

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR
“LEGACIES OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION”
a video interview with Professor Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato



Organizing Questions

- What were the immediate and long-term legacies of the Mexican Revolution within Mexico?
- What legacies of the Mexican Revolution were intended from its outset? Which were achieved and which were not achieved?

Summary

Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato is a Professor of Historical Studies at Colegio de México. In this 18-minute video, Professor Gómez-Galvarriato discusses how perceptions of the legacies of the Mexican Revolution have changed over time. She talks about the immediate legacies of the Revolution, intended outcomes that did not materialize, and the legacies that have persisted until today.

Objectives

During and after viewing this video, students will:

- identify the immediate and long-term consequences of the Mexican Revolution;
- discuss to what extent the goals of the original revolutionaries were achieved by the end of the Mexican Revolution; and
- evaluate whether the benefits of the Mexican Revolution justified the costs.

Materials

Handout 1, *Overview of the Mexican Revolution*, pp. 5–10, 30 copies
Handout 2, *Video Notes*, pp. 11–13, 30 copies

Handout 3, *Perspectives on the Legacies of the Mexican Revolution*, p. 14, 30 copies

Handout 4, *Synthesis of Perspectives*, pp. 15–16, 30 copies

Handout 5, *Assessing the Mexican Revolution’s Costs and Benefits*, p. 17, 30 copies

Answer Key 1, *Overview of the Mexican Revolution*, pp. 18–19

Answer Key 2, *Video Notes*, pp. 20–21

Answer Key 3, *Perspectives on the Legacies of the Mexican Revolution*, p. 22

Answer Key 4, *Assessing the Mexican Revolution’s Costs and Benefits*, p. 23

Teacher Information, *Video Transcript*, pp. 24–26

Video, “Legacies of the Mexican Revolution,” online at

<http://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/multimedia/legacies-mexican-revolution>

Equipment	Computer with Internet access and a Flash-enabled or HTML5-supported web browser Computers with Internet access for student research Computer projector and screen Computer speakers
Teacher Preparation	Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 30 students. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Make the appropriate number of copies of handouts.2. Set up and test computer, projector, speakers, and video before starting the lesson. Confirm that you are able to play the video with adequate audio volume.3. Preview Video, “Legacies of the Mexican Revolution.”4. Become familiar with the content of handouts and answer keys.
Time	Two 50-minute class periods, plus homework before the first class period
Procedures Before Day One	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain to students that they will be learning about the legacies of the Mexican Revolution. They will watch a video featuring Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato, Professor of Historical Studies at Colegio de México. To prepare for the video, students first need to refresh their knowledge of the Mexican Revolution.2. Distribute one copy of Handout 1, <i>Overview of the Mexican Revolution</i>, to each student. Ask students to read the handout and respond to the two questions as homework.

- Day One
1. Organize students into groups of five students each. Allow groups ten minutes to share their list of the most important dates and events in the Mexican Revolution with each other and discuss how much their lists overlap.
 2. Collect Handout 1, *Overview of the Mexican Revolution*, from each student. Use Answer Key 1, *Overview of the Mexican Revolution*, to assess student responses.
 3. Distribute one copy of Handout 2, *Video Notes*, to each student. Allow students several minutes to read through the questions before they view the video.
 4. View the video, “Legacies of the Mexican Revolution.” If necessary, pause the video at various points to allow students to respond to the prompts on Handout 2.
 5. Once the video has ended, allow students several minutes to write their answers to the questions on Handout 2.
 6. Distribute one copy of Handout 3, *Perspectives on the Legacies of the Mexican Revolution*, to each student. Instruct groups to assign one student to each of the five figures in the handout and complete the assignment as homework. Inform students that they will share their findings with each other in their groups tomorrow.
 7. Inform students that you will also collect their responses to Handout 2, *Video Notes*, during the next class period, so they should complete this as homework if necessary.
- Day Two
1. Collect Handout 2, *Video Notes*, from each student. Use Answer Key 2, *Video Notes*, to assess student responses.
 2. Ask students to return to their groups from the previous class period. Distribute one copy of Handout 4, *Synthesis of Perspectives*, to each student, and instruct groups to complete Handout 4 by sharing their findings on the perspective of each of the five figures with each other. Allow 20 minutes.
 3. Distribute one copy of Handout 5, *Assessing the Mexican Revolution’s Costs and Benefits*, to each student.
 4. Allow students one minute to read the instructions on Handout 5. Inform students that, in preparation for this final assignment, the entire class will now generate a list of the benefits and costs of the Mexican Revolution.
 5. Allow five minutes for students to list as many benefits and costs of the Mexican Revolution as they can in their groups. Consider rewarding the group that generates the greatest number of items.
 6. After five minutes have passed, go around the room and ask each group to share one cost and one benefit. Write these on a whiteboard for the entire class to see.

