

Material design about conflict history and peace in Colombian history for ELT classrooms

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Abstract

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Key Words: ELT, Classroom, Colombian Armed Conflict

In Colombia, a country where armed conflict has been a basic foundation in the country's evolution, the need to promote awareness about this issue has raised steadily throughout the recent decades. This is why schools have decided to implement workshops and different activities to let students understand the conflict in their country. However, almost none of these activities take place in English classes. Hence, knowing what materials about Colombian armed conflict can be designed for ELT classrooms is the cornerstone of this study. Having that in mind, the present study intends to contribute to ELT classrooms by creating a set of materials about armed conflict that can be used there. In order to create these materials, it was necessary to understand the concept of peace and conflict, as well as peace as a transformative means and as a means of education through the concept of peace education, a discipline that has gained notoriety in recent years. For the purpose of creating these materials, knowing what teachers knew about Colombian armed conflict was important, together with inquiring about what teachers did to implement their knowledge about armed conflict into their classes. By taking the teachers' perspectives into account, the material creation had foundations that could further help in their creation. With the results in sight, it was possible to notice that teachers had some knowledge about the armed conflict in Colombia, however, no efforts were put into implementing that knowledge in their classes. They signaled the government and schools as the main culprit for this, as they mentioned they did not receive the necessary support to implement armed conflict in their classes. About the materials created, the results were a series of workshops, compiled into a 36-paged textbook called Truth and Memory English Workshops. Each workshop is called Unit, and each one of them has multiple listening, reading, speaking, and writing exercises. The results made it possible to understand that the creation of materials for ELT classrooms about Colombia's armed conflict was indeed possible.

Resumen

Título: Diseño de material sobre la historia del conflicto y la paz en la historia de Colombia para las clases de inglés

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Palabras Clave: Clases de inglés, conflicto armado colombiano

En Colombia, un país en el que el conflicto armado ha sido un componente básico en la evolución del país, la necesidad de concientizar sobre este problema se ha mantenido a través de las últimas décadas. Es por eso que los colegios del país decidieron implementar talleres y actividades para hacer conocer a los estudiantes el conflicto de su país. Sin embargo, casi ninguna de estas actividades se realiza en las clases de inglés. Por lo tanto, saber qué materiales sobre el conflicto armado colombiano se pueden crear para las clases de inglés es el enfoque principal de este estudio. Teniendo eso en cuenta, este estudio pretende contribuir a las aulas de inglés creando una serie de materiales sobre el conflicto armado para darles uso en ellas. Para crear estos materiales, fue necesario entender el concepto de paz y conflicto, así como también el concepto de paz como un medio de transformación y como un medio de educar, a través del concepto de educación para la paz, una disciplina que ha ganado notoriedad en los últimos años. Con el objetivo de crear estos materiales, saber lo que los profesores sabían acerca del conflicto armado colombiano era importante, así como también investigar de qué forma los profesores implementaban ese conocimiento a sus clases. Teniendo en cuenta las perspectivas de los profesores, la creación del material tendría bases que eventualmente ayudarían en su creación. Con los resultados a la vista, fue posible constatar que los profesores sí tenían cierto conocimiento acerca del conflicto armado colombiano, sin embargo, no se había realizado un esfuerzo considerable en aplicar ese conocimiento en sus respectivas clases. El gobierno y los colegios fueron los principales señalados por los profesores, quienes alegaban una clara falta de orientación y de apoyo para implementar este tema en sus clases. En cuanto a los materiales, los resultados finales del estudio y la creación de materiales fueron una serie de talleres, compilados en un libro de texto de 36 páginas llamados Truth and Memory English Workshops. Cada taller es llamado Unit, y cada uno tiene múltiples ejercicios de listening, reading, speaking, y writing. Los resultados demostraron efectivamente que es posible crear materiales para aulas de inglés acerca del conflicto armado colombiano.

1. Problematization

Throughout the history of education, many concerns have been raised about what should be taught and how it should be taught. The academy has moved forward from the typical STEM format (Sciences, Technologies, Engineering & Mathematics) as the core of subject-based education. Instead, the implementation of more subjects such as arts and music has gained relevance in recent decades. With this, more questions emerged in need of improving the educational system and how it influences the students' life in a positive way. For good measure, it became a matter of time for education to grasp the issues that our contemporary societies undergo and how education and these issues go somewhat hand-in-hand. Amongst these issues, peace and conflict surfaced and became a topic of interest for educators and researchers.

In Colombia, the northernmost country of the subcontinent of South America, peace and conflict have had more relative prominence compared to other South American countries. Not only is it because of the brutality and complexity of the situation, it is also because of how long it has lasted; Starting from the Two-party warfare period famously known as *La Violencia* in the middle of the 19th century, where conservative and liberal parties were on the hunt for one another. Whilst the political scenario was in high levels of instability, guerrilla groups and paramilitary groups keen to opposite sides emerged. Not much time after, cocaine was making its way to Colombia's society and economy. The white powder entered and established itself as one of the major economic forces because of its profitability. The impact was overly significant as drug cartels and drug trafficking groups found a source of wealth for years to come. The strategic placing of Colombia between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean suited perfectly for traffickers. Ever since then, the conflict has moved from a political subject, to a subject over territorial-control and money. Urban gangs, guerrillas, paramilitary organizations, cartels, military forces members and even politicians have taken part in the affair

of the cocaine economy as one of the major impactful factors in the country. The wound became more profound (Molano, n.d.).

At some point, it was almost inevitable to consider the convergence between education and conflict along with peace. In spite of political sides intending to appease the much evident negative impact that conflict has brought to Colombia, local initiatives, institutions and the ministries of education have created different programs that seek to acknowledge the violent history of the country. Unquestionably, those have been huge steps. However, what is questionable is to think that despite all the efforts done around integrating peace in the current curriculums, ELT teachers do not take an active role to address the issue, sometimes because of the lack of orientation, sometimes because of the lack of ELT materials or simply because there is a lack of interest. Even less, not even the mild consideration to design materials about peace and conflict history in Colombia for ELT teachers has surfaced in the academy. This is a huge concern for this excludes ELT classrooms from learning a transcendental question for Colombian students, and the people in general. It is also worth mentioning that governmental institutions have also been implicit about the exclusion of ELT classrooms from peace education and conflict memory. In 2015, the law 1732 demanded specific attention from different subject classes (Maths, Biology, Ethics, etc) to teach Cátedra de la Paz, however, English Language Teaching was never mentioned.

ELT classrooms have unlimited options to approach the peace and conflict topics (Nuskhan, 2016), however, the panorama becomes more lacking than promising in Colombia when researchers look into it. The scarce number of studies about ELT teaching and peace education in Colombian contexts makes the present study a difficult challenge.

1.1 Research Question

It becomes obvious then, that at some point, ELT and FLT teachers and educators would reflect upon the inclusion of their areas of work in the framework of peace and conflict history education. For the case of this study specifically, how can ELT teachers contribute to the framework of peace and conflict history education through materials design? What materials about peace and conflict history can be designed for ELT classrooms?

1.2 Rationale

The reasons behind the execution of this study are various. Primarily, my concerns about the little acknowledgement and borderline denial that the bloody history of Colombia has by part of Colombians. A serious sentiment of worryment arises when political sectors and many Colombians attempt to turn a blind eye to the tragic events that have marked the history of millions. Colombia has lived almost a century of violence, oppression and political instability for enough years to understand that this topic must be discussed. To make things worse, it is even more worrying how normalized and unnoticed these topics go day by day. The number of people that do not know the abominable things that have happened in this country is concerning.

Even though in recent years the topic of war, conflict and peace has gained prominence, the percentage of people that are politically active is not high. In 2016, the plebiscite for the peace accords between FARC-EP and the national government saw less than half the registered voters cast their vote in a historically crucial event for the country (Gomes-Suarez, 2017). Notoriously, the results of the polls and the indifference towards the problem of conflict in Colombia can be credited to different actors; drug traffickers, paramilitary gangs, guerrillas, corrupted politicians and the privileged. Unsurprisingly, the direct victims of this lengthy

conflict are usually the poor and the peasants who live in places where planting cocaine is favorable.

It is worth mentioning that the panorama is not entirely negative. Fortunately, the efforts put into achieving a greater peace have paid off, even in a small range. With the release of the Truth Report by the Truth Commission in 2022, one can believe that a step towards a more peaceful country has been taken. The whole process that the truth commission and their participants have taken is valuable to recognize, repair, and learn about the mistakes that have been made in the past, and most importantly promise not to repeat them again. Progress is noticeable and the hopes are up for a better country.

Achieving a greater peace does not imply that only victims and perpetrators should be part of the process of repairment, instead, all Colombians must become actors as this is a topic of crucial national interest. In addition, all disciplines and sectors of interest such as education, economy, transport, and agriculture, etc, must enter the mission of seeking a greater peace.

The role of education in the process to achieve peace is huge. All schools and educational institutions across the country are important agents for contributing to the development of national agreements that seek together to reach this ambitious goal of living in peace. There are already initiatives such as *Cátedra por la Paz* that plan to make peace an essential topic in schools and universities through teaching the conflict history of Colombia. However, these initiatives shall not be only the responsibility of the government, but also an institutional project for each school. Schools ought to innovate and become active promoters of peace education.

The action of schools should not only be assigned to specific subjects such as social sciences or ethics, but rather become a holistic factor in all schools. Peace can be taught in any class and through any practice. Students have to grasp the concept of peace everywhere to understand its priority. The plurality of peace allows it to be adjusted to many subjects, such as English language class.

ELT classrooms are useful spaces for learning almost any topic, and, more importantly, peace should be one of them. Unfortunately, peace and conflict history are not topics that are usually learned in ELT classrooms. A frequent argument about English teaching is the perpetual adherence between ELT teachers and textbooks. Although textbooks are especially useful, they do not often portray the realities of Colombians, but rather eurocentrist or american realities. This is why the design of these materials about conflict history and peace for ELT becomes transcendental. It will ultimately lead education towards a more inclusive pedagogy of peace education.

2. Objectives

2.1 General Objective

To create a set of educational materials focused on readings, testimonies, and stories taken from the Truth Report (Informe de la Verdad), Centro de Memoria Histórica, and different reliable sources dedicated to investigating Colombia's conflict thoroughly.

2.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this research are to share the harsh past history of Colombian conflict to the students of higher school grades to integrate them to the peace framework (The Great Peace) that the country is heading to. The second specific objective is to integrate the English

language and the armed conflict of Colombia in a set of educational materials for ELT classrooms.

3. Theoretical Framework, Literature Review and State of the Art

3.1 Literature Review & State of the Art

Unquestionably, Colombia is known as a country in which violence, and conflict have become a strong cultural element. Currently, the country is still facing the remnants of a 70-year internal chaos driven by capricious political parties, corruption, private militias (paramilitary organizations), guerrillas, drug cartels, law enforcers, etc. It is because of this that the significance of peace education in Colombia has gained strength. There have been certain programs implemented into the Colombian educational system that intended to contribute a sense of awareness to students about the internal conflict and the importance of achieving peace. Some of these programs are the National Program for Citizenship Competencies (Competencias Ciudadanas), Peace Games, and Cátedra de la Paz.

The *National Program for Citizenship Competencies* was an initiative propelled by the Ministry of Education in 2002. These citizenship competencies were divided in three: peace and convivence, participation and democratic responsibility, and plurality, identity and respect for differences (Ministerio de Educación, 2004). These competencies were assessed through what is known as the Saber tests, a type of standardized test made in Colombia for 11th graders (Diazgranados et al, 2014). According to Diazgranados et al (2014), the Citizenship Competencies of the 2003 Saber test were disquieting. Understandably, these undesired results became fuel to addressing and understanding Colombian conflict and the detachment of peace from an educational perspective. The results prompted the ministry of education to take measures, such as requesting the assistance of different local and international peace pedagogy

programs to collaborate, one which will be mentioned further in the article. In summary, the National Program for Citizenship Competencies was there, but the implementation of this program in educational institutions was non-existent and the program never reached its main purposes, but rather remained part of a national test.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the mediocre results from the Saber test prompted the ministry of education to seek solutions to address the complex issue. In the study made by Diazgranados et al (2014), a project called *Peace Games* (one of the multiple international programs and projects surrounding peace education introduced by the ministry of education) was assessed and researchers attempted to analyze the transformative effect that it had on the participant teachers. This project was executed in the province of Norte de Santander, Colombia, in which the subject of peace education was instructed in two different parts, each covering half a year. In the first part, teachers tutored students into becoming active peacemakers through different games and constructivist practices. In the second part, students started their own projects by assessing community problems, seeking possible solutions to them, and finally presenting them. The findings of the study suggest that the impact of the workshops were positive in the teachers, with many of the teachers stating that it had a huge impact on them, not only in terms of pedagogy, but also in their own personal sphere.

Moving to more recent times, in the context of the Peace Accords of La Habana between FARC-EP (longest-lasting extreme left-wing guerrilla in Colombia) and the national government in 2016, the law 1732 from 2015 required all private and public academic institutions from low, basic, and medium level, to implement the *Cátedra de la Paz*. The *Cátedra de la Paz* allowed freedom of instruction for the program, suggesting the creation of spaces for the scheme in the subject classes of social sciences, history, geography, political

constitution and democracy, natural sciences and environmental education, and ethics. Similar to the National Program of Citizenship Competencies program, the lack of clarity, left schools without a clear start, but also without a clear path to follow on with Cátedra de la Paz due to the unclear guidance and orientation for the application of the Cátedra de la Paz (Morales, 2021).

