

# Who Are The Zapatistas?

**Levels:** 6-8, 9-12

**Subjects:** Social science, history, writing skills.

**Objectives:** This lesson is based on the Schools for Chiapas video "Who Are The Zapatistas?" and aims to examine and familiarize learners with a background to the Zapatista movement, their history and origins, where they live, how they live, and what their hopes and aspirations are. It will address:

- a) Who the Zapatistas are.
- b) The background to and history of the Maya people in Chiapas.
- c) How the Zapatista movement originated and the conditions that led to the 1994 uprising.
- d) The key demands of the Zapatistas.
- e) What the Zapatistas mean by autonomy.

Learners will develop critical thinking skills by reflecting on the following:

- a) The content of the video.
- b) Their preconceptions of Zapatistas before and after watching the video.
- c) What they can do in reaction to injustice in their own environments.

Learners will be able to answer the following questions:

- a) Who are the Zapatistas?
- b) What types of problems did indigenous communities face before the Zapatista uprising in 1994?
- c) Why did the Zapatistas decide to rebel?
- d) Why do they cover their faces?
- e) What is their relationship and attitude to the land?
- f) What are the demands of the Zapatistas?
- g) What were the responses of the Mexican government and the Zapatistas in this conflict?
- h) What do the Zapatistas mean when they speak about 'autonomy'?
- i) How do the learners imagine a better world?

## Relevant Materials:

- Video: <http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/library/video-who-are-the-zapatistas/>
- Maps: <http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/teach-chiapas/putting-chiapas-map/>
- Slideshow: <http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/lesson-plans/slideshow-zapatistas/>

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## Introduction:

The video you are going to watch is a short introduction to the autonomous Zapatista communities in Chiapas. There are some questions to discuss before and after watching the video, as well as some questions on specific information about what you hear and read while you are watching. After that, you will have the opportunity to think and write about the type of world you would like to live in and compare your ideas with those of the Zapatista communities.

## Before watching:

- Where is Chiapas?
- How do you imagine the way of life of people in Mexico in general? And in Chiapas?
- What do you know about Mexican history?
- What do you know about the Mayan people?
- What do you know about the Zapatista movement?

## While watching:

- How do the Zapatistas live?
- What do they call the Earth? And themselves?
- Where do the Zapatistas come from?
- List two things that the Mayan peoples resisted.
- What was the slogan of the Mexican Revolution in 1910?
- List three things that the land gives the people.
- What happened in 1983?
- List six of the demands of the Zapatistas.
- When did the Zapatistas start their revolution? Why?
- What does '¡Ya basta!' mean? What did the Zapatistas want to say with this? What types of problems did they face?
- How did the Mexican government respond to the Zapatista revolution? And the Mexican people?
- How did the Zapatistas respond to the ceasefire? And the Mexican government?
- What did the Zapatistas do to build the world they dream of?
- How does their government work? What do they call it?
- List four things that 'autonomy' includes?

## After watching:

- Now you're going to imagine your dream world. Make a list of what you think are the biggest and worst problems that the world has today.
- In groups, compare your answers and decide on a list of what you think the five biggest problems are.

- What do you think the causes of these problems are? What do you think the solutions are? Discuss in your groups.
- Imagine what the world would be like without these problems.
- Write a first draft of a report on your findings and include the following information. The following are guidelines. Your answer may contain more paragraphs:
  - Introduction: Summary of what your group thinks the major problems the world is facing today are.
  - Paragraph 1: Summary of what your group thinks the causes of these problems are.
  - Paragraph 2: Summary of what your group thinks the solutions are.
  - Closing: Description of how you imagine your dream world without these problems.
- Exchange your first draft with another group for feedback and peer correction.
- Write your final draft and publish it on the school website or post it on the wall of your classroom.

### **WebQuest:**

Find out more about the Zapatistas here in our library:

<http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org/teach-chiapas/library/>