

Esperanza Rising – Literature Circles and Review (Day 3)

Language Arts, Grade 6

Created by Keli Jacewitz, November 2007

Lesson Plan Summary: In this lesson plan, students will gain a deeper understanding of the information presented in the novel *Esperanza Rising* by taking part in a literature circle and engaging in peer discussion.

Objectives: The student will review information from the novel *Esperanza Rising*, characterization, and point of view.

Standards:

Reading/Comprehension. The student comprehends selections using a variety of strategies. Draw inferences such as conclusions or generalizations and support them with text evidence and experience. Write to inform/tell/explain/define. Including:

- Inferring: take specific information (from text and/or prior experience/learning) in order to draw a conclusion or form a generalization; an inductive process; “reading between the lines.” [The writer implies; the reader infers.]
- Drawing and Supporting Conclusions With and Without Text Evidence: A statement about an individual person, place, thing, or event that is supported by accurate information [Note: On TAKS, that information must come from the text.] Conclusions are “some” or “sometimes” statements. There are many different kinds of conclusions, e.g.:
 - a statement about an individual person, place, thing, or event;
 - a statement/conclusion about the future = prediction; and
 - a statement/conclusion about why something happened = cause/effect
- Forming Generalizations: A statement about a group/class of persons, places, things, or events supported by accurate information. [Note: On TAKS, that information must come from the text.] There are many different kinds of generalizations, e.g.
 - a straightforward statement about a group/class of persons, places, things, or events
 - a statement/generalizations about the future = prediction
 - a statement/generalizations about why something happened = cause/effectInductive process: draw conclusions and then validate/support it with text evidence, primarily direct quotations from the text
- Deductive process: validate/support conclusions and generalizations with text evidence (primarily direct quotations from the text)
- Represent text information in different ways such as in outline, timeline, or graphic organizer. Including:
 - Drawing Conclusions;
 - Analyzing Characters and Events.And using:
 - Venn Diagram: Comparison/Contrast of Traits/Characteristics of Two Characters
 - Web: Characteristics of a Character

TEKS §110.22. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 6.(b)(10)(H,L)

Reading/Literary Response. The student expresses and supports responses to various types of texts. Support responses by referring to relevant aspects of text and his/her own experiences.

Including:

- Analyze Characters/Motivation
- Analyze Characters/Traits
- Analyze Characters/Conflict
- Analyze Characters/Changes They Undergo

And support those responses with accurate, connected text evidence.

TEKS §110.22. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 6.(b)(11)(C)

Reading/Text Structures/Literary Concepts. The student analyzes the characteristics of various types of texts (genres) Describe how the author s perspective or point of view affects the text, including:

- why the author included certain pieces of text (e.g., introduction),
- why the author chose to tell the story from a narrator’s point of view
- why the author wrote the text (e.g., to inform, to persuade, to entertain)

And the traditional literary concept of point of view: Point of View

- Point of View: The perspective/attitude/stance toward an event, issue, another character
Point of view is “the vantage point, or stance” from which a story is told, the eye and mind through which the action is perceived and filtered. (this) is sometimes called narrative perspective.”
- 1st Person—“The narrator stands inside the story. The narrator may be the protagonist, a minor character, or a character who is not directly involved in the action but who functions as an observer and recorder. ... Employing first person point of view has several advantages. One of these is credibility. A strange or fantastic story is easier to believe if told by someone who is supposedly relating a first-hand experience. And it is far more natural for a character to reveal her own thoughts than it is for the author to tell us what she is thinking and feeling. Another advantage is in intimacy. The ‘I’ narrator seems to address the reader directly and from the heart, sharing his personal observations and insights with an interested listener. But first-person narration also has disadvantages. The reader can see, hear, and know only what the narrator sees, hears, and knows. The reader’s perceptions of other characters are colored by the narrator’s predispositions, prejudices, and personal limitations.”
- 3rd Person/ Omniscient—This is the most common 3rd person narrative perspective. “Here the narrator, standing outside the story, assumes a god-like persona, moving about freely in time and space, revealing the thoughts and motives of all the characters, knowing the past, present and future, and (sometimes) commenting on or interpreting the actions of the characters. The major advantage of this approach is its obvious freedom and unlimited scope. Its major disadvantage is a relative loss of vividness, involvement and intimacy. This disadvantage is overcome somewhat if the narrator assumes limited omniscience?”
- 3rd Person/Limited Omniscience—In 3rd person limited omniscience, the narrator focuses on the “thoughts of a single character and presents the other characters only externally. This more restricted approach surrenders the privileges of seeing and knowing everything and typically follows one character throughout the story, presenting only those incidents in which the character is involved.”
- 3rd Person/Objective—This point of view “is an even more restricted type of 3rd person limited omniscience that prevents any subjective commentary by the author.... (This approach) also abandons freedom of movement in time and space, examination of motives,

and revelation of thoughts, and restricts the narrator to only those objective details that can be seen and heard by an invisible witness. (This is sometimes) called the scenic method or the fly-on-the-wall technique.

