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TALK AND TAKE ACTION:

EDUCATORS' GUIDE TO CHALLENGING LATINX/HISPANIC DISCRIMINATION



Hispanic Heritage
FOUNDATION

Introduction to the Guide	2
Talking with Students About Latinx Discrimination	3
Talking to Parents/Caregivers About This Guide	6
The Diversity of the Latinx Community	7
Addressing Latinx Discrimination and Its Root Cause	7
History of Latinx Activism	8
Latinx Discrimination Today and Why It’s important to Take Action	11
Taking Action! Discussion Guides	12
Combating Stereotypes	12
Taking Action: Stopping Latinx Stereotypes	13
Increasing Visibility	14
Understanding Intersectionality	16
Creating Connections	18
Showing Solidarity	20
Culture Spotlight: Reggaetón	22
Educator’s Reflection Journal	23
Additional Resources	24
Children’s Reading List	25
Glossary of Key Terms	26
Kids’ Section	29
Key Terms at a Glance	30
Kids' Reflection Journal	31
References	33
Special Thanks	33



Nickelodeon's Talk and Take Action: Educators' Guide to Challenging Latinx/Hispanic Discrimination

For centuries, the Latinx community has faced hate and discrimination in the United States. Today, discrimination is still a common experience in the lives of Latinx people. It stems from prejudgements, misrepresentations, stereotypes, and racist ideas others have about this community. Latinx hate is visible in many ways. We see it in hurtful, untrue words and comments, in bullying, and in threats. We see it in healthcare, education, policies, and media. Even as Latinxs share their experiences and advocate for their rights, they often remain unheard.

This guide, focused on stopping Latinx and Hispanic discrimination, has been written in partnership with the [Hispanic Heritage Foundation](#) and [KID Museum](#). It is designed to provide educators with the tools, tips, and language needed to talk with their students about the racism, discrimination, and hate directed at the Latinx community in the United States.

We recognize having conversations focused on racism and hate can be challenging at any age. We hope this guide will help educators feel supported as they navigate these tough topics with their students.

Finally, we want our students to leave these conversations empowered to make change. This guide provides simple, but significant, action steps we can take together to create a more inclusive world.

Latinx is a gender-neutral term used to describe people with roots in Latin America, which include Central and South American countries, Mexico, and the Caribbean. There is a lot of variation in how people identify themselves and which terms they use to describe their culture and their heritage. Some people may prefer to use the term Hispanic, which refers to their roots in Spanish-speaking countries, while those who are Mexican American may prefer Chicax. In this guide, we use the term Latinx as an inclusive way to talk about this community as a whole.

TALKING WITH STUDENTS ABOUT LATINX DISCRIMINATION: BEFORE YOU BEGIN

When preparing to talk about difficult or potentially triggering topics with students, it's important to frame those discussions in ways that maximize opportunities to learn while at the same time, ensuring that students don't leave the encounter confused, afraid, or traumatized. This guide includes descriptions of racism, discrimination, and violence the Latinx community has endured, which can be challenging for all of us to read and talk about. Here are tips you can use to support student learning.

An important note: You may have students in your class who are Latinx or who have caregivers or family members who are Latinx. Talking about issues related to discrimination and hate against the Latinx community can unlock personal connections and experiences of trauma. Please allow your students to contribute at a level that feels comfortable for them. Avoid putting them on the spot by asking or expecting them to "carry the weight" of these conversations.

1. Check in with yourself first. Take stock of your own feelings and perceptions related to the information included in the guide.

- If you hold personal beliefs that make this conversation challenging to prepare for, begin simply with universal values of kindness, fairness, and equality. Take some time to examine how your beliefs and values may impact Latinx students' academic success and sense of belonging in your classroom or how you talk about the Latinx community with your students.
- If you identify as Latinx or have been personally impacted by discrimination due to your multiple identities (race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, home language, etc.), it may be difficult to revisit those painful experiences. Be aware of emotions that may arise. As an educator, you may need to notice what comes up for you, before you engage with your students. Consider sharing your thoughts with another trusted adult.

2. Review the guides. As an educator, creating a safe space to discuss topics like racism and discrimination sends a powerful message to your students. However, these topics can be challenging for some people, and you may need help in preparing for these conversations. If that's the case, look through the Talk and Take Action Guides. Each guide will provide you with an introduction to the guide's topic, a historical and contemporary context for why these conversations need to take place, and discussions to support your students' learning. Focus on the information that you feel is meaningful and relevant to your students' lived experiences and your specific conversation.

ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. Share your lesson objective(s) with students: Today we are going to think about how we want to treat and talk with each other as we learn about ____.
2. Briefly explain "the how." We are going to develop a list of norms. Briefly describe that norms are shared expectations of acceptable behavior by groups.
3. Ask students to brainstorm the following prompt: What would help us work together best as we learn about _____?
4. Encourage students to answer the prompt by providing an example to begin the discussion: "What would help us work best together is not interrupting each other when we are speaking." Develop 3 to 5 community agreements based on children's responses.

3. Lay the foundation. Before having conversations about difficult topics like bullying, discrimination, bias, and hate, it's important to lay the foundation for respectful dialogue. With your students, set the tone by establishing age-appropriate community agreements. Community agreements help build and deepen rapport between caring adults and children.

4. Prepare to be transparent. Talking honestly and openly about difficult topics models behavior that fosters open lines of communications with young children. In fact, acknowledging that some topics are difficult to talk about encourages kids to express their feelings, even when it's not easy.

5. Gauge what they know. Kids gain information implicitly, or informally, through what they see, hear, and experience. Asking students what they already know about a topic is a great starting point for conversation. Expand on what they bring up to deepen their understanding and fill in their knowledge gaps. Children often notice and absorb much more than we expect.

6. Lean in and listen. In a world full of distractions, now is the time to give students your undivided attention. Encourage them to ask questions and revisit the community agreements that guide these conversations. Pay attention to the questions they ask and any emotional responses that may be evoked or suppressed by the information being presented. Look out for body language cues, as well as what they are saying. The goal is for students to feel safe and secure.

7. Validate their feelings. Ask students to name their feelings — afraid, frustrated, excluded — and encourage them to explain why they feel the way they do.

- If misinformation is involved, share the proper and accurate information with them.
- If the student is demonstrating a lack of empathy or having a hard time “seeing” the perspectives of others, ask them to think of the issue from the perspective of another person.
- Some students may be more likely to suppress their emotions due to learned gender, social, or cultural roles.