On June 28 of 2022, the Truth Commission released officially the *Informe de la Verdad* (The Truth Report). This report encompasses a series of documents and resources gathered in an online platform created in order to elucidate the different stories of groups and individuals involved in the historical Colombian conflict. The online website of the Truth Commission has different sections in which different pedagogical activities can be found. Amongst these documents, one book particularly stands out for its educational scope. The book is called “*Para que no me olvides*” consisting of different studies, summaries and orientations to implement the truth report in the Colombian classrooms. In addition, the truth commission along with the ministry of educations and the different educational institutions in Colombia held the workshop “*La escuela abraza la verdad*”. This workshop was directed to school students and teachers of different grades to receive guidance about 6 different pedagogical axes: The truth and convivence, The truth is built upon many voices, Defending the truth is defending diversity, My body tells the truth, There is future if there is truth, and The truth of the teachers. Given the short time between the truth report release date and the current date, studies about the effect of the application of the truth report tools are scarce or do not exist at the moment.

Peace Education in ELT

Although peace education is a branch under study, its ties with language teaching are not as established as many may think. Not even English Language Teaching (ELT) (arguably the most

taught language in the world) has really dived into peace education. However, there are some studies that second the idea of implementing peace education in FLT (Foreign Language Teaching) classrooms .

Takkaç Tulgar (2017) talks about the relationships between both peace education and FLT classrooms. She comments on the transcendency of peace in past and present societies. Peace is an essential element in today's world and this is the reason why the significance of it increases with each day in the educational panorama. She states that the relationship between peace education and FLT is indispensable for the time to come and encourages the creation of materials that integrate both in one. Furthermore, she delves into the significance of language and its cultural/identity essence and the impact that it has on students. Languages are crucial in developing the identity of students and peace is a construct built upon many other constructs, respect included. Hence, material design should follow a theme that shows that it is correct to belong to different communities, with different beliefs and customs, as long as there is this acknowledgement of cultures and diversity.

In the reflective paper made by Nuskhan (2016), the message is clear; let students know that grades are not the only focus and also direct the classes towards ones where the context and social issues are a big part of the students' learning. The concept of peace is only one in the long list of topics that can be taught in an foreign language class. Nuskhan encourages teachers to innovate and design teaching materials that are focused on peace education taking into account the context and the students' needs and reminds that materials can be adapted to the curriculum.

Arikan (2009), whose work centers around environmental peace education in ELT classrooms, represents one of the cases in which the peace education topic was grasped in ELT classrooms. The participants were pre-service ELT teachers who worked in a university in Ankara, Turkey. These teachers used the Contextualized grammar teaching (CGT) method while being socially responsible teachers (SRT) in ELT classrooms. On the first hand, Contextualized grammar teaching (CGT) suggests that teaching grammar can be done in tandem with socially-relevant topics. On the second hand, Socially responsible teaching (SRT) intends to change the focus of the ways in which students interact with each other to ways in which they address socially crucial topics in hopes of generating an impact in real life contexts. The findings of this study evidence that the lessons had a positive impact on both teachers and students. Teachers ended up being keen to the CGT method and students, whereas students claimed that the lessons were enjoyable. The author concludes by reminding that grammar should not only be taught through repetitive practices, but also through addressing social topics such as peace, and for the case of this study, environmental peace education.

3.2 Theoretical Foundations

The concept of peace

Peace is a concept that cannot be labeled because it does not have a fixed definition. Johan Galtung's work paved a way for future researchers to understand peace. In his studies, Galtung usually claimed that peace could be divided in two different versions; positive peace and negative peace. There is negative peace as long as there is no war or direct violence. On the other hand, positive peace deals with the complexity of the social circles and the people who are part of them. It looks for the prosperity of topics like human rights, injustice, etc (Nuskhan, 2016).

Although peace is believed to be just a concept, Galtung also considers that peace can be prosecuted. These ways of prosecution are called; peacebuilding, peacemaking and peacekeeping. First, peacekeeping is attributed to decreasing violence and concluding on-going conflicts. Similarly, peacemaking is a community-oriented strategy that works to seek agreements between the parties involved in a conflict to eventually find solutions. Finally, peacebuilding encompasses the previous two and works in the long-term stay of peace and non-violent environments (Galtung, 1976; Reyhler, 2010, as cited in Morales, 2021). Although the concept of peace and the gist of this study do not have a direct connection, Galtung's framework is usually regarded as a starting point to any peace study (Morales, 2021). One of the objectives of this study falls on the spectrum of peacemaking and peacebuilding, as it aims to develop a critical sense in students that can help them to reflect on Colombia's present and past conflict history.

Critical pedagogy as reference

Paulo Freire, the father of critical pedagogy, contemplated the power of education from two different sides; the power and role of those who were oppressed and from those who oppressed. Nonetheless, after more than 40 years, the proposal of critical pedagogy has shapeshifted into different forms, for different purposes. Amongst these purposes like feminism, anti-racism, peace and environmental awareness movements were progressively gaining interest. It was just a matter of time until these movements became structural to pedagogy and persuaded institutions to make it a curricular reality (Apple, 1986, 2009; Giroux, 1983, 2001; McLaren, 2007; as cited in Crookes, 2012). Freire's critical pedagogy method considers that the language curriculum shall be tied to the needs, problems and obstacles of the students in sight of eventually solving or improving their own real-life situations (Crookes, 2012).

Peace education framework

Although peace education has already been established as a discipline, there is not a way to define it yet (Bajaj, 2008; Gur Ze'ev, 2001; as cited in Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). Zembylas & Bekerman (2013) argue that this can be caused by the intangibility of a broad concept as peace, and points out that this universal peace concept is often addressed as a “lack of violence”, disregarding the understanding of the word peace that different communities around the globe have (Hayden, 2002; as cited in Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). This universal peace concept has migrated into the peace education foundations and has been questioned as to how the legitimacy of other perceptions about peace are dismissed (Gur Ze'ev, 2001; as cited in Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013).

Taking into account the considerations of the authors mentioned prior, one can infer that the complexity of peace education is not to be understood soon. This is why different examples of what authors think peace education will be helpful to contextualize with this study. In contrast to what Zembylas and Bekerman (2013) mentioned before, it is argued that peace education has many objectives; helping to stop conflicts is one of those. However, it is also said that peace education becomes more meaningful when it is used to build, teach and understand peace and its importance, not only in education, but also in other departments such as politics and life in general (Brantmeier & Bajaj, 2013; as cited in Takkaç Tulgar, 2017). In summary, peace education is more valuable when it becomes praxis.

3.3 Legal Referent

Law 1732 of 2014 obliges all public and private schools of Colombia to impart the Cátedra de la Paz sections in all school subjects. Although there is not any law about the insertion of the Truth Report in Colombian schools, the Cátedra por la Paz and the Truth Report are

intrinsically conjoined because both are born within the Peace Accords of La Habana of 2016. Upon the agreements between the parties involved (The national government and FARC-EP) and the eventual closure of the agreements, the right of initiative 01 of 2017 (Acto Legislativo 01 de 2017) and the 588 decree of 2017 (Decreto 588 de 2017) assembled the Truth Commission, organization that eventually created the Truth Report.

4. Methodological Design

4.1 Type of Research

The present study adopts the exploratory research approach as it fits with the characteristics of the work. Exploratory research tries to “travel over a field of study” (Boulding, 1958; as cited in Stebbins, 2001) and also intends to extend the knowledge and data about a field that has not been widely studied. This approach will come in handy to understand the different insights that teachers have about the past and present conflict history in Colombia and subsequently design ELT material focused on both conflict history and peace in Colombia. The relationship between conflict story, peace, education and more specifically ELT has not been talked about enough, much less explored, hence the exploratory research approach will give us a hint to at least understand a few teachers’ position towards a topic that is normally overlooked in Colombian schools. As exploratory research poses the challenge of understanding unexplored fields and opens up to the idea of enquiring a discipline and extend its data broadly (Stebbins, 2001), the possibilities to create theories based on raw data increase exponentially and also the contribution to the corpus to the discipline under research adds up to the list of advantages for making this study.

In addition, this study will be of qualitative nature. To define qualitative research, it is almost mandatory to compare it to quantitative research. Qualitative research focuses on the

form and actual transcripts, fieldnotes, documents, etc, instead of figures, like quantitative research. Hence, the exploration focuses more in the actual responses or representations of the population, instead of the quantity or figures that come out from studying said population (Saldaña, 2011). Qualitative research fits this investigation the most, as it focuses in the most significant essentials that the participants of the research share with the researchers.

4.2 Research Population

For the initial part of this research, it was necessary to assess the opinions of teachers of public schools. The main focus was made on teachers of secondary school, however, some teachers from primary school also shared their opinions, which were also taken into account.

4.3 Research Instruments

To understand the nature of this research project, it is important to note down that this study was divided in 2 parts. The initial part consisted of mapping teachers' knowledge about Colombia's conflict and their inclusion of these topics in their classrooms. The second part, was the design and creation of the materials.

Instrument for the first part: An online questionnaire

In order to know what teachers knew about Colombia's conflict and how they implemented that knowledge in their classes (if they did), an online questionnaire was created. A questionnaire is an simple instrument of obtaining information in a very simple and accessible form (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). There are some reasons as to why an online questionnaire was used for this research. 1) the online research questionnaire facilitated and fastened the process of research, due to the fact that a physical meetings were not necessary. These could be filled from the teachers' cellphone, computer, etc. 2) questionnaires are simple

ways of obtaining a high amount of answers from different participants with a single format. 3) analyzing the answers from participants becomes an easier task when a questionnaire is used.

The online questionnaire was shared with teachers of different schools in the metropolitan area of Bucaramanga, department of Santander, Colombia. Although the focus was initially on English teachers, many teachers from different areas also joined the research process and contributed with their insights. That is why, two different questionnaires were created, one in Spanish (for non-English teachers) and the other in English (for English teachers).

Instrument for the second part: Official documents

A document, according to Michael Buckland (2018) is “*used to refer to a written instrument, charter, or official paper. In modern times “document,” as a noun, came to mean almost exclusively a textual or graphic record on paper or, now, an electronic medium, but the sense of showing or instructing remained*”. For the purpose of this research, an extensive and focused exploration of documents was necessary to know what topics would be the center of study of the materials. As the present study revolves around Colombia’s conflict, all the documents that were read were completely centered in that topic.

4.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis of the online questionnaire focused on two principal aspects; first, are nowadays Colombian teachers informed about Colombia’s conflict? and second, do they implement thier knowledge about Colombia’s conflict in their curriculum? do they consider it important to include these topics in their classes (regardless of the subject)?

For the second part of the research, the document analysis was made carefully. First, an overall analysis of documents from the Truth Report platform, Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, and other renowned journals focused on Colombia's conflict was made. Once finished the analysis, three topics were selected as the principal focus of the materials; The Salado Massacre (La masacre de El Salado), the Conflict in Santander, and the 1985 Siege of the Supreme Court (La toma del Palacio de Justicia de 1985). These topics were selected because they are considered transcendental in the lives of millions of Colombians in the margin of conflict. After that, different specific documents about the chosen topics were selected from the Truth Report platform, the Memoria Histórica group, etc. After reading the chosen documents, specific information about the three topics was dissected. In this part, it is important to note down that the information was mostly conformed by witnesses or direct victims of the Colombian armed conflict. Nonetheless, stories shared by third parties and perpetrators of crimes are also presented, all of that with the intention to offer different perspectives of the events. Finally, the materials' design started.

4.5 Research Stages

In order to comprehend the unfolding and development of this project, it was split into two different parts. The first part consisted of the exploration of teachers' knowledge about Colombia's conflict and also their experiences with implementing material about this topic. Second, the choice of topics, document selection, and the selection of information/fragments about the chosen topics. The process of the second stage led to the creation of the *Truth and Memory English Workshops*.

5. Results

5.1 Teachers and Colombia's Conflict

The answers that the teachers gave to the online questionnaire were split into two important items. 1) the teachers' knowledge of contemporary and past conflict in Colombia. 2) the teachers classes and the implementation of the Colombian armed conflict in their curriculum.

The entirety of the teachers that answered the questionnaire said that they are normally aware about the armed conflict situation in Colombia. However, only half of the teachers that solved the questionnaire said that they felt prepared to conduct a lesson centered on Colombia's armed conflict. When asked about the importance of implementing Colombia's armed conflict in their classrooms, some answers drew especial attention. Participant #6 said "*It is important to become aware about the historical memory of the country to build over a country that is reconciled and just*". On a similar note, Participant #1 stated that "*knowing the dark side of our country's history will let us analyse the different behaviors that led to the conflict that the country goes through*". Two important terms come out of these answers. The first one is mentioned by Participant #6, when mentioning the term "*historical memory*". According to COPREDEH (2011), historical memory refers to the grind from human beings in recognizing or identifying past events that affected their community at some point, with the focal intention of not repeating them. The other prominent term is mentioned by Participant #1, when referring to "*the dark side of our country's history*". It can be asserted that there is an evident relationship between the *dark side of our country's history* mentioned by Participant #1 and the *historical memory* mentioned by participant #6. Both reference the bloodstained Colombia's armed conflict that started almost 70 years ago, and both accentuate in the fact that recognizing these *dark times (historical memory)* plays an important role in not repeating them. Other participants shared this insight, resulting in a sheer agreement between these teachers that Colombia's armed conflict must be a part of Colombia's classrooms.

