



Contemporary Latin Artists and Activism

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How are contemporary Latin artists pursuing activism and promoting positive change in their communities?

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will analyze song lyrics, music videos, artist biographies, interviews, and news clips to learn how the Latin artists Bad Bunny, Cardi B, Miguel, and Selena Gomez are pursuing activism by raising awareness and promoting change in their communities. At the end of this lesson, students will use what they learned about activism to create an action plan that raises awareness for a social issue that they are personally interested in.



Screen capture from the music video "El Apagón"

Latin artists Bad Bunny, Cardi B, Miguel, and Selena Gomez have become household names across the globe. They have topped *Billboard* charts, won Grammys, and have altered genres through their unique sounds and style. In addition to their musical achievements, they have also become involved in activism, pursuing causes they care about that affect their communities.

Before becoming one of the most popular entertainers on the planet, Bad Bunny worked in a grocery store while attending university in Puerto Rico. In his free time, he created songs and uploaded them on SoundCloud, the platform where he was first discovered. Since these humble beginnings, Bad Bunny has become the most streamed artist on Spotify for three consecutive years. His first all-Spanish language album, 2020's *El Último Tour del Mundo*, reached number 1 on *Billboard* 200. Through a blend of Reggaeton, Latin Trap, and genres like Rock and Soul, he raises awareness for the current issues facing his home in Puerto Rico. His music video for "El Apagón" celebrates Puerto Rican culture and then turns into a 20-minute mini documentary about gentrification, displacement and power grid issues plaguing the territory.

Cardi B was born in The Bronx of New York City to a Dominican father and a Trinidadian mother. She has many musical achievements, including winning Rap Album of the Year in 2019 at the Grammys as well as being the first female rapper to have three songs in the top 10 of *Billboard* 100. The popular rapper pursued activism by giving back to her immigrant-rich Bronx community by donating 100,000 dollars to the middle school she attended. The Latin artist has also conducted outreach with Community Capacity Development, an organization that "provides Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities the tools and frameworks that supports sustainable growth, promotes entrepreneurial values and positive mindsets/mental health". She has also participated in a campaign through Instagram to get New Yorkers, especially people of color and immigrants, to participate in the 2020 census.

Singer-songwriter Miguel was born in California to a Mexican American father and African American mother. Miguel's song "Adorn" won Best R&B Song in 2012 at the Grammys, and he has collaborations with Usher, Travis Scott and many others. The "Sure Thing" and "Skywalker" singer was inspired to get involved in issues related to immigrant detention centers in 2016. His song "Now" from the album *War and Leisure* is a social commentary about the state of America in 2016 and the issue of immigrant detention centers. The music video for the song is a mini documentary that took place at a protest outside the largest detention center in California, where Miguel performed the song and spoke to immigrants who were held in the center.

Selena Gomez grew up in Texas ,where her father was born after his parents immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico. The former Disney star-turned singer, songwriter, and actress has achieved much before turning 30 years old in 2022. She has released multiple albums, acted in several television shows and movies, produced two series on Netflix, and started her own cosmetic line, Rare Beauty. Selena Gomez shared her family's immigration story for *Time* magazine and has also worked on a project surrounding immigration in a documentary she executive produced called *Living Undocumented*. The documentary follows eight families as they deal with changing immigration policies in the U.S.

These four Latin artists are pursuing activism by using their talents and resources to inspire change in their communities. They come from different backgrounds that have influenced their activism through various means of exposure. They are choosing to get involved in matters that impact people beyond themselves and inspire anyone to do the same. In the lesson below, students will explore these Latin artist's different methods of activism.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- How Latin artists Cardi B, Bad Bunny, Miguel, and Selena Gomez have taken up activism to spread awareness about issues they care about
- The ways music can be used to raise awareness and promote change in modern society
- That people of any age and position can raise awareness on social issues and participate in activism
- The privatization of public beaches in Puerto Rico and the ramifications for the people who live there
- Immigration issues in 2016 and after in terms of immigrant detention centers
Issues facing undocumented immigrants in the U.S., such as potential deportation, a twenty year wait for a green card, and the separation of families
- Issues facing communities of color in the Bronx of New York City, and why filling out the census is important

2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be able to identify forms of activism from popular modern Latin artists through the analysis of song lyrics, music videos, and other media.

