art with a modern context.

8. This element of sophistication continued with the traditional flamenco dress. At first, the dress was seen as a humble costume only meant to be worn by peasant women, generally gypsy women. Later, at the April Fair in Seville, Spain, the ladies of high society were intrigued by the dresses worn by the ladies of the humble society. The women of high society wanted to buy their own dresses and wear them to the fair as a new tradition. In 1929, the flamenco dress was **institutionalized** as a typical costume for wearing during the fair. This was accomplished by the general acceptance of the flamenco, and the higher societies interest in the culture surrounding it.

Flamenco Dresses from the early 1900's



Figure 5

Flamenco Dress from the 1950's



Figure 6



Figure 7

Flamenco Dress from the 2000's

9. Once the flamenco became an international craze, people from all over the world began studying it and adding their own cultural elements to it. For example, in the Caribbean, the genre includes more polyrhythmic, African beats to the music. In addition, they told more stories about persecution and oppression faced by the ethnic minorities in this region during the colonization of the Americas. Another example of how globalization has impacted this hybrid music genre, is a Flamenco Festival hosted in Singapore. This festival consists of several segments. The first segment, pairs flamenco with Chinese dance, belly dance, and Indian kathak dance. The second segment displays famous flamenco dancers from Japan, Singapore, China, and Taiwan. Finally, all the dancers perform a grand finale together. Both of these examples demonstrate how hybridized and globalized this dance is, and how it will continue to be.

10. While there are thousands of flamenco dancers, singers, and musicians, there are three classic forms that the flamenco is categorized into. They have each contributed to it becoming a popular, well-known music genre. The first being *Cante Jondo* (deep song). This is the most serious and deeply moving variety of the music genre. It is characterized by profound emotion and

deals with themes of anguish, death, despair, and religious doubt. The second style is called *Cante Chico* (little song). This style is lighter and fun and has an upbeat mood. Common themes expressed in this style are love and happiness. The final style is called *Cante Intermedio* (middle song). This style includes components from both of the categories already listed. These three different styles appeal to different moods, people, and cultures internationally.

11. The flamenco is a highly expressive, passionate dance and music genre that was created many years ago, by culturally oppressed minority groups living in southern Spain. Today, it is taught and practiced internationally, adding even more interesting artistic elements to this music genre. Although many aspects of the dance have evolved and developed over time, the flamenco has remained true to its multicultural roots.

Cloze Activity

Complete this cloze activity individually. The answers for the missing sections are within the article. Once you are finished, compare your answers with a partner.

The flamenco is a passionate music genre from (1) _____. The genre was created by three different cultures living in the region. They were the (2) _____, the (3) _____, the (4) _____, and the (5) _____. This music genre can be sung and danced to polyrhythmic beats. Common instruments used in the flamenco are guitars (6) _____, (7) _____, and (8) _____. Today, the flamenco is a very popular style of music, which is taught and practiced internationally. The three classic forms are (9) _____, (10) _____, and (11) _____. Each form has its own style and is categorized by different themes expressed during the songs and dances performed; for example, anguish and desperation and love and happiness. This music genre is very expressive and has changed a lot throughout history but has (12) _____ traditional.

Post-Reading Discussion

Answer these questions. With a partner, discuss what each answer might mean to you.

1. Are there many subcultures within your region, or home country? If so, how are they viewed within society? Have they contributed any, nationally or internationally, well-known traditions?
2. In general, are there any traditions that have been commodified from your home culture? Do you consider this to be an issue, or a good thing for the nation to benefit from?

Possible Homework Assignments

1. Finish activities A & B from the Vocabulary Build section.
2. Re-read the article to understand the chronological and historical development of the flamenco.

Day 2 Listening & Speaking

Recalling of Previous Class

- A. Share your answers to activities A & B from Day 1's Vocabulary Build with a partner.
- B. Ball Toss Activity. Stand in a circle and toss the ball to your classmates. When the ball is tossed to you, and you catch it, answer the questions that your thumbs are on, or closest to. Each question will relate to yesterday's article.

Which cultures contributed to the creation of the flamenco?

Why is the flamenco considered a hybrid genre?

What are some common themes associated with the flamenco? (happiness/sadness/etc.)

What are some instruments commonly used in the flamenco?

What was your favorite part of the article?

What is a traditional music genre from your home culture?

How many classic flamenco forms are there?

In which country did flamenco originate?

Warm-Up Activity, Group Reasoning

- A. Work collaboratively to retell the story of the flamenco through images. Each group will receive a picture relating to the article of the flamenco. As a group, you will work together to decide why and how your image relates to yesterday's article on the flamenco. After, each group will present their image and information to the class and answer any questions the class may have.

Vocabulary Build 2

- A. Below are important vocabulary words for this music unit. Define these words individually.

Polyrhythmic	Percussive Beats	Wooden Castanets	Tambourine	Bells
--------------	------------------	------------------	------------	-------

Polyrhythmic: _____

Percussive Beats: _____

Wooden Castanets: _____

Tambourine: _____

Bells: _____

- B. Create three sentences using three different vocabulary words learned in the previous class at random.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Pre-Listening Activity, Think-Pair-Share

Answer the questions below relating to the video of the flamenco dancer and guitarist you watched the previous day. Then, discuss with a partner.