Notwithstanding, all participants agreed upon the fact that there was a huge challenge to achieve teaching about Colombian's armed conflict in their classroom; lack of institutional and governmental support. Two specific answers about this question from the participants of this research caught particular attention. Participant #1 argued that "(teaching about Colombia's armed conflict) *is a pending assignment. These contents are barely known, which difficults their divulgation a lot. A massive divulgation campaign should be launched, but all of this in a way that it draws our students' attention*". As mentioned in the state of the art section, some initiatives such as Catedra de la Paz have been "implemented" in Colombian schools, yet these come as materials that are not appealing for teachers, and much less for students. Above and beyond all considerations, the answer from Participant #5 alleged that "*there are other topics that are considered more important. Besides, there is some fear to talk about conflict and war in Colombia in hopes of a change*". There are two points to highlight from here; two questions, more specifically. First, one can possibly wonder, what can be more important than Colombia's biggest problem, armed conflict? and second, how come this does not have a space in Colombian schools? But then, Participant #5 shares an interesting suggestion in the same answers, addressing a "*fear to talk about conflict and war in Colombia*". Yamashita (2006) introduces an interesting concept called "*haunted stories*", in her own words, these stories are making teachers back off (or be scared) from talking about war and conflict in their classes. Yamashita shares a story to understand *haunted stories* better:

For example, one teacher mentioned the story of another teacher having a child in her classroom crying, when she was reading a short story to do with a war. Another secondary school head teacher told me about the story of a student getting upset because the student thought that his teacher was making a racist remark against him, when the teacher was talking about the issues of war in his class. (Yamashita, 2006)

Both Yamashita and Participant #5 imply that talking about war and conflict scares teachers. One possibly reason to think this is the underlying reasons behind wars and conflicts, as they are often driven by political, cultural, or economic interests. Putting those topics under discussion, not only can be taken the wrong way by students, but most prominently by parents of students who are probably more informed about conflict and war. This can lead to teachers being labeled as supporters of one or another side of the conflict, hence making teachers refrain or “be scared/fearful” of talking about war and conflict in their classroom.

It can then be said that perhaps a decent amount of teachers is informed about Colombia’s armed conflict. Also, it can definitely be agreed upon that teachers consider that talking about Colombia’s armed conflict in their classrooms is important. However, there are some obstacles or challenges that get in their way and are substantial enough to refrain teachers from talking about those topics in their classes. First, teachers do not get enough support from the government to have lessons centered in that topic. Second, teachers can be “scared” of dealing with those topics as they can often lead to misunderstandings that teachers want to avoid. Adding to this, the teachers’ own motivation to teach about armed conflict in their classrooms shall be taken into account.

5.2 Materials Design

5.2.1 Topic selection and analysis of information

To begin with the materials design, it was necessary to do an extensive research work. For that, webpages and platforms like the ones from the Truth Report and Centro de Memoria Histórica were subject of scrutiny. Checking each corner of these platforms was important, as they offer a wide range of materials and information that can be used for multiple purposes. Something

to highlight in this part was finding the “*Colombia Adentro*” section in the Truth Report platform. This section offers a very complete report about events that have occurred in the different Colombian regions, so if there was a particular interest in a specific region, a book was there to cover it.

After doing this exhaustive research, three topics were chosen. The first one was the Salado Massacre (Masacre del Salado). The Salado Massacre is one of the deadliest manslaughters in the history of Colombia. It is a constant reminder of the atrocities that some Colombians have had to go through (directly and indirectly). Having this mindset, it became almost mandatory to include this event as one central part of the materials, hence, different documents were read in order to understand and explain the magnitude of that tragedy. Based on that, specific documents such as *La Masacre de El Salado: Esa Guerra No Era nuestra* from Andrés Fernando Suárez (2009) and *La masacre de El Salado: diez años después, las exigencias de verdad, justicia y reparación siguen vigentes* from the Comisión Colombiana de Juristas (2010). It is worth-noting that a special focus on the victims stories and voices was made.

The next topic to be selected was the conflict in Santander, Colombia. Santander is a department in northeastern Colombia. This department has undergone different difficult situations tied to the internal Colombian conflict. As the creator of this material, being Santandereano (how the people from Santander are called) and trying to connect local students with their history is important. Besides, it is not like Santander has not gone through very difficult times throughout this conflicted century. Many paramilitary organizations had control of different municipalities in the south of the department. For discovering more about it, it was necessary to read books such as *El Modelo Paramilitar de San Juan Bosco de la Verde y*

Chucurí from the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (2019) and the *Magdalena Medio and Santander* section from the Truth Report (2022).

At last, the Siege of the Supreme Court (Toma del Palacio de Justicia de Bogotá) was the central topic. The Siege of the Supreme Court was an incident that sabotaged the political and social landscape in Colombia. The country was going through a critical state, after negotiations and a peace treaty between FARC and president Belisario Bétancur were going south. One of the many reasons that made this incident worth of being a central part of this material, is the connection that this incident has with adults who were alive in the 80s and witnessed the event unfold in live television or in person. It is a way of connecting past tragedies lived by those who are older, with those who are younger and are living milder versions of those tragedies. A book that contributed a lot to this material was *Informe Final: Comisión de la Verdad sobre la Toma del Palacio de Justicia* from Jorge Gómez, José Herrera, and Nilson Pinilla (2010).

5.2.2 Textbook's units format

To give each of the topics the same level of importance, it was decided to divide the textbook into three different units. All the units share the same format, with the difference being in the content of each one of them. For example, each one of the units has a total of 10 pages, no more, no less.

Each unit is also divided in 3 sub-units (check Annex 1, page 5). The first sub-unit works as an introduction to the whole unit, starting to talk about general facts and stories about the place or incident under scope. The second sub-unit starts focusing more in the central topic of the unit as a follow-up series of activities. In the end, the 3rd sub-unit focuses entirely in the

central topic of the unit. It must be highlighted that the first two sub-units of each unit have a grammar component in each, but the 3rd sub-unit does not. With this organization, the whole unit works like a bunch of intertwined sub-units that together compose a complete result and have a holistic approach. In the first page of each unit, there is an introductory activity or an *unit starting activity* to introduce the students to its topic (check Annex 1, page 6).

Each unit has many listening and reading activities majoritarily. However, speaking and writing activities are also present, but in a fewer frequency than listening and reading activities. Writing and speaking activities work more as complementary activities to the listening and reading activities, although some work independently and are completely different activities.

Last but not least, each unit contains at least 2 *Factboxes*. The Factboxes are text squares within the units that share a crucial or interesting fact about the topics of each unit. These facts can easily be connected with the activities or work as a complementary tool.

5.2.3 Textbook's units

Unit 1: Stories from the Montes de María

The first unit's main topic is the Salado Massacre. As explained previously, every unit is also divided in smaller sub-units, in this case, the first sub-unit is called *Hectic Days from Coveñas to El Salado*. Then, the second sub-unit is called *Chalán and the Burrobomba*. As the final sub-unit of Unit 1, it is a sub-unit titled *Late February Days*. (to check this unit, check Page 6 of Annex 1)

Hectic Days from Coveñas to El Salado revolves around the story of a girl called Adriana, who is going to visit El Salado, in the Montes de María. She is going there to know a little more about the history of the Montes de María. This first sub-unit introduces the reader to the Montes de María and its surroundings. Although there are hints about the Montes de María and its reputation, this unit does not present a specific event that struck the Montes de María within Colombia's armed conflict context. Additionally, this sub-unit introduces the first grammar topic of the unit, the regular past simple. A section with an explanation, examples and practice for this topic is included there. (to check this sub-unit, check Page 7 of Annex 1)

The second sub-unit, *Chalán and the Burrobomba* is the shortest sub-unit of all the book. This unit is composed of two pages, but it does not take away from its content. The core of this unit concentrates on the terrorist attack perpetrated by FARC in 1996, where they attached a ton of dynamite into a donkey to attack a police station in Chalán, Sucre. Also, there is a especial reading, made specifically to mention the symbolic and close relationship between the Colombian peasants and their favorite packing animal, the donkey. Lastly, the grammar target of this unit is the irregular past simple. (to check this sub-unit, check Page 10 of Annex 1)

The third and last sub-unit of the first unit, *Late February Days*, ultimately addresses the Salado Massacre tragedy. This sub-unit is the longest sub-unit of the whole book, taking 4 pages in total. This unit shares the real life stories of direct victims of El Salado massacre, as well as the *Chronicle of a Vicious Massacre*, a short but detailed chronicle about the foremath and unraveling of the massacre. Considering it was previously mentioned that the late sub-units of each unit would not include a grammar component, this sub-unit closes with different

exercises that practice both forms of the past simple, but there is no clear-cut focus on any of those. (to check this sub-unit, check Page 12 of Annex 1)

Unit 2: Living in the Lion's Den

For the second unit, the spotlight is given to the history of armed conflict in Santander. The first sub-unit is titled *Santander: More than You Know*, next, the second sub-unit is named *Colombia's Main Artery*, and subsequently, the last sub-unit is called *Scary Days in Santander*. (to check this unit, check Page 16 of Annex 1)

The starting sub-unit, *Santander: More than You Know*, familiarizes the reader with the department of Santander. General facts about the department, ecologically important places like the páramos, the department's gastronomy, etc. are some of the topics discussed in this unit. Adding to this, this unit centers on comparative adjectives as its grammar component. (to check this sub-unit, check Page 17 of Annex 1)

From there on, the second sub-unit, *Colombia's Main Artery* deals with the most important river in the country, the Magdalena River. The Magdalena River flows from south to north in the western side of the department of Santander, making of it a fertile and sustainable land. This portion of the Magdalena River is called the Magdalena Medio, a region that covers more than 3 departments, Santander included. In Santander, the Magdalena River hosts the city of Barrancabermeja, the city with the largest oil refinery in the country, as well as important municipalities such as Puerto Wilches, where fishing in the river and its neighboring ciénagas is the main source of income. The grammar section of this sub-unit treats with the superlative forms of adjectives. (to check this sub-unit, check Page 20 of Annex 1)

Sub-unit 3 of Unit 2 treats with the armed conflict in Santander that broke out in different municipalities like Simacota, Charalá, Barrancabermeja, and Tona. Similarly, it talks about the crimes committed by different paramilitary groups that operated in the south of the department, like the Frente Isidro Caballero and the Frente Comuneros Cacique Guanentá. One of the activities of the sub-unit is dedicated to the sexual abuse that young girls went through 20 years ago, when the paramilitaries had control over Riachuelo, Charalá. (to check this sub-unit, check Page 23 of Annex 1)

Unit 3: Siege Anecdotes

The last unit of this textbook has the Siege of the Supreme Court of 1985 as its focal point. *Bogotá in the 80s* is the name of the first sub-unit, after that, the second sub-unit is called *Bogotá in the Present*, and then, the last sub-unit is called *The Siege and a Dark November*. (to check this unit, check Page 26 of Annex 1)

Beginning with the third unit, *Bogotá in the 80s* is a flashback to the 80s, in a Bogotá that was growing exponentially due to the displacement of the peasants in rural Colombia and getting invaded by the Punk phenomenon. This sub-unit mentions the famous *El Cartucho*, one of the most dangerous places in Bogotá from the 80s to the 90s, with commentaries from people who lived in El Cartucho during the time. The introducing grammar topic of this sub-unit is the reported speech for the present simple form. (to check this sub-unit, check Page 27 of Annex 1)

Bogotá in the Present takes the reader from the 80s of the previous unit, to contemporary Bogotá. In this unit, people who live in Bogotá talk about general facts of the city and how it is living in it. They also talk about one of the biggest problems in Bogotá and

why it is extremely chaotic at times. Finally, the sub-unit ends talking about the iconic Plaza de Bolívar, which will connect with the last sub-unit of Unit 3. In this sub-unit, the main grammar focus is the reported speech for sentences in past simple form. (to check this sub-unit, check Page 30 of Annex 1)

As the closing sub-unit of this textbook, the attention was drawn at the Siege of the Supreme Court of 1985, as well as the tragic events that unfolded through November of that year. This sub-unit presents a summed-up story of the siege directed by M-19 and the supreme court takeover by the national army, along with the subsequent burn-down of the building. It also covers the view of two adults who watched the siege through TV and the impact that it left in Colombians. Finally, comprising the dark events of November of 1985, this unit is complemented with the eruption of the Nevado del Ruíz volcano in 1985 and the annihilation of the town of Armero, Tolima. (to check this sub-unit, check Page 33 of Annex 1)

6. Conclusions

Standing face-to-face with the research problems of this study, it can be confirmed that there is an imminent absence of ELT materials that are aimed to teaching about Colombia's armed conflict. That combined with different factors, led us to the different stages of this research; the first one being mapping the teachers knowledge about Colombia's armed conflict, and the second one being creating ELT material about the armed Conflict in Colombia. The first stage helped to understand what the current relationship between classrooms and the local armed conflict is. The second stage served as a minimal response to the non-existent relationship found in the first one.

According to the questionnaire answered by our participants in the first stage of the study, it was noticed that half of them were somewhat aware or were informed of the armed conflict situation in Colombia. However, they alleged two obstacles that made it difficult for them to talk about those topics in their classrooms; lack of governmental support and orientation, and also fear from dealing with those topics due to different circumstances. All the teachers agreed upon the fact that more efforts should be put into building classrooms where armed conflict is a relevant subject. In this case, a side note shall be added here, since not only do the government and institutions play an important role into transferring the topic of armed conflict to schools, but also teachers do play an important role, as there should be a level of initiative coming from them to introduce armed conflict in Colombia in their own respective classrooms.

Referring to the first objective of this research project, it can be said that the creation of the material was completed successfully. The result was a textbook of 36 pages, divided into three different units. The first unit being Stories from the Montes de María talks about the struggles in the Montes de María and has especial focus on the Salado Massacre of 2000. The second unit focuses on the conflict in Santander, Colombia, from the riverside of the Magdalena, to the heights of Charalá. The third and last unit treats two different Bogotá, culminating with the dark events that unfolded through November of 1985. These units combined have more than 100 activities that include exercises which cover all the English learning skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). To create this material, a sizeable analysis and exploration of documents was necessary in order to choose which topics were adequate for teaching. Certainly, a big majority of the material was taken from the Truth Report platform, as well as from the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica archives. It could also be found that although there is information galore to create material about the armed conflict, a

vast majority of it is in Spanish, not in English. Thus, in order to make this material usable for English classes, a considerable amount of the information there had to be translated word by word, and re-adapted to English standards. Also, a lot of the existent material is not built-up properly, meaning that it lacks a didactical component.

About the second objective, it can be said that it is absolutely possible to share Colombia's conflicted past through classrooms. In order to do so, a proper process is necessary for the materials to come into fruition. Studying the teachers' and students' needs, exploring and prioritizing the topics that should be talked about, inquiring from reliable sources are some of the steps that should be taken into account. After that, the materials design should aim towards the students' and teachers' interests', this pretty much says that especial effort should be made into making the materials attractive, interesting, enriching, and informative.

