

## 3-5 | Lesson 6



# LESSON 6

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

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The unit essential questions developed through this lesson are...

- In what ways have Latino individuals and organizations in Indiana advocated for their communities?

## TASK

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The task that students will fulfill through this lesson is...

- Students will compose a persuasive letter/email to the office of the mayor/governor regarding La Plaza's need for increased space. Through this letter, students will gather evidence from the prior lesson's reading and additional research to advocate for government funding/support to expand La Plaza's space.

## CONTENT OBJECTIVE

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By engaging in this lesson, students will...

- Summarize La Plaza's mission and key services provided.
- Understand why La Plaza requires increased space to carry out its work.
- Understand how an individual citizen can use written correspondence to advocate for other individuals and organizations.

## LITERARY OBJECTIVE

By engaging in this lesson, students will demonstrate their ability to...

- Write a persuasive claim.
- Support that claim with aligned evidence and reasoning.

## STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

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- Write persuasive compositions in a variety of forms. (5.W.1)
- Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic. (5.W.5)

## LAUNCH (5 MINUTES)

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*Today I'm very excited to continue our study of Hoosier activism. I'm particularly excited about today's lesson because it will give us a chance to demonstrate support for La Plaza, the organization we learned about yesterday. Through yesterday's reading, we learned about the important work La Plaza is doing to offer a wide range of educational and social supports to Indianapolis' Latino community.*

*When reading that article, one part stood out to me that I wanted us to revisit today. In the article's final section, the writer, Natalia Contreras, pointed out a specific challenge that La Plaza is facing, particularly as more and more residents turn to La Plaza for support. Contreras wrote:*

*"As the community grows, the need for services increases, too. La Plaza is seeking a bigger location to keep up with the demand," Acevedo Davis said. "So in hiring staff to meet the demands of COVID, provide those essential services, we literally have run out of space," she said. "We've put together a task force to help us look at additional space or facilities or something but that's a big need, as well as something I think the community needs: a central place for Latinos to gather."*

*As I was thinking about this portion of the article, I was feeling motivated to help La Plaza, because of all the important help that they are offering to Indianapolis' Latino community. I've been thinking about what we might be able to do to support their space needs. After all, as we learn about all these examples of activism, we see how activist individuals are always seeking a way to make things better and to take action. To an activist, every step in the right direction and every show of support can make a big difference.*

*So, I got to thinking... and while I can't build La Plaza a new office building or community center... and while I can't afford to buy La Plaza a new office building or community... something I can do is to write. And guess what? You're all great writers too! I know that when citizens want to make change, one action they can take is to write their local government officials to advocate for that change. Our government officials, like the mayor and the governor, have the power and the resources to make bigger changes that we might not be able to. For example, they might be able to help La Plaza find good buildings that are available for occupation throughout the city. Or, they might even be able to use some of their budget to help La Plaza buy or rent more space.*

*So, what we are going to do now is to compose persuasive letters to our government officials to advocate for more space for La Plaza!*

## MODEL OR SHARED WRITING (10 MINUTES)

*Let's work together for a bit as we prepare to write our letters. When I start to write a persuasive letter, the first thing I do is to think about the audience and purpose of the letter.*

*For this letter, who is our audience?*

- A government official with the power and resources to support La Plaza, such as the mayor or governor.

*For this letter, what is our purpose?*

- Our purpose is to convince the government official to help La Plaza to locate and/or pay for more space, so that the organization can continue to do its important work.

*Great! After thinking about our audience and purpose, the next step is to think: how will we convince our audience to agree with us and to take action? So, for this letter, our job is to convince the government official that La Plaza deserves more space. Let's brainstorm for a minute: what are the ways that we can help our audience understand why La Plaza deserves more space? How can we convince them that this is an important thing to do?*

**Listen to partnerships as students discuss; then select 1–2 students to share their ideas, such as:**

- We should show how La Plaza does important work for the Latino community.
- We should explain why La Plaza needs more space to do this important work.