TEKS §110.22. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 6.(b)(12)(H)

Prerequisite Skills: The student will need basic reading and writing skills. It is also important to understand and be able to apply characterization and point of view skills.

Anticipatory Set: Journal – Instruct the students to write a letter from Esperanza in California, to Abuelita still in Mexico. Allow the students to choose one of the following formats for their letter: a formal letter, a thank you note, a travelogue, a poem, or a request for her mother to join her in America.

Modeling: Place the students into small groups of 3-4 people. Pass out the literature circle questions and the novel. Explain to the students that the final test over the novel *Esperanza Rising* will take place the following day. Remind them that they need to review the information in the novel, as well as characterization and point of view. Give the students 20-30 minutes to complete and discuss the literature circle questions.

Show the students how to look in the book for the answers to literature circle questions. Explain how to politely disagree with each other and how to discuss the answers. Remind them to support their answers and opinions with pages from the book.

Check for Understanding: Have students tell their elbow partner one thing to remember when working together in groups.

Guided Practice: The students will work together in small groups to answer and find supportive text for the literature circle questions.

Closure: Once students have completed the literature circle questions, the teacher will lead a discussion about the answers.

Independent Practice: Students will take home the test review and work on it to study for the test. If time allows in class, students can work on it then.

Enrichment: Students can interview friends or family members who have had the experience of emigrating from one country to another. The student may bring notes from their interview back to school and type it up in the library.

Remediation:

- ESL - Partner with a strong English speaker. Allow students to work in partners. Allow students to draw pictures for their answers.
- GT - Students can complete the enrichment project.
- SPED - Follow the students IEP. Students can work in partners. Students can attend CM. The assignment can be shortened.

Assessment/Rubrics: Literature Circle Questions and Test Review

Materials:

- *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan - class set:
http://devo.sfasu.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=12A0314D82217.4263&profile=sfa&uri=link=3100006~!862116~!3100001~!3100002&aspect=basic_search&menu=search&ri=3&source=~!marquis&term=Esperanza+rising+%2F&index=TITLE%23focus#focus
- [Literature Circle Questions](#) - 1 per student
- [Test Review](#) - 1 per student

Name: _____

Date: _____

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan Literature Circle Discussion Questions

Directions: In your small group, discuss each question and the answer to the question. Look in the book to prove your answer. Write down the page number(s). Be prepared to discuss these as a whole class. **Take this page home to study for your test!!!**

1. How is Esperanza planning to spend her birthday? What does she anticipate happening? What actually happens? Page Number(s): _____

2. Who is Tio Luis? What does he want from Esperanza's mother? Does Esperanza like him? Why? Page Number(s): _____

3. Why does Esperanza and Mama have to leave El Rancho de las Rosas? Why do they have to leave in secret? Page Number(s): _____

4. What kind of people does Esperanza meet on the train? How does she feel about them and treat them? What does her mother think of her behavior? Page Number(s): _____

5. List some of the challenges that Esperanza encounters when she comes to the farm workers' camp. Why were they so difficult for her? Page Number(s): _____

6. How does working on finishing Abuelita's blanket sustain Esperanza when her mother is sick? What does it remind her of? What do you think it symbolizes? Page Number(s): _____

7. Explain the title of the book. How does it relate to the story? Use details from the story to support your point of view. **Hint: Esperanza is Spanish for hope.** Page Number(s): _____

Literature Circle Guide to
ESPERANZA RISING by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Book Summary

Esperanza believed her life would be wonderful forever. She would always live on her family's ranch in Mexico. She would always have fancy dresses and a beautiful home filled with servants. Papa and Abuelita would always be with her.

But a sudden tragedy shatters her world and Esperanza and Mama flee to California, where they settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard labor, financial struggles brought on by the Great Depression, and lack of acceptance she now faces. When Mama gets sick, and a strike for better working conditions threatens to uproot their new life, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances—because Mama's life and her own depend on it.

Author Information

Pam Muñoz Ryan, has written over 25 books for young people including the novel, *Esperanza Rising*, winner of the Pura Belpre Medal, the Jane Addams Peace Award, an ALA Top Ten Best Book for Young Adults, and the Americas Award Honor Book. Her novel, *Riding Freedom* has garnered many awards including the national Willa Cather Award, and the California Young Reader Medal. Her picture books for the very young and picture books for older readers, include the award-winning *Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride* and *When Marian Sang*, the recipient of the ALA Sibert Honor and NCTE's Orbis Pictus Award. She received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees at San Diego State University. She now lives in north San Diego County with her husband and four children.