Concerning the third objective, this textbook alone is the proof that both armed conflict and English learning can both be integrated. It was possible to find materials that deal with armed conflict using English as a second language, however, the amount of them was rather scarce. The Truth and Memory English Workshops aimed to help students learn English, all through learning about Colombia and its struggle with armed conflict. In fact, a greater emphasis was made towards the content of the exercises, rather than in grammatical aspects that are over-exaggeratedly seen in English classes. Despite their importance, the focus of these exercises was 90% more on the content than the form of the language.

Having said that, it should also be mentioned that this material is 100% ready to be piloted and used in classrooms after being evaluated by 2 professionals in the language teaching area. This material is recommended to be used with students from 9th grade or above, as some

of the stories here can be disturbing, given that one of the points of these activities was to make them as raw as if they were explained by the victims of different events themselves.

An especial heads-up to the teachers who are going to use this material should be done, since the use of this material requires sheer commitment from the teacher to properly use it. Perhaps, if there is no interest in using this material, or there is no pedagogical praxis whilst using it, then the whole purpose of these activities would be void.

It is in the nature of materials like this (first editions) to have major and minor points to be corrected. That is why, this material is required to undergo intensive assessment to see what can be added, removed, or modified. Due to time issues, this material was cut short, but the building and design of this material is not foreign to still be worked on, as it can still be modified and improved for future versions. These future versions can include more topics, a different variety of exercises, and a whole new range of possibilities to teach English through Colombia's historical armed conflict.

Of course, it is compulsory to do further research on this topic. As it was previously mentioned, ELT materials portraying Colombia's armed conflict are sparse, hence, the making of materials like this gains importance. Although these activities cover some of the most atrocious and heinous events that Colombia has gone through, they do not make up for a 1% of what has truly happened in the entirety of the country. A deep, more detailed set of materials that intend to teach English through armed conflict should become a thing sooner than later. For doing so, it is necessary that different departments, such as the ministries of education, public and private institutions, teachers' and students' associations come to an agreement to give Colombia's armed conflict and ELT a space in the same classroom. Additionally, turning

this into a multi-disciplinary affair can make wonders, as students and professionals from areas such as Human Rights, Law, Social Sciences, Maths, Literature, Languages, Arts, and others, can contribute different perspectives and ideas to make a more multifaceted and inclusive material. It is worth mentioning as well that the inclusion of peasant groups, indigenous groups, different collectives such as the LGBTIQ+, and feminist groups, can enrich the development of these materials significantly.

All-in-all and beyond and above all else, these initiatives will not only serve to enhance the students' and teachers' English level and increase their knowledge about Colombia's conflict, but they will also have a social impact for the benefit of the country. The development of activities like this can have a transformative influence in everyone that can lead to a more critical society; a society that holds high regard for their historical memory and respect the events that have affected them profusely in recent and older times. Eventually, it will contribute to the Colombians' biggest dream, the dream that has been pursued for more than 50 years, the dream that sees all Colombians living in peace.

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Appendix



TRUTH AND MEMORY

ENGLISH WORKSHOPS

The Truth and Memory English Workshops are a series of activities, divided into three different units, where general information about Colombian culture and history are some of the topics. However, the main focus of each unit entails several events within the Colombian conflict framework.

DANIEL SANTOS

INTRODUCTION

Learning a new language has become a new valuable competence for Colombians. English, the target language for a great part of the language learners in the world, is also the main target of a plethora of language learners from Colombia.

Normally, English classrooms revolve around the use of textbooks; textbooks that were internationally created, based on international contexts, following international trends, and dealing with international affairs. However, little is the space that is left for the local context of the learners, if nothing. Ironically, it has been proven that using the local contexts of the learners to learn a new language is positive for their learning development. Then, why don't we try to make our English classrooms more focused on our own context; in the Colombian context? That is one of the standards of this book; trying something new. A new way of learning English.

More importantly, a big majority of Colombians know at least a tiny part of the country's history. They know the struggles that this country has been going through starting from before the independence days, to the contemporary ones. One of those struggles, and probably the most socially-altering and deadly that this country has gone through is the Colombian armed conflict. From a historical perspective, the murder of liberal politician Jorge Eliecer Gaitán during La Violencia is used as a reference to the actual start of the armed conflict in Colombia. Ever since, the country has spiraled, taking down hundreds of thousands of lives, displacing millions, and destabilizing the country's overall state. As you can see, Colombia's history is rich, perhaps negatively, but it is volatile and worth of acknowledgment. But, did you ever hear about it in your English class? Were you ever present in an English class that, at the very least, skimmed on the importance of Colombia and its history with armed conflict? Probably not. Hence, this short book has a main focus; the armed conflict in Colombia.

Adding to the previous point, what is possibly better than learning about Colombia's armed conflict, and learning English at the same time? Well, that sums up the meaning of this book. Learn English, through entertaining and meaningful stories of Colombians. Learn from the very victims of the armed conflict; from Colombians who have lived here for their entire lives. Learn English through the memories of those who are deceased. Learn English through the crudity of Colombia and its past. Learn English, and learn Colombia.

As a final point, I would like to clarify that in no way is this material intended to brainwash, scaremonger, or indoctrinate our students and teachers. This is just a textbook that has information about Colombia and its history of armed conflict. The information here is not an attempt to incite violence or disgruntlement between those who get it, but rather as a form of fostering a critical and reflective thinking about the major problem that Colombia has had for the past century.

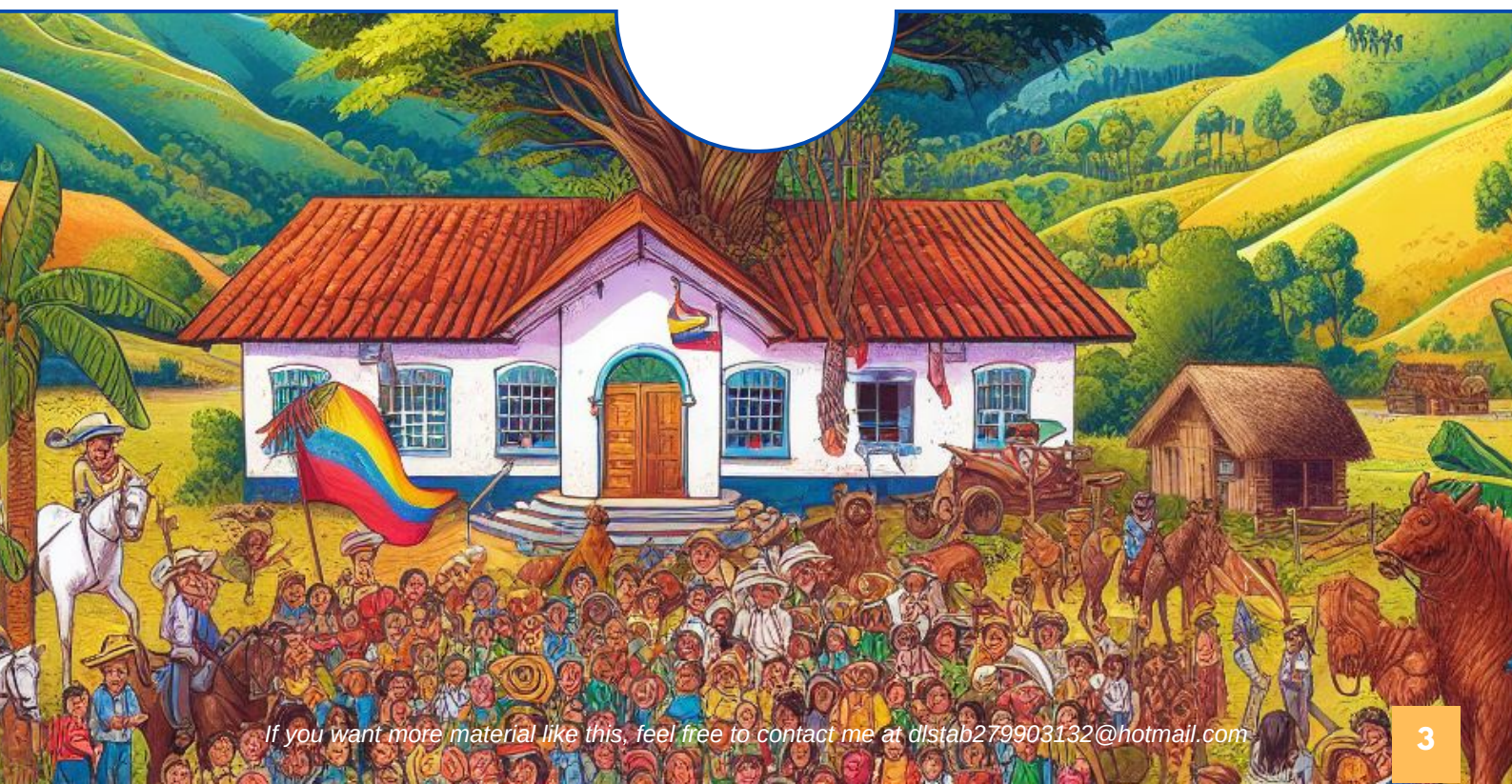
FOR THE TEACHER

Us teachers have often been relegated to mere information providers. This corrupted view of the role of the teacher underestimates the actual impact that teachers can make on their students and what unfolds within classrooms. As the creator of this material, I encourage you to make use of this material in the most productive and significant form, so that the students can end their courses knowing about the conflict in Colombia and its importance. It is your task to show them that this topic is not irrelevant or just a side subject, but rather a topic that should not only be talked about in English classes, but in some form be dealt with in other subjects such as maths, biology, and informatics.

I request you, the teacher who is going to use this material, to feel free to use it however you feel like. Just keep in mind its main objective; learning English through the Colombian armed conflict. Although not extensive, there is still some material similar to this available on the internet that you can use as complementary to this, or vice-versa. Remember, it is not the material that matters the most, but how you use it.

This short textbook is divided into 3 different units. The exercises in each one of these units are open to be modified. They aren't necessarily fixed. You can mold them based on your class context in order to enrich the classroom's environment. The foundations are in the textbook, but there are a myriad of things that you can do with them without necessarily following them to the letter.

With the use of this material, classrooms are becoming transformative spaces for students. The enrichment of social conscience and a critical view of the country's violent history only serves as a form of learning not to repeat the mistakes from the past. It all depends on you, the teacher, to know how to properly use this material, and most importantly, guide your students toward a more reflective and beneficial way of thinking for themselves and the nation.



FOR THE STUDENT

Dear student, the following activities have two clear objectives; first, learn about your country and its history. Second, learn English. This material was conceived as a new way of learning English for you. Perhaps, a lot of the times you have tried to learn English, you have noticed that nothing that is shown in English textbooks relates to you. Nothing is familiar to you there. This material is for you. A material that overlaps with the identity of millions and millions of Colombian students who have never had the chance to experience English learning with the eyes of their own culture, like you. There are two important missions that you might try to accomplish by using this material.

Your first mission is to never let go of those memories of those who passed away, of those who have suffered years of physical and emotional pain because of the conflict, and to share this message with future generations. These acts of evil against Colombians of all colors and ethnicities, perpetrated by Colombians themselves, should also be carved in the memory of contemporary and future citizens of this beautiful country. Justice, reparation, and no-repetition.

It's also in your hands to break the stereotypes of English learning. New ways of teaching English will emerge sooner than later, and some of those will be effective as well. One of those new ways of learning English is portrayed in this material. A way of learning English where you learn about your country's turbulent story.

Hopefully, these stories, these games, and these discussions will impact you, at least to a slight extent, because Colombia's armed conflict has taken the lives of hundreds of thousands, has destroyed the livelihoods of many, has displaced many from their homelands, has left many in misery, and has deteriorated so profusely the country's wellness.

With any luck, you and your classmates will have a wonderful time using this material.



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PHOTO BY: ALEJANDRA VEGA

UNIT 1

STORIES FROM THE MONTES DE MARÍA

By Daniel Santos

In this unit, you will find different information and exercises revolving around the Montes de María, a geographical area located between the departments of Sucre and Bólvivar, in northern Colombia.

The north of Colombia has been historically important for the armed conflict surge. Numerous paramilitary groups were founded initially in the department of Córdoba and it was anticipated that those groups would have interest in their expansion. That is how these groups found their way onto the Magdalena Medio and other departments of the north, north-center, and northeastern Colombia.

