



# Beyond Fronteras

The Story of Arizona's Santa Cruz County

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## **\* LESSON PLAN \***

### **B9. What is the Significance of the 1918 Battle of Ambos Nogales?**

The Mexican Revolution, World War I, and the First U.S.-Mexico Border Fences

**Grade Level: 9-12 (adaptable)**

**Subject: U.S. History, World History, Border Studies**

**Time Allotment: 4 days, teacher may adapt to their own needs**

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**The Lesson is Adapted from Paper 1 of the IB History Assessment**

### **Lesson Objectives**

- Students will explore the significance of the 1918 Battle of Ambos Nogales and its broader implications for U.S.-Mexico relations during the Mexican Revolution and World War I. They will analyze primary sources to better understand the event's causes, consequences, and historiography.

## **Applicable Arizona History and Social Science Standards**

History and Social Science Standards available as PDF documents by grade band on the Arizona Department of Education website<sup>1</sup>

### **US History Standards:**

#### **1. Emergence of Modern America**

- Activity 1.1 Warm-Up Discussion: By connecting modern U.S.-Mexico border tensions with historical events, students explore the broader context of the emergence of the United States as a global power, as well as issues of immigration and migration.
- Background Lecture on U.S.-Mexico Tensions and the Battle of Ambos Nogales: This introduces the historical circumstances leading to the battle, such as the Mexican Revolution and U.S. militarization during WWI, fulfilling this standard on U.S. global power and its relations.

#### **2. World History Standards:**

- Lecture on WWI's impact on the U.S.-Mexico Border: This covers WWI's aftermath, particularly how it influenced U.S. policies and actions on its southern border, which ties directly into global and national power dynamics and border militarization.

### **Disciplinary Skills and Processes:**

#### **1. HS.SP1.1 Evaluate how events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader contexts.**

- Lecture and Source E Analysis: Students analyze how the Battle of Ambos Nogales was shaped by WWI, the Mexican Revolution, and local conditions. They assess how these broader contexts influenced the specific historical circumstances of Nogales.

#### **2. HS.SP1.2 Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.**

- Group Discussion on the Battle's Significance: Students reflect on how the battle represented a significant shift in U.S.-Mexico relations, including the introduction of a permanent border fence. This activity allows students to assess continuity and change over time.

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<sup>1</sup> "Arizona History and Social Science Standards," *Arizona Department of Education* (<https://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/k-12standards/standards-social-studies>)

**3. HS.SP1.3 Evaluate the significance of past events as they relate to their own lives and the world.**

- Warm-Up Discussion and Source Analysis: Students relate the historical tensions and events of the Ambos Nogales battle to contemporary U.S.-Mexico border tensions, considering how past conflicts continue to shape modern relations.

**4. HS.SP1.4 Use compelling questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by historical context.**

- Group Discussion and OPCVL Analysis: Students generate questions about the role of individuals and groups (such as U.S. customs officials, Mexican civilians, and military personnel) during the battle and how their actions were shaped by the historical context of nationalism and militarization.

**5. HS.SP3.2 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views.**

- OPCVL Activity and Group Source Presentations: Students work with primary and secondary sources (e.g., Dr. Parra’s article, the Nogales Herald) to identify a range of perspectives on the battle and border tensions.

**6. HS.SP3.3 Analyze the relationship between primary sources and secondary interpretations.**

- Source Analysis and Presentations: Students analyze primary sources and compare these with secondary interpretations from scholars like Dr. Parra, exploring the limitations of each source.

**7. HS.SP3.4 Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the source.**

- OPCVL Analysis: Students evaluate the credibility and usefulness of each source based on its origin, purpose, content, and expert opinions.

**8. HS.SP3.5 Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry.**

- Google Form Activity: The questions encourage students to compare multiple sources, generating deeper inquiry into the Battle of Ambos Nogales and prompting further investigation into the socio-political context of the event.