8. If you don't know, just say so. Answer questions as clearly and honestly as you can, using developmentally appropriate language and definitions. If you don't know the answer to a question, just say so. Be sure to follow up afterward.

9. Help them frame the situation. Providing students with context is useful when helping them make sense of acts of bullying, hate, or violence. If they ask why someone would direct hate at someone based on their identity, you could say, “Some people wrongly believe that certain identities are better than others. They may have gotten these wrong ideas from stereotypes we see and hear in the media. Without the correct information, they sometimes commit acts of violence against other people and think it's OK based on their beliefs.”

10. Empower them to make a difference. Tackling tough topics can sometimes leave us feeling sad, angry, or hopeless. While these feelings are valid, we can use them to engage in meaningful actions to fight against hate and discrimination, like learning about and standing in solidarity with others or volunteering time to a cause. If you need support, each guide includes a list of actions you can take as a classroom to leave the conversation feeling empowered and prepared to build a more just and compassionate world.

TALKING WITH PARENTS/CAREGIVERS ABOUT THIS GUIDE

It can be helpful to remind parents and caregivers that students are paying close attention to issues related to social justice, bias, and racism — even those who we think are too young to see or understand what’s going on. By sharing with parents and caregivers your commitment to being proactive around these issues, you are helping students gain the competency to discuss tough topics and the ability to approach uncomfortable or inequitable situations with thoughtfulness and sensitivity. If your school utilizes social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum and that information has already been communicated to parents, emphasize how this guide supports and enhances SEL. In addition, SEL competencies will support adults and children to address these complex topics more effectively.

Communicating with parents and caregivers: There are caregivers who may push back and assert that their children don’t need to learn about racism and discrimination, or express concerns about what students will be learning. If this happens, acknowledge the fact that addressing the topic of racism may be uncomfortable. By being transparent about what will be discussed and the goal of supporting an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges important challenges impacting students, you can demonstrate the importance of creating an awareness of these issues and model a willingness to work together.

A SAMPLE NOTE TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Students are paying close attention to issues related to social justice, bias, and racism — even those we think are too young to understand what’s going on. Racist and discriminatory images that appear on social media and in the news, news stories, discussions, and events are happening all around them.

As an educator, I am responsible for ensuring that my students have access to fact-based sources of information and the ability to ask questions about things that may be confusing. I’m often in the position to field those questions, and I also have the responsibility to ensure that students are engaging each other in a respectful manner.

It is also in students’ best interest to create a classroom environment that is positive and inclusive. These conversations will foster respect, communication, and a safe space for our diverse classroom.

Starting on _____, our class will be discussing the tough topics of racism using a few resources from recognized organizations such as The Conscious Kid, The Shoah Foundation, GLSEN, and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation to develop an understanding of how historical events have shaped and influenced some of the challenges we see today. The guides are designed to support students’ social emotional learning while teaching difficult concepts in a safe and caring environment.

Below are a few resources you can use if your child has questions:

[Learning Heroes Anti-Racism Directory for Families](#)

[Smithsonian Latino Center](#)

If you have questions about our discussions,
please feel free to contact me at _____.

THE DIVERSITY OF THE LATINX COMMUNITY

The term **Latinx** refers to people with roots in many different regions and countries in North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Because of this diversity, there can be a lot of variation in how people identify themselves and which terms they use to describe themselves, their culture, and their heritage. Some people may prefer to use the term **Hispanic**, which refers to their roots in Spanish-speaking countries, while those who are Mexican American may prefer **Chicana**, **Chicano**, or **Chicanx**. Others might prefer to identify with just a single country.

Members of the Latinx community who identify as female may prefer to use the term **Latina** and those who identify as male may prefer **Latino**. This is because in the Spanish language most nouns (people, places, and things) are considered masculine (often ending in -o) or feminine (often ending in -a). **Latinx** and **Chicanx** are new terms meant to be inclusive of all genders and may be preferred by people who don't identify as male or female. They can also be used to describe a large group of people with various, or diverse, genders. Another gender-neutral term that can be used is *Latine*. Because *Latine* ends in -e, it is easier to pronounce in the Spanish language than *Latinx*.

Remember, it is up to each individual to decide how they identify with their gender, culture, and heritage. You should never assign or assume how someone identifies. In most cases, it is best to listen closely to how they describe and identify themselves.

ADDRESSING LATINX DISCRIMINATION AND ITS ROOT CAUSE

You may have seen on the news or heard talk about the harmful acts and mean words targeted at Latinx people, or all the many ways people across the country have been speaking out about Latinx hate. Discrimination against Latinx people is not new in the United States. It is rooted in hundreds of years of anti-Latinx racism and white supremacy. Much of that mistreatment is based on Latinx people wrongly being seen as outsiders, or perpetual immigrants.

In 1848, the United States won the Mexican-American War and more than half of Mexico's territory, or land, became part of the United States. When the land changed ownership, tens of thousands of Mexican citizens living in that territory became residents of the United States. In the war's treaty, Mexicans who became U.S. citizens were promised their safety and land. This promise, however, was not fully upheld. By the end of the 19th century, many Mexican Americans had lost their land and faced hostility and violence from others in the United States.

Since that time, many laws and policies have limited Latinx people from having equal access to job opportunities, voting rights, healthcare, land, and housing. For example, residential segregation, the act of keeping people from living in certain neighborhoods because of their race, was a common occurrence into the mid- to late-1900s. Latinx families were denied access to financial support that would help them buy homes, faced discrimination when seeking to rent, and were limited to neighborhoods that didn't have important things like public transportation and parks. Today, even

though residential segregation is illegal, the Latinx community still faces housing discrimination due to unfair bank lending, housing costs, and landlords' or realtors' personal biases.

It is these kinds of thoughts and actions that perpetuate the "outsider" mentality that many in the United States have about the Latinx community and, over time, that have encouraged acts of racism, like offensive name calling and even violence.

HISTORY OF LATINX ACTIVISM

For as long as there has been hatred, discrimination, and racism against Latinx people in the United States, there have been members of the Latinx community, known as activists, who speak out against inequality and stand up for their rights and fight to bring about social change. Learn more about the history of Latinx activism with these examples.