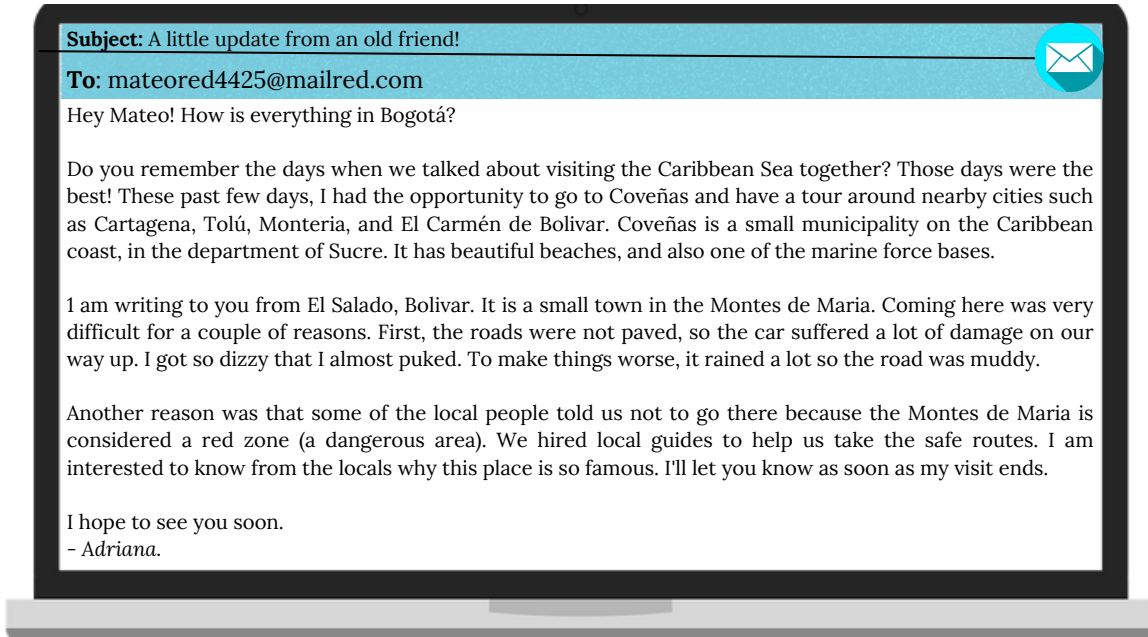
UNIT STARTING ACTIVITY

1. Observe the picture on top of the page. What objects can you recognize from the picture?
2. Are there any similar places to that one from the picture that you know as well?
3. Draw a line on the words that refer to objects that don't appear in the picture.

car forest door wood donkey
church flowers court sun palms
street lightpost grass person clouds

READING

1. Read the letter. In general, what is the whole text about?



2. Read the sentences. Write from 1 to 4, depending on the order that the events happened in the email.

- Adriana got dizzy because the road to El Salado was in bad conditions _____
- Adriana visited Coveñas and had a tour in the nearby towns _____
- Adriana writes an email to Mateo _____
- Adriana and Mateo talked about visiting the Caribbean Sea together _____

3. Write one thing about the text in each space using the descriptions given in the sentences.

1. An unsafe place _____
2. A verb related to weather _____
3. A profession _____
4. The tool that Adriana used to contact Mateo _____
5. A landmark of one of the cities that Adriana visited _____

FACTBOX

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD ABOUT RED ZONES? RED ZONES ARE AREAS THAT ARE LABELED AS DANGEROUS BY THE GOVERNMENT AND INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTRY. THEY ARE CONSIDERED DANGEROUS DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS, GUERRILLAS, AND OTHER ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS.

GRAMMAR

PAST SIMPLE: REGULAR FORM

The past simple is generally used to talk about actions or events that have already finished.

Mariana talked with me all night.

In this sentence, the word “talked” implies that the action happened in the past and that it is already finished.

USING THE REGULAR PAST SIMPLE

The changes made in a sentence to use the past simple affect the main verbs in it. To make a verb turn into the past simple regular form, we just add the termination -ed to it.

Edward called me yesterday.

Camilo finished his homework in the afternoon.

Raúl waited for two hours.

Keep in mind that depending on the termination of the verb, the addition of -ed can be slightly different.



<p>When the verb ends in -e, only -d is added. <i>He mov<u>e</u>d to Cali three years ago.</i></p>
<p>When the verb ends with -y, but has a consonant before it, y becomes i, and then -ed is added. <i>Mariana <u>crie</u>d all night.</i></p>
<p>When the verb termination has a vowel + y, -ed is added as in the general form. <i>Dario play<u>e</u>d before going to bed.</i></p>
<p>When the verb is ended with a consonant + vowel + consonant, the last consonant is usually doubled, and then -ed is added. <i>The thief <u>robbe</u>d the poor lady.</i></p>

PRACTICE

1. Complete the sentences using the past simple.

- Adriana (talk) talked to Mateo in January.
- Mateo (reply) _____ to Adriana two weeks ago.
- They always (dream) _____ of visiting the Caribbean together.
- Adriana (pay) _____ a lot of money to travel.
- Mateo (try) _____ to contact Adriana. She (respond) _____ two days later.

2. Choose the correct option.

- The floor dried/dried pretty quickly
- Mateo called/called me yesterday.
- The local guide asked/asked me a question.
- They fixed/fixed the car with a wrench.
- The local people sayed/said that this place has a tragic history.

LISTENING 1.0

1. Listen to Mateo's response to Adriana and discuss.



- Did Mateo show any interest in being with Adriana?
- Was Mateo interested in the places that Adriana mentioned in her email?
- What emotions could you feel from Mateo in his email?
- What did Mateo know about the Montes de María before?

2. Make pairs and discuss.

- Would you be interested in visiting the Montes de María? Why/Why not?
- Do you know any information about the reasons why this place is considered dangerous?
- What interesting things from the exchange between Adriana and Mateo did you find?
- Do you know any other place that is considered dangerous where you live?

3. What does Mateo mean when using the next expressions?

- *It's great to hear from you!*
- *You are living your best life!*
- *Stay safe.*
- *With love, Mateo.*

FACTBOX

LOCATION OF THE MONTES DE MARÍA

UNFORTUNATELY, THE CARIBBEAN REGION OF COLOMBIA HAS BEEN THE PLACE WHERE SOME OF THE MOST INFAMOUS PARAMILITARY GROUPS HAVE BEEN FOUNDED.

MY FAVORITE TRIP

WRITING

1. Think about your favorite trip ever. Write 5 words that are related to it.

Example: My favorite trip was to Santa Marta.

Words: Beach, sun, sea, sand, and swim

2. In at least 6 lines, write about your favorite trip.

3. Make groups of three at least. Ask each one of the members of the group the next questions about their trips.

- Where did you go to?
- Who did you go with?
- Why did you go there?
- What is your best memory about that trip?



GRAMMAR

REGULAR PAST SIMPLE: NEGATIVE FORM

In order to use the regular past simple in its negative form, you must use the auxiliary “did not/didn’t”.

Nicolas did not visit me this past Monday.

Do not add -ed terminations when you are using the regular past simple as the auxiliary did already implies that the action was in the past.

Camila ~~did not called~~ me yesterday.

Camila did not call me yesterday.

PRACTICE

1. Write sentences in the past simple form using the words that are available in each line.

1. go / Rosalba / want / to / not / Sincelejo / to / did

Rosalba didn't want to go to Sincelejo.

2. days / Some / not / eat / we / did

3. the / visit / not / Cecilia / did / Caribbean / coast

4. not / Coveñas / Zaira / did / in / live

5. help / much / government / did / The / not / in /

2. Make the sentence negative.

1. I had a great experience when I visited Sucre.

I didn't have a great experience when I visited Sucre.

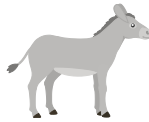
2. I visited Ovejas when I was 18 years old.

3. The last December, it rained a lot in the Montes de María.

THE BURRO BOMBA

1. Match the pictures with the words.

policeman bomb gun dynamite
 explosion camouflage donkey conflict



LISTENING 1.1

2. Listen to the recording about the burro bomba of Chalán.



PHOTO BY: 123RF

3. Write T or F if the statements are true or false.

- Mr. Adolfo didn't know that car bombs existed.
- Mr. Adolfo was with his wife, mother, and a little boy when the explosion happened.
- The battle was between the FARC and the policemen of Chalán.
- 11 police officers were killed during the incident.
- Mr. Adolfo and his family left Chalán.
- Chalán received help from the government.

4. Answer the questions.

- What methods were used by Pablo Escobar to perpetrate terrorist attacks?
- What was the date of the events?
- What did Mr. Adolfo and company do when the incident started?
- What caused the explosion?

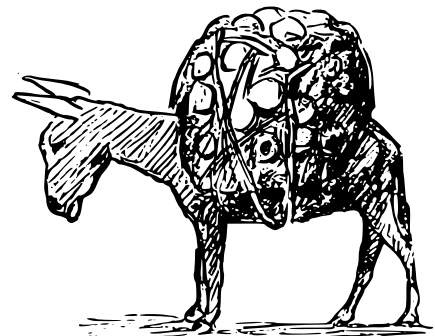
SPEAKING

1. Make pairs. Discuss the next questions.

- Who were the direct victims of this tragic event?
- Was Mateo interested in the places that Adriana mentioned in her email?
- What emotions could you feel from Mateo in his email?
- What do you think was the aftermath of the event?

FACTBOX

DO YOU KNOW WHAT A PACK ANIMAL IS? PACK ANIMALS ARE ANIMALS THAT SERVE AS CARRIERS OF DIFFERENT ITEMS. DONKEYS ARE ONE OF THE FAVORITE PACK ANIMALS OF COLOMBIA'S PEASANTS.



GRAMMAR

PAST SIMPLE: IRREGULAR FORM

In the previous chapter of this unit, we discussed the regular form of the verbs in the past simple. However, if there is a regular form, it also means that there is an irregular one.

In English, when a verb is irregular in its past form, it means that it doesn't end with -ed when it is transformed into its past form.

~~Daniela spoke to me this morning.~~
Daniela spoke to me this morning.

In the case of the negative form, the same formula explained before is used as well. The only exception is the verb **be**, which is used with **was/were + not**.

Carlitos wasn't my friend.

PRACTICE

1. Complete the sentences using the past simple irregular or regular form.

- A beautiful donkey took (take) us to the mountains while we _____ (rest).
- The events of Chalán _____ (be) saddening.
- My family always _____ (tell) me about how much they loved Chalán.
- When we _____ (arrived) to the Montes de María I _____ (be) so happy.
- I _____ (walk) 2 km daily to get to school.

2. Fill the gaps with the correct option.

didn't scare wasn't / didn't care
used / didn't like spoke / supported
met

- We used a lot of corn in our food, but I didn't like it to be honest.
- Social leaders _____ to the community and _____ us through the process of recovering.
- The government _____ supportive with us. We think that they _____ about us.
- Explosions _____ me when I was a child.
- I _____ with my relatives after the incident.

READING

THE FIRST VICTIM

1. Read the text about one of the witnesses from the incident. Then, answer the next questions.

When the Burro Bomba incident happened, a lot of people were completely shocked. Chalán was a very peaceful place, but after that, it became a place where war was the normal thing. After the incident, the people from Chalán and the newspapers talked about the victims. Those who passed away were honored, however, people forgot about the first victim that this tragedy took; **the donkey**.

For those who don't know, the donkey is an important animal in Colombia. It has always worked as a company for the peasants, as well as being the first option as a pack animal. It was sad to see that nobody talked about the donkey when the tragedy occurred. Even worse, seeing that such a peaceful creature was used as a weapon, as a tool to kill, made it even sadder.

- Did you think that the donkey was the first victim when you read the text for the first time?
- Have you ever heard about an animal being used as a weapon?

2. Read the text again. Which verbs in the past tense are regular? Which ones are irregular? Write them on the table below.

REGULAR	IRREGULAR

Yirley

I was 14 when the paramilitares arrived at El Salado. My neighbor started to scream because they opened fire. I tried to escape, but **they got me**. They took me to one of the kitchens and made me cook for them. One of the paramilitares told me “Do you know what will happen to you?”. It was then when they raped me.



1. Match the words with their meanings.

neighbor

rape

court

pray

curse

A. to force someone to have sex

B. to use a word or an expression that is not polite and shows that you are very angry:

C. someone who lives near you

D. to speak to a god either privately or in a religious ceremony in order to express love, admiration, or thanks or in order to ask for something

E. an area drawn out on the ground that is used for playing sports

READING

2. Read the interviews. Then, make groups and discuss with your teammates.

- What do you think that happened in El Salado?
- What situation are the inhabitants of El Salado in?
- Which situation did you find as the most painful?
- Which of the stories was the one that had the biggest impact on you?

3. Read the text again. In groups, try guessing the meaning of the expressions in bold.

- *they got me*
- *armed to the teeth*
- *scared to death*
- *run away*
- *begged*
- *took away*

Ladys

When the paramilitares came to El Salado, in February of 2000, they grabbed my mother and did horrible things to her. Before all that happened, she told me to **run away**, she **begged** me to escape. I did what she said, and the next day, when the paramilitares left, my younger brother was there, looking after the dead bodies of my elder brother and my dear mother.



Anonymous Source

There are three roads to get to El Salado. The paramilitares came from all ways. When they entered, they ordered us to go to the town court. What could we do? They were **armed to the teeth**. We were praying for our lives. We were **scared to death**.



Édita

The paramilitares entered El Salado cursing and shouting out loud bad words about us, the people from El Salado. They **took away** my young girl from me and raped her in one of the nearby houses. They threatened us and told us that if we cried, we were going to die. They gave me my little girl back after she was raped, but I couldn't cry.



ILLUSTRATION BY: HECTOR RODRIGUEZ

CHRONICLE OF A VICIOUS MASSACRE

March 23th, 1997

A group of 50 paramilitares arrived at El Salado, where they killed 4 people, abducted 1 person, and injured 3 more.

December 23th, 1999

A helicopter of the national army flew over El Salado. This helicopter threw down leaflets warning the saladeros about what would happen to them. In the leaflets, a message is shared, telling the saladeros “enjoy their Christmas because it will be the last one”.

February 16th, 2000

The paramilitares started their bloody journey in three different groups in the nearby villages and towns like Zambrano, El Carmen de Bólvivar, and Ovejas. On their way to El Salado, the paramilitares made several pickets in order to stop all the vehicles that were driving in the area. They forced many of the drivers to get out of their vehicles and donkeys to know if they were “guerrilleros”; 24 people were killed on the first day of the massacre.

Unbelievably, the members of the Infantería de Marina were apparently “not aware” of what was happening in the Montes de María. Some of their versions said that they were busy tracking down thieves who had stolen cattle. Some others said that the army forces were busy because the guerrillas were taking over different municipalities. Years later, it was confirmed that none of those claims were true, and it was then proved that the army, and most specifically, the Infantería de Marina, collaborated in the perpetration of the massacre.

February 17th, 2000

On February 17th, the paramilitares arrived at El Salado. They fenced in the village with different members of the group to prevent anybody from entering the village while they were there. If the locals tried to escape, they would be found by the vigilantes of the perimeter.

After that, it was then when the paramilitares broke into the houses of the Saladeros, forcing them out of their houses. They divided men, women, and women with children into different groups. The men were sent to the court of the village, where the vicious massacre reached the worst levels of brutality. Some of the saladeros were tortured, some others got their throat slit, some others were choked to death, and others were decapitated. After every death, the paramilitares would play music in a stereo, then dance and sing around the dead bodies, like a party. This activity continued until...

