

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

# Esperanza Rising

Pam Muñoz Ryan

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# ESPERANZA RISING

by  
Pam Muñoz Ryan

## Teacher Guide

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## Table of Contents

Summary .....	3
About the Author .....	3
Characters .....	3
Initiating Activities.....	4
Vocabulary Activities.....	5
Thirteen Sections.....	11
Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions .....	29
Post-reading Extension Activities.....	30
Assessment.....	31

## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Interpreting, evidence, compare/contrast, forming opinions, identifying stereotypes, paradox, pros/cons, research

### Comprehension

Cause/effect, classifying, details, generalizing, inferencing, main idea, predicting, summarizing

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, interview, music, oral report, role-playing

### Vocabulary

Compound words, context clues, Spanish words

### Writing

Article, description, editorial, poem, list, narrative, letter, report

### Literary Elements

Analogy, characterization, descriptions, foreshadowing, plot development, setting, point of view, simile, theme, personification

### Across the Curriculum

Art—architecture, crocheting, doll making, drawing; Music—dance, recording; Science—agriculture, fire safety, weather; Social Studies—maps, culture, history, politics, religion; Math—survey statistics

## Aguascalientes, Mexico and Las Uvas, pp. 1–22

The preface introduces Papa and six-year-old Esperanza in 1924. The father and daughter are walking through the vineyard, and Papa tells Esperanza that if she lies down, she can hear the heartbeat of the land. She listens and finally hears the heartbeat of the land combined with Papa's and her own.

In the second chapter, Esperanza begins the grape harvest by cutting the first bunch. At the end of the three-week harvest will be her thirteenth birthday and a big fiesta. She dreams of the time when she will have her presentation party. She remembers that at one time she wanted to marry Miguel, but her mother explained that a "big river" separates the landowners from the hired workers. Esperanza recalls how, when she told this to Miguel, their relationship changed from friends to acquaintances. Esperanza pricks her finger on a rose thorn, which foreshadows something painful to come. Miguel and his father finally appear, bringing his body home.

### Vocabulary

arbors (1)	tendrils (1)	scythes (1)	vicious (8)
premeditation (9)	serenaded (9)	porcelain (9)	porcelain (9)
acquaintances (13)	crochet (12)	unwashed (13)	nape (13)
capricious (13)	propriety (13)	philosophical (13)	resurrected (16)
entangled (21)	transforming (21)	candelabra (21)	

### Discussion Questions

1. What does the contextual information tell us about the story? *(It gives setting, time, and shows the relationship between Papa and Esperanza. Answers will vary. p. 1)*
2. Why do you think the land is important? Do you think it will play a part in the rest of the story? *(Papa's eyes dance with love for the land and when he says it is alive and has a heartbeat. Answers will vary. p. 1)*
3. Is it important that Esperanza hear not only the land's heartbeat but also her father's and her own? Why? *(Yes; Esperanza needs to feel that she, her father, and the land are all connected. Answers will vary. pp. 1–3)*
4. Why is it unusual for a female to cut the first grape cluster? *(This honor is usually reserved for the eldest son. p. 4)*
5. Explain the "big river" metaphor that separates Esperanza and Miguel. *(They are from different social classes and, therefore, unable to associate with each other and especially not get married. p. 18)*
6. No one says in words that Papa is dead (p. 22). Discuss how the characters express their feelings. *(Answers will vary.)*
7. **Prediction:** Abulelita says there is no rose without thorns. How does this saying predict what's to come in the story? *(It means there is no life without difficulties. Papa's death begins Esperanza's life of difficulties. p. 19)*

## Supplementary Activities

1. Social Studies: Have students locate Aguascalientes, Mexico, on a map. Let them guess where the fictional El Rancho de las Rosas should be.
2. Literary Analysis/Symbols: The heartbeat of the land symbolizes agriculture in the book. Have students begin a list of other symbols that occur in the book.
3. Literary Analysis/Characterization: Have students begin a character analysis chart (see page 9 of this guide) for Esperanza, Mamá, Ramón, and Abuelita.
4. Literary Analysis/Plot Development: Have students begin a plot graph (see page 10 of this guide) to use as they read the story.
5. Social Studies: Have students research the Mexican revolution of 1910 and make a chart of the leaders on each side.
6. Social Studies: Instead of chapter numbers, the author has named each chapter after a fruit or vegetable. Have the students begin a list of foods and add to it as they read each chapter. Have them write a sentence explaining the significance of each food to the story.
7. Science: Have the students research the way grapes used to be harvested by hand and compare it to how grapes are now harvested by machine.
8. Literary Analysis/Similes: The author uses similes that compare characters to animals—Alfonso looks like a “wretched puppy” (p. 16), and the two uncles look like “underfed billy goats” (p. 19). Have students bring a picture of a person from a magazine or newspaper and describe the person using an animal comparison. Have the students begin a list of similes and add to the list as they read.
9. Writing: Abuelita quotes an old proverb, “There is no rose without thorns,” which means that life has difficulties (p. 14). Have students find a familiar proverb and write a few sentences about its meaning.
10. Language: Have the students begin a list of Spanish words that are defined in the text and add to the list as they read the book.

## Using Predictions

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how a conflict will be resolved, which details will be important to the plot, which details will help fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses as they read the novel.

As students work on their predictions, these discussion questions can be used to guide them: What are some of the ways to predict? What is the process of a sophisticated reader's thinking and predicting? What clues does an author give to help you make predictions? Why are some predictions more likely to be accurate than others?

Create a chart for recording predictions. This could be either an individual or class activity. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, students can review and correct their previous predictions about plot and characters as necessary.

Use the facts and ideas the author gives.

Use your own prior knowledge.

Apply any new information (i.e., from class discussion) that may cause you to change your mind.

Predictions