

Overview and Purpose

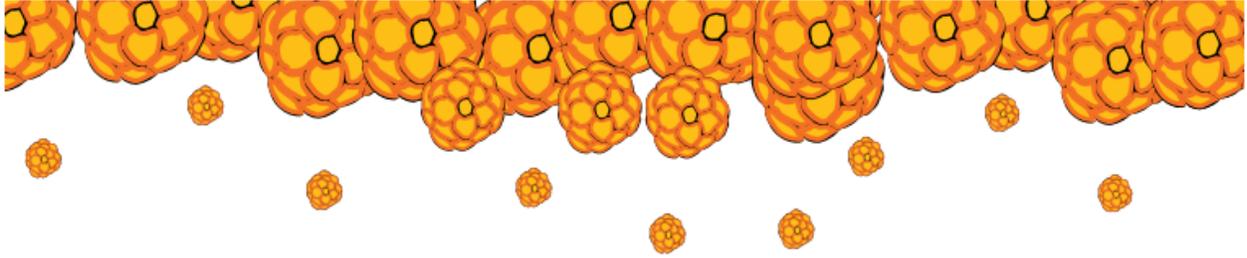


As part of Día de Muertos, altars are created to honor the memories of loved ones who have passed. The altars are decorated with *ofrendas*: personal objects to encourage their spirits to return and join the celebration.

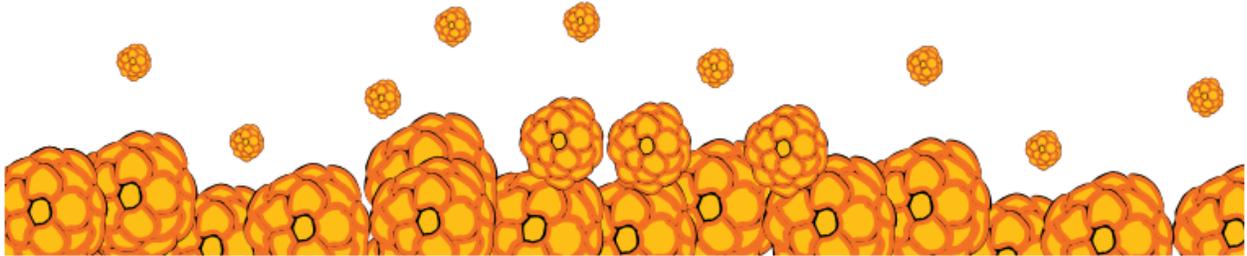
The purpose of this project is to make something beautiful in celebration of the Mexican *Day of the Dead* traditions through music and thoughtful expressions of joy and loss. You'll create an individual *ofrenda* that includes things like a guitar recording and photos of a loved one who has passed. You'll combine these into a “musical altar” or short music video in offering and love of those passed. Along the way we'll learn more about *Day of the Dead* traditions from a special activity guide created by Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, Texas.



Materials Needed



1. Mexic-Arte Museum El Dia De Los Muertos Educational Activity Guide (separate packet)
2. A device that can record audio and take digital photos as well as a means to upload all assignments to their classroom teacher.
3. A guitar and the ability to tune your instrument, or another instrument, or your singing voice.



Here are some examples!

Student Ofrenda by Whitney Prestridge

[Ofrenda: W.P.](#)

Student Ofrenda by Samaria Hill

[Ofrenda: S.H.](#)

Adult and Student Ofrendas Playlist

[Ofrendas Playlist](#)

Ancestry Tree Activity

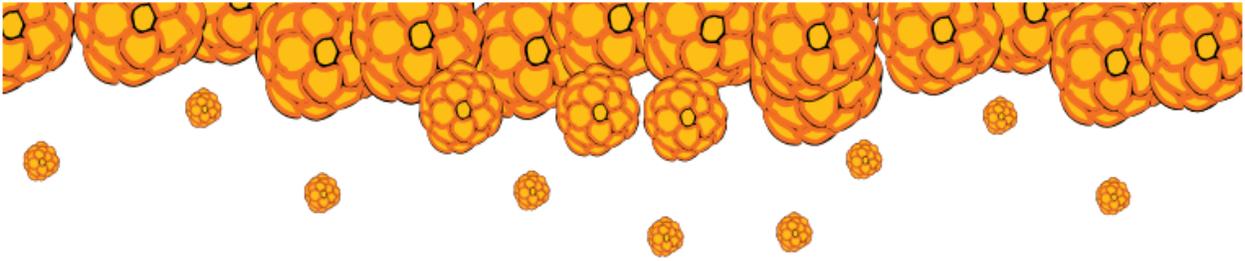


Locate the Ancestry Family Tree Section in your *Mexic-Arte Museum El Dia De Los Muertos Educational Activity Guide*.

This ancestral tree is a diagram to help you understand more about your ancestors and a way to map WHO you came from (your past family members or ancestors).

Talk to your family and fill in the blanks with the appropriate relatives.