Pam Muñoz Ryan was born and raised in California's San Joaquin Valley. She is the oldest of three sisters and the oldest of twenty-three cousins on her mother's side. She grew up with many of her aunts and uncles and grandparents nearby and considers herself truly American because her cultural background is an ethnic smorgasbord. She is Spanish, Mexican, Basque, Italian, and Oklahoman. During many long, hot valley summers, she spent most of her time riding her bike to the library. It became her favorite hang out because her family didn't have a swimming pool and the library was air-conditioned! That's how she got hooked on reading and books. After college, she knew that she wanted to work in a profession that had something to do with books, and she thought that would be teaching. She became a teacher, an administrator and then, at the encouragement of a friend who thought she could write, began her first book. That's when she finally knew what she really wanted to do.

Suggested Answers to Literature Circle Questions

- * 1. How is Esperanza planning to spend her birthday? What does she anticipate happening? What actually happens?

Esperanza anticipates a *fiesta* on her birthday, beginning with a serenade from her father and the men on the ranch, followed by many beautiful gifts (pp. 9-10).

Instead, her father does not return from the field and later his body is found (p. 22) and she learns he has been killed by bandits (p. 24).

- * 2. Who is Tío Luis? What does he want from Esperanza's mother? Does Esperanza like him? Why?

Tío Luis is one of Papa's stepbrothers (Tío Marco is the other) and the local bank president. After Papa's death, he wants to marry Mama so that he not only inherits the land, but also influence and power so that he can run for governor (pp. 31-33). Esperanza does not like Tío Luis, she thinks he is too "serious and gloomy," and that he and Tío Marco "looked like two underfed billy goats," (p. 19). Her father had said Tío Luis loves "money and power more than people," and he is considered a "devious, dangerous man," (p. 33). He threatens to make life impossible for Mama if she will not marry him, and to send Esperanza away to boarding school if she does.

- * 3. Why do Esperanza and Mama have to leave El Rancho de las Rosas? Why do they have to leave in secret?

Tío Luis burns the ranch to the ground (pp. 39-42) and threatens to do the same to the servants' homes if Mama will not marry him. She agrees, but instead makes plans to escape to America (pp. 46-50). They must depart in secret because Tío Luis' anger at the humiliation would be so great that he would do anything to find them and take revenge.

- * 4. What kind of people does Esperanza meet on the train? How does she feel about them and treat them? What does her mother think of her behavior?

Esperanza meets peasants and beggars on the train, thinking "they do not look very trustworthy," (p. 67) although they are in fact all very kind. She does not feel she belongs with them. When a peasant girl tries to touch her doll, she jerks it away and puts it back in her valise, causing her mother to apologize for her bad manners (p. 69) and selfishness.

5. Describe Miguel and Esperanza's friendship. What do they have in common? What are their differences?

Miguel and Esperanza both grew up on El Rancho de las Rosas, and would play together often when they were little. Both loved and respected Papa, and Papa treated Miguel almost like a son. Esperanza had wanted to marry Miguel when she was a young girl, but as she became older she felt the differences in their stations—she as the ranch owner's daughter, and he as the housekeeper's son—and that "between them ran a deep river," (pp. 17-18). Despite this they have great fondness for one another, even though they rarely speak.

When they move to California and the work camp, Miguel is more practical about what needs to be done because he has worked all his life. It takes Esperanza time to learn this. By the end of the book, the river between them has been removed; they have much in common (and it does seem likely they may one day marry).

- * 6. List some of the challenges that Esperanza encounters when she comes to the farm workers' camp. Why were they so difficult for her?

The cabin they live in reminds Esperanza of a horse's stable (p. 102); she does not know how to wash diapers or clothes (pp. 114-115); how to use a broom (pp. 140-142); or how to cook or feed the babies (pp. 140-142). She thinks that Hortensia, her former servant, will still bathe her (pp. 126-127). She was pampered in her previous life in Mexico and never had to learn to take care of these things for herself. Hortensia says on page 126, "We are accustomed to doing things a certain way, aren't we?"

7. Who are you more like—Esperanza when she first arrives at the farm camp or Isabel? Why?

Answers will vary—some students may identify with Esperanza's difficulties adjusting to life in the camp, while others might find Isabel's optimism appealing. Conversely, Esperanza might be seen as spoiled in her initial complaints and selfishness, and Isabel as naïve - as when she dreams of being picked as Queen of the May, although no Mexican girl is ever chosen.

8. On page 133 Esperanza asks why Marta is so angry and Josephina offers her one explanation. Do you agree with her answer? Why? What other possible reasons are there for Marta's anger?

Josephina explains that Marta and her family are angry about the conditions in which they are forced to live as migrant workers. There is room here to discuss what feelings and actions are reasonable and unreasonable when situations are unfair. Will fighting unjust situations make a difference, or do some people just like to complain?