1928: Octaviano Larrazolo

Octaviano A. Larrazolo became the first Latinx Senator in U.S. history. As an immigrant from Mexico, Larrazolo was an advocate for equal opportunity, especially in education, and supporter of Latinx civil rights. He was known as a great speaker, giving speeches both in English and Spanish, and advocated for the Spanish language to be included in business.



1911: Meeting of the Mexicanist Congress

Hundreds of Latinx men and women gathered for the first Mexicanist Congress, a meeting in Laredo, Texas, to express their anger about segregation, unfair treatment of workers, women's rights, and violence against Mexicans and Mexican Americans and to find solutions to these problems. This became the largest Mexican American civil rights gathering at the time.

1946: *Mendez v. Westminster*

When Mexican American parents, Gonzalo and Felicitá Mendez, tried to enroll their children in an all-white school in Orange County, California, they were told they weren't allowed. The Mendezes, along with other Mexican American families in the area, filed a lawsuit against four school districts in the California court system and won. The ruling made it illegal for California schools to keep Mexican American children from attending all-white public schools. Though this was one of the first successful cases to challenge segregation, or the separation of schools based on race, it did not apply to kids from other racial groups. However, arguments from this case were used eight years later in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case that ended segregation for all racial groups.



1962: United Farm Workers Union

The United Farm Workers Union was founded by César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, and other Chicánx activists to defend and support the rights of farmworkers. The organization fought to improve working conditions, raise wages, establish contracts, aid in workers' credit and savings, provide affordable healthcare, and increase voter registration.

1938: Pecan Shellers' Strike

Over 10,000 pecan shellers, mostly Latinx women, went on strike to protest poor working conditions and low wages in hundreds of pecan factories across San Antonio, Texas. The strike, which lasted for three months, received national and international attention after police unfairly arrested workers who were protesting peacefully. The shelling companies eventually agreed to raise workers' pay. However, the pecan factory owners, looking for the cheapest production, switched to shelling machines in factories. This switch resulted in the laying off, or dismissal, of about 10,000 shellers.



1960s to 1970s: Nuyorican Movement

The Nuyorican Movement was an intellectual and cultural movement led by Puerto Rican poets, writers, artists, and musicians. Their work focused on issues faced by Puerto Ricans in New York City at the time, like discrimination, limited working opportunities, and poor living conditions. However, their songs, stories, and poems also celebrated Puerto Rican experiences, showed pride in their language and identities, and told stories of rebellion, resistance, and resilience.



1963: Coral Way Elementary School

This elementary school in Miami, Florida, was the first publicly funded school to provide students a dual-language, or bilingual, immersion program in the United States. Spanish- and English-speaking students learned in both languages. The program was created in response to growth in Miami's Spanish-speaking communities and its success inspired bilingual school programs across the country.

1968: East Los Angeles Walkouts or Chicax Blowouts

Thousands of Chicax students walked out of their schools because of unequal treatment they experienced in some Los Angeles Unified School District high schools. Students were not allowed to speak Spanish and were discouraged from applying to or attending college. The Educational Issues Coordinating Committee, made up of Chicax students, teachers, parents, and other community members, presented a list of concerns and demands to the Los Angeles Board of Education in their fight for equality. While the demands were not met at the time, it is still one of the largest student protests in U.S. history and strengthened Chicax solidarity.



1973: Baseball Hall of Fame Induction of Roberto Clemente

Roberto Clemente, one of America's first Latinx baseball stars, was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame after his death in 1972. He was proud of his Puerto Rican and Afro-Latinx heritage and saw his career as a way to help others, especially those from the Latinx community, live better lives.

1976: Founding of The Congressional Hispanic Caucus

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus was founded to address national and international issues that impact the Hispanic community. This group, made up of Hispanic Congress members, advocates for policies and laws that support Latinx and Hispanic people. Today, the Caucus continues to give a voice to the Hispanic community by standing up for their rights, needs, and interests in the lawmaking process.

2017: A Day Without Immigrants / A Day Without Latinxs

Thousands of Latinx activists across the country observed "A Day Without Immigrants" meant to highlight the importance and contributions of immigrants in the United States. Many businesses closed while others donated their earnings, or proceeds, to local Latinx organizations. Members of the Latinx community and fellow Upstanders, or allies, also marched to support immigration rights and protest anti-immigration laws.



1969: Sylvia Rivera and the Stonewall Riots

The Stonewall Inn was an LGBTQ+ nightclub in New York City. The Inn's customers, who were part of the LGBTQ+ community, were often targeted and harassed by police because of who they were and what they believed in. On June 28, 1969, like many times before, the Inn was raided by police. This time, however, the community came together to fight for their rights and protest their mistreatment in what is called the Stonewall Riots. Sylvia Rivera, a Latinx transgender icon and activist, was a well-known participant in this demonstration and is thought of as one of the "godmothers" of the gay rights movement.

1974: Southwest Voter Registration Education Project

This organization was founded in 1974 to promote Latinx voter participation and political empowerment. Through door to door registration drives, voter campaigns, and lawsuits, the Latinx vote grew from 2.1 to 3.7 million people. Today, it is the oldest Latinx voter organization in the United States and continues its mission in empowering the Latinx vote.

1988: Hispanic Heritage Month

The recognition and celebration of Latinx contributions and culture started with Hispanic Heritage Week, established in 1968 under former President Lyndon B. Johnson. In 1988, former President Ronald Reagan expanded the weeklong celebration to a full 30-day period from September 15 to October 15. This window of time includes the independence days of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Chile.

2020: Black Lives Matter — "Your Struggle is My Struggle"

After the death of George Floyd, a series of protests against police violence took place in hundreds of cities in the United States. Since many members of the Latinx community, especially those who are Afro-Latinx or have darker skin, experience police violence and racism, they joined the protests to show solidarity with the Black community. They also raised awareness of their own experiences with racism.

LATINX DISCRIMINATION TODAY AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO TAKE ACTION

Since the Latinx community is so diverse, hatred and discrimination against Latinx people can be seen in many ways, and Latinx people can experience discrimination, racism, and hate for more than one reason. This is because people from outside the Latinx community often group everyone who they perceive, or see, as Latinx together and make unfair judgements about them based on the color of their skin or the language they speak. According to a [2019 Pew Research Center survey](#), about half (48%) of Latinx people had concerns over their place in the United States. Calls for Spanish-speaking Americans to only speak English or even to leave the country, and **stereotypes** about Latinx people are part of everyday life for many in the Latinx community.