February 21th, 2000

The paramilitares left El Salado, just for the army to arrive after they left. Every minute it looked more like the paramilitares and the army (who are supposed to defend people) planned everything. Families of the victims and the saladeros came out of their shelters to see the bloodstained landscape. Of course, there was not a soul after the incident because the saladeros were scared; they were displaced by force; for fear.

READING

1. Read the chronicle on page 10. Based on the order of the events, make a comic that represents what happened. Follow the link to check examples, <https://web.comisiondelaverdad.co/novelas-graficas-comision-de-la-verdad>

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

2. Discuss with your classmates and teacher.

- Did you hear about the Salado massacre before?
- What part about this real tragedy shocked you the most?
- Why do you think the paramilitares committed such an evil crime?
- Do you think that the government was responsible for this tragedy to happen?



3. Underline the words that you don't know from the chronicle. Write them down on the space below.

GLOSARY

- **to abduct somebody:** forcing a person to go with you through threats or violence
- **leaflet:** a photocopy with information
- **picket:** a military barrier where soldiers usually tell drivers to stop their cars and turn back or take a different way
- **to fence something:** to make a fence around a specific place
- **to choke somebody:** to violently grab somebody's neck to prevent them from breathing
- **shelter:** a building or a place to protect yourself
- **bloodstained:** full of blood

REPARATION

1. Watch the images. What do you think each one of them represent?




LISTENING 1.2

2. Listen to three different stories from people who lived through the massacre. Write information about what they say about the aftermath of this tragedy.



Eloy



Yirley



Alfonso

3. Read the questions and discuss.

1. What was each one of them most insistent about?
2. Why do you think they were so insistent about that so much?
3. What impressions do the interviewees give to you when you listen to them?

4. Read the questions and discuss with your classmates

1. Do you think events like the Salado massacre were common in Colombia?
2. Do you think events like the Salado massacre are common in Colombia today?

FACTBOX

WHAT ARE THE PARAMILITARIES? PARAMILITARY GROUPS ARE ILLEGAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT OPERATE ALL OVER THE WORLD. IN COLOMBIA, THE PARAMILITARIES HAD CONTROL OF SEVERAL REGIONS FOR OVER A DECADE.

WRITING

1. Think about something bad that somebody has done to you. Answer the questions about the situation that you thought about.

- What did he/she do to you?
- Who did it?
- When did it happen?
- Where were you when it happened?
- Did you forgive him/her?
- How did you feel after forgiving him/her?

2. Write a text in which you share something bad that somebody did to you. Answer how you forgave that person for what they did.

3. Make groups of three. Each one of your teammates will share their story. Fill in the spaces for each one of them answering each one of the questions in Exercise 1.

teammate 1	teammate 2



PHOTO BY: Y2D/GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

UNIT 2

LIVING IN THE LION'S DEN

By Daniel Santos

In this unit, the focus will be on the department of Santander, located in the northeast of the country. For the local people of Santander and its capital, Bucaramanga, little is known about Santander and its history with conflict, but there is so much to know about it that you might be surprised.

The Magdalena riverbank has always been the ideal location for Colombians to settle down, and Santander has not been the exception to this belief. The city of Barrancabermeja, for instance, has the most important oil refinery in the country, and it is located by the Magdalena river, in the northwest of Santander.

UNIT STARTING ACTIVITY

1. Check the facts that you know about Santander.

The border between Santander and Antioquia is defined by the Magdalena River

Barrancabermeja has the largest oil refinery in Colombia

Deep fried ants are one of the most representative dishes in Santander

The War of the 1000 Days finished in the Battle of Palonegro, in the municipality of Lebrija

READING

1. Read the paragraph below. What do you think makes the Metropolitan Area of Bucaramanga so important?

Santander is a department located in the northeast of Colombia. It has over 2.000.000 inhabitants which are known as Santandereanos. The capital of Santander is the city of Bucaramanga, located in the north of the department. Bucaramanga is also surrounded by 3 of the largest cities of Santander; Floridablanca, Girón, and Piedecuesta. This area is known as the Metropolitan Area of Bucaramanga where more than 1.000.000 people live. The Metropolitan Area of Bucaramanga is the economic and political epicenter of Santander, as well as a very important area for eastern Colombia.

2. Read the statements. Write a T if they are true, F if they are false, or DM if it is not mentioned.

- Santander is a department in northwestern Colombia.
- Santander has more than 2 million inhabitants.
- The Metropolitan Area of Bucaramanga has more inhabitants than Santander.
- The Metropolitan Area of Bucaramanga is of high significance for eastern Colombia.
- Bucaramanga and Floridablanca are the most populated cities in the Metropolitan Area of Bucaramanga.

3. Check the box containing words from the paragraph. Place them in their respective column.

important area locate political
 city capital inhabitants eastern
 economic live large is/are

Verb	Adjective	Noun



SPEAKING

1. Watch the map of Colombia. Discuss the next questions.

- What are the neighboring departments of Santander?
- What foreign country is closer to Santander?
- What departments are larger than Santander?
- What other departments have you visited?

2. Complete the conversation with the words in the box. Then, practice the conversation with your classmate.

more comfortable better closer beautiful

Carlos: It's a _____ day, isn't it, Samantha?
Samantha: It is. Should we go to San Pío park?
Carlos: Sure, why not?
Samantha: I think that park is _____ than Parque de los Niños.
Carlos: I don't know. For me, Parque de los Niños is _____.
Samantha: And it's also _____ to the library. Let's go there then?
Carlos: Sure!

GRAMMAR COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES

Comparative adjectives are adjectives that are used to compare people, objects, places, etc.

To make an adjective comparative, you must add the termination **-er** to it and add the word **than** after it.

José is shorter than Gabriel.

When the adjective has more than two syllables, the **-er** is not added and the word **more** is used instead.

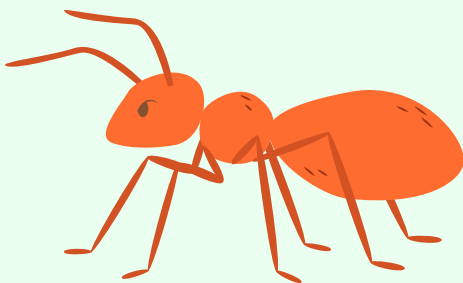
Carlos is more intelligent than me.

When you want to say that something or someone is less than another, then you will use the word **less**, instead of more. **Don't use -er!**

LISTENING 2.0

A FLAVORY DEPARTMENT

1. Listen to a recording about the different dishes from Santander. Match each one of the statements with the dish that corresponds.



A. Hormiga Culona



B. Mute Santandereano



C. Pepitoria

1. They are kind of a snack
2. Is some sort of goat rice with smoked goat
3. Is more flavory than Mute Santandereano
4. Is more difficult to prepare than Hormigas Culonas
5. Are more delicious than other insects he has eaten before
6. Is better than Hormiga Culona and Pepitoria
7. Was much bigger than Mute Santandereano and Hormigas Culonas
8. Are crispier than potato chips



Mauricio is less responsible than Jhon.

PRACTICE

1. According to the symbol, make the sentence using the comparative sentence

1. (+/-) Brayan is taller (tall) than me. / Brayan is less tall than me.
2. (+) Steven is _____ (fast) than César.
3. (+) Bucaramanga is _____ (big) than the city of Floridablanca.
4. (-) Sofía is _____ (disciplined) than the whole family.
5. (+) Estéban and his family are _____ (rich) than the whole school.
6. (-) My sisters are _____ (annoying) than my two younger brothers.

2. Fill the table with at least 2 characteristics from each dish.

Hormigas Culonas	
Mute Santandereano	
Pepitoria	

3. Discuss with one of your classmates the next questions.

- Which dish would you like to try? Why?
- Which dish have you tried?
- Which dish you did not like? Why?
- Which dish would you like to prepare?

READING

PÁRAMOS FOR EVERYONE!

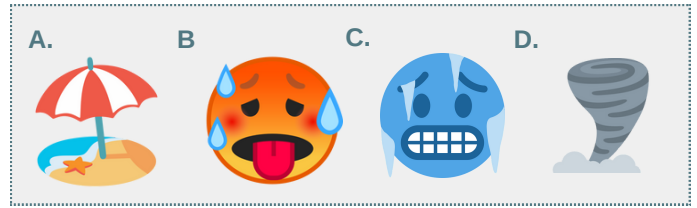
Did you know there are two páramos in Santander? **The Almorzadero Páramo**, and **The Santurbán Páramo**. These two páramos are located in the eastern part of the department, as they are part of the eastern range of the Colombian Andes. These páramos are over 2,500 meters above sea level, so the climate is incredibly cold and the living conditions are challenging.

The conservation and protection of these Páramos are very concerning tasks for Santandereanos. Their ecological value is immense, also, these páramos provide the Santandereanos with clean water for their daily activities. These páramos are a beautiful place to visit as well, as the landscapes that you can see there are jaw-dropping.



PHOTO BY: FELIPE VILLEGAS

1. Choose the picture that describes the páramos best.



2. Find the words from the texts that are related to the definitions.

1. Incredible or unbelievable. Something that will surprise you: _____
2. Difficult or hard to execute: _____
3. Important or worrying: _____
4. Huge or big: _____

3. Write five sentences comparing the two páramos. You can search for more information about the páramos on the internet.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



QUIZPLAY

For this activity, you should have an electronic device with access to the internet.

Make teams of 4. Complete the questions and the challenges. The team that ends first, wins the game.

1. What is the largest páramo in the world?

2. How many páramos are in Colombia?

3. What páramos are outside of Colombia?

4. Complete the name of the next páramos.

1		A	S		P		P		
2		H		N		A	Z		
3			S		A				

READING

1. Read the text and add the missing words using the adjectives in the box in their superlative form.

important iconic relevant dry common famous

In today's world, water is a necessity for humans. Water is provided from different sources, but the ¹_____ water sources are rivers. Rivers flow all around the planet, even through the ²_____ deserts. Some rivers are wider than others, but some are longer and can cover thousands of kilometers. However, some are both; very wide and long; and that is the case of the Magdalena River, also known as the main artery of Colombia.

The Magdalena River is born in the Las Papas Páramo, in the department of Huila, southwest of the country. It is the ³_____ river in the country because it flows through densely populated areas, and provides people with fish (food), water, and also other valuable resources that help Colombians. Amongst some of the cities that the Magdalena flows through, Barrancabermeja, Neiva, Honda, Puerto Boyacá, and Barranquilla are the ⁴_____.

Through time, the Magdalena has been the place where many of the ⁵_____ events in Colombia have happened, that's why the Magdalena River is considered one of the ⁶_____ features of Colombia.

2. Read the text and answer the next questions.

- What size characteristics does the Magdalena River have?
- According to the text, why is the Magdalena River the most important river in Colombia?
- What is said about Colombian history and the Magdalena River?



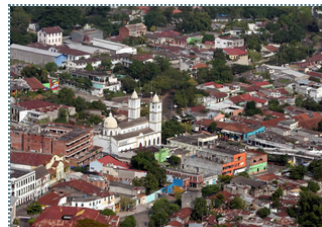
3. Read some of the characteristics of the cities that are in the path of the Magdalena River. Make sentences about them using superlative adjectives.



Barranquilla
Population: 1.206.000
Location: Caribe Region
Elevation: 18 m
Average temperature: 27° C



Puerto Boyaca
Population: 56.000
Location: Andina Region
Elevation: 145 m
Average temperature: 27,5° C



Honda
Population: 24.000
Location: Andina Region
Elevation: 229 m
Average temperature: 24,7° C



Neiva
Population: 373.000
Location: Andina Region
Elevation: 442 m
Average temperature: 29,4° C

- Neiva is the second most populated city.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

FACTBOX

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD ABOUT THE MAGDALENA MEDIO BEFORE? THE MAGDALENA MEDIO IS A STRETCH OF THE MAGDALENA RIVER THAT COVERS FROM HONDA, TOLIMA, UP UNTIL THE CARIBE REGION. THE MAGDALENA MEDIO HAS BEEN A HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT PLACE AS SEVERAL ARMED GROUPS HAVE DISPUTED ITS CONTROL FOR DECADES.

LISTENING 2.1

FISHERMEN OF THE MAGDALENA

1. Listen to a fisherman of the Magdalena talk about his livelihood. Number the topics in a-e in the order that they are mentioned.

- the abundance of fish was at its lowest
- the preservation of the local species
- the waters are abundant in fish
- the ciénagas that are close to his house
- the type of fish that he always tries to get

2. Choose the correct answer about what the fisherman said.

- I live next to the Magdalena River, the importantest/most important river in Colombia.
- I also live near some of the most beautiful/beautifulest ciénagas in Colombia.
- That type of fish is the profitablest/most profitable to sell.
- It was one of the most hardest/hardest moments in my life.

3. Listen again. Check the box and tick the phrases that are mentioned in the audio.

- I am a fisherman of the Magdalena.
- I have to get up early and go to the river to fish.
- It isn't really easy.
- We didn't have anything to sell.
- Our situation was worrying.
- Some of the fishermen had to find different jobs.
- Luckily, there hasn't been a change recently.



GRAMMAR SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

Superlative adjectives are adjectives that are used to indicate that a person, an object, etc, is the most in a group.

To make an adjective superlative, you must add the article *the* before the adjective, and the termination *-est* to the adjective.

Cesar is the shortest kid in the class.

When the adjective has more than two syllables, the *-est* is not added and the word most is used instead.

Andrés is the most reliable person in the class.