**9. HS.SP3.6 Construct and present arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources.**

- Group Presentations: Students synthesize information from their sources to present reasoned arguments about the battle's significance, using evidence to support their claims while acknowledging limitations.

**History Skills:**

**1. HS.H2.1 Explain multiple causes of conflict.**

- Background Lecture and Group Discussion: Students learn about the various causes of the Battle of Ambos Nogales, including border militarization, racial tensions, and U.S.-Mexico relations.

**2. HS.H4.1 Examine how historically marginalized groups have affected change on political and social institutions.**

- Discussion on the Role of Race and Nationalism: In exploring the role of Mexican citizens and U.S. authorities, students examine how marginalized groups and their treatment (e.g., Mexican immigrants) have shaped social and political change, particularly in border policies.

**3. HS.H4.4 Examine how a diverse society can be a force for unity and/or disunity.**

- Group Discussion and Reflection: Students discuss how local identities and nationalisms contributed to unity or disunity during the conflict, particularly focusing on the Mexican and U.S. perspectives.

**Geography Standards:**

**1. Population, movement, and migration**

- Warm-Up Activity and Source Analysis: The focus on border tensions directly ties into issues of population movement and migration, specifically how border enforcement policies affect migration patterns. Students analyze sources to understand the implications of these movements.

**Key Concepts & Terminology**

- Mexican Revolution (1910-1920)
- World War I (1914-1918)
- Combatants, Corrido, Primary Sources, Secondary Sources, Corroborate
- The 1918 Border Fence

**Duration of Lesson:**

4 days; Teacher may adapt to their own needs.



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# **\*\*\* Lesson Plan \*\*\***

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## **Lesson Plan: The Significance of the International Tensions leading to the 1918 Battle of Ambos Nogales**

**Grade Level: 9-12 (adaptable)**

**Subject: U.S. History, World History, Border Studies**

All readings referenced in this lesson plan may be found in the Research Article “**What is the Significance of the 1918 Battle of Ambos Nogales?**” by Carlos Parra

(<https://beyondfronteras.org/nogalepedia/b/b9-what-is-the-significance-of-the-1918-battle-of-ambos-nogales/>)

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### **Section 1: Introduction to the Battle of Ambos Nogales (15 min)**

#### **1.1 Warm-Up Activity:**

- **Prompt:** Ask students, "Are there border tensions between Mexico and the United States today?"
  - **Objective:** Encourage students to think about the idea of borders and conflicts that arise from them, connecting to the modern context of U.S.-Mexico relations.
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### **Lesson Outline**

#### **Section 1: Background Lecture (10 min):**

- Briefly introduce the **Mexican Revolution** (1910–1920) and its effect on border towns like Nogales.
- **Key Points:**
  - The Revolution's social and political causes.

- U.S.-Mexico tensions, including Pancho Villa’s raid on Columbus, NM, and border militarization during WWI.
- Rising tensions between U.S. customs officials and Mexican citizens, and how these tensions culminated in the Battle of Ambos Nogales.

## **Section 2: Source Analysis and OPCVL Activity (50 min)**

### **2.1 Source E Analysis (10 min):**

- **Primary Focus:** Dr. Carlos Parra’s article “What is the Significance of the 1918 Battle of Ambos Nogales?” (<https://beyondfronteras.org/nogalepedia/b/b9-what-is-the-significance-of-the-1918-battle-of-ambos-nogales/>)
- Hand out **Source E** from Dr. Parra’s article.
- **Activity:** Have students read the source excerpt individually and identify key themes (e.g., border tensions, political violence, identity).

### **2.2 OPCVL Analysis Activity (20 min):**

- **Small Group Work:** Divide students into small groups, assigning each group a different source from **Section 2 of 6**, including Dr. Parra’s article, the Nogales Herald article, the Tucsonense article, and others.
- **Task:** Each group will complete an OPCVL analysis of their assigned source.
  - **Origin:** Who created this source? When was it created?
  - **Purpose:** Why was this source created?
  - **Content:** What information does the source provide?
  - **Value:** What can we learn from this source about the Battle of Ambos Nogales?
  - **Limitations:** What does the source leave out or what biases might exist?