The national debate, or discussion, about immigration policies in the United States has divided many people. The topic often paints immigrants, especially those from Mexico and Central America, in a bad light. As a result, Latinx people face discrimination and hate. In 2016, a [survey](#) revealed that 52% of people who identify as Latinx had experienced discrimination. In another [recent survey](#), up to 25% of Latinx respondents reported experiencing forms of racism and discrimination such as being criticized for speaking Spanish in public, being told to go back to their home country, being unfairly treated, and being called offensive names.

America is made up of Indigenous peoples, people of African descent brought here during the slave trade, and immigrants from all over the world. Many people who live in the United States today come from somewhere else.

We are a country that is only growing more diverse. Today, the Latinx community is the largest minority racial or ethnic group in the United States. People from the Latinx community are an important part of our economy, our communities, and our country's future. Learning about Latinx history, cultures, and contributions, along with how to spot stereotypes, fight discrimination, and show solidarity with the Latinx community are important steps we can all take to combat Latinx discrimination.

TAKING ACTION! DISCUSSION GUIDES

COMBATING STEREOTYPES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to define and identify stereotypes.
- Students will gain an understanding of the harmful impacts of stereotypes.
- Students will learn strategies to combat anti-Latinx stereotypes.

What are stereotypes and how can I identify them?

Stereotypes are widely held and oversimplified ideas about a type of person or group. They are harmful because they erase differences within and across communities, shape interactions between people, and are often believed to be true even when they are false.

The Latinx community is made up of people from many different backgrounds, cultures, and heritages. However, people outside of this community often group everyone they perceive, or think, to be Latinx together based on their skin color or the language they speak. A common anti-Latinx stereotype is that everyone who is Latinx (or appears to be Latinx) knows and speaks Spanish. Another common stereotype is the reverse: that Latinx people don't know English or can't speak it well. Neither of these stereotypes are true and both overlook people's individual experiences and identities.

Hurtful, anti-Latinx stereotypes run deeper than just language. Stereotypes common in media, on TV, and in movies and books often show Latinx people as foreigners, criminals, or villains. Portraying Latinx people in these ways promotes inaccurate, or untrue, ideas about the Latinx community and can result in harmful and unfair treatment toward Latinx people.

Stereotypes seep into our everyday thinking, and create automatic or unconscious thoughts or biases for — or against — groups of people. When left unchecked, these unconscious biases can lead us to prejudge a person just because they belong to a particular group, culture, or religion. These prejudgements can influence the decisions we make about a person or group without even knowing them and impact our behavior. The actions that we take based on these biases and prejudgements can lead to acts of discrimination. This is a cycle that begins with a simple stereotype.

TAKING ACTION: STOPPING LATINX STEREOTYPES

The Latinx experience is unique to each person. By thinking, saying, and believing stereotypes, we overlook people's individuality and what makes them unique, or special. Learning about the diversity of Latinx people's experiences is important in stopping anti-Latinx stereotypes.

Below are a few ways you and your class can stop the spread of anti-Latinx stereotypes:

- Explore Latinx cultures — go to a museum, listen to music, visit a restaurant, listen to the different languages spoken across Latin America and learn a few words.
- Listen for stereotypes in your conversations with others. Speak up if you hear them. Even stereotypes in jokes and teasing are harmful. Try responding with phrases like, "That's actually not true," or, "That comment is hurtful."
- Look for and call out stereotypes in books, shows, and media. Read books that show diverse characters with unique stories.
- Get to know Latinx individuals living in your community.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Can you think of a moment where you witnessed or had an experience with a stereotype? How did it make you feel?
- Have you ever had a judgmental thought or idea about someone? How did that thought change after getting to know them?
- How do you think stereotypes impact how you see people? Do you think it is harmful or hurtful to be thought of this way? Why or Why not?
- What would you say if you heard someone say something untrue about a person or community? Practice what you could say to speak out against stereotypes.



EDUCATOR TIPS:

- One way to combat negative stereotypes is by reframing. If someone is using stereotypes, they are often focused on the perceived negatives associated with someone's identity. Actively engage your students in focusing on the many enriching and positive aspects of Latinx culture.
- Work with your students to develop a "Statement of Values" that reaffirms your classroom's commitment to inclusive words, behaviors, thoughts, and actions. For example, "In our classroom, we value the ideas of..."
- Be aware that you are constantly modeling behaviors for your students — your actions can serve as a powerful tool to combat bias.
- Find ways to include Latinx culture and history in your curriculum — whether it's through the examples you use, the books you read, or in full lessons.

INCREASING VISIBILITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify societal contributions from the Latinx community.
- Students will gain a deeper appreciation for the contributions made by members of the Latinx community.

From the people of ancient civilizations, like the Mayans, who invented chocolate and the concept of zero, to the scientists, business leaders, and artists of today, Latinx people have made many significant contributions to the world we live in. Many times, these contributions are forgotten or overlooked by our larger society. By not highlighting the rich and diverse contributions of Latinx people, we are erasing and minimizing the impact they had on our history and will have on our future. This affects the way Latinx people are perceived, or seen, as a community and may create doubt in how Latinx people see themselves.

By learning about the contributions and experiences of the Latinx community, you are taking important steps toward increasing visibility and combating Latinx discrimination. Learn about important Latinx innovators, creators, and groundbreakers below:

- **Guillermo González Camarena** was an electrical engineer and pioneer of color television. He invented the chromoscopic adapter for television equipment at the age of 17, in 1934.
- **Dr. Miguel Cardona** was appointed Secretary of Education in 2021. He is an educator who is passionate about making the education system more equitable for students of color and those who are bilingual.
- **Natalie Diaz** was awarded the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for her poetry collection called *Postcolonial Love Poem*. The poems are about Indigenous peoples' experiences with the erasure, or invisibility, of their culture, heritage, and history. She was the first Latinx woman to receive this award.

