

Mexican Independence Day

Every morning a priest named Miguel Hidalgo would ring the bell in his church. The people of his parish were used to hearing the bell. But on the morning of September 16, 1810, they heard something unusual. As Father Hidalgo rang the bell that morning he shouted, "*¡Viva la Independencia! ¡Viva México!*"

Father Hidalgo's cry for Mexican independence started a long fight for freedom from Spain. His words (called *El Grito de Dolores*) spread all over Mexico. He tried to lead a Mexican war for independence. But in 1811 he was captured by the Spanish and shot as a traitor.

Today, Miguel Hidalgo is remembered as the Father of Mexican Independence. And the Mexican people celebrate his famous shout on September 16 as Mexican Independence Day. Every year the president of Mexico rings the very same bell that Father Hidalgo rang in 1810, and the president repeats *El Grito de Dolores*.

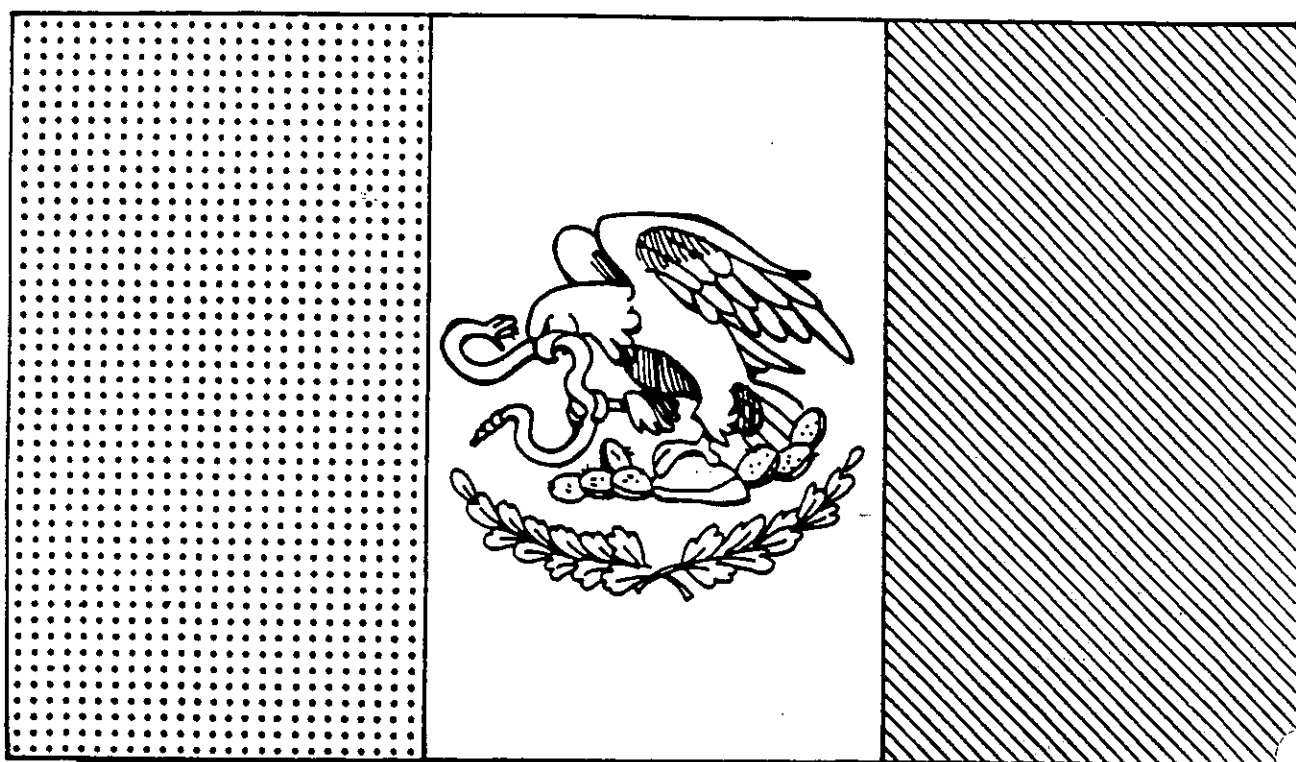
To show pride in their country on Independence Day, Mexicans fly the flag and sing

the national anthem, "*Mexicanos, al Grito de Guerra.*" In each city and town, crowds gather in the *zócalo* (town square). Flags and wreaths of flowers drape the buildings. Confetti and paper streamers fly everywhere.

Some towns add still more noise and color with a *torito*. A *torito* is a little toy bull made of wire, paper, and straw. Attached to the toy are firecrackers, sparklers, and pinwheels. A boy carries the *torito* on his shoulders, and as he dashes through the streets, sparks go shooting in every direction.

One of the big events of Mexican Independence Day is the National Lottery. Because the lottery tickets are so inexpensive, almost everyone can buy a chance to win the top prize. The lucky person who wins becomes an instant millionaire! The winning ticket is drawn from a gigantic container in Mexico City. But nearly everyone in Mexico watches on television or listens to the radio to see who will win. The Lottery helps bring Mexicans together as they celebrate their Independence Day holiday.

La bandera de México



La bandera de México es de tres colores—verde, blanco y rojo.

Hay un emblema en el centro de la bandera.

En el emblema hay un águila con una serpiente en el pico.

El águila está posada en un cacto.

Este emblema es de una leyenda de los aztecas.

Palabras Nuevas

la bandera
el emblema
el centro
un águila
una serpiente
el pico
está posada
un cacto
una leyenda
los aztecas

New Words

the flag
the emblem
the center
an eagle
a snake
the beak
is perched
a cactus
a legend
the Aztec Indians