7. Continue going around the class group-by-group until no one has another benefit or cost to add to the list. Refer to Answer Key 4, *Assessing the Mexican Revolution's Costs and Benefits*, to add to or clarify students' responses.
8. Remind students to complete Handout 4, *Synthesis of Perspectives*, and Handout 5, *Assessing the Mexican Revolution's Costs and Benefits*, as homework before the next class period. Collect the two handouts from each student at the start of the next class period and use the relevant answer keys to assess student responses.

OVERVIEW OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

After centuries as a colony of Spain, Mexico became an independent country in 1821. It endured years of instability after its independence, contributing to the loss of more than half of its territory to Texas in the 1830s and the United States in the 1840s, and was also briefly conquered and ruled by France from 1863 to 1867.

The 50 years of political instability that followed independence ended when Porfirio Díaz became president in 1876. Díaz ruled Mexico for more than 36 years, defining a period known in Mexico as the *porfiriato*. He invited foreign investment into Mexico, and the country's railroads, mines, and industries expanded greatly. However, the land of peasants and indigenous populations was often seized for these new developments, and those who protested were repressed and sometimes imprisoned. Most of the country's new wealth went to the Mexican elite, which was concentrated in Mexico City. By 1910, 20 percent of Mexico's land was owned by U.S. citizens or companies, fueling resentment among many Mexicans.

porfiriato—term used in Mexico to refer to the period of Porfirio Díaz's effective rule over the country, from 1876 to 1911

After around 1900, protests against Díaz's policies and his repressive rule grew more frequent. During an interview in 1908, Díaz told a visiting U.S. journalist that he would not run for president in the 1910 election. This eased many of the political tensions in the country. Francisco Madero, who wrote a popular book criticizing Díaz's long rule and advocating democracy, was seen by many as the favorite to win the election in 1910. Unlike most of the country's political elite, Madero was from northern Mexico. He had studied in the United States and hoped to bring some of the benefits of democracy he saw there to Mexico.

However, Díaz changed his mind and decided to run for president again in 1910 despite his earlier promise not to do so. He imprisoned Madero, whom he saw as a threat, and won reelection in July 1910. After the election, Díaz let Madero out on bail, and Madero fled to San Antonio in the United States, where he issued the Plan of San Luis Potosí, calling for uprisings against Díaz on 20 November 1910. Several revolts against the Díaz regime broke out that day, marking the widely agreed upon start of the Mexican Revolution.

Plan of San Luis Potosí—manifesto written by Francisco Madero and published in San Luis Potosí in October 1910 denouncing Porfirio Díaz and urging the people of Mexico to rise up against him on 20 November 1910

Armed groups dedicated to defeating the government quickly emerged. Madero persuaded Pascual Orozco and Francisco "Pancho" Villa to join the revolt; they started fighting government forces in the north of Mexico. While some northerners were motivated by the same democratic ideals as Madero, many simply wanted more autonomy from Mexico City and did not even know who Madero was. Meanwhile, a rebel fighter named Emiliano Zapata led an uprising of villagers in Morelos (central Mexico) who were seeking land and water rights.

In early 1911, northern rebels captured railways that allowed them to quickly transport troops and supplies to battle federal forces further

south. In May 1911, Madero's forces beat government troops in the decisive Battle of Juárez. Díaz and Madero agreed to conditions for a peaceful transfer of power: Díaz resigned and left to Paris in exile, an interim president was chosen, and a new election was scheduled for October 1911. Madero easily won the election and became president in November 1911. At the time, it seemed as if the Mexican Revolution was over. Instead, nine more years of armed conflict and political instability awaited.

Madero was unable to keep all of the unrelated revolutionary fighters who had helped overthrow Díaz satisfied. He did not focus on land reform, and indicated that there would be a long transition to democracy. Zapata, who had led the rebel forces in the south, was adamant about returning lands that had been seized during the *porfiriato* to indigenous farmers. When he discovered that this was not a priority for Madero, he started an armed rebellion that quickly spread among several southern states.

In early 1912, Pascual Orozco, one of the commanders of northern troops, became disillusioned with Madero for failing to carry out several of the social reforms he had promised. Orozco declared a revolt against Madero and won several victories against Madero's troops. In response, Madero asked military commander Victoriano Huerta to defeat and capture Orozco's forces. Huerta defeated Orozco's troops in 1912. However, in a shocking betrayal, Huerta organized a successful military coup against Madero in February 1913 with support from counterrevolutionary forces linked to Díaz and the U.S. ambassador to Mexico. Huerta declared himself the new president and executed Madero and his vice president.

Huerta ruled in a dictatorial manner. He arrested and killed potential adversaries, censored the press, and forced the poor to join the army. Angered by Huerta's actions, Villa aligned with two other northern leaders—Venustiano Carranza and Álvaro Obregón—to fight against Huerta. They announced the Plan of Guadalupe, which named Carranza as the successor president to Huerta but did not mention social reforms. Zapata continued his resistance in the south, and the United States soon declared its opposition to Huerta's government and imposed an arms embargo on Mexico.

