

# Open Up the Textbook (OUT)

*Enlarge*

*Complicate*

*Contest*

*Vivify*

Title: Basque Culture in Nevada

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In this OUT analysis, 4<sup>th</sup> students will study Basque Culture in Nevada in order to better understand the following essential questions:

- What can we learn about the culture and history of the Basque people in Nevada?
- In what ways are the Basque people unique and how do they feel about their own uniqueness?

This OUT analysis provides students with documents that are meant to deliberately enlarge and vivify the textbook.

This strategy is implemented most effectively when students collaborate to analyze the texts in small, heterogeneous groups. The texts that accompany the textbook are complex and often include difficult vocabulary and syntax. (For a few words that are likely unknown to students and unidentifiable based upon context clues, helpful synonyms are provided in the footnotes.) Students should first annotate each text and then collaborate to answer the text dependent and specific questions that follow. Questions will highlight sourcing and perspective of the author, close reading of key details from the document that enlarge, complicate, contest, or vivify the textbook, as well as questions that help students corroborate (or not) the accuracy of individual documents. The writing task that follows is an independent activity wherein students will employ evidence from multiple sources to justify their analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

**Source A: Primary Source** – Don Grey, Basque Shepherder Mural, Ely Nevada -2001 - ZOOM

## Basque Culture Zoom In

When presenting the Zoom In with the class, ask the students to remain quiet for at least thirty seconds per slide before discussing the questions. Then, discuss the Zoom as a class with the questions integrated into each page of the PowerPoint. Encourage Think-Pair-Share strategies and Accountable talk.

Following the presentation, have students write a response to the questions on the last slide. At the end of the slide show is a picture of the artist, Don Grey, in front of the mural.

### **Source A: Questions for Consideration**

1. What inferences can you make about the Basque shepherder and his lifestyle? Cite evidence from the Mural to support your answer.
  
2. Write a title for the mural.

***Basques in Nevada***

The Basque people who came to our state loved the high deserts and mountains of Nevada. It was a good place to raise sheep as their families had been doing for centuries in Europe. Many Basques settled near Elko, Carson City, and Ely.

Many times, the cattle ranchers and sheepherders had trouble getting along. Both wanted control of Nevada's grassy ranges. However, sheep ranchers had a few advantages over cattle ranchers. Sheep adapted to climate changes better than cattle. Market prices for selling sheep didn't go up and down as much either. Ranchers could also make more money from sheep because they could sell their wool.

The life of a sheepherder was a very lonely life. Most of his time was spent alone with the sheep. Sometimes, a faithful dog was his only company for weeks or months at a time. Many Basque families took their herds and spread out across the ranges of Idaho and Oregon, too.

Today, many people in Nevada love to attend the yearly Basque festivals. People from all over the state get together to celebrate the Basque heritage, or way of life. They celebrate with music, dance, and traditional Basque foods.

**Source B: Questions for Consideration**

1. Describe three advantages that sheep ranchers had over cattle ranchers.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
2. According to the text, what character traits can you infer about the Basque people? Cite evidence to support your answer.
3. What geographical characteristics of Nevada are mentioned above that made the Basque people settle here?

**Source C: Secondary - Website** –*Basque Folklife*, Lisa Corcostegui, 1/10/11

<http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/basque-folklife>

Many of the Basque folkways that we see today in Nevada formed part of the cultural baggage of Basque immigrants, and first found collective expression here within the context of *ostatuak*, or Basque boarding houses. These establishments, which began to open their doors as early as the 1860s, served Basques who were engaged primarily in the sheep industry and in mining.

At one time or another, Basque boarding houses operated in sixteen northern Nevada towns, many of them located within a triangle formed between Gardnerville, Ely, and McDermitt. Many traditions from the Basque homeland were preserved in these ethnic enclaves<sup>1</sup>. Social gatherings, handball games, and dances punctuated the daily routine and networks developed among various *ostatuak*.

Traces of Nevada's Basque shepherders may still be found in the form of arborglyphs among the aspens. Names, dates and images carved into their white bark testify to the presence and lifestyle of shepherders over the last century on Peavine Mountain in Reno, and in groves across northern Nevada. Many *Harri mutilak*, or stone cairns<sup>22</sup>, built by shepherders still stand marking ranges now devoid<sup>3</sup> of sheep.

As the sheep industry declined, so did the institution of the Basque boarding house. Many of these establishments, however, adapted and became restaurants. The style of food and the form in which it is served naturally reflect their Basque-American origins rather than homeland cuisine. As in the days of feeding a dining room full of hungry shepherders at long tables, today's restaurants serve up generous amounts of hearty food family-style. Typically a meal consists of soup; green salad; beans; vegetables; stew; lamb, beef, chicken or fish; bread; red wine; ice cream and coffee. Sweetbreads, beef tongue, and salt cod are often offered. Red and green peppers, tomato, onion and garlic are the underpinnings of most dishes.