- What were the people in the video doing?
- What did you think of it in general?
- Do you think it was rehearsed or improvised?

Listen to a lecture on Flamenco

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nQYQQcxHFo>

While listening to the audio for the first time through, listen for the gist and take notes. Here are some questions to consider before listening for the first time.

- What is the main point of this Ted Talk?
- Is there information you are hearing for the first time?
- Are they using some of the vocabulary words that we studied in the previous class? If so, how are they used?
- Are there any new words that you do not know the meaning of?

Notes:

Listen to the lecture again.

Answer these questions below as they are asked while you listen the second time through.

Was the dance improvised or practiced?	
What does Alice Blumenfeld explain a subida is in the flamenco?	
What does Alice Blumenfeld explain a Falceta is in the flamenco?	
What does Alice Blumenfeld explain the llamada is in the flamenco?	
How does Alice Blumenfeld explain that the flamenco is like a language?	

Post-Listening Discussion

1. What was the main point of the video?
2. How does Alice Blumenfeld explain the difference between the subida (going up), Falceta (musical melody), and the llamada (call)?
3. Why is studying flamenco's music structure so important for its musicians, singers, and dancers?
4. How does she explain flamenco as a language? What are other examples of communication that are not as obvious as speaking?
5. Although the flamenco is a traditional music genre, Alice Blumenfeld explains that you can bring your own personal expression to it. Can you think of anything from your home culture that is similar?

Possible Homework Assignments

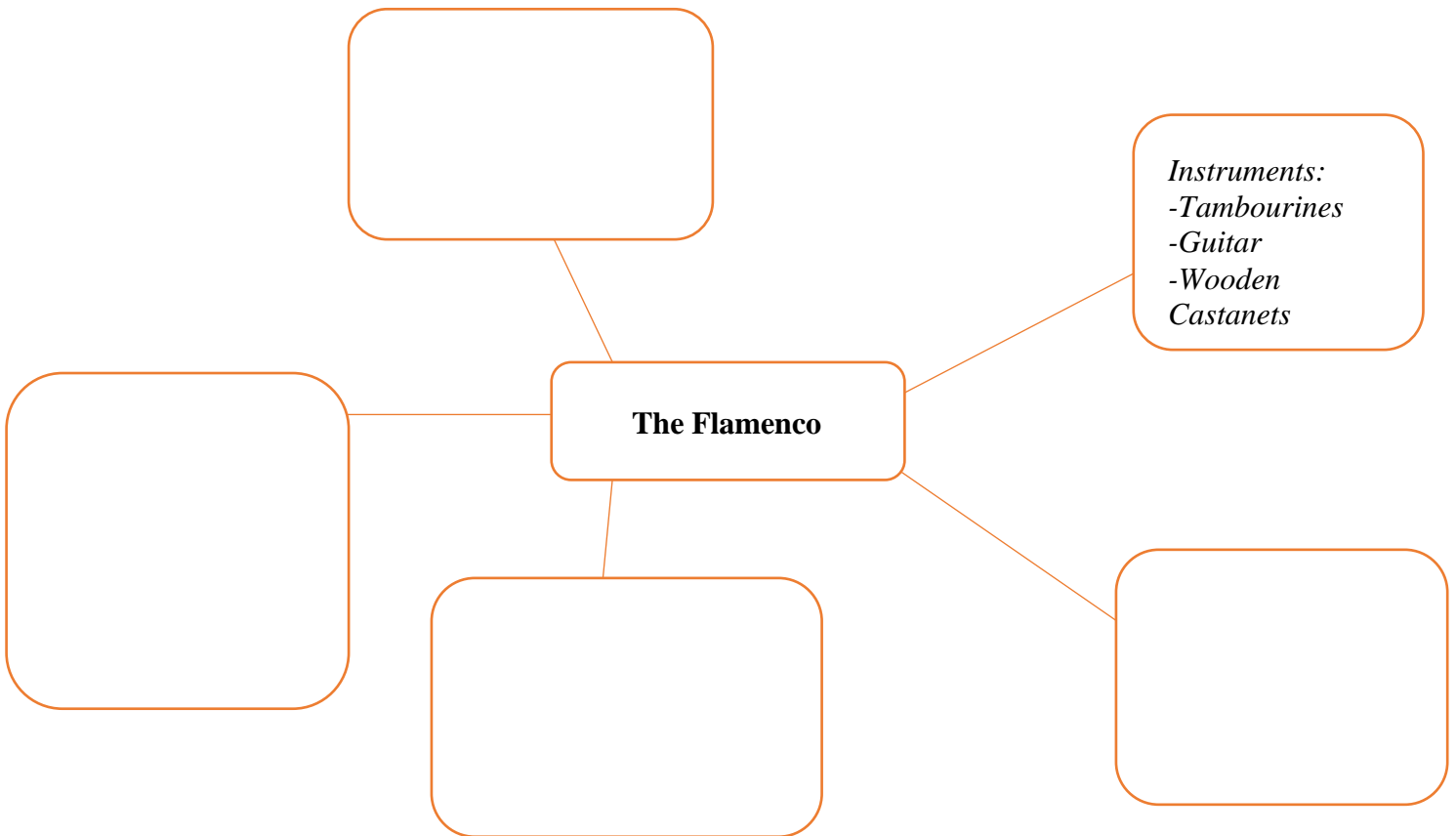
1. Create a sentence using each vocabulary word from yesterday's vocabulary list.
2. Bring a computer, phone, and/or electronic device to class to research.