In early 1914, Villa signed a film deal with the Mutual Film Company of the United States to raise money for his forces. Real and staged battle scenes starring Villa and his forces were filmed and shown in movie theatres across the United States. The popularity of these films, which featured brutal scenes of war and portrayed Pancho Villa as a sympathetic bandit, made Villa famous around the world and built his reputation as a revolutionary hero.

Huerta's forces lost ground throughout 1914, and Huerta resigned in June 1914 and fled to Spain. As planned, Carranza was named president, bringing hope that Mexico was once again on the road to stability and real reform.

coup (coup d'état)—the sudden overthrow of a government and seizure of political power

counterrevolutionary—a revolutionary who attempts to overthrow a government or social system that was established by a previous revolution

Plan of Guadalupe—document written in March 1913 by a coalition of forces who opposed Victoriano Huerta. The plan stated that Huerta's rule was not legitimate and that once Huerta was defeated Venustiano Carranza would become the interim president and would call for elections as soon as peace had been restored.

embargo—an official ban on trade or other commercial activity with a particular country

However, without a common enemy, the uneasy alliance among the victorious armies quickly frayed. Zapata pushed for radical land reform, Villa emphasized political autonomy for northern Mexico, and Obregón and Carranza argued over priorities. Before long, the coalition had fractured and fighting started anew. Zapata and Villa declared war on Carranza in September 1914, less than three months after defeating Huerta. The country was once again in civil war, and 1914 to 1916 marked the bloodiest stage in the ten years of the Revolution.

The United States recognized Carranza as president of Mexico in October 1915 and helped him move troops to the north of Mexico to fight against Villa. Feeling betrayed by the United States, Villa led soldiers on several raids within U.S. territory. They sacked Columbus, New Mexico in March 1916, killing eight U.S. soldiers and ten U.S. civilians. Indignant, the United States assigned General John Pershing to lead a force of 10,000 men that ventured 350 miles into Mexican territory to capture Villa, but they were unable to do so.

decree—an order having the force of law

As the fighting continued, Carranza tried to give his presidency more legitimacy by enacting some of the more sweeping reforms that the initial revolutionaries had demanded. In January 1915 he issued a decree that called for land and electoral reform and more workers' rights. In October 1916, a Constitutional Convention met, and the new Mexican Constitution, which was very progressive in terms of human rights for its time, was completed in January 1917. Carranza was elected president under the terms of the new constitution in March 1917. Some scholars mark this as the end of the Revolution, as it formally enshrined many of the reforms the original revolutionaries were seeking. Nevertheless, conflict and instability continued for three more years as Carranza's government forces continued to fight on several fronts.

Zapata was assassinated in an ambush in 1919, ending the war against the resistance forces known as Zapatistas. The same year, Álvaro Obregón—a popular ex-general who had won many famous battles against Villa's forces—declared himself a candidate for the 1920 election. Carranza tried to jail him, but Obregón escaped and declared himself in rebellion against Carranza. Obregón had a wider base of support and was able to quickly advance against Carranza's troops. In May 1920, Obregón's forces captured Mexico City, ousting Carranza and killing him. The ten years of conflict and instability that defined the Mexican Revolution were finally over when Obregón was elected president in October 1920. Most scholars consider this the end of the Mexican Revolution, as all subsequent presidential successions were peaceful.

With a broader network of support than previous presidents in the Mexican Revolution (Madero, Huerta, and Carranza), Obregón was able to negotiate peace agreements with most remaining armed groups, including Villa. He settled a major dispute over oil with the United States and gained official recognition from the United States in 1923. Obregón

also introduced educational reform and greatly expanded access to basic education. He transitioned power peacefully to Plutarco Elías Calles, one of his allies, after Calles won the 1924 presidential election.

By the late 1920s, Obregón and his successors had organized their coalition of supporters into what became the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The PRI ruled Mexico from the 1920s until the year 2000, making it one of the most enduring governments in the world—a stark contrast to the ten years of fighting and political instability of the Mexican Revolution.

In the 1930s, PRI leader Lázaro Cárdenas carried out many of the rural land reforms that Zapata had championed, such as distributing large haciendas to peasants. In fact, many of the demands of the original revolutionaries—wider access to basic education and health services, more protections for workers' rights, and the return of control of key industries to Mexico—came to pass during the 1920s and 1930s.

hacienda—term used to refer to a large estate in Spanish-speaking countries (similar to plantation)

Sources

"An Educator's Guide to the Mexican Revolution," Stanford University.

"[Mexican Revolution](#)," Wikipedia.

"The Mexican Revolution and the United States: A Chronology," Adán Griego, Stanford University.