- **Christina Hernandez** is one of three women to receive the 2021 Hispanic Heritage STEM Award for work as an engineer on the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover. She oversaw the construction of the rover's on-board systems.
- **Frida Kahlo**, who lived from 1907 to 1954, was a painter known for her brilliant colors and thought-provoking self-portraits. She is considered one of Mexico's greatest artists.
- **Carlos Saavedra Lamas** was the first Latinx person to be awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, for his role in ending the Chaco War and for creating peace between Paraguay and Bolivia, in 1935.
- **Lin-Manuel Miranda** is an award-winning composer, actor, and creator of the groundbreaking musicals, *Hamilton*, which opened on Broadway in 2015, and *In the Heights*, which opened on Broadway in 2008.
- **Ellen Ochoa** was the first Latinx woman to go to space, in 1993, and in 2003 became the first Latinx director of the Johnson Space Center.
- **Clara O'Farrell** is one of three women to receive the 2021 Hispanic Heritage STEM Award for her work on the supersonic parachute that was vital to the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover's safe landing.
- **Ivy Queen** is an important figure in Reggaetón. Her lyrics represent the voice of women, offering a feminist perspective. She has worked hard to build her career as a respected Reggaetón musician. The genre is mostly male artists, and she has paved the way for many female musicians to come.
- **Sonia Maria Sotomayor** has served as a Supreme Court Justice since 2009, when she became the first woman of color and the first Latinx member of the Court.
- **Diana Trujillo** is one of three women to receive the 2021 Hispanic Heritage STEM Award for her leadership in the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover's journey from planning to launch to landing.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Choose a name from the list above and research the person. What is their story? What contributions did they make? How would today be different without those contributions?
- Are there any other Latinx inventors, leaders, musicians, authors, or artists you know? How did you learn about them? If not, what can you do to learn more about other important Latinx contributors?
- How many Latinx authors or illustrators are in your school or classroom library? What kinds of stories do they tell? If there aren't that many, what can you do, as a class, to grow your Latinx book selection?

- What do you think of when you hear the word invisibility? Have you ever experienced a time when you felt invisible, unheard, or overlooked? How did it make you feel? Do you think others have similar feelings?



EDUCATOR TIPS:

- Allow students to work in pairs and present their findings to the class.
- Encourage students to find Latinx authors and books, and work to include these in your classroom library.
- Name a Trailblazer of the Week. Choose one less well-known innovator and share their contributions with your class. Hang their picture and have your students journal about what the person did and how it inspires them or relates to their lives.
- Have students do a scan of current events. What contributions are being made by the Latinx community in real time? Set aside time to discuss those events in class.

UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to define intersectionality.
- Students will be able to describe how intersectionality impacts how people might be treated differently.

Intersectionality refers to the interconnected, or overlapping, nature of people's identities. We all identify with and belong to multiple communities. All the ways we identify work together to make us who we are and how we experience the world. The communities we belong to also shape our exposure to things like discrimination and bias.

Latinx people are diverse in every way: race, culture, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and more. Each Latinx individual is part of, and adds to, the community they identify with. This means each person's experiences are different from anyone else's and no one person can represent the entire Latinx community.

Here are some examples of Latinx activists, artists, and innovators with diverse identities. Explore how their identities intersect to shape who they are and how they interact with the world, then consider the potential struggles they may have experienced or discrimination they may have faced.

- **Bad Bunny** is one of the first Latin Trap artists, a subgenre related to Reggaetón. He has broken many music records and is one of the most streamed artists around the world. His painted nails, colored hair, and style of dress break common gender norms.
- **Roberto Clemente** was one of America’s first Latinx baseball stars, of Afro-Puerto Rican descent. He was a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame, a philanthropist, and activist for equality.
- **Sage Grace Dolan-Sandrino** is an Afro-Latinx artist, public speaker, and activist. When she came out in 2013, the lack of support she received from her high school led her to fight for transgender students and found Team Mag, a digital magazine, to help transgender people share their stories.
- **Yuyi Morales** is a Mexican American children’s book author and illustrator. Her stories are published in both Spanish and English and are inspired by her family’s heritage.
- **Sylvia Rivera** was a transgender icon and activist with Latinx heritage. She is well known for her participation in the Stonewall riots of 1969, an event that revolutionized the gay rights movement. Her legacy has led to organizations like the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, an initiative working toward justice for the trans community.
- **Eric Velasquez** is an Afro-Puerto Rican author and illustrator who grew up in Harlem, New York. His stories include diverse characters that represent the people in his neighborhood, family, and culture.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Choose two of the people above and research them to learn more about them. What obstacles may have been in their way due to their gender, race, age, sexual orientation, or other aspects of their identity? How do their identities and struggles compare and contrast?
- Think about yourself. What communities do you identify with? How does your identity shape how you interact, or connect, with your friends, teachers, and classmates?
- Have you faced discrimination based on part of your identity? How did it make you feel?



EDUCATOR TIPS:

- Have students identify another Latinx individual who has made a difference but is not listed above. What parts of their identity intersect to make up the whole of their experiences?
- For students who may have a more difficult time understanding how various identity characteristics contribute to intersectionality, consider using a graphic organizer or other visual tool like a Venn diagram to demonstrate the concept.

CREATING CONNECTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to define immigration.
- Students will be able to describe how immigration leads to more diverse communities.
- Students will be able describe how discrimination has a negative impact on immigrants.
- Students will be able to describe how immigrants positively impact the communities in which they live.

People immigrate, or move, to the United States for many reasons. Some want to join their families already living here, while others are looking for more opportunities, like in work and school, than they may have in their home countries. Refugees, people trying to escape persecution, or mistreatment, for their identities and beliefs, also want to come to America because it is a safer place to live.

There are many different programs available for people to immigrate to the US. Some people have **visas**, apply for safety as a refugee, or can get sponsored through their work. These programs can lead to **naturalization**, or the process of becoming a citizen. Sometimes, people do not qualify for these programs, fit the criteria, or have the resources needed to enter the country, so they enter without documentation, or permission. There are certain protections that can be given to those that are undocumented. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or **DACA**, is a policy that protects young people whose families came to the United States without permission. It keeps them safe from deportation, or removal from the country, and allows them to apply for a driver's license and a work permit. The **DREAM Act** is a proposal that would permanently protect certain undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as kids but may be **deported**. This Act has never been signed into law.

Immigration is a complicated issue. Some people believe the United States should have stricter policies on immigration that limit the number of immigrants coming into the country and have more rules for those coming without documentation. Other people believe the United States should have a more open immigration policy that welcomes immigrants into the country and gives them support and access to things like U.S. citizenship.