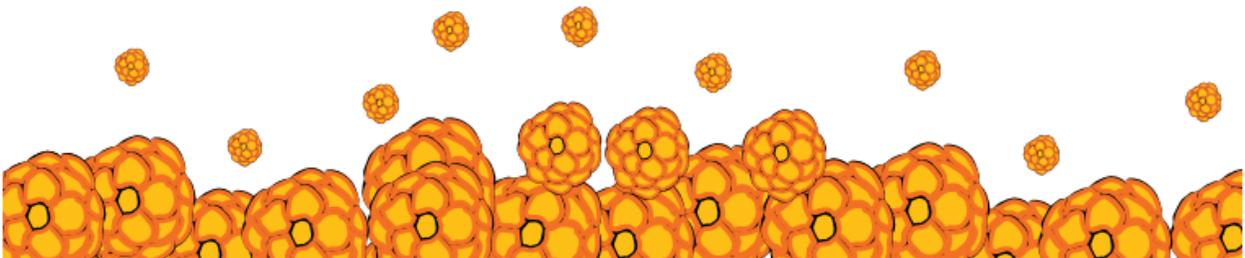
The Subject of Your Sonic Ofrenda



Using your work on the Ancestry Tree and conversations with your family members, decide on one person that you would like to honor and celebrate with your Sonic Ofrenda.

Continue conversations with family members or friends that knew this person. Find out what they remember, what this person loved in their lifetime and express what you loved about that person.

Locate any photos or items that might contribute to the Ofrenda. These photos of the subject and meaningful items can be physical or digital. They can also be photos of landscapes, food, living animals, digital art, images of text... anything you can imagine to honor someone. Be creative!



Gathering Materials



Create and gather all materials for your Sonic Ofrenda, including any traditional items like: sugar skulls, candles, flowers, papel picado, food, beverages etc.. along with photos and meaningful items.

For this assignment, share a quick list of the materials that you are including in your sonic ofrenda.

Ex:

Framed photograph

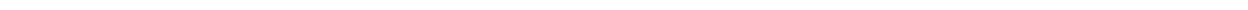
Fresh flowers from the garden

Sugar Skulls

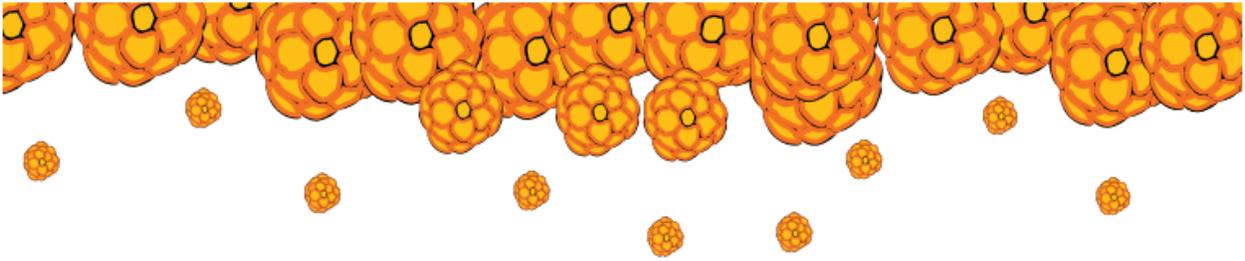
Candles, foods, and drinks

Papel Picado

Special items like jewelry, letters etc...



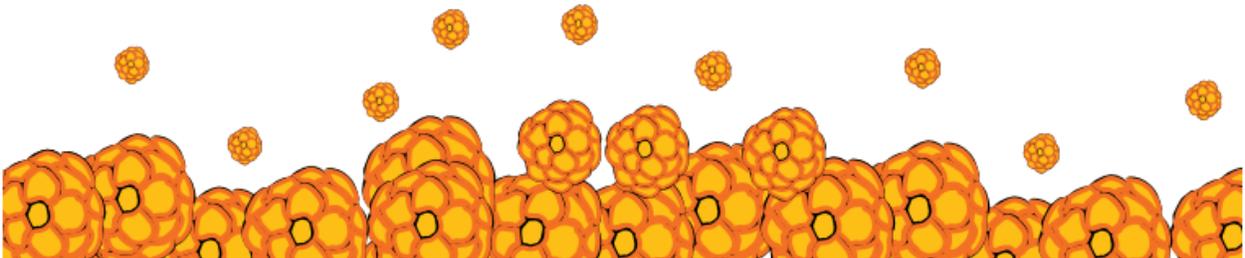
Photographing Your Altar Items



Once you have gathered the objects, materials, landscapes, and images to celebrate your loved one, think about how you would like to display and photograph or video record them. You are not necessarily building a physical altar. The items intended for an altar can be placed anywhere compelling, beautiful, and appropriate.

Some items might look best by themselves. Others might be draped in flowers and colorful paper to more resemble a physical altar. Some images might be completely separate from the idea of an altar altogether. For example you could use a video of sunlight reflecting off of the ripples in the lake because this reminds you of a memorable experience with the person. Again, be creative.

Take 3-5 photos or videos that you would like to be included in your sonic ofrenda.



Creating Your Guitar Music



Once you have decided on the photos to be included in your video, sit down with these photos and your guitar. Tune the guitar. Think about the person who you are offering to.

What music can you play that celebrates and honors this loved one and suits the images you have created?

Begin to make some sounds on the instrument. Is there a piece that you play that would be perfect for this video? Can you improvise a short bit of music that would be appropriate? Do you just feel like playing some big celebratory chords? Do you want to sing a song? Anything goes as long as it honors your loved one.

Recording and Submitting

For the best possible audio quality, we recommend that you find the quietest space available to you and capture the audio with a recording app on a phone or tablet. The mic of the device should be pointing directly at your guitar at a distance of 1-2 feet.

Record 30s to 1.5m of your music and submit the audio file according to your teacher's instructions.