"[The Mexican Revolution and the United States in the Collections of the Library of Congress](#)," Library of Congress.

Questions

1. The overview mentioned many key figures in the Mexican Revolution. Match the eight figures below with the brief description of roles in the table that follows.

Lázaro Cárdenas	Francisco Madero
Venustiano Carranza	Álvaro Obregón
Porfirio Díaz	Francisco “Pancho” Villa
Victoriano Huerta	Emiliano Zapata

Role	Name
Leader of revolutionaries in central Mexico throughout the Mexican Revolution. He sought the return of land and water rights to the rural poor and indigenous groups and was uncompromising in this demand. This led him to turn against several presidents who failed to prioritize land reform, and he was eventually assassinated in 1919.	
One of the commanders of the original northern forces who defeated Díaz, he later put down an uprising against the Madero government before turning on Madero and taking the presidency in a 1913 coup. His dictatorial rule generated strong opposition, and he was forced to flee Mexico in 1914.	
Issued the call for rebellion that marked the start of the Mexican Revolution after he was jailed for standing against Díaz in the 1910 Mexican election. Became president in 1911, but was unable to unite all of the rebel forces and in 1913 was ousted in a coup by Huerta and executed.	
President of Mexico from 1934 to 1940, he carried out the land reforms that Zapata and others had fought for during the Mexican Revolution. He also provided greater rights for workers and transferred capital from foreign companies back to Mexico, fulfilling several of the other demands of the original revolutionaries.	
Leader of forces in the north of Mexico for the duration of the Revolution. He became a global celebrity when movies of his forces fighting the Mexican government were distributed, earning him a reputation as a frontier Robin Hood. Changed alliances several times throughout the Revolution. At times was supported by the United States but was later pursued by 10,000 U.S. troops after carrying out border raids in U.S. territory.	
President of Mexico from 1914 to 1920. Led the drafting of the Mexican Constitution of 1917, which codified many of the reforms that the original revolutionaries had sought. Despite this, the country was in civil war for his entire term, fighting both Zapata’s forces in the south and northern forces led by Villa and others.	
Elected President of Mexico in 1920, effectively ending the Revolution. Signed peace treaties with the remaining fighting groups, gained official recognition from the United States, and peacefully transitioned power to a new president in 1924.	
Led Mexico almost continuously from 1876 until 1911. Greatly expanded Mexico’s economy, but his seizure of land from the poor and indigenous, repression of opposition, and discontent with his long undemocratic rule sparked the start of the Mexican Revolution.	

handout 1

2. Choose ten of the most important events from the narrative and place them into the timeline below in chronological order. You will compare your list with your classmates later, so make sure that the dates and descriptions are clear enough for others to understand.

	Date (Year and Month)	Description of Event
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

VIDEO NOTES

You are about to watch an 18-minute video interview with Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato, a Professor of Historical Studies at Colegio de México. In this video, Professor Gómez-Galvarriato discusses how perceptions of the legacies of the Mexican Revolution have changed over time. She talks about the immediate legacies of the Revolution, intended outcomes that did not materialize, and the legacies that have persisted until today.

Use the space below to answer each question; you may want to take notes on another sheet of paper as you watch the video.

1. What were the three biggest changes the Mexican Revolution brought from 1910 to 1930?

2. What was one major goal of the original revolutionaries that never materialized?

Reference: Defined Terms (in order of mention)

oligarchy—a small group of people having control of a country, organization, or institution

peasant—farm laborer of low social rank

Indian—in the Mexican context, a person of indigenous descent, especially someone who maintains their indigenous identity

mestizo—in the Mexican context, someone of mixed racial or ethnic ancestry

“cosmic race”—belief espoused by Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos that a new “race” of people with mixed heritage would emerge in the Americas and would transcend all races and nationalities

nationalism—loyalty and devotion to a nation to the point where primary emphasis and promotion of its interests and culture are placed above others

globalization—a term used to describe the internationalization of the world economy and culture, and in particular increased flow of goods, services, and people among countries

protected economy—a situation in which a national economy is protected from foreign competition through restrictions or high tariffs on foreign goods and services

Mexican Constitution of 1917—current constitution of Mexico, approved in 1917 during the presidency of Venustiano Carranza. It replaced the 1857 Mexican Constitution that had been in place for 60 years.

coup (coup d'état)—the sudden overthrow of a government and seizure of political power

PERSPECTIVES ON THE LEGACIES OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

In this exercise, your group will identify how five key figures of the Mexican Revolution would appraise the Revolution's impact.

1. Skim the table below listing five key figures of the Mexican Revolution, the year they died, and their main goal(s).
2. Assign one of the five figures to each person in your group.
3. Research and answer the following questions for your assigned figure:
 - How satisfied might this person have been with the legacies of the Mexican Revolution at the time of his death?
 - How satisfied might this person have been with the legacies of the Mexican Revolution looking back at it today?
 - How would this person answer this question: "Were the benefits of the Mexican Revolution worth its costs? Why or why not?"