ACTIVITIES

PREPARATION

1. Set up materials for four classroom stations with a device that can access the internet, and hard copy or digital versions of the following documents:
 - **Station 1: Bad Bunny**
 - Handout - Bad Bunny
 - Document Set - Bad Bunny
 - “El Apagon” video (starting at minute 15:30 and ending at minute 22:00)
 - Handout - Comparing Raphael Hernandez’s “Lamento Borincano” and Bad Bunny’s “Mi Puerto Rico”
 - **Station 2: Cardi B**
 - Handout - Cardi B
 - Document Set - Cardi B

- News Clip of Cardi B
- Handout - Comparing Hector Lavoe and Cardi B's "Mi Gente"
- **Station 3: Miguel**
 - Handout - Miguel
 - Document Set- Miguel
 - "Now" music video
 - Handout - Comparing Alice Bag's "Programmed" with Miguel's "Now"
- **Station 4: Selena Gomez**
 - Handout - Selena Gomez
 - Document Set - Selena Gomez
 - *Living Undocumented* Trailer
 - Handout - Comparing Woody Guthrie's "Deportee" with Selena Gomez's Time Magazine Op-Ed

MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Set up four large sheets of paper on the board (or use board space). Label each sheet of paper with the artist's name: one for Bad Bunny, one for Cardi B, one for Miguel, and one for Selena Gomez.
2. Instruct students to write on each sheet of paper something they know about each of the artists, and/or a question they have about the artists.
3. After students finish writing, encourage them to read the facts off the sheets of paper and share what they wrote with the class. Ask students:
 - What do you think these four artists have in common? (*The teacher should guide the discussion to reach the idea that all artist can be considered Latin artists.*)

PROCEDURE

1. Inform students that they will be looking at ways that each of the four Latin artists pursue activism. Ask students:
 - What is an activist?
 - What kind of work does an activist do?
2. From the four stations set up in the classroom, allow students to choose which Latin artist's station they would like to visit. Ask students to examine all the materials in each station, and answer the questions on the handout.
 - **Station 1: Bad Bunny**
 - Handout - Bad Bunny
 - Document Set - Bad Bunny
 - "El Apagon" video (starting at minute 15:30 and ending at minute 22:00) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TCX_Aqzoo4)

- **Station 2: Cardi B**
 - Handout - Cardi B
 - Document Set - Cardi B
 - News Clip of Cardi B (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TCX_Aqzoo4)
- **Station 3: Miguel**
 - Handout - Miguel
 - Document Set- Miguel
 - “Now” music video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eFL1zzGK8o>)
- **Station 4: Selena Gomez**
 - Handout - Selena Gomez
 - Document Set - Selena Gomez
 - Living Undocumented Trailer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eFL1zzGK8o>)

3. Show **Image 1, Station Activity Discussion.**

Using the questions on the image, encourage students to share what they discovered about these Latin Artists and their activism in their stations with the rest of the class.

4. Ask students:

- Do you feel the issues each of these artists are tackling are new to the Latin-American community in the United States, or are they historic issue?

5. Ask students to return to the station they were previously at, and provide the following handouts to each student to discuss the historical connections for each artist:

- **Station 1: Bad Bunny**
 - Handout - Early 20th Century Puerto Rico
- **Station 2: Cardi B**
 - Handout - Mi Gente
- **Station 3: Miguel**
 - Handout - Chicano Movement and Punk Rock
- **Station 4: Selena Gomez**
 - Handout - Attitudes Toward Immigrants in the Past

6. Ask students to share the historical issues they learned from each handout.

SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to think about a social issue they are passionate about and/or impacts their daily lives. Then distribute **Handout - Activist Action Plan** to create an action plan for this issue.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Follow through with the social issue action plan drafted in class, and report the progress that has been achieved.
2. Miguel’s song “Now” mentions other social issues in 2016-2017. Read the lyrics, and research the other issues Miguel mentions in the song.
3. Conduct further research on the current issues facing the people of Puerto Rico.
4. Watch the first episode of Living Undocumented, and write a short summary of the episode. Research how Cardi B’s money was used in her Bronx middle school, and the impact it made.

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (K-12)

Craft and Structure 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Craft and Structure 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (K-12) (Extension Activities only)

Production and Distribution of Writing 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (K-12)

Comprehension & Collaboration 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Comprehension & Collaboration 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Comprehension & Collaboration 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language (K-12)

Language 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Language 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

Theme 1: Culture

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 3: People, Place, and Environments

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION (NAFME)

Core Music Standard: Responding

Interpret: Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators' and/or performers' expressive intent.

Evaluate: Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Core Music Standard: Connecting

Connecting 11: Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.



Connecting

Anchor Standards 11: Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

- Handout - Bad Bunny
- Document Set - Bad Bunny
- Handout - Comparing Raphael Hernandez's "Lamento Borincano" and Bad Bunny's "Mi Puerto Rico"
- Handout - Cardi B
- Document Set - Cardi B
- Handout - Comparing Hector Lavoe and Cari B's Usage of "Mi Gente"
- Handout - Miguel
- Document Set - Miguel
- Handout - Comparing Alice Bag's "Programmed" with Miguel's "Now"
- Handout - Selena Gomez
- Document Set - Selena Gomez
- Handout - Comparing Woody Guthrie's "Deportee" with Selena Gomez's Time Magazine Op-Ed
- Handout - Becoming an Activist