No matter where we come from, we all deserve to feel safe, respected, and equal.

Chances are if you ask a friend or neighbor about their heritage, you'll learn they had relatives that came to (or were brought to) America from somewhere else. In fact, 25% of kids under the age of 18 have an immigrant parent or grandparent. United States history is full of stories of immigration and it is this history that makes us so diverse.

Many towns and cities across America are working to embrace their diverse populations and create safe spaces for all people to live. Hazleton, Pennsylvania, is one example.

In the 1800s, Hazleton was a busy coal-mining town that was made up of immigrants from Germany, Poland, and Italy. Residents of the town worked together to create a safe and respectful place to live. In the 1990s, Hazleton saw another increase in its population. This time, it was immigrants from South America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic looking for job opportunities and a better, safer way of life. Since then, the town has been working on how to connect and bring together its white and Latinx communities. It hasn't been easy, but the Hazleton Integration Project has helped.

The goal of the Hazleton Integration Project is to unite Hazleton's diverse population, spread acceptance, and celebrate differences. The project runs a community center that offers classes in Spanish and English for both children and adults, afterschool sports programs, citizenship classes, and cultural discussions and events. Through these programs, Hazleton is building trust and respect between all the town's residents.

Discrimination stems from a lack of understanding of other peoples' experiences and a disconnection, or divide, between people who are different from ourselves. Like we saw in Hazleton, there are ways to build a sense of community and belonging with our neighbors — no matter their background, race, or ethnicity. Making these kinds of connections can help dismantle, or break, stereotypes, combat hate, and promote acceptance.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Do you, a friend, or a family member have an immigration story? If so, what is it?
- Are there any ways in which Hazleton is similar to your community? If yes, in what ways?
- Why do you think it is important to connect with people who are different from yourself?
- What are some of the ways you have connected with people different from you in your school community?
- What are some of the things about your school environment that stop people from making meaningful connections? How can you change that?
- What do you think would make it easier for students to make connections and feel a sense of community? What effect do you think something like this might have on your school?



EDUCATOR TIPS:

- With your students, design and create a space in your school or classroom that allows them to talk about their differences. Learn how [here](#).
- For students whose families may have had an immigration experience, ask them to find out more and share their experiences.
- Host a Classroom Charla. Using the community agreements of your class, have your students lead a conversation around an issue they are seeing within their school. Invite local leaders to participate or send them questions your students have. Come up with action steps to make change.

RESOURCES

Learn more about immigration, equality, and the kids of Hazleton, PA, from [Nick News: Kids, Immigration and Equality](#) here.

Learn about how people become citizens with [iCivics' Immigration Nation](#).

SHOWING SOLIDARITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify ways in which they can demonstrate solidarity with the Latinx community.
- Students will be able to demonstrate solidarity with the Latinx community through classroom activities.

Solidarity is about expressing support and taking action when people are being treated unfairly. It means taking on racial justice issues as your own and listening to those experiencing injustice. When we fail to speak up and act against Latinx hate, we play a role in allowing racism and harm to continue.

Here is a list of small ways you, as a class, can show solidarity with the Latinx community:

- Speak up or find a teacher or trusted adult if you witness racism, Latinx discrimination or bullying at school or in your community.
- Research the history and contributions of Latinx people in the United States and around the world.
- Explore books, movies, and music created by Latinx authors and artists.
- Host conversations discussing differences and commonalities.

- Commit to treating others with respect and spreading kindness by avoiding teasing, bullying, or joking about Latinx people online and in person.
- Recognize and call out Latinx stereotypes in TV shows, books, and movies.
- Appreciate those speaking in Spanish or another language. Try to learn a few phrases!

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What problems, inequities, or injustices do you see or experience and want to change for the better? What causes or movements are you passionate about?
- What images, words, or phrases best express the changes you want to see or the injustices you want to speak out against? How can you combine them together in a meaningful and thought-provoking way?
- How could you share your message with the world?

EDUCATOR TIPS:

- Find inspiration from [Rocks Against Racism](#). This group painted rocks with anti-hate messages and spread them throughout their neighborhood. Have your students create their own rocks with messages to put in their community or around your school.
- Spread your messages of acceptance and connect your community through chalk! Carefully use sidewalk chalk on the asphalt, brick or sidewalks around your school. You can even leave it out to encourage others to do the same.
- Consider having a monthly “Culture Spotlight” where you and your class can learn about one aspect of a culture. Use the one featured here to get started.



CULTURE SPOTLIGHT: REGGAETÓN

What do you think of when you hear boom-ch-boom-chick? If you say it aloud a few times in a row, you're actually making the signature beat of a popular type of music called Reggaetón. This style of music originated from Puerto Rico and started out being called underground, because it was mostly played at clubs and wasn't widely known. Reggaetón has many influences from all over Latin America and the world.

Reggae, the first part of *Reggaetón*, refers to a style of music from Jamaica, but its roots are actually in African music and dance traditions brought to Latin American and the Caribbean by enslaved people. Reggaetón has been influenced by Spanish reggae (from Panama), dancehall (from Jamaica), hip-hop (from New York), salsa (from Cuba), and bomba (also from Puerto Rico).

Reggaetón serves as a way for Puerto Ricans to express their feelings about urban life and social problems like racism, poverty, and crime. A unique aspect of Reggaetón is it is mostly rapped or sung in Spanish. Currently, Reggaetón is one of the most listened to music genres around the world and its popularity continues to grow.

Reggaetón music is linked to the artists' culture and environment and often talks about inequities and social movements important to the Latinx community. Create your own original song that reflects some aspect of your own identity, or confronts a problem or issue that is important to you. Try writing the lyrics, creating your own beat, or remixing a song that you already know and love.

Learn more about the history of Reggaetón and how to create your own music with [this activity](#) from KID Museum.

EDUCATOR'S REFLECTION JOURNAL

As you have discussions about discrimination against the Latinx community in your classroom, take stock of what implicit biases and experiences you may have. Below are some questions to ask yourself.

Note: Hate-based discrimination is not unique to the Latinx community. While the focus of this particular guide is on the Latinx experience, it may be helpful for you to reflect on your own experiences, and consider how much you want to share as a way to help students bridge the gap between various communities.