*(Note to teacher: This article lends itself to showing examples of arborglyphs from the internet and an extension activity of allowing the kids to create their own arborglyph art. See <http://nevadabasque.com/arborglyphs/>)*

### **Source C: Questions for Consideration**

1. Immigrants must travel with some of their belongings when they come to a new country. How would you describe the idea of “cultural baggage” that the Basques came with to Nevada?
2. What were the benefits of the boarding houses to the Basque shepherders? Site evidence from the text.
3. What artifacts can still be seen in Nevada as proof of the evidence of the Basque shepherders?
4. Create a list of Basque cultural traits and traditions described by the author.

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<sup>1</sup> Enclave – an area with a different culture from the surrounding area

<sup>2</sup> Cairns – groups of stone heaped together as a monument or landmark

**Source D: Genre (Secondary Cookbook)** – Chorizos in an Iron Skillet, Mary Ancho Davis, 2001 pg. XI

Traditional Basque cuisine is not complex or elaborate. It is a simple cooking, which has its roots in the cooking of ordinary people. However, it can reach heights of excellence in restaurants and gastronomic<sup>3</sup> societies as well as in the most ordinary household. The excellence of Basque cooking is largely due to the high quality of ingredients used and the pride that most Basque cooks have in creating a perfect product. Fresh, flavorful fish, meats, vegetables, and other ingredients are absolutely essential. The pride that a Basque takes in cooking is reflected in the comment of the late John Bilbao, University of Nevada Basque Studies scholar and author, who stated that to a Basque, cooking, as well as eating and drinking are as much a way of praising God as is praying.

Culinary experts who have written on Basque cuisine have labeled the regional Basque areas of Spain and France as “the Land of the Sauces.” Many traditional Basque recipes are cooked in one of four basic sauces: white (cream base), red (tomato, red pepper base), green (parsley base), and black (squid ink base). These sauces are what differentiate Basque cooking from the cooking of non-Basque regional areas of Spain and France. Food cooked in these sauces requires a special slow-simmer heat called, *pil pil*, which is not an easy heat to achieve on modern gas and electric stoves.

#### **Source D Questions for Consideration**

1. Underline phrases in the text that describe Basque cuisine.
2. One scholar likens Basque cooking to praising God.
3. Cite three reasons from the source for why Basque cooking is considered excellent.
4. What region/countries do the Basques come from in Europe? What is this region nicknamed? What evidence from the text demonstrates that this was a good nickname?
5. Compare and contrast the description of the Basque cuisine from Source C and D. In what ways are the descriptions similar or different? Give examples from both sources.

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<sup>3</sup> Gastronomic - restaurant

**Source E: Genre Primary - video** – Basque Festival, Nevada Stories, Nevada Stories and NV arts Council, and July 4, 2013 <http://vimeo.com/78776901>

For the last 50 years, Basque families from throughout the American West have gathered in Elko, Nevada on 4th of July weekend to celebrate their culture and the opportunities afforded them in the USA. Filmed over the three days of the 2013 National Basque Festival, “Euskal Jaiak: Celebrating Basque Culture” offers the viewer an all-embracing view of this multi-faceted event.

**Source E (STUDY GUIDE)**

1. Prior to watching the video, number the students 1- 4. Each student will be responsible for making observations and notes about one aspect of Basque culture. Use the study guide provided or have the students fold a lined piece of paper into quarters.
  - a. Group 1: Traditional Costumes.
  - b. Group 2: Traditional Food.
  - c. Group 3: Traditional Music and Dance.
  - d. Group 4: Culture and Traditions (including games, language, and children).
2. After watching the video, have the students with the same number compare notes and meet to share what they observed.
3. Finally, have the students break into small groups of 1-4 and have each person share with the group as an expert.
4. If time allows, have the students draw a sketch in each section of an important aspect of Basque cultural costumes, food, dance, music, and the culture and traditions.

**Source E: Final Question**

How would you describe Basque culture in one or two sentences to a family member? Use descriptive language and evidence from texts A-E.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

BASQUE VIDEO NOTE TAKER

1. Costumes and clothing

2. Food

3. Music and Dance

4. Games, Language, Children

## Writing Task

This is an informative writing task based on NVACS standards W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.5, W.4.8, L.4.1, & L.4.4. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the texts as well as the ways in which the textbook was enlarged, complicated, contested, or vivified.

Create a brochure for the annual Basque Festival in Elko, Nevada. The brochure should include:

- detailed descriptions under the following headings/sections: *History of Basques in Nevada, Basque Culture, and The Basque Festival*;
- at least six illustrations or visuals with specific and descriptive captions;
- at least one concrete piece of evidence from each of the texts we studied;
- vocabulary from the word bank below used correctly to inform and explain your topics;
- sourcing information: a title, a byline (author's name), date.

### WORD BANK

shepherd  
arborglyphs  
heritage

chorizo  
culture

region  
cuisine

geography  
boardinghouse