



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2024 Volume III: Poetry as Sound and Object

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## **Sight, Sound, and Satire: Exploring Calaveras Literarias**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 24.03.06, published September 2024

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In this multimodal unit designed for a World Language class, I will focus on providing my Spanish students with an engaging and enriching learning experience in which they will explore the captivating world of Calavera Literarias. Rooted in Mexican tradition, these poetic epitaphs humorously depict death while offering poignant social commentary. Over a span of four weeks, my students will investigate the origins and cultural significance of Calaveras Literarias through readings, videos, and class discussions and examine prominent themes, including death, satire, and social commentary. They will analyze the linguistic and poetic devices used in Calaveras Literarias to create rhythm, rhyme, and satire. My students will explore sound in poetry while listening to recorded performances of Calaveras Literarias and they will identify key auditory elements that enhance their impact on the poetry. They will employ visual interpretation by studying visual representations of Calaveras Literarias in artwork and illustrations. This unit will culminate with a writing workshop in which my students will craft their very own Calaveras Literarias. By exploring the sight, sound, and satire of Calaveras Literarias, my students will engage in a rich interdisciplinary study that enhances their understanding of the Spanish language and of Mexican culture.

(Developed for Spanish II, grade 8; recommended for Spanish I, grades 7-9, and Spanish II, grades 8-10)

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