Come prepared to share your conclusions with your group during the next class period.

KEY HISTORICAL FIGURES

	Year Deceased	Main Goal(s)
Francisco Madero	1913	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overthrow of Porfirio Díaz • Political reforms • True democracy in Mexico
Emiliano Zapata	1919	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agrarian reform, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – redistribution of land to rural peasants – restoration of land to indigenous people – a framework for communal ownership of land
Venustiano Carranza	1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition of the presidency to a legitimately elected office • Credibility for his presidency • Reelection as president of Mexico in 1920
Pancho Villa	1923	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater political autonomy for northern Mexico • A legitimate and more democratic Mexican presidency
Álvaro Obregón	1928	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An end to the civil war of the Mexican Revolution • Orderly and peaceful succession of presidents • Expanded access to basic education • A second term as president of Mexico beginning in 1928

SYNTHESIS OF PERSPECTIVES

Complete the following table as a group by sharing your research on each historical figure with each other.

Assessment of Costs and Benefits of the Mexican Revolution		
Satisfaction with Legacies Today		
Satisfaction with Legacies at Time of Death		
	Francisco Madero	Emiliano Zapata

	Satisfaction with Legacies at Time of Death	Satisfaction with Legacies Today	Assessment of Costs and Benefits of the Mexican Revolution
Venustiano Carranza			
Pancho Villa			
Álvaro Obregón			

ASSESSING THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION'S COSTS AND BENEFITS

Write an essay of one to two pages in response to the prompt below. Your teacher will evaluate your response based on the following criteria:

- How clearly did you state your thesis?
- How effectively did you cite evidence to support your arguments?
- How well did you integrate information discussed in class into your response?

Essay prompt:

Were the benefits that the Mexican Revolution brought to Mexico worth the costs? Why or why not? Cite specific examples to support your conclusion.

OVERVIEW OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

1. *Ensure that names and roles match as indicated below.*

Role	Name
Leader of revolutionaries in central Mexico throughout the Mexican Revolution. He sought the return of land and water rights to the rural poor and indigenous groups and was uncompromising in this demand. This led him to turn against several presidents who failed to prioritize land reform, and he was eventually assassinated in 1919.	<i>Emiliano Zapata</i>
One of the commanders of the original northern forces who defeated Díaz, he later put down an uprising against the Madero government before turning on Madero and taking the presidency in a 1913 coup. His dictatorial rule generated strong opposition, and he was forced to flee Mexico in 1914.	<i>Victoriano Huerta</i>
Issued the call for rebellion that marked the start of the Mexican Revolution after he was jailed for standing against Díaz in the 1910 Mexican election. Became president in 1911, but was unable to unite all of the rebel forces and in 1913 was ousted in a coup by Huerta and executed.	<i>Francisco Madero</i>
President of Mexico from 1934 to 1940, he carried out the land reforms that Zapata and others had fought for during the Mexican Revolution. He also provided greater rights for workers and transferred capital from foreign companies back to Mexico, fulfilling several of the other demands of the original revolutionaries.	<i>Lázaro Cárdenas</i>
Leader of forces in the north of Mexico for the duration of the Revolution. He became a global celebrity when movies of his forces fighting the Mexican government were distributed, earning him a reputation as a frontier Robin Hood. Changed alliances several times throughout the Revolution. At times was supported by the United States but was later pursued by 10,000 U.S. troops after carrying out border raids in U.S. territory.	<i>Francisco "Pancho" Villa</i>
President of Mexico from 1914 to 1920. Led the drafting of the Mexican Constitution of 1917, which codified many of the reforms that the original revolutionaries had sought. Despite this, the country was in civil war for his entire term, fighting both Zapata's forces in the south and northern forces led by Villa and others.	<i>Venustiano Carranza</i>
Elected President of Mexico in 1920, effectively ending the Revolution. Signed peace treaties with the remaining fighting groups, gained official recognition from the United States, and peacefully transitioned power to a new president in 1924.	<i>Álvaro Obregón</i>
Led Mexico almost continuously from 1876 until 1911. Greatly expanded Mexico's economy, but his seizure of land from the poor and indigenous, repression of opposition, and discontent with his long undemocratic rule sparked the start of the Mexican Revolution.	<i>Porfirio Díaz</i>

2. *While opinions on which ten events or dates are most important will vary, responses should include most of the following:*