### **2.3 Group Presentations (20 min):**

- Groups will present their findings, focusing on the historical significance of their source and its OPCVL analysis.
- After each presentation, open the floor for other students to ask questions or provide additional insights.

## **Section 3: Discussion and Reflection (25 min)**

### **3.1 Class Discussion (15 min):**

- **Prompt:** “How did the Battle of Ambos Nogales change the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico? What role did local identities play in this conflict?”
- Focus on the role of **nationalism**, **race**, and **militarization** in shaping the conflict.
- Discuss how the construction of the **first permanent U.S.-Mexico border fence** after the battle symbolized a major turning point in border enforcement.

#### **Section 4: Primary Source Analysis (60 min)**

Use Google Form [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfdtaiRULu7YEAxpf-IXsaICPJQcl2VzxyO6KxMhppUDeBmXw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfdtaiRULu7YEAxpf-IXsaICPJQcl2VzxyO6KxMhppUDeBmXw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

**Working with a scholar buddy: Answer the following questions:**

#### **Source A – Analysis**

**What two battles does Source A report on?**

*MEXICANS, U.S. BATTLE*

*FRENCH ADVANCE ON AND TAKE IMPORTANT TOWN OF ROUYE*

**In the Battle of Ambos Nogales, whose casualties does the paper leave out?**

*Mexican*

**With reference to its origin, purpose, and content, analyze the value and limitations of Source A for a historian studying the Battle of Ambos Nogales. (To get full points the student needs to find a value and/or limitation for origin, purpose, and content. Furthermore, the student must find both a value and a limitation.)**

*Source A is an article from the Nogales Herald, published on August 27, 1918, reporting on the military conflict between U.S. and Mexican forces at the border during the Battle of Ambos Nogales. Analyzing the value and limitations of this source involves considering its origin, purpose, and content. To get full points the student needs to find an acceptable value and/or limitation for origin, purpose, and content. Furthermore, the student must find at least both one value and limitation.*

*Value:*



*Origin: The Nogales Herald was a local newspaper in Nogales, Arizona, published close to the time of the event. Since it was written on the day of the battle or shortly thereafter, it provides an immediate, firsthand account of the skirmish and can offer insight into how the local press and public perceived the event as it unfolded. Its proximity to the event also gives it a high potential for capturing local details.*

*Purpose: The article's purpose was to inform the public about the battle and its casualties, as well as the sequence of events that led to the conflict. Since it was intended for a local audience, it might include important regional context that broader sources might overlook, providing historians with insights into local attitudes and responses to the battle.*

*Content: The article offers specific information about casualties on the U.S. side, including the names of American officers killed or wounded, which can be valuable for understanding the human toll of the battle. It also describes the initial trigger for the conflict—an altercation between Mexican civilians and a U.S. sentry—and suggests that the incident quickly escalated into a larger confrontation, shedding light on the volatile nature of border tensions at the time.*

*Limitations:*

*Origin: As a local newspaper, the Nogales Herald might reflect a biased U.S. perspective, potentially minimizing or ignoring the Mexican side of the story. The fact that it was published so soon after the battle could also mean that the information presented is incomplete or hastily reported, and might not fully reflect the complexity of the events.*

*Purpose: The article was written for a U.S. audience and likely aimed to rally local support or offer reassurance following a violent event on the border. This could result in a one-sided portrayal of the Mexican forces as aggressors, without considering their motivations or the broader context of U.S.-Mexico relations during the Mexican Revolution, thereby limiting its usefulness in providing a balanced view of the battle.*

