

## North America

### The Mexican War of Independence

In the early nineteenth century the Mexicans wanted freedom from Spain. A leader of the Revolution was a priest named Miguel Hidalgo. The Spanish government found out about the revolt. They ordered the arrest of Hidalgo. When Hidalgo heard about this, he called a meeting at his church. He rang the church bell on the night of September 15, 1810 to call his **congregation**.<sup>1</sup> When all the people arrived Father Hidalgo gave the speech that is now called the *Grito de Dolores*. He said “Viva Mexico” and “Viva la independencia!” These words mean “Long live Mexico!” and “Long live independence!” These famous words he said have been remembered. They are said each year at the Independence Day celebrations.

Before the year was over, Father Hidalgo was captured and **executed**.<sup>2</sup> Other people continued to fight for Mexican independence. Father Hidalgo's *Grito de Dolores* became their battle cry. The people fought for eleven years before they finally won their freedom. When they finally did, they designed a flag for their new country. Each color – green for independence, white for religion, and red for union – now reminds Mexicans of an important part of their history.

Today Independence Day is a big celebration in Mexico. The celebrating begins the night before, on September 15. Crowds of people gather in the centers of cities, towns, and villages. The people watch the time. When the clock strikes eleven o'clock the crowd gets silent. In Mexico City, on the last strike of eleven, the president of Mexico steps out on the palace balcony. He rings the old liberty bell that Father Hidalgo rang. Then the president gives the *Grito de Delores*. He shouts “Viva Mexico,” “Viva la independencia” and the crowd shouts back. People do this at the same time all across Mexico. While the crowd says this they fill the air with **confetti**<sup>3</sup> and streamers.

The actual day of September 16 is like July Fourth in the United States. There are **rodeos**,<sup>4</sup> parades and bullfights. The people eat, recall Hidalgo's speeches and decorate statues of their hero with red, white, and green flowers.

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<sup>1</sup> **congregation**: a group of people who belong to a church together

<sup>2</sup> **executed**: put to death or killed by the government under a law

<sup>3</sup> **confetti**: small pieces or streamers of colored paper that are scattered around during festive occasions, like a parade or New Year's Eve.

<sup>4</sup> **rodeos**: shows in which cowboys ride “bucking broncos” (wild horses) and rope cattle.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What happened first in this passage?
  - a. Mexicans decided on the colors of their national flag.
  - b. Father Miguel Hidalgo shouted “Viva Mexico” in his Grito de Dolores.
  - c. The Mexican people were having lots of discussions about gaining independence from Spain.
  - d. September 15<sup>th</sup> became a national holiday.
  
2. Why do you think the President of Mexico shouts the Grito de Dolores each year on Independence Day?
  - a. So that everyone is proud that Mexico is an independent country.
  - b. Because he hopes someday to be as popular as Father Hidalgo was.
  - c. Because he hates the colors of the national flag and is angry about it.
  - d. It is the cry for the official end to the rainy season and everyone is happy.
  
3. How is September 16<sup>th</sup> in Mexico like July 4<sup>th</sup> in the United States?
  - a. Both are the days on which the citizens celebrate their country’s independence.
  - b. The weather in Mexico on September 16 is always exactly like the weather in the U.S. on July 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - c. Both countries are led by Presidents.
  - d. Both countries stop on those days and remember how many people have died fighting for their country in wars.
  
4. How long did the Mexican War for Independence last?
  - a. It lasted for fifteen months.
  - b. The author does not provide enough information.
  - c. It lasted eleven years.
  - d. It lasted three years; that is why the Mexican flag has three colors in it.
  
5. Which of the following is not mentioned as a way to celebrate Mexico’s Independence Day?
  - a. bullfights, rodeos, and parades
  - b. decorating statues with green, red, and white flowers
  - c. eating and recalling Hidalgo’s speeches
  - d. going to church

6. What kind of person was Father Miguel Hidalgo? Support your answer with one or more details from the text.

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7. What are some similarities between the history of Mexico's Independence Day and the United States' Independence Day?

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ the celebration begins, the people of Mexico wait for the president to give the Grito de Dolores from the palace balcony.

- a. Before
- b. When
- c. Since
- d. After

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Mexicans celebrate their independence every year with the same pride they had when they first won their freedom in 1810.

Who? Mexicans

(do) What? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Vocabulary Word:** congregation: a group of people who belong to a church together.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Teacher Guide and Answers**

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 740

**Featured Text Structure:** Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

**Passage Summary:** The passage describes how Mexico gained its independence, including the important figures involved, and how Mexican independence is celebrated today.

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  - c. eating food and recalling Hidalgo’s speeches
  - d. **going to church**

6. What kind of person was Father Miguel Hidalgo? Support your answer with one or more details from the text.

**Suggested answer:** Answers will vary but could include that he was a brave person (he was executed because he tried to make Mexico free), a good public speaker (his speeches inspired the people to fight for independence), or a fighter (he was a leader of the Revolution).

7. What are some similarities between the history of Mexico's Independence Day and the United States' Independence Day?

**Suggested answer:** Similarities could include gaining independence from a European Nation, or fighting to gain independence and then creating a flag that had significant meaning.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

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- b. When
- c. Since
- d. After

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Mexicans celebrate their independence every year with the same pride they had when they won their freedom in 1810.

Who? **Mexicans**

(do) What? **celebrate their independence**

When? **every year**

How? **with the same pride they had when they won their freedom in 1810**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** congregation: a group of people who belong to a church together.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.