	Date (Year and Month)	Description of Event
1	July 1910	Díaz wins reelection. He had previously stated he would not run in the 1910 elections, but changed his mind.
2	October 1910	Madero issues the Plan of San Luis Potosí, calling for uprisings against Díaz to start on 20 November 1910.
3	November 1910	Uprisings against Díaz, as requested by Madero, begin. This is usually considered the formal beginning of the Mexican Revolution.
4	May 1911	Revolutionary forces, led by Madero, defeat government troops in the Battle of Juárez, forcing Díaz to step down and signaling the victory of the revolutionaries.
5	October 1911	Madero wins election as president of Mexico.
6	1912	Factions of the revolutionary forces turn against Madero and begin fighting against government troops.
7	February 1913	Huerta succeeds in a military coup, killing Madero and installing himself as the new president of Mexico.
8	June 1914	Huerta is forced to resign in the face of defeat by rebel forces; Carranza becomes president.
9	September 1914	Villa and Zapata break their alliance with Carranza and begin fighting him.
10	March 1916	Pancho Villa raids Columbus, New Mexico. In response, the United States organizes a mission to enter Mexico and capture Villa.
11	January 1917	The new Mexican Constitution is finalized. It addresses many of the demands of the original revolutionaries.
12	March 1917	Carranza becomes the first president elected under terms of the new Mexican Constitution.
13	1919	Zapata is assassinated by government forces.
14	May 1920	Obregón's fighters enter Mexico City, taking control of the government and killing Carranza.
15	October 1920	Obregón is elected president, effectively ending the Mexican Revolution.

VIDEO NOTES

1. What were the three biggest changes the Mexican Revolution brought from 1910 to 1930?
 - A. *First, the nature of the political elite changed. Before the Revolution started, a relatively small group formed an oligarchy. They were older in age and came almost exclusively from Mexico City. After 1920, the political elite broadened to include people from northern Mexico and members of the middle class. Political leaders were more focused on addressing the issues of the general Mexican population, particularly the rural poor who had not been taken into account by the previous political elite. In this way, the Mexican government was more accountable to popular demands.*
 - B. *Ideas about race and Mexican identity also changed. The fact that most Mexicans were of mixed race was seen as a national asset. Elements of indigenous culture were idealized and celebrated as central to Mexican identity, and "Indians" were not as marginalized as they had been in the past.*
 - C. *Finally, Mexico's government became more economically nationalist. Before the Revolution, the government encouraged foreign investment. Foreign companies and citizens owned large portions of the Mexican economy. After the Revolution, the Mexican government protected national companies more aggressively and placed barriers on foreign capital, goods, and services. In parallel, there was a conscious effort to champion Mexican culture and identity through the educational system.*

2. What was one major goal of the original revolutionaries that never materialized?

The original group of revolutionaries, especially Francisco Madero, were motivated by a desire to bring true democracy to Mexico. Unfortunately, this did not occur for decades. Mexico became more democratic from 1920 to 1940 in the sense of having separation of powers, free press, and an independent Congress. However, in the 1940s the government became less representative and did not truly allow free democracy until the 1990s. So the Revolution did not immediately result in a democratic government, which would have disappointed many of the original revolutionaries.

3. What economic benefits did the Mexican Revolution bring to poorer Mexicans from 1920 to 1940?

Most workers saw a significant improvement in their standard of living from 1920 to 1940. They had better education and access to health care. Industrial workers earned higher wages and had more freedom to organize and advocate for improved working conditions. Agrarian reform provided poor rural workers with more land and ownership rights, particularly in the 1930s.

4. Why did the economic benefits that stemmed from the Mexican Revolution fade after 1940?

Mexico's population exploded from 1940 to 1960, and the economy did not grow enough to keep up with population growth. In rural areas, land had to be divided into smaller plots that were no longer able to support as many families. In urban areas, there were not enough formal jobs for all the adults entering the workforce, so many had to take informal jobs that were not productive and did not provide protections or benefits.

5. What two legacies of the Mexican Revolution have contributed to Mexico's relative political stability since 1920?
- A. *The Mexican Constitution of 1917 provided rights and benefits to a much larger portion of the population. It outlined ways for grievances to be handled through peaceful means, including the political and judicial systems.*
 - B. *The Revolution also provided a powerful reminder of the huge costs of trying to resolve political disputes through armed conflict. It is estimated that over one million Mexicans died as a result of the Revolution, and it hampered economic growth for years. The memory of these costs has encouraged Mexico's political leaders to use peaceful means to resolve their conflicts and avoid another civil war at all costs.*

PERSPECTIVES ON THE LEGACIES OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

This table contains suggested responses to the first two columns in Handout 4. Responses to the “Assessment of Costs and Benefits of the Mexican Revolution” column will vary but should be consistent with the responses in the previous columns.