Day 3, Listening & Speaking

Recalling of Previous Class

- A. Share Vocabulary Sentences with a partner.
- B. Flamenco Web Map

Work with a partner to break down the flamenco into its components.



Final Assignment, Individual Music Genre Presentation

Students will prepare a five-minute, individual presentation on a traditional music genre from their home culture.

A. Cultural Web Map

Create a cultural web map on a traditional music genre from your home culture. To research, you may use your computer, phone, or any other electronic device.

If you cannot decide on a traditional dance from your home culture, you may select one from the list below.

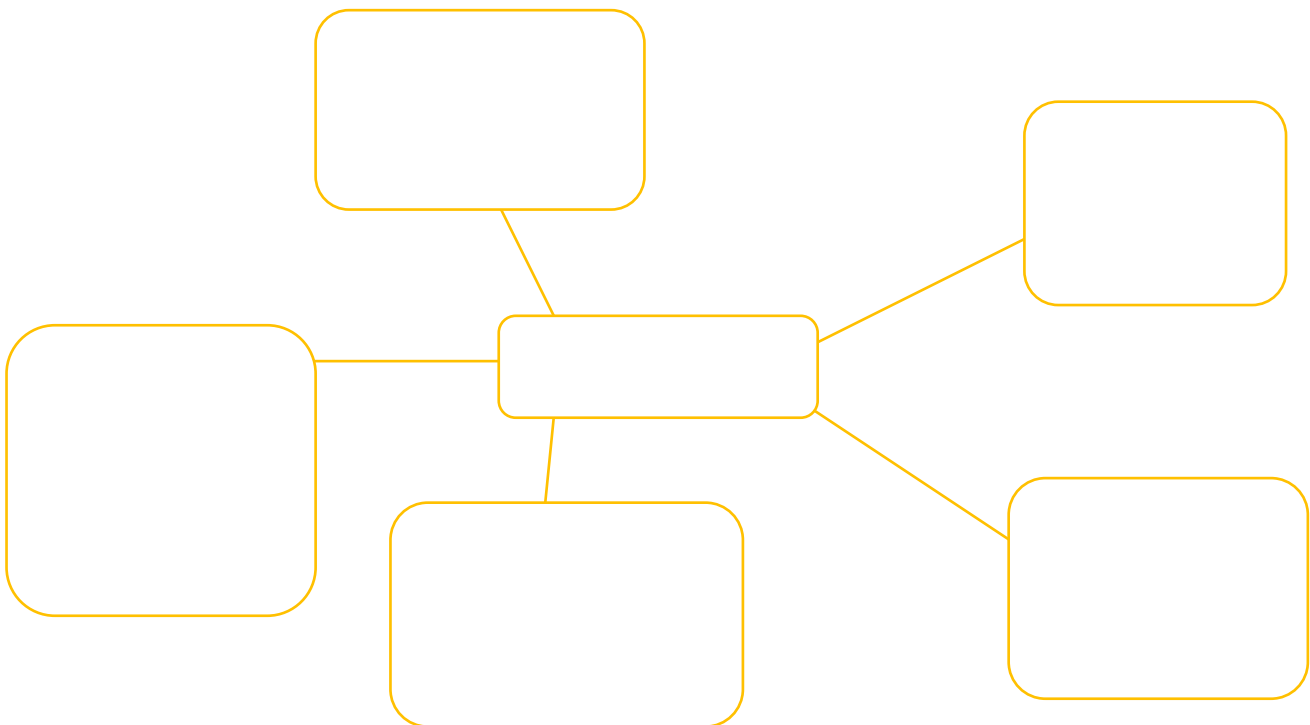
Tango – Argentina

Bachata – Dominican Republic

Bollywood Folk Dance – India

Bon Odori – Japan

Atilogwu – Nigeria



B. Answer these questions by researching more about your topic. These answers need to be included in your final presentation.

- What is the music genre you are sharing with the class?
- Where does it originate?
- What is its history? Has it evolved and changed over time? Or, remained traditional?
- How do the dancers typically dress while performing this music genre?

C. Present your information on the traditional music genre from your home culture. While listening to your classmates' presentations, you need to fill out this table. See Row 1 as an example.

Student	Music Genre	Country of Origin	History	Costume	Fun Fact
<i>Whitney</i>	<i>Native American Shawl Dance</i>	<i>USA and Canada</i>	<i>From the Northern Native American tribes along the US / Canadian border</i>	<i>-Ladies wear a shawl to cover their shoulders. -Colorful -Beads -Fringes</i>	<i>This dance is only meant for women</i>

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