- * 9. How does working on finishing Abuelita's blanket sustain Esperanza when her mother is sick? What does it remind her of? What do you think it symbolizes?

Working on the blanket reminds Esperanza of Abuelita's love and good wishes (p. 159), and of her promise to Abuelita to take care of Mama (p. 160). The valleys and mountains in the blanket can be seen to symbolize the ups and downs in Esperanza's journey through life. It also serves as a reminder to "not be afraid to start over," as Abuelita tells Esperanza when she is learning to crochet (p. 15) and Isabel at the end of the book (p. 253). Esperanza must start over in America, just as Abuelita did when she came to Mexico from Spain as a girl.

10. Reread the description on pages 176-178 of Esperanza's hospital visit to her mother. Is it a hopeful visit or an upsetting one? Support your idea with details from the text.

The visit seems hopeful, although Esperanza's mother doesn't wake up. The Christmas gifts other visitors are bringing to the hospital are cheerful, and though Esperanza wishes she could have brought more than the small stone she'd found in the fields it is still an expression of love. She tells her sleeping mother that Miguel thinks Papa's roses show signs of growth, and hopes that the blanket will bring color to her cheeks. In parting Esperanza says, "Don't worry. I will take care of everything. I will be *la patrona* of the family now." Esperanza is gaining confidence

and strength, and hopes her mother will improve, as well.

11. Imagine you were taken out of your life right now and put in a work camp like Esperanza's. How would you react? What would be hard for you? What would be easy?

Answers will vary. Life at the work camp is difficult and unfair, especially compared to Esperanza's previous position of wealth. While students may feel sweeping the platform or taking care of the babies are things they could handle, there would be many other things about their present life they take for granted which would be missed. There is room for discussion as to whether they would immediately take the side of Marta and the strikers, or if they would be more concerned with continuing to work in the fields so they could take care of their families' immediate needs.

12. Imagine you could write a letter to Esperanza. What would you want to say to her? What would you want to ask her?

Answers will vary. Students may want to tell Esperanza that everything will turn out all right in the end, or that she should understand more quickly that the work camp will very different from Rancho de las Rosas, and that she shouldn't expect to be taken care of in the same way.

13. On page 208 it says, "Something seemed very wrong about sending people away from their own "free country" because they had spoken their minds." Do you agree? Why?

It is likely that students will be especially surprised that even citizens born in the United States who had never even been to Mexico would be deported. There is much room for discussion as to what rights citizens should have, or expect. Some may also believe that there are situations where the government may think deportation is a good idea, although the book's point of view would not support this.

* 14. Explain the title of the book. How does it relate to the story? Use details from the story to support your point of view.

***Esperanza* is Spanish for "hope." There is the literal meaning of "hope rising" which Esperanza feels when her life improves as she learns to take care of herself and others, as her mother's health improves, and when Abuelita joins them in California.**

Abuelita has told Esperanza the story of the phoenix (pp. 49-50), the mythical bird which rises from the ashes. After Papa's death and the fire at Rancho de las Rosas, Esperanza, her family, and their servants also rise from these disasters as they make a new life for themselves. So, too, do the roses Miguel and Alfonso rescue from the burned ground at the ranch and plant at the work camp (pp. 122-124).

Esperanza also has a vision of "floating and drifting upward" (p. 92), which at first frightens her because she feels herself losing control and falling. She has not yet learned confidence in herself. But at the end of the book on pages 249-250, she has the vision again, but this time she is unafraid and "soared with the anticipation of dreams she never knew she could have, of learning English, of supporting her family, of someday buying a tiny house." She is no longer afraid of starting over.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Esperanza Rising Test Review

What does Esperanza mean when she says to Miguel that there is a “deep river” that runs between them?	Why is Mama the only one to get sick with Valley Fever?	Compare the two train rides that Esperanza and Miguel took.
What is the significance of the rose cuttings that Alfonso and Miguel carry with them from Mexico?	What was the name of the ranch Esperanza lived on in Mexico?	After what storm did Esperanza’s mother get sick?
Who got Abuelita out of Mexico?	When the woman came on the train what was in her wired cage?	What was the mean striker girl’s name?
What was Esperanza’s father’s name?	What was Esperanza’s mother’s name?	What does Miguel call Esperanza?
Why wouldn’t Esperanza and her family strike?	Why can’t Abuelita come with Esperanza to California?	Who wanted to marry Ramona?
Where did Miguel always want to work?	Explain the theme of Esperanza Rising. He who falls today may rise tomorrow.	Which point of view is this novel told? A. First Person B. Second Person C. Third Person
This novel is told by the _____ who only has access to _____ thoughts.	List five character traits of Esperanza and explain.	What are Esperanza’s motivations?