	Satisfaction with Legacies at Time of Death	Satisfaction with Legacies Today
Francisco Madero	Unsatisfied: While Díaz was no longer president, democracy had not taken root in Mexico at the time of this death—or for long after.	Mostly satisfied: Mexico’s political system better served the entire population after 1920, but true democracy did not really emerge until the 1990s.
Emiliano Zapata	Unsatisfied: Significant rural land reform did not take place during his lifetime.	Partially satisfied: The rural land reforms carried out in the 1930s satisfied several of Zapata’s demands.
Venustiano Carranza	Partially satisfied: While he gained legitimacy for his presidency through the Mexican Constitution of 1917, he was killed before the presidential election of 1920.	Mostly satisfied: The Constitution of 1917, which was drafted in his presidency, is still in effect, and presidential successions have been peaceful since 1920.
Pancho Villa	Satisfied: Mexico had transitioned to peace with more regional autonomy and political freedom at the time of his death.	Satisfied: No change from the situation at his death.
Álvaro Obregón	Partially satisfied: He brokered an end to the fighting of the Mexican Revolution and established a peaceful, orderly presidential succession. However, he was killed after winning election to the presidency for the second time but before starting his term.	Mostly satisfied: The political system and party that he helped create, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), ruled Mexico peacefully for more than 70 years after his death.

ASSESSING THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION'S COSTS AND BENEFITS

This list of benefits and costs can serve as a reference for several activities. However, it is not comprehensive; your class may identify several items that could be added to the list.

Benefits of the Mexican Revolution:

- *Mexico's political leadership became more representative and had to take into account the concerns of more of its population.*
- *Primary education was expanded to all segments of the population.*
- *Access to health care increased, particularly in rural areas.*
- *Farmers and indigenous people living in rural areas gained access to more land.*
- *A more widely shared sense of Mexican identity was developed that included Mexicans of all ancestries.*
- *The Mexican government became more protective of the economic interests of its own citizens.*
- *Industrial workers gained rights and better wages.*
- *Conditions for formal workers were guaranteed in the 1917 Constitution.*
- *The Revolution provided a reminder of the disruption that can occur when national disputes are not resolved peacefully, providing a strong incentive for Mexico's political leaders to settle differences through non-violent means.*

Costs of the Mexican Revolution:

- *Around 1.4 million Mexicans (an estimated nine percent of Mexico's population at the time) died during the conflict.*
- *At least 300,000 Mexicans emigrated, mostly to the United States.*
- *The Mexican debt grew astronomically due to the costs of waging war for the better part of a decade.*
- *Major sections of the Mexican economy were stifled due to the diversion of resources to the war effort.*
- *Despite all the fighting, Mexico's government did not become truly democratic for decades, even though this was one of the main goals of the original revolutionaries.*
- *Mexico gained a reputation as a country whose political leaders cared more about power than respecting the rule of law.*

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

On-screen text:**Legacies of the Mexican Revolution
a discussion with Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato****On-screen text:****Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato
Professor, Centro de Estudios Históricos (CEH), Colegio de México**

Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato: The legacies of the Mexican Revolution are really difficult to define. It depends on when in time do you consider them. I think there were some immediate legacies and there are some legacies that last until today. There are also some legacies that were thought to be a result of the Revolution that nowadays we think they really, they really didn't exist or were just a myth.

So, talking about the immediate legacies, the Revolution was not a unified process. What really changed from 1910 to, let's say, 1920 was the elite in power. Whereas before 1910, it was more like an oligarchy, old even in terms of generation and more...even regionally, it was more localized around Mexico City. In 1920, it was a different elite. It was more middle class, it was, there were more people that were from the north of the country. And it was also more interested into, or because of the Revolution, required to bring some of the demands of the working classes, of the peasants, into the issues it had to deal with and the policies they implemented and the rules they developed. Because the experience of the Revolution showed that if they wanted to be in power, they needed to take into account the masses. So I think this really changed.

And even, of course, it was not only in Mexico that the world changed. It was also, well, all over the world because of the First World War that the countries, many countries, had to take into account the popular masses a lot more, because they, in Europe, they had required them to fight and many of them had died. So in general, the governments either became more democratic or at least took into account the popular demands more, and this also happened in Mexico.

And another important difference that is related to this is the ideas about race and about who are Mexicans. After the Revolution, it became like more of a consensus that Indians were part of the nation, and that Mexico was a *mestizo*, like a mixed blood, nation and that this was something like an attribute. It was something that made us Mexicans better. There was the idea of forging the "cosmic race"—that Mexico had European, African, and Asiatic blood—and that this made Mexicans really special. So even in the arts, [they] like the Indian culture was embraced, perhaps in a very mythical way or idealistic way, but it happened.

And I think this is one of the legacies that has lived longer. Because although there's racism in Mexico, of course, it is not ... there is not an idea of race like there is in the U.S., for example, that it's something that you even write down in forms, right? In Mexico, there is the idea that everyone is some kind of mixed blood and that that is okay. There is a very, of course, it's a very unequal society and race is related to class, so it doesn't mean that there are no differences. But I think this makes Mexico so like more integrated than countries like Peru or Bolivia or Ecuador, countries that also have a large indigenous population.

