

C.1: LESSON PLAN

Title

Dionisio “Dennis” Chavez: First American-Born Hispanic U.S. Senator

Subject

Civics and Government

Grade

K-5

Time

30-45 minutes

Purpose

After locating and identifying the image of Dennis Chavez in the fresco, students learn how a New Mexican became the first American-born Hispanic U.S. Senator; how the U.S. government functions at a national level; and some of the ideals, rights, and responsibilities of U.S. citizens.

Key Questions

1. Who was Dionisio “Dennis” Chavez?
2. How did he become a U.S. Senator from New Mexico?
3. What is the U.S. Senate and how does it function?
4. What are the responsibilities of a U.S. Senator?
5. How can U.S. residents interact with U.S. Senators?
6. Why would you want to interact with a U.S. Senator?
7. How is Senator Chavez depicted in the fresco?

Values

Service to country; active citizenship; good government

Materials & Resources

[Virtual tour of the fresco](#); [fresco image guide](#); examples of “portraits” that include [Dennis Chavez](#); one coin per student; diagram: 3 branches of U.S. Government; [biographical](#)

information: Dennis Chavez; Constitutional [Qualifications](#) for U.S. Senate Service; paper and colored pencils.

Activities

1. Lead students through a virtual tour of the fresco.
2. Present slide show of images that are “portraits” of famous people. Can students identify one or more persons?
3. Looking at the virtual fresco, ask students to search for “portraits” by holding a coin “heads up” to locate faces. Ask students if they see anyone from the portrait slide show.
4. When students arrive at Dennis Chavez, teach his life story and engage discussion.
5. Teach the 3 branches of U.S. Government, with emphasis on the Constitution, the U.S. Senate, and the roles and responsibilities of a U.S. Senator.
6. Teach active citizenship, the ways in which U.S. residents can participate in government and interact with Senators.
7. Read or ask students to read the words next to Chavez’ portrait in the fresco and discuss “trust in public life” and “devotion to public service.” Why are these important?
8. In pairs, ask students to create portraits of each other. Then, ask each student to imagine a future in which you become a public servant. In pictures, ask each student to draw a map in which this future unfolds.
9. Students share their portraits and imagined lives of public service.

Evaluation/Assessment

Feedback: [Take this survey to share your feedback on this lesson plan](#); formative and summative assessment (e.g. [Edutopia](#); [CRLT](#)); state assessment tools.