1. Do I acknowledge all people are different or do I focus on the similarities between ethnicities and communities? What are the benefits of focusing on people's similarities? What are the benefits of focusing on people's differences?
2. Do I interact with people who have different lived experiences than I do?
3. Am I mindful of how various aspects of someone's identity affects how they're treated?
4. Have I ever heard a stereotype about my identity (e.g., my religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or beliefs)? How did I feel and react? What do I wish the other person knew?
5. How does the news, social media, and press influence the way I see the Latinx community?
6. What Latinx stereotypes do I see most often in books, movies, and conversation? Do I share books, movies, and ideas that combat those stereotypes?
7. What books written by Latinx authors do I have in my classroom? Who was the last Latinx historical figure I taught about? Can I include more representation in my future lessons?
8. Does my school offer bilingual education? Why or why not? Do I have bilingual books in my library? Why or why not?
9. When I hear students speaking in another language, how do I react?
10. What are my expectations for Latinx students in my classroom? Are they the same as or different from my expectations of other students?
11. How do we celebrate our identities, cultures, and communities in our classroom? If we don't, why don't we?
12. What can I do to learn more about the Latinx community within my school?

13. In what ways do I show my students I am actively listening to them and encouraging them to share their thoughts? How do I ensure I am not dominating conversations?
14. Do I actively listen to or encourage some students more than others? Why or why not? What can I do to ensure I am modeling an open mind, support, and encouragement to all my students?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"Share My Lesson: Teaching for Racial Equity and Justice," [American Federation of Teachers](#).

"Global Immigration," [Facing History and Ourselves](#).

"Maker Playground," [KID Museum](#).

"Immigration," [Learning for Justice](#).

"Hispanic Children and Families," [National PTA](#).

"Latino Center," [Smithsonian](#).

"Teaching Central America," [Teaching Central America](#).

"Discover Hispanic heritage at these historic sites," [U.S. Department of the Interior](#).

"Books for Hispanic Heritage Month," [DC Public Library](#).

CHILDREN'S READING LIST



Ages 4-7

How Tia Lola Came to Stay, by Julia Alvarez

Sembrando historias: Pura Belpre: bibliotecaria y narradora de cuentos/Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpre, by Anika Aldamuy Denise

My Two Border Towns, by David Bowles

Frida Kahlo and Her Animalitos, by Monica Brown

Tito Puente: Rey del Mambo/Tito Puente: Mambo King, by Monica Brown

Tales Our Abuelas Told: A Hispanic Folktale Collection, by Isabel Campoy

Palettero Man, by Lucky Diaz

La Joven Aviadora: Aida de Acosta sube muy alto/The Flying Girl: How Aida Acosta Learned to Soar, by Margarita Engle

Queen of Tejano Music: Selena, by Silvia López

El Primer Corte de Mesita de Furqan/Furqan's First Flat Top, by Robert Lui-Trujillo

Alma y Cómo Obtuvo su Nombre, by Juana Martínez-Neal

Mango, Abuela, and Me, by Meg Medina

¿De dónde eres?/Where Are You From?, by Yamile Saied Mendez and Jaime Kim

Dreamers, by Yuyi Morales

Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book, by Yuyi Morales

Soñadores, by Yuyi Morales

Pasando Páginas: La historia de mi vida, by Sonia Sotomayor

Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras, by Duncan Tonatiuh

Grandma's Records, by Eric Velasquez

Octopus Stew, by Eric Velasquez

Ages 8-12

The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora, by Pablo Cartaya

Alicia Alonso: Prima Ballerina, Diego: Bigger than Life, by Carmen Bernier-Grand
Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library, by Carole Boston Weatherford

Stella Diaz Has Something to Say, by Angela Dominguez

Dancing Home, Under the Royal Palms: A Childhood in Cuba, by Alma Flor Ada

Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel, by Xavier Garza

The Bossy Gallito, by Lucia Gonzalez

Calling the Doves/El Encanto De Las Palomas, by Juan Felipe Herrera

Messi, by Illugi Jökullsson

Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez, by Kathleen Krull

Merci Suarez Changes Gears, by Meg Medina

Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music, by Rafael Lopez

Puerto Rican Americans, by Hal Marcovitz

Hands-on Latin America: Art Activities for All Ages, by Yvonne Y. Merrill

The Dreamer, by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Me, Frida, by Amy Novesky

Cuba 15: A Novel, by Nancy Osa

The First Rule of Punk, by Celina C. Perez

Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation, by Duncan Tonatiuh

Roberto Clemente: Pride Of The Pittsburgh Pirates, by Jonah Winter

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Activism

The actions people take to change policies, laws, or rules that are unfair or unjust.

Afro-Latinx

A person from a Latin American country who has African ancestry.

Bias

A tendency to lean in a certain direction, either in favor of or against a particular thing or group of people. Some people might be biased against a certain race, ethnicity, culture, or religion because they have been told negative things about that group.

Chicanx

A person who lives in the United States and is from, or whose family is from, Mexico. Chicanx is a gender-neutral way of saying Chicano/a.

Citizen

A person who is granted the full rights of and protection from a country because it is their birthplace, their parents' nationality, or where they were naturalized.

Culture

An action, or practice, shared by a community, which is meaningful and has been done over a long period of time. Culture is something all people and communities participate in through their language, traditions, and beliefs.

Deportation

The removal of an immigrant from a country for a legal reason. People may be deported for overstaying their visa or breaking immigration laws.

Discrimination

Unfair treatment of one person or group of people because of the person or group's identity, like their race, ethnicity, gender, ability, religion, or culture. Discrimination is an action that can come from prejudice.

Ethnicity

The social and cultural groups someone belongs to based on shared traditions, ancestry, language, history, nation, and religion.

Hispanic

Someone who is a native of or descends from a Spanish-speaking country.

Immigrant

A person who makes the decision to move to another country with the intention of staying there.

Immigration

The act of moving to one country from another country with the intention of living there permanently.

Intersectionality

The way a person's identities, like their race, gender, and abilities, interconnect to shape who they are and how they experience the world. These identities combine to create our unique experiences with power, privilege, and discrimination.

Latin America

A region of the world including Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

Latino/Latina/Latinx/Latine

Someone of Latin American cultural or ethnic identity. Latinx and Latine are both gender-neutral ways of saying Latino/a. *Latinx* is increasingly popular in the United States, while *Latine* is more prevalent in Latin America.

Naturalization

The process of becoming a citizen of a country.