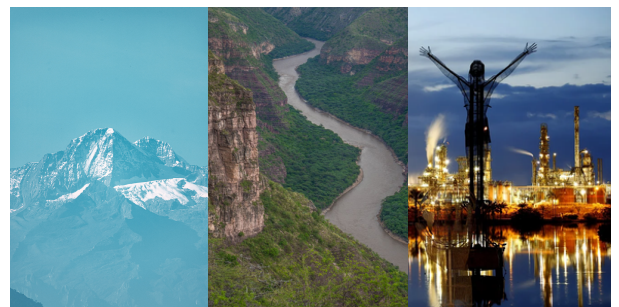
When you want to say that something or someone is the least in a group, then you will use the word least, instead of most. **Don't use -est!**

PRACTICE

1. Complete the sentences using the adjectives in the box. Remember to use their superlative form.

smart important cold difficult hot tall dangerous

- The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta should be one of _____ in Colombia.
- Kevin is _____. He should be able to reach the ceiling with his fingers.
- Julio is _____ teacher. He knows everything!
- Barrancabermeja is one of _____ places in Santander.
- Swimming during rainy seasons is likely _____ activity here.
- I won't pass the exam. It was _____ I ever had.
- The Sogamoso River is from the 5 _____ rivers in Santander.



READING

THE MAGDALENA MEDIO GIANT

1. Read two different stories from two Barranqueños. What similarities between both stand the most?



- Junior
- 19
- Barrancabermeja resident



- Diana
- 24
- Barrancabermeja resident

I have lived in Barranca all my life because all my family is from here. A lot of people will tell you it's not a good place because it's hot, but for me, it's the perfect place. The amount of places you can visit is endless. It's the funniest city out there.

You have a river, the largest in the country as a matter of fact. Also, you have a lot of ciénagas around to swim and have paseos de olla. You can spot the most beautiful animals ranging from manatíes to wild birds. You won't find that elsewhere. Those are not the only things I love the most about Barranca. I love the ambiance, the people, and the infrastructure, everything about Barranca makes me happy. Probably, I am the proudest Barranqueño in the country.

Barrancabermeja is a great city. It has a lot of interesting places to visit like the docks or the San Silvestre mall. Also, it's a fun place to go out on weekends because nights are usually very active with bars all over the city.

Although I have a big issue with Barrancabermeja; it's too hot.; probably the hottest place I know. I have lived here all my life so I can say it! For example, a lot of houses here must have an air conditioner system, otherwise, you would be burned alive inside your house! You can't stay too long indoors because it's the most overwhelming weather. It's just too hot. The only positive about that is that you have to take a shower very often. Barranca makes you live a clean life!

2. Answer the questions.

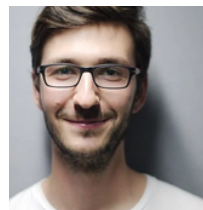
- Who seems to be the most positive about Barrancabermeja? Why?
- What are the most notorious differences between Junior and Diana about their opinion of Barrancabermeja?
- What factors stand out the most about their opinions of Barrancabermeja?

3. Write down the expression from the text that are related to the next definitions:

1. In fact:
2. Something that doesn't end or is limitless:
3. An exaggeration about living inside a hot place:
4. To have a big problem:

4. Three foreign tourists are looking for a city to visit and Barrancabermeja is on their list. Check the box if you think that Barrancabermeja suits them as a potential city to visit. Explain why and why not in the space below each.

Bertrand



I love sunny days and beaches. I want to have a lot of fun! ☀️

Sahad



Nature and marine life are my passions. Some good fish for lunch is my fav! 🐟

Marcos



Give me some cold and windy places. Allergic to fish 🤢

LISTENING 2.2

1. Listen to the recording and put the number of the recording according to the pictures that you see below



2. Answer the questions about the recording.

- What did the speakers talk about?
 - incredible Colombia stories
 - tragic events that happened in Santander
 - stories about children
- What place was not mentioned by the speakers?
 - Bucaramanga
 - San Gil
 - La Rochela
- What event was related to sexual harassment?
 - the Hidrosogamoso displacement
 - the Berlín operation
 - the children abuse in Riachuelo

3. Make pairs and discuss.

- Which event shocked you the most?
- Which event did you find the most interesting?
- What story would you share?
- Why do you think these stories must be shared?

4. Match the statements with their respective story.

**La Rochela
Massacre**

**Hidrosogamoso
displacement**

**The Berlín
Operation**

**Children abuse in
Riachuelo**

**The
Barrancabermeja
Massacre**

- Beauty pageants organized by school principals to where girls were selected to be raped by paramilitares.
- One of the most sadistic events in Santander history where 7 people where killed and 25 were kidnapped.
- The massive building of a megaproject made a lot of peasant families get forcefully displaced by the government.
- A massacre executed by paramilitaries and military forces where investigators were killed while on their duty.
- A combat between FARC and the military forces in which children who were forcefully recruited by FARC perished.

SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE FRENTE ISIDRO CARREÑO

1. Find the hidden words using the definitions that are given.

event where items are sold to the highest bidder

- u o n t i a c

treat somebody with cruelty and violence

- e u a s b

to abduct or hold somebody captive

- a p n k d i

emotion felt when you are in danger

- a f r e

LISTENING 2.3

2. Listen to Yury, a victim of the Frente Isidro Carreño. As if you were to inform the police, fill in the police report card with the information that she is providing you.

CRIME REPORT

DATE: _____

CRIME (WHAT HAPPENED?):

WHO CAUSED/DID IT?

FACTBOX

THE FRENTE ISIDRO CARREÑO WAS A PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATION THAT HAD CONTROL OVER LARGE TERRITORIES IN THE SIMACOTA BAJO, SANTANDER. THEY FOUND PROFIT BY ILLEGALLY SELLING GASOLINE AND EXTORTING THEIR VICTIMS.

3. How would you describe Yury's situation? Write a short text about it.

SPEAKING

1. With the help of the sentence builder, make sentences describing a difficult moment. Share them with your classmates.

I lived a similar situation...
I had to go through...
The most difficult time of my life...
Something I will always remember...
An horrible experience I lived was when...



READING

LOST CHILDHOOD

1. Read the interview about one former member of a paramilitary group in Santander. Discuss with your classmates.

- What is the feeling that the victim conveys?
- What other questions would you ask to this person?
- Do you think that this person still suffers from the consequences of joining the paramilitary forces?

2. Read the text again. Complete the sentences with the correct expression/word.

1. The victim is sharing a heartbreaking _____.
2. The victims didn't have parents. He was an _____.
3. For him, seeing weapons was cool. It _____.
4. The paramilitary forces gave him weapons as soon as he joined because they wanted to _____ him.

3. What does the victim mean with the next expressions?

- It caught my attention
- I was outdoors the whole day
- I wasted my time
- I regret it immensely

WRITING

1. In each one of the boxes, make three drawings that represent three different emotions that you felt after reading the text.

--	--	--

2. Create a short ending in which you tell how the victim left the paramilitary forces.

Around 70 children from the municipalities of Charalá (Riachuelo) and Coromoro (Cincelada) were victims of different crimes committed by a paramilitary group called Frente Comuneros Cacique Guanentá. This group belonged to the AUC, Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia. One of these children became a victim after joining voluntarily the paramilitary group. Read his testimony.

Interviewer: So how old were you when the AUC recruited you?

Victim: I was 13 years old.

Interviewer: How did you end up joining them?

Victim: We had never seen people carrying weapons in Riachuelo, so I was really shocked. It caught my attention during that time. I thought it was cool.

Interviewer: Why did it catch your attention?

Victim: I was an orphan. I was outdoors the whole day. When I was in my early teenage days, the most technological things that I could see were those weapons and guns.

Interviewer: Was your experience in the paramilitary forces "cool", then?

Victim: It was like being arrested. It's easy to get arrested, but it's really hard to get out of jail.

Interviewer: When did you get your first weapon?

Victim: As soon as I joined. They wanted to motivate us.

Interviewer: Now you are 33 years old. It's been 20 years since you joined the paramilitary forces. Was it a good decision?

Victim: No. I wasted my time. I wasted my life. I lost my childhood. It still hurts me in the present. I lost my future. I have pain, death, suffering, and family losses. I regret it immensely.



PHOTO BY: INFOBAE

UNIT 3

SIEGE ANECDOTES

In this unit, a shallow rewind of history in the capital of Bogotá will be made. A major focus will be placed on the capital in the 80s, and also the historical and horrid events that unfolded in the Palace of Justice of Bogotá in 1985.

Perhaps, 1985 could be considered the worst year in the history of Colombia. More specifically, November of 1985 might be the most tragic month in the history of the country. The Palace of Justice was taken by a guerrilla group, and, almost immediately after, a volcano in the western center of the country decided to break hell loose.

UNIT STARTING ACTIVITY

1. There is an old picture on top of the page. What do you think is happening there?
2. Put the words in the category that they belong.

vintage young past outdated
recent antique modern contemporary

old	new

By Daniel Santos

READING



It's impossible to talk about Colombia without mentioning its capital, Bogotá. Whatever happened in Bogotá, ended up having an impact on the whole country and was shown in the headers of the most famous newspapers.

Bogotá in the 80s was a city full of iconic places and landmarks. From Crepes & Waffles to Café Imperial, or from Teatro Skandia to Parque Timiza; Bogotá always had something to distract its visitors and locals.

During the 80s, new neighborhoods started to grow the city population exponentially. Colombia had started a heinous relationship with drugs and drug trafficking, which ended up affecting the country's social status deeply. Many people were forcefully displaced from their houses in the countryside because their lands were going to be used to plant cannabis and coca. Many of those displacement victims ended up in Bogotá, hence starting the creation of illegal settlements in localities as Kennedy, as these victims didn't have a place to go.

Bogotá also became the cradle of a music movement in Colombia. The phenomenon of Punk music arrived in Colombia during the 80s. Bands such as La Pestilencia, Ekhyrosis, and Perseo were just some of the most renowned bands from the movement initiated in Bogotá. To this day, the remnants of Bogotá's punk influence are still alive.

Although the city has changed considerably since then, most of the representative places from Bogotá are still in place. The lives of "Rolos", as they call the people from Bogotá, have been influenced by time, but Bogotá is still Bogotá, as bohemian and cold as it has always been.



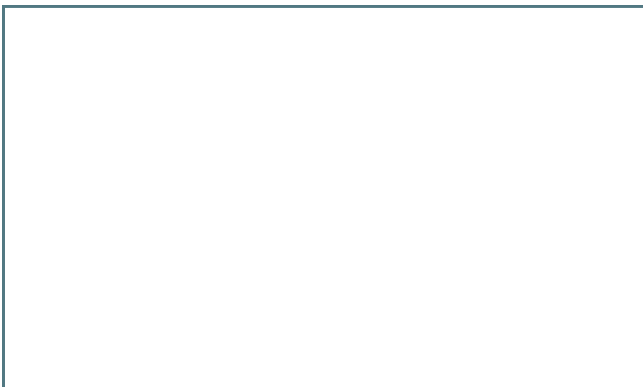
1. Read the text about Bogotá in the 80s. Make groups and discuss.

- Have you been to Bogotá? Did you like it? Why / why not?
- Has there been any kind of music revolution in your city like there was in Bogotá with Punk music?
- Do you know any sector of your city that has received a lot of displacement victims like the Kennedy locality in Bogotá?
- How much has your city changed from your earliest memory to how it is now?

2. Number the paragraphs in the order that they are mentioned in the text.

- Talking about the influence that Bogotá had _____ on music in Colombia
- Talking about how Bogotá has changed _____
- Talking about Bogotá and its influence on the country _____
- Talking about different places of Bogotá that were usually visited by locals _____
- Talking about how a locality saw population growth because of displacement _____

3. Draw a picture about how you imagine Bogotá was in the 80s.



FACTBOX

BOGOTÁ, THE CAPITAL OF COLOMBIA, IS BY FAR THE MOST POPULATED CITY IN THE COUNTRY WITH OVER 8 MILLION INHABITANTS.

GRAMMAR

REPORTED SPEECH: PRESENT SIMPLE TO PAST SIMPLE

The reported speech is used when we want to tell somebody about something that another person told us before. For example:

Sara to Daniel: *Daniel, I am hungry (direct speech)*

Daniel to Camila: *Sara said that she was hungry (reported speech)*

In order to build the reported speech in present simple, use the verb tell/say in its past form, and then simply transform the main verb of the sentence into its past form as well.

Brayan told me that he liked the movie

Orlando said that he called mom

PRACTICE

1. Turn these sentences from direct speech to reported speech.

1. Kevin: I like eating chocolates

Kevin said he liked eating chocolates

2. Oscar: I don't work in the mornings

3. Kiara: I take the bus near my house

4. Paola: I use my computer to do my homework

5. Ingrid: I don't drink alcohol

2. Use *said* or *told* depending on the situation.

1. You said that you used my cellphone.

2. María _____ me that you were not welcome.

3. Ciro _____ you that he ate a lot.

4. You _____ her that you didn't have money.

5. I _____ that I didn't want to go.





PHOTO BY: VIVIANA CACUA

 **READING**
THE CARTUCHO

1. Watch the picture above. What can you say about the place that is shown?

2. Read the text. Write T if the statement is true, or F if the statement is false.

1. El Cartucho is a street currently located in Bogotá.
2. El Cartucho and the Parque Tercer Milenio are located close to each other.
3. The street of El Cartucho was considered a no-go place in Bogotá.
4. The demolition of El Cartucho helped in lowering the crime rate of Bogotá.

EL CARTUCHO: THE PLACE THAT EVERYBODY FEARED

There is a beautiful park in downtown Bogotá (Santa Fe locality); it's called Parque Tercer Milenio. Perhaps, many of the people who visit the park think this park is just, a park. However, the story of this place goes beyond.

Before the creation of the Parque Tercer Milenio in the Santa Inés neighborhood, a street called *El Cartucho* used to dominate the whole landscape. But, what made this place so peculiar? Well, it was the most dangerous and one, if not the poorest, place in Bogotá. Prostitution, drug trafficking, hitmen, rippers, robberies; *El Cartucho* built a reputation that made the people from the capital not want to enter it. *El Cartucho* was indeed a different place, and words can't really explain how chaotic it was. The following are some of the views shared by former residents of *El Cartucho*:

I lost all my family.

My wife, she died from cardiac arrest.