*Content: The source is fragmentary and hard to read in places, limiting the amount of detailed information that can be extracted. The report's focus on U.S. casualties and actions could downplay or omit important details about Mexican forces, contributing to an incomplete understanding of the battle. Additionally, the article may sensationalize aspects of the battle to attract readers, which could distort the factual accuracy of the account.*

*Conclusion:*

*Source A is valuable for providing an immediate local perspective on the Battle of Ambos Nogales, especially in terms of U.S. casualties and the event's portrayal in the American press. However, its limitations include potential bias, incomplete information, and a lack of balanced coverage, making it necessary to corroborate this source with other contemporary Mexican or neutral accounts to gain a fuller understanding of the battle.*

## **Source B – Analysis**

### **Compare sources A and B on their description of the Battle of Ambos Nogales.**

#### *Similarities:*

*Both Source A (“Mexicans, U.S. Battle,” Nogales Herald, August 27, 1918) and Source B (“Acontecimiento de Sangre en Ambos Nogales el Martes,” El Tucsonense, August 28, 1918) describe the Battle of Ambos Nogales, highlighting the severity of the conflict and the casualties on both sides. Both sources indicate that the battle resulted from a violent clash between Mexican and U.S. forces at a border entree, with Source A reporting an attack by Mexicans on U.S. sentries and Source B detailing a smuggling attempt that triggered the battle.*

#### *Differences:*

*Source A reports a total of 15 casualties, without specifying the breakdown between dead and wounded or between the American and Mexican sides, while Source B provides a more detailed account with 2 dead and 28 wounded Americans and estimates between 50 and 200 Mexican casualties, highlighting a significant difference in the casualty figures reported by the two sources.*

*Source A describes the battle starting when two Mexicans attempted to cross the border, leading to the confrontation, whereas Source B states that only one Mexican smuggler crossed the border, suggesting a discrepancy in the accounts of how the battle began.*

*Source A explicitly states that Mexican forces fired on U.S. soldiers, initiating the battle, while Source B is ambiguous, not clearly attributing the gunfire to the Mexican side or providing details about who fired first.*

*Level descriptor*

5–6 • *There is discussion of both sources. Explicit links are made between the two sources.*

• *The response includes clear and valid points of comparison and of contrast.*

3–4 • *There is some discussion of both sources, although the two sources may be discussed separately.*

• *The response includes some valid points of comparison and/or of contrast, although these points may lack clarity.*

1–2 • *There is superficial discussion of one or both sources.*

• *The response consists of description of the content of the source(s), and/or general comments about the source(s), rather than valid points of comparison or of contrast.*

0 • *The response does not reach a standard described by the descriptors above.*

**What does “Source C” reveal about the treatment of Mexican immigrants by U.S. Immigration officers?**

*Source C provides insight into the treatment of Mexican immigrants by U.S. immigration officers, specifically highlighting harassment and mistreatment. It is a letter written by the Roy and Titcomb Company to the U.S. Secretary of State on August 21, 1915, describing how Mexican immigrants were mistreated by U.S. border officials. This source mentions that Mexicans were subjected to frequent harassment and discrimination by immigration officers, especially in relation to the changing passport and food card requirements during World War I.*

*This mistreatment is reflected in the increasing restrictions imposed on Mexican workers, the insults and physical abuse they endured, and the difficulty many faced in complying with these new regulations. Mexican immigrants often did not understand the passport and food card laws, and U.S. immigration officers showed little patience, leading to increased tension and resentment at the border.*

*Thus, Source C reveals a broader pattern of mistreatment of Mexican immigrants by U.S. officers during this tense period, exacerbating the strained U.S.-Mexico relations that contributed to the eventual 1918 Battle of Ambos Nogales.*

### **What is the message conveyed by Source D?**

*Answer will vary*

*The message conveyed by Source D is that the people of Nogales acted with bravery and patriotism during the Battle of Ambos Nogales in 1918. The corrido glorifies their resistance against the U.S. forces, portraying them as heroic figures who defended their homeland. It emphasizes their sense of duty, honor, and national pride, particularly through the image of fighting to the death or victory for Mexico, with references to the tricolor flag accompanying those who died for their country.*

### **With reference to its origin, purpose, and content, analyze the value and limitations of Source D for a historian studying the Battle of Ambos Nogales.**

(To get full points the student needs to find a value and/or limitation for origin, purpose, and content. Furthermore, the student must find both a value and a limitation.)