Prejudice

Prejudging or making a decision about a person or group of people without enough knowledge or information. Prejudicial thinking is often based on stereotypes.

Protest(er)

When someone or a group of people takes a stand against something to show disapproval.

Race

An idea invented by humans, not based on biology, that categorizes people into different groups by their perceived physical differences, such as skin color, hair color, or facial characteristics.

Racism

The belief that one race is better than another — and having the power to create systems (i.e., educational system, legal system, etc.) that support that belief.

Refugee

A person who has been forced to leave their home because of war or violence, to find safety in another country.

Segregation

The practice or policy of keeping people of different races, classes, genders, religions, or ethnic groups separate from one another. It can include separate housing, education, transportation, access to public spaces and services, and more.

Solidarity

Being an Upstander by expressing support, standing up for, and helping a group of people being mistreated or discriminated against.

Stereotype

A widely held and oversimplified idea about a type of person or group. Racial, religious, and cultural stereotypes are harmful, shape interactions between people, impact policy, and are often believed to be true even when they are false.

Undocumented immigrant

A person living in the United States without U.S. citizenship or other legal permission.

Upstander

A person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

Visa

A permit, or permission, for a person to enter a country for a specific reason like travel, study, or work and for a specific period of time.

White supremacy

The norms, laws, treatment, power, access, and opportunities that benefit white people and/or Western cultural practices at the expense of people of color and marginalized communities. It is rooted in the false belief that white people and dominant Western cultural norms are superior.

KIDS' SECTION

The Latinx community is an important part of America's history and its future. Learning about Latinx experiences, cultures, and contributions, along with how to spot and stop stereotypes and show solidarity with the Latinx community are important steps we can all take to disrupt Latinx hate.

Take Action!

- Speak up or find a teacher or a trusted adult if you witness racism, Latinx discrimination, or bullying at school or in your community.
- Research the history and contributions of Latinx people in the United States and around the world.
- Explore books, movies, and music created by Latinx authors and artists to learn more about Latinx experiences.
- Commit to treating others with respect and spreading kindness. Avoid teasing, bullying, or joking about Latinx or other people of color online and in person.
- Ask to learn about Latinx history, culture, and contributions in school.
- Recognize and call out anti-Latinx stereotypes in conversation and in TV shows, books, and movies.
- Appreciate those speaking in Spanish or another language. Try to learn a few phrases!
- Get to know people in your school and community who have different experiences and identities than you.

KEY TERMS AT A GLANCE

Afro-Latinx

A person from a Latin American country who has African ancestry.

Chicanx

A person who lives in the United States and is from, or whose family is from, Mexico.

Chicanx is a gender-neutral way of saying Chicano/a.

Culture

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The way a person's identities, like their race, gender, and abilities, interconnect to shape who they are and how they experience the world. These identities combine to create their unique experiences with power, privilege, and discrimination.

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Someone of Latin American cultural or ethnic identity. Latinx and Latine are both gender-neutral ways of saying Latino/a. *Latinx* is increasingly popular in the United States, while *Latine* is more prevalent in Latin America.

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Being an Upstander by expressing support, standing up for, and helping a group of people being mistreated or discriminated against.

Stereotype

A widely held and oversimplified idea about a type of person or group. Racial, religious, and cultural stereotypes are harmful, shape interactions between people, impact policy, and are often believed to be true even when they are false.

KIDS' REFLECTION JOURNAL

Think about parts of your identity like your race, ethnicity, language, culture, gender, school, grade, interests, and more! What communities do you belong to or identify with?

Draw the parts of your identity that make you feel special and unique.



List three ways you can show respect for other people's identities.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

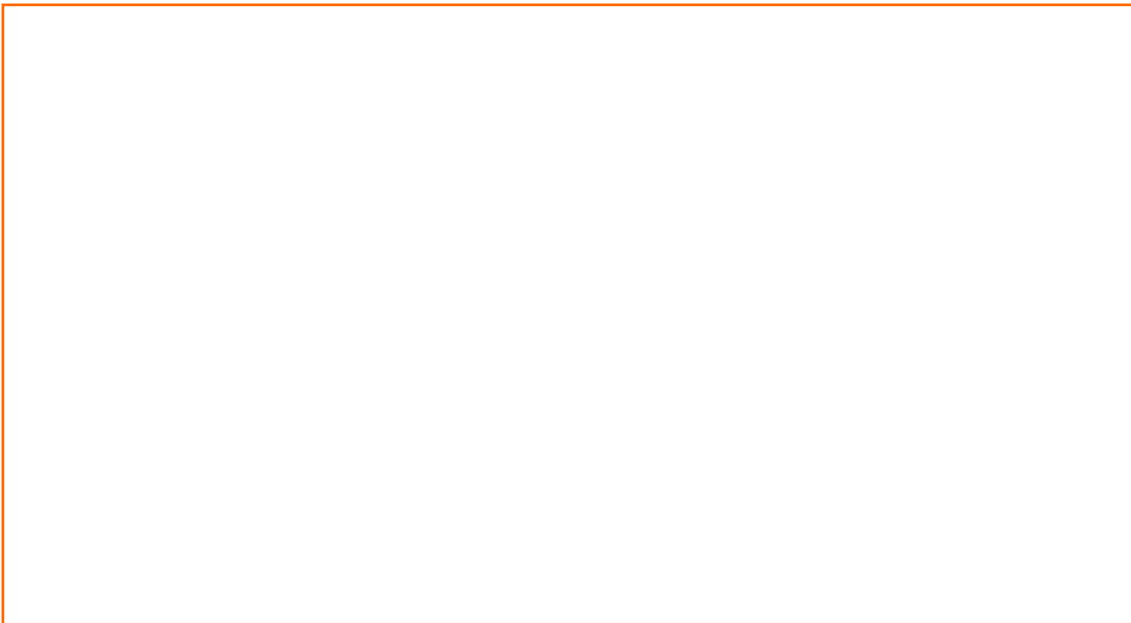
What would you say if you heard someone stereotype a person or community? Write what you could do or say to speak out against stereotypes here:



What Latinx leader, innovator, artist, or activist inspires you?
What makes them inspiring?



What message of solidarity do you want to share with your school community?
Design and draft a poster, sign, or flag with your message here, then create a real one to hang in your classroom or school window.



What actions will you take today to stop Latinx discrimination?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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