

Worksheet: Tradition and Translation

“She really wanted me to carry on not so much doing altars like I do today, but to carry on the tradition of remembering— And it ties in with what I do today with the Día de los Muertos.”
— Ofelia Esparza

Work with partners to share ideas and thoughts for this worksheet. Find a circle shape to trace, such as an empty yogurt cup. Think about how to explore the following topics using Venn diagrams (use the yogurt cup for circles) or create diagrams of your own design:

- The similarities and differences between the Día de los Muertos observances in East Los Angeles and in Teotitlán del Valle, Mexico.
- The parts of the celebrations that have visual art aspects, and the parts that do not.
- Similarities and differences between local practices of memorializing and those on the video.
- The different appearances and uses of calaveras (skulls) and calacas (skeletons) in contemporary U.S. culture (such as tattoos, tee shirts, in cartoons and movies, fashion dolls, etc.) and what meanings and purposes they appear to have.
- Any traditions in your own family that have changed over time (such as sharing special foods, how and whether you celebrate holidays, attending certain events, traditions associated with seasons, those still present and those gone, etc.)