*Origin:*

- *Value:*

*The source is a Mexican corrido (folk ballad), a traditional form of storytelling through music, often composed by local people in the aftermath of important events. The corrido offers insight into how Mexicans, especially in Nogales, perceived the 1918 battle, making it valuable for understanding public sentiment and local perspectives.*

*The creation of the corrido shortly after the event allows historians to gauge the immediate emotional and nationalistic reactions of the Mexican populace to the battle.*

- *Limitation:*

*As a folk song, the corrido was likely created by someone without direct knowledge of military strategy or political decisions. It might not provide a comprehensive or balanced view of the battle, focusing instead on emotional or exaggerated elements that could distort the factual reality. Folk ballads often reflect the biases and stereotypes of the time.*

*Purpose:*

- *Value:*

*The purpose of the corrido was to commemorate the bravery of the people of Nogales who fought against U.S. forces. This patriotic purpose makes it valuable for*

*understanding Mexican nationalism and resistance against foreign intervention, which can help historians studying the social and cultural impact of the battle on the local population.*

- **Limitation:**

*The purpose of celebrating Mexican bravery and condemning U.S. forces can result in one-sided perspectives. The corrido might glorify the Mexican side while villainizing the U.S. soldiers ("bad Americans"), making it less reliable for an objective account of the event. It also serves as propaganda, which limits its use for balanced historical analysis.*  
*Content:*

- **Value:**

*The corrido provides a vivid narrative of the battle, emphasizing the bravery of Mexicans and highlighting significant figures such as Peñaloza, who is portrayed as a hero. It gives details about the event, such as the start of the fighting and the involvement of women, which can provide historians with a sense of the local experience and the cultural memory of the battle.*

- **Limitation:**

*The content of the corrido is highly emotional and uses exaggerated language, typical of folk songs. It simplifies the battle into a story of good versus evil, portraying the Mexican fighters as heroic and the U.S. forces as oppressive. The lack of factual details, such as precise casualty figures or military tactics, limits its usefulness for historians trying to reconstruct the exact events of the battle..*

## **Section 5: Summative Assessment (45 Minutes)**

**After students do source analysis with their scholar buddy, they will write a small essay on “Evaluate the extent to which international tensions between the United States and Mexico contributed to the outbreak of the Battle of Ambos Nogales on August 27, 1918. Use the sources, and your own knowledge to support your analysis.” Students should refer to sources as Source A, Source B, Source C**

**This will be an evaluative question that asks students to draw on both the sources and their own knowledge in their evaluation.**

*Markbands (Grading Values):*

*0: The response does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.*

*1–3: The response lacks focus on the question. References to the sources are made, but at this level these references are likely to consist of descriptions of the content of the sources rather*

*than the sources being used as evidence to support the analysis. No own knowledge is demonstrated or, where it is demonstrated, it is inaccurate or irrelevant.*

*4–6: The response is generally focused on the question. References are made to the sources, and these references are used as evidence to support the analysis. Where own knowledge is demonstrated, this lacks relevance or accuracy. There is little or no attempt to synthesize own knowledge and source material.*

*7–9: The response is focused on the question. Clear references are made to the sources, and these references are used effectively as evidence to support the analysis. Accurate and relevant own knowledge is demonstrated. There is effective synthesis of own knowledge and source material.*

**A Thank You to Our Santa Cruz County Teachers!**

Thank you for your consideration of our K-12 local history curriculum!

**Thank you for making  
history with us!**



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