

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Esperanza Rising

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

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Esperanza Rising

Background

All references come from the Scholastic, Apple Paperbacks, After Words edition of *Esperanza Rising*, Copyright 2000.

Pam Muñoz Ryan grew up the oldest of three sisters and twenty-three cousins in the San Joaquin Valley of California. Her grandmother, Esperanza Ortega, was the inspiration for *Esperanza Rising*, and Ryan remembers the stories about life in the company farm camp where her grandmother and grandfather worked and lived when they first came to America. After Ryan had her own children, she learned that her grandmother had once lived a privileged life in Mexico, and she wondered what it had been like transitioning from a life of wealth and luxury to the difficult, labor-intensive life of a farm camp in a foreign country. *Esperanza Rising* was born out of that wonder and parallels her grandmother's early life. Pam Muñoz Ryan lives in San Diego County, California, with her husband and four children.

Esperanza Rising

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. identify examples of the following literary devices:
 - simile
 - personification
 - metaphor
 - proverb
2. cite examples of the author's use of symbolism and imagery and discuss the meaning of these techniques within the text.
3. explain how *Esperanza Rising* can be considered a coming-of-age story.
4. define important vocabulary words found throughout the text.
5. discuss some of the reasons that Mexican immigrants came to the United States after the Mexican Revolution.
6. compare and contrast the different sides of the issue to strike.
7. discuss the variations of camp accommodations among the different nationalities and the reason for those variations.
8. analyze relationships between the characters and how those relationships shape the plot.
9. find incidents of discrimination in the text and discuss its role in the story.
10. identify the use of foreshadowing in the text.
11. Discuss how the workers measure time and the purpose for using this method.
12. identify and discuss the themes of the novel.

Esperanza Rising

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Explain how Abuelita uses the blanket as a metaphor. Use examples from the text to support your explanation.
2. How does the author use the phoenix to symbolize the theme “From the sorrows of the past, new beginnings can emerge”? Explain how Esperanza’s actions, thoughts, and emotions in the last chapter demonstrate this theme.
3. How does the author’s use of literary techniques help to emphasize the meanings of the events in the story? Provide examples from the text, identify the literary techniques, and explain their meanings.
4. Why do you think the author chose to name each chapter after a fruit or vegetable? How are these references integrated into the story?
5. Discuss the title, *Esperanza Rising*; what are the possible meanings of the title, and what are the possible reasons why the author chose it.
6. Examine the importance of family and friends to Esperanza and her family. What role do they play in their lives and how is this exhibited?
7. There are two sides to the issue to strike. Examine the arguments for and against the strike, and decide which argument is more compelling. Be sure to list the points you make, and cite examples from the text to support your opinion.
8. What would it be like to have your parents depend on you for support? What could you do to earn money to pay for the bills and food? Describe the jobs that you feel qualified to perform and how they could help support your family.
9. *Esperanza Rising* takes place during a period in history that experienced large migration westward for U.S. citizens and northward for Mexican citizens. What were some of the causes of this migration, both from Mexico and the Eastern United States? What were some of the effects of this migration? Use other resources to learn about additional causes and effects other than those illustrated in *Esperanza Rising*.
10. While *Esperanza Rising* takes place during the early part of the 20th century, the conditions that migrant workers live and work in have not changed much. Write a persuasive essay to convince readers that something needs to be done to change the working conditions of migrant workers in the United States.

Esperanza Rising

Aguascalientes, Mexico

1924

Vocabulary

incline – a bend or slant

tendril – a spirally stem that attaches a climbing plant to its support

1. What does Papa mean when he tells Esperanza that the land is alive?

2. Why does Papa teach Esperanza how to listen for the earth's heartbeat?

Las Cebollas

Onions

Vocabulary

accost – to make its presence known
foreman – the person in charge of workers
gingerly – with extreme care
plaited – braided
unrelenting – constant; endless

1. What is Esperanza's first impression of the cabins when they arrive at camp?

2. Why must Esperanza and Mama live with Alfonso and Hortensia?

3. What is Esperanza's reaction to this news?

10. How is Esperanza's kindness significant?

11. When Mama is well enough to come home, Esperanza and Hortensia are allowed to visit her. What does Hortensia tell Mama that makes Mama proud of Esperanza?

12. What does Esperanza find when she opens the valise to show Mama the money orders?
