La Llorona

Paso 1: Read the story to learn about the legend of La Llorona as told in Mexico.

Once upon a time there was a beautiful yet poor Aztec woman named María that lived in a small town in Mexico. She fell in love with a rich Spaniard and they had 3 children.

Even though the Spaniard loved the woman, he became afraid that his reputation was in danger for being with such a poor woman. He decided that he needed to leave her and marry a Spanish-bred woman instead.

When woman learned of this, she was overcome with grief and anger. She took their 3 children down to the river and drowned them all. She immediately regretted this decision and jumped in to try and save them, but it was too late.

Overcome with guilt over what she had done, she ended her own life. Hispanic legend says that she can still be seen wandering near rivers and bodies of water looking for her children in the night. Those who have seen her say she is tall and thin with long black hair and wears a long, white gown. She has even been known to take local children that she mistakes for her own should they be out at night. Her cries and screams often wake people from their sleep. This is why she is referred to as La Llorona or the “weeping woman”.

Paso 2: Draw a picture of La Llorona based on what you read.
Paso 3: In the legend of *La Llorona*, the man leaves María because he is afraid that being married to a poor woman will put his social status in danger. Look at the pyramid below which shows the different social classes that existed in Mexico at the time and respond to the questions below.

1. What was someone’s social status based on in colonial Mexico?
2. Which category would the man from the legend of *La Llorona* most likely fall into? Why?
3. Which category would María most likely fall into? Why?
4. Which category would the couple’s 3 children most likely fall into? Why?
Paso 4: Respond to the questions below about social status within your own school.

Does your school have a social hierarchy? Are some people considered more popular than others? Why?
What is your social status in your school based on? Give several examples.

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Paso 5: Create a social pyramid for your school with the types of people that are most popular at the top and least popular at the bottom. List the traits of each group in each section of the pyramid.
Paso 6: As with most legends, there are many different versions of the story with different details. Read this alternate version of the legend of *La Llorona* commonly told in the U.S. state of Texas, then compare and contrast the story with the original using the venn diagram provided.

There was a woman named Maria who had several children from her first marriage. Her first husband had died unexpectedly leaving her alone. Soon she met a man who swept her off of her feet, but he wanted nothing to do with her children. He promised her that they would have a wonderful life together, but only if she agreed to get rid of them. After much thinking, she decides to follow the man in a new life together and drowns her children in the Rio Grande. After a few months, the man grew tired of her and left her for another woman. Realizing that her selfish actions brought about the deaths of her children who truly loved her, she died in grief. Her spirit now wanders through the night eternally looking for her lost children.