*Okay, I think we now have a strong plan of what our letters need to accomplish. If we can show our audience that (1) La Plaza does important work the Latino community and (2) La Plaza does needs more space to do this important work, then our audience will understand why they should try to help La Plaza procure more space.*

*Before we actually start writing our letters, it will be really important to make sure that we have enough evidence to prove those two big ideas. In fact, we should conduct a bit of research to collect the best evidence possible. To do our research, we can re-read the article from yesterday's lesson; and we can also use the internet to locate some additional sources that might help us to (1) show the important work that La Plaza does and (2) explain why La Plaza needs more space to do it. Before we begin that research, let's create a note-catcher that will help us to select evidence that specifically backs up our two key ideas:*

| Source | Evidence showing that La Plaza does important work | Evidence showing that La Plaza needs more space to do its work |
|--------|--|--|
|        |  |  |

As we read through our sources today, add the evidence that you find to these two columns. Be sure to select evidence that really connects to one of the two big ideas we need to demonstrate: (1) La Plaza does important work, and (2) La Plaza needs more space to do that important work.

## CREATE (20-25 MINUTES)

In groups, have students re-read yesterday's article and any of the additional sources linked below. Circulate to provide student feedback on the quality of the evidence they are selecting from the articles (i.e., the degree to which that evidence supports one of the two big ideas).

You may also want to begin by re-reading yesterday's text, or portions of yesterday's text, together, to help model and guide the process of noticing aligned evidence and adding it to the note-catcher. An example of what a completed note-catcher might look like after reading just yesterday's text is below:

| Source  | Evidence showing that La Plaza does important work   | Evidence showing that La Plaza needs more space to do its work   |
|---|--|--|
| Contreras' article: <i>"For 50 years, this organization has been helping and empowering Latinos in Central Indiana"</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Runs a summer academic, leadership, and career camp</i></li> <li>• <i>Helps students to apply to college</i></li> <li>• <i>Helps residents to find jobs and housing</i></li> <li>• <i>Provides translation services</i></li> <li>• <i>Provides mental health supports</i></li> <li>• <i>Provides translation services and literacy classes</i></li> <li>• <i>Distributed vaccines and information during COVID-19</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Number of individuals coming to La Plaza for support increased from 1,400 to 2,000 to 7,000 during the pandemic years</i></li> <li>• <i>Quote from CEO Acevedo Davis: Need more staff, want to have a physical community center where Latino residents can gather</i></li> </ul> |

## DISCOURSE (5-10 MINUTES)

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*Great work, everyone! Now, let's share some of the most compelling evidence that we found to back up the two key ideas in our argument.*

- **Have students share the best evidence they found to support the idea that (1) La Plaza does important work.**
- **Have students share the best evidence they found to support the idea that (2) La Plaza needs more space to carry out its work.**
- **Students can share in partnerships, small groups, or whole group. In all cases, ask students to explain why their evidence clearly supports the idea and ask students to evaluate one another's evidence.**

*Excellent discussion. Tomorrow, we will use the evidence we have gathered through research to compose our letters!*



## EXIT TICKET

1. Which quotation from the article best justifies the idea that La Plaza needs more space for its future work?
  - a. Rosales Salazar said at La Plaza and through the summer program, he found mentors and other young Latinos he could relate to.
  - b. For decades La Plaza, a Latino-led nonprofit organization, has been providing education and health resources, social services, and empowering Latino families, youth, and young professionals in Indianapolis.
  - c. In 2004, the organization merged with The Hispanic Education Center, FIESTA Indianapolis, to create one nonprofit, La Plaza Inc.
  - d. Typically, La Plaza serves about 1,400 people (who seek services once) every year, but the pandemic increased the need for health and education resources, so those numbers have gone up.
2. Which quotation from the article least demonstrates the idea that La Plaza adds important value to the city of Indianapolis?
  - a. The mentors he found at La Plaza guided him through each step of the college application process; helped him apply for scholarships; proofread his essays; and helped him practice for scholarship interviews.
  - b. The trusted community hub, on the city's east side, most recently has also played a critical role in keeping Latinos and Spanish-speaking Hoosiers informed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - c. Although there are still misconceptions that Latinos are new to Central Indiana, the longevity of La Plaza speaks to how long Latinos have lived and contributed to the state.
  - d. La Plaza helps Hoosiers find jobs and housing; get access to healthcare services; find emergency assistance for rent and utilities; how to enroll kids in school; domestic violence advocacy; and provides mental health resources.
3. In the text, La Plaza CEO Miriam Acevedo-Davis suggests that Indianapolis would benefit from a “a central place for Latinos to gather.” What ideas presented in the text best justify this proposal?

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