



### What you will learn

You will learn about the Day of the Dead Festival and why it is such an important part of Mexican life and culture. You will draw from original Day of the Dead skull drawings to enable you to understand how these designs are created, looking carefully at the symbolism contained within them. You will use this knowledge to create your own art work.



### Useful Websites

<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/travel-and-adventure/top-10-things-know-about-day-dead>

<https://www.history.com/topics/halloween/day-of-the-dead>

### Creative possibilities

From your initial drawings you will start to draw your own design for a Day of the Dead inspired skull. You will consider how you use the symbolism and use of colour to make your idea as exciting as you can. You could make a clay skull or you may make an embroidered felt skull.



You will be set a drawing test as part of this project to emphasise the importance of drawing within an Art and Design curriculum.



### Key Words

**Day of the Dead** – a Mexican festival held on 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> November every year to celebrate the lives of loved ones who have died. Activities and traditions vary depending on the local community. It is believed that the spirits of the dead visit the living during the celebration: angelitos (children) on 1<sup>st</sup> November; adults on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

**Calacas and calaveras** – skeletons and skulls.

**Altar** – people create altars by gathering together photographs and mementos of loved ones, flowers, candles, and food. This is a place to remember the dead.

**Papel Picado** – paper cut into decorative designs is laid on tables and hung up like bunting.

**Ofrenda** – offerings are left for the dead at altars and graves. Ofrendas include things that would be missed in the afterlife, such as Bread of the Dead, fruit, sweets, cigarettes, coffee, and alcohol.

**Sugar skulls** – are moulded from a mixture of water and sugar. They are decorated with patterns, and sometimes people's names, in bright colours.

**Marigold flowers** – the vibrant colours and scents of the flowers guide spirits to their altars. Marigolds, or flowers in general, also represent the fragility of life.

**Symbol** – a sign understood as representing an idea, object, or relationship.

**Tone/value** - highlight, mid-tones, and shadow. Tone is applied to create the illusion of 3D form and depth.

**Block colour** – colour in a single tone, with no variation.

**Gradient** – a smooth transition from one tone to another.

**Colour blend** - a smooth transition from one colour to another.

**Colour mix** – combining at least two colours to achieve a new colour.

At home you could look at how people use make up to create skull effects and try this out for yourself.

You could try to create your own Papel Picado.