My son, he died in a bike accident. My other son, he died in a truck accident. I lost control, and I lost all hope in life. I just came to El Cartucho, and I think I will die here.

In the streets of El

Cartucho, you don't need anything. You

get food, you get

clothes, you get

everything. But then,

you lose as well. You can get killed

anyday. You can lose your life anytime.

What you see

everyday in El

Cartucho are

problems, traumas.

This is what you

have to face

everyday. You can

die here just for

giving food.

In the late 90s and beginning of the 2000s, the Bogotá mayor and his cabinet demolished *El Cartucho* to suppress the hundreds of crimes that were being committed there. Then, the building of the famous Parque Tercer Milenio started, until it was opened in 2004. Curiously, the demolition of *El Cartucho* wasn't as effective as the Bogotá authorities thought. A considerable percentage of the residents of *El Cartucho* moved to *El Bronx*, but that is another different long story to tell.





3. In a ten-words sentence, describe *El Cartucho*.

4. Make pairs and discuss.

- Why do you think *El Cartucho* was the center of illegal activities in Bogotá?
- Why do you think the demolition of *El Cartucho* was not effective in reducing the crime rates in Bogotá?
- What would you do if you had had the chance to visit *El Cartucho*?

LISTENING 3.0


1. Listen to 5 people talk about their experience in Bogotá. Complete the information that is missing.

	Arley I go to Bogotá every year for Christmas. I just think the city is beautiful, and I love the cold weather. I have a _____ with traffic in Bogotá, though.
	Guillermo Bogotá is a _____. It's dangerous in some parts. But, you can have a lot of fun there. I like _____ the different parks and museums.
	Tatiana I love _____ La Candelaria. It's such a beautiful place. Also, _____ Usaquén is really relaxing. Bogotá is fantastic, except for the traffic. It's horrible.
	Lucila Bogotá is both _____ and _____. I like those two sides of Bogotá. Also, Bogotá is huge. I don't even know 10% of this city. I want to know everything about it!

2. Discuss with your classmates the following questions about what the speakers said.

- What other places have you heard of about Bogotá?
- What is one of the most common complaints about Bogotá?
- What are some of the characteristics that are mentioned by the speakers?

3. Complete the conversation with the information that was given to you using the reported speech.



SO, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT BOGOTÁ?

4. Complete the table with expressions from exercise 1.

characteristics	places	problems
<i>the city is beautiful</i>		

WRITING

1. Complete the conversation with the correct option from the box.

- he was assisted by medicine students in the bus
- but he had a bad time there because he is claustrophobic
- yikes! that must have been hell!
- he told me that he got stuck in a traffic jam

 **What happened with Nicolás in Bogotá?**

 **Well, he called me this afternoon. _____ and had a panic attack.**

 _____ **. But what happened, is he okay?**

 **He said that he is fine right now.** _____

 **Did he go to the hospital or something?**

 **No. He said that _____.**

 **God bless him. I hope he is fine.**

 **I'll let you know about his state whenever we talk again.**

GRAMMAR

REPORTED SPEECH: PAST SIMPLE TO PAST PERFECT

The reported speech in the past simple form is used when you want to share something that a person told you that happened in the past.

Mery to Rocio: *I was sick yesterday.*

Rocio to Carlos: *Mery said that she had been sick the day before. (Reported speech)*

In order to build the reported speech in present simple, use the verb **tell/say** in its past form, and then use the main verb of the sentence in its past perfect form.

Tania told me that she had gone to the hospital

Johan said that his father had talked with the teacher

PRACTICE

1. Read the text. Find the sentences that are using the reported speech.

Did you know that there was a party today? Well, there is a party near Puente Aranda, and Tatiana invited us. She told us that the party had been prepared to celebrate her birthday. She said that her party had taken over a month to be fully prepared and then she was tired. I think I am going to her party. Are you going to come as well?

2. Choose the correct form of the reported speech to complete the sentence.

- Lina said that she had been to Bogotá/is been to Bogotá last year.
- Betty told us that she worked in a restaurant/works in a restaurant in Suba.
- My teacher said that he walked/has walked 30 minutes to go home.
- Sonia told us that Ciudad Bolívar was/is a good place to live.
- Catalina told us yesterday that she had called/has called her mother to see if she was fine.



SPEAKING

1. Go to Page 27. Read what some people said about Bogotá in *Reading, Exercise 1*. Listen to the questions and answer them using that information. Use the spaces to write your answers.

3.1 1. _____

3.2 2. _____

3.3 3. _____

3.4 4. _____

THE PROBLEM WITH BOGOTÁ

1. Match the words with their definitions.

to take care of

to give

nobody

opportunity

A. to transfer the possession of something.

B. a chance to get something or get something done.

C. to keep something or someone safe.

D. no person; no one.

LISTENING 3.5

2. Listen to a resident of Bogotá and answer the next questions.

1. Why is Bogotá not for everyone?

2. Why do people come to live in Bogotá?

3. What is Bogotá's biggest problem according to the speaker?

4. What does he mean by "Bogotá is nobody's land"?

3. Discuss the next questions with your classmates.

- What do you think makes people want to live in Bogotá?
- Would you like to live in Bogotá? Why/why not?

READING

THE PLAZA DE BÓLIVAR



The historic center of Bogotá has one of the most **iconic** places in the country. We are talking about the Plaza de Bolívar, the most important plaza in Bogotá and Colombia. But, why is it so important? The Plaza de Bolívar is **surrounded** by buildings that hold a high degree of importance for Colombia. For example, in the south of the Plaza, there is the National Capitol, and, in the north, there is the Palacio de Justicia. The Plaza de Bolívar is also one of the most **touristy** places in Bogotá. Tourists always want to visit this place to take pictures of themselves or just pictures of people walking by and feeding the thousands of pigeons that invade it. Throughout time, this plaza has always been important. Centuries ago, people were executed publicly in the plaza, now, it has become the **landmark** of La Candelaria locality, and also an important **venue** for events.

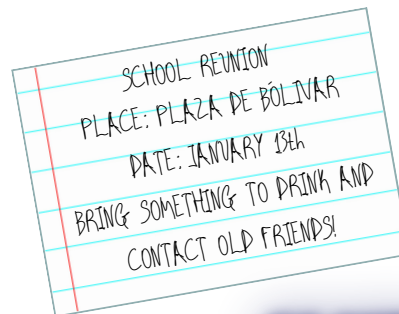
1. Complete the sentences with the words that are in bold from the text.

1. My friends said that the Plaza de Bolívar was an important _____ of Bogotá because a lot of people can fit there.
2. Somebody told me that the Palacio de Justicia had been _____ by the military in 1985.
3. Carmen said that the Plaza de Bolívar was an _____ place because many important things happened there.
4. Lorena told me that the Plaza de Bolívar was the best _____ of Bogotá to guide me around the city.
5. People said that the Plaza de Bolívar was one of the most _____ places in Bogotá.

2. What type of events can be held in the Plaza de Bolívar?

WRITING

1. Read the invitation for a school reunion. Write a short message to one of your friends informing him/her about it. Use the reported speech.



Hey! I got a letter that said

FACTBOX

THE WORD BOGOTÁ COMES FROM THE MUISCA WORD BACATÁ. CENTURIES AGO, THE PLACE WAS A SETTLEMENT OF THE MUISCAS, THE MOST IMPORTANT TRIBE OF THE CHIBCHA FAMILY.

 **READING**

THE SIEGE OF THE PALACIO DE JUSTICIA



The Plaza de Bolívar, the emblematic plaza of Bogotá, was apparently having a normal day on November 6, 1985. Months before, leaks suggested that the left-wing group M-19 was planning to attack the Palacio de Justicia, but those rumors were forgotten after some time. Nonetheless, on that day, M-19 finally assaulted the Palacio de Justicia and took hostage hundreds who were inside the building. The M-19 entered through the basement and the first floor of the building. They killed the security guards and proceeded to go up until they had control of all the floors for more than 20 hours. It was just the beginning of an unprecedented tragedy.

The next day, the Colombian national army had a clear determination to suspend all types of dialogue with M-19 and take the Palacio back by force. Armed vehicles (as seen in the picture above) raided the Plaza de Bolívar and knocked down the main entrance of the Palacio, opening the path for the army soldiers to enter the building.

The incident took an even more tragic turn when the building was set on fire with all the people inside due to the heat caused by explosions. All documents and wooden furniture of the Palacio fueled the fire that consumed the whole building. It took 2 days to end the fires, even with the constant assistance of the firemen department of Bogotá. 98 people died that day.

1. Number the events in the order that they happened according to the text.

- The building is set on fire with all the people ____ inside.
- The military enters the building to gain its ____ control back.
- The M-19 convoys takeover the Palacio de ____ Justicia.
- The firefighters extinguished the fire after 2 ____ days.

2. Read the following statements. Which one do you think was the main reason for M-19 to commit these acts??

- a. The cartels pushing M-19 to invade the Supreme Court in order to abolish a new extradition policy.
- b. The killing of one of the commanders of M-19.
- c. Taking control of the city of Bogotá.



PHOTO BY: JAIRO BUITRAGO

FACTBOX

THE SIEGE OF THE PALACIO DE JUSTICIA WAS SO SHOCKING FOR COLOMBIANS BACK IN THE DAY, THAT MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ALIVE BACK THEN STILL REMEMBER WHAT THEY WERE DOING AT THE MOMENT OF THE TRAGEDY.

1. Observe the picture below. What can you see here? What similarities it has with other pictures seen before?



2. Work in pairs and discuss the next questions.

- Did you hear about the siege before?
- Do you know somebody who was alive during the siege? What were they doing during the siege?

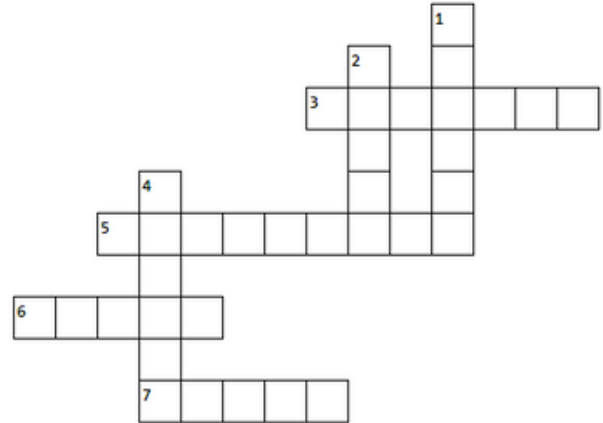
LISTENING 3.6

3. Listen to two people who watched the event through TV.

1. What expression did the man use to talk about this incident?
 - a. he said that he didn't remember it
 - b. he said that he was shocked
 - c. he said that he was surprised
2. What were the "microondas"?
 - a. what they called live TV in the 80s in Colombia
 - b. a microwave to cook your food
 - c. their TV
3. What did they say about those who disappeared?
 - a. they said that they are safe now
 - b. they said that they never found them
 - c. they said that they found them

WRITING

1. Complete the crossword with the words according to their definitions. Use the text below as clue.



Across

3. not possible to be found
5. be lost or go missing
6. something that is true
7. to express the pain that someone goes through after losing somebody they love

Down

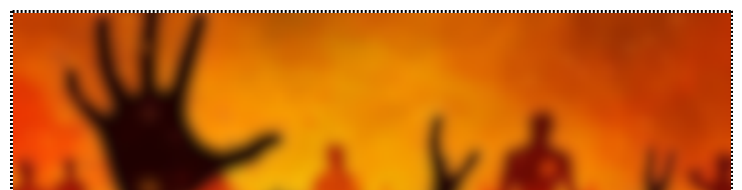
1. a solution to a question
2. military operation where a group takes control of a place
4. somebody that is affected by a crime

2. Make pairs and complete the story by writing its last paragraph. You can use words from the previous exercise.

The families of many were devastated after the Siege. After all, 98 people died, and some of them disappeared. Families of those who disappeared are still mourning them. The pain that these families go through is indescribable "We never it would be the last time we would see them", "I miss him every day", "What happened to her?".

Some researchers say that those who disappeared might have been burned to ashes inside the Palacio de Justicia, and that's why nobody knows what happened to them. Some others accuse the government of disappearing them on purpose.

Anyways, _____



 **READING**

ARMERO



If you thought that November was done, then you were wrong. 4 days after the massacre that took place in the Palacio de Justicia, something even worse was underway.

In September of 1985, Nevado del Ruíz volcano showed signs of instability. Starting November of 1985, scientists and geologists warned the government about a possible eruption of the Ruíz volcano, event that became a reality on November 13th. The eruption was mild, but the heat of the eruption melted the glaciers on top of the volcano, and that created immense lahars that traveled the volcano slopes at fast velocities.

Unfortunately, the volcano erupted at night, when the people least expected it. The lahars became so enormous, that they completely destroyed the 3rd largest town in the Tolima department, Armero. Neighboring towns like Chinchiná were also destroyed.

This natural disaster took the lives of more than 23.000 people! 23.000! After the tragic event, the town of Armero was erased from the planet, and the memory of those who died there is still in the hearts of Colombians.



This is a picture of Armero after being obliterated by the Ruíz volcano

1. Make pairs and discuss about the Armero tragedy.

- Do you think that this tragedy could have been prevented from happening?
- What responsibility does the government have in this tragedy?
- Is Colombia prepared to face situations like the Armero tragedy right now?
- What things can be learned from this heartbreaking event?

2. Read the text and answer the questions.

1. How many days passed after the siege of the Palacio de Justicia and before the eruption?

2. What was the force of the eruption?

3. What was the real thing that destroyed Armero?

FACTBOX

Omayra Sánchez became the symbol of the Armero tragedy. She was stuck for more than 50 hours underwater. It is said that it wasn't possible to save her because there was not the required equipment to free her without damaging her legs. She died on November 16th at 10:05 AM after 60 hours of sufferment.



Omayra Sánchez, 1985



**TRUTH AND
MEMORY
ENGLISH WORKSHOPS**