Another important legacy was nationalism. And this was—this is still important—but it lasted at least until the 1980s and globalization came, came in and now it's not so—like there's—it's some issue at debate in Mexico. But at least until the 1980s, nationalism was something very important for all governments to embrace, and it was related also to industrial development

and the attitude of Mexico towards trade and economic growth. But also in terms of culture, in terms of education, and...well, after the Mexican Revolution, governments were a lot more nationalistic than before. Although, in many ways, this is something really that you can also find in the *porfiriato*. But at least in the way it was framed, it was stronger afterwards.

Something that was not a legacy of the Revolution was a democratic government. It was something that Madero and the first revolution, the first revolutionary heroes, were like the ideal of having a democratic government was one of the goals that the Revolution sought. And it was not something it achieved. Although the governments that came after the Revolution, like embraced and [were in] embraced more social classes and this legitimized them more, it was not really democratic governments—although it can be said that until 1940, there were some kind of democracy or like, if it was like a matter of degrees, Mexico was more democratic than it became after 1940 at least until the 1990s. And also, there was some separation of or some role of Congress and freedom of press larger than after [the] 1940s. So sometimes we think that the way the government, the Mexican government, was in the 1960s–1980s was the way, was exactly the same as in the 1930s. But this really changed.

Another legacy of the Mexican Revolution was that for the working population, either rural or industrial/urban, there was really an important improvement in their standards of living, at least in the short and medium run. For industrial workers, there were, there was, an important increase in real wages that came about because of the new freedom of organization in the labor movement. And also, they got different benefits that are stated in the Mexican Constitution and then placed in labor laws.

And for the rural population, well, land was distributed. There was an agrarian reform that was particularly important in the 1930s. And those families in the 1930s—either of workers, urban workers, or rural workers—really lived an improvement in their living conditions. They got better access to education, better access to health. So, I think if we looked at the Mexican Revolution around 1940, we would see that there were many changes that were really good for the people. And then if we look at it from like a more recent year, this starts to fade away.

Many of the benefits that the popular masses got as a result of the Revolution were in many ways diluted after the 1940s because of an extreme population explosion that took place between 1940 and 1960. And this basically meant that the land that was distributed was not enough anymore for the size of the families. So their plots became very small and unable to support the population.

And then in the industrial sector, the urban jobs, there were just not enough for that quantity of people demanding jobs. So, a very large percent[age] of the population started working in the informal sector, just selling things on the streets or doing jobs that were not really productive. And at the end, this meant that although the laws for workers were very good, at least half of the population is not really...does not have a formal job. So those laws really don't—doesn't matter anything for them—don't matter anything for them. So, in many ways when we look at the Mexican Revolution from today's standpoint, it seems that nothing...that all those benefits didn't really take place. But they did.

Another problem, and this is a problem that is perhaps like one of the more difficult junctures, one of the most difficult problems that we need to solve in the whole world, is how are we—like what sort of regime do we build—in order for workers to be able to have a decent standard of living, and at the same time produce things that can compete internationally, that are good enough in quality and in price in order to be able to be sold everywhere. And this was also the case in Mexico.

Many of the benefits that came about during the first decades of the Revolution had to do with a protected economy in which workers had wages and had benefits that didn't allow the country to use the best technology or to produce goods that were cheap and competitive enough in global terms. So when the economy opened up, these factories went bankrupt and these jobs were lost. And then in order to produce things that are globally competitive, we just have to be very low. So, this is really something that is like a trap that is not only Mexico but the whole world that is facing it. And well, these are also some of the reasons why the legacy of the Revolution diluted through time and does not last until today.

However, I think the Mexican Constitution of 1917 is still a legacy of the Revolution that in some ways survives until today. And that is a document that in a way has been able to keep together the nation in a more or less peaceful environment for all these years. And in contrast to other Latin American countries that in the 1950s, '60s, '70s faced military coups and periods like very harsh military dictatorships, that was not the case in Mexico. So I think that was like, through Mexican history, part of the legacy.

At the same time, when one compares Mexico to other countries, for example Brazil, that did not have a revolution like the Mexican Revolution, then one realizes that many of the changes that we attribute to the Mexican Revolution perhaps would have taken place anyway. And perhaps also through like a slower more like reform process rather than a revolutionary process, these changes are able to be adopted like in a more long-lasting way.

So, I think it is always better to be able to solve the problems that a nation has in a peaceful way. And when a country gets to the point when only things can be solved by weapons, it's always something that costs a lot, costs a lot in terms of lives, in terms of economic development. So, it's really not the best way to solve problems. And I think that's another legacy of the Mexican Revolution in some ways: that it is better for Mexico, at least that's how we understand it, to try to provide channels of negotiation, channels of change and reform, that do not lead to another civil war.