

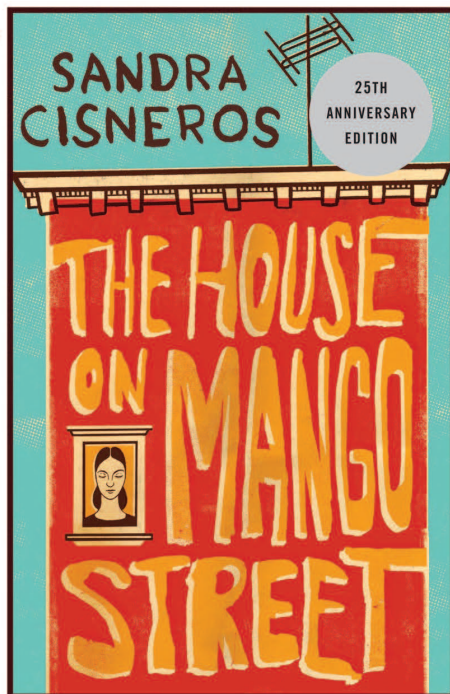
Reading ^{with} Relevance

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

The House on Mango Street

A novel by Sandra Cisneros



Recommended for:
Grade Levels
8th-10th

A tool to inspire change

This literacy curriculum is constructed around a content-rich novel that builds students' literacy skills and supports their character development and self-confidence. Students are motivated to read because they relate to the strong, diverse, and resilient characters featured in our selected novels and because each session gives them the opportunity to connect what they've read to their own lives.

Developed, field-tested, and refined in our own tutoring and mentoring programs, this common core standards-based curriculum has inspired persistently low-performing students to engage with literature, make meaning in their lives, and improve their English language arts skills. Now, *Reading with Relevance* is available to help you dig deep into the social, emotional, and academic needs of your students, whether in your classroom, after-school program, or youth development agency!

This teacher's guide includes:

- A facilitator's guide with tips and resources for implementing the curriculum.
- A map of common core standards addressed through this program.
- Nine individual lesson plans, including vocabulary, discussion questions, journal prompts, extension activities, and all handouts.
- Two assessments to monitor student progress throughout the program.
- Regular checkpoints to help teachers assess their students' progress on ELA standards.
- A culminating essay-writing unit, along with instructions for final student portfolios.
- An appendix with additional teaching resources and activities to continue exploring this novel.

Why *The House on Mango Street*

The House on Mango Street is the story of Esperanza, a pre-teen Chicana growing up in the barrio in Chicago. In the book, Esperanza narrates the stories of herself and her neighborhood and experiences joy, loss, change, and growth. We chose this novel for its powerful attention to some rich social and emotional themes: friendship and family, coming-of-age, poverty, community, loss, and perseverance. Students will find themselves relating to and being inspired by Esperanza; this curriculum will help students build connections between Esperanza's experiences and their own.



Session 3

pages 33-45

Vocabulary

strutted (pg 40): v.,
walked pompously

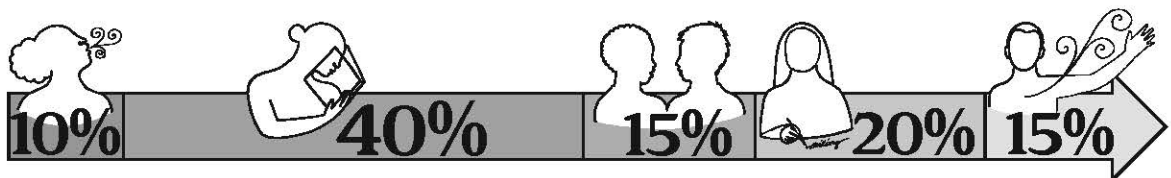
cumulus (pg 36): n., a
type of cloud form that
looks like rounded masses
heaped on each other

Today's Themes

Today's twin themes are **finding beauty** and **experiencing disappointment**. On the one hand, Esperanza experiences a lot of disappointment in the book, like when she finally gets to sit in the canteen, but finds that this is a lonely, alienating experience. But on the other hand, she also finds beauty in many places, which shows us that she can find the good in her life and community. Have students think about these contrasting themes as two ways to look at the same thing. How are the two approaches both real and true ways of seeing the world? How does each make them feel?

Session 2 Recap

In the previous vignettes, Esperanza and her sister visit a junk store and see a beautiful music box, but the owner says it's not for sale. Her friend Meme has a big dog and lives in a house with floors that are slanted and lopsided. They have a Tarzan jumping contest, and Meme breaks both his arms. Their neighbor Louie's cousin drives up in a big, yellow Cadillac and gives them all rides, but then they have to get out quickly because the police arrive. Louie takes off, but crashes the car and is taken to jail. Marin is an older girl who Esperanza thinks is still probably waiting for someone else to change her life. Alicia is a neighborhood girl who is afraid of mice and of her father.





During Reading

“The Eskimos got thirty different names for snow” (pg 35):

A common misconception that alleges that Eskimos (Eskimo people includes the Yupik peoples and Inuit tribes, indigenous people located in the circumpolar region) have multiple ways to say “snow.” While the Eskimo/Inuit people have about as many words for snow as we have in English, the Sami People, a different indigenous circumpolar group, do have hundreds of words for snow.

Cream of Wheat cereal... lumps (pg 37): a hot breakfast cereal made from ground farina wheat that can easily develop lumps (that don't taste good)

salamander (pg 40): common name for species of amphibians that typically look like lizards

300 Spartans (pg 44): A 1962 movie depicting the battle in which a small band of Spartans (Greek warriors from Sparta known for their self-discipline and self-restraint) held off the much larger army from Persia for seven days despite being vastly outnumbered.



Discussion Questions

- How does Darius change when he is thinking about the clouds? What do you think he is feeling?
- What do the girls do with the new shoes they have?
- What kind of attention do they attract with these shoes? How would you feel getting this type of attention?
- Why does Esperanza want to eat in the canteen at school?
- What happens when she gets her mother to send a note?
- How do you think Esperanza feels when she is eating her food in the canteen? How would you feel if you were Esperanza?

Journal Prompt

BEAUTY

- Esperanza says that butterflies, flowers, and other things that make life beautiful are too few.

What are other things that you think make life beautiful?

- » Are they all tangible (touchable) things?
- » Are some of them ideas or feelings? Explain.
- » Do you think there are enough things that make life beautiful?
- » Why or why not?

DISAPPOINTMENT

- When Esperanza finally gets to stay in the canteen, the experience is a bad one, not the good one she had anticipated.

Have you ever really wanted something but then, once you finally had it, it wasn't as great as you thought it would be? What happened?

- » How did you feel?
- » Why did you think that it would have been better?
- » Do you think real life can ever live up to our expectations?

Checkpoint

- Students should start each journal entry by clearly introducing the topic of their writing, and previewing what is to follow.
 - » Construct a focused thesis sentence.
 - » For example, "Today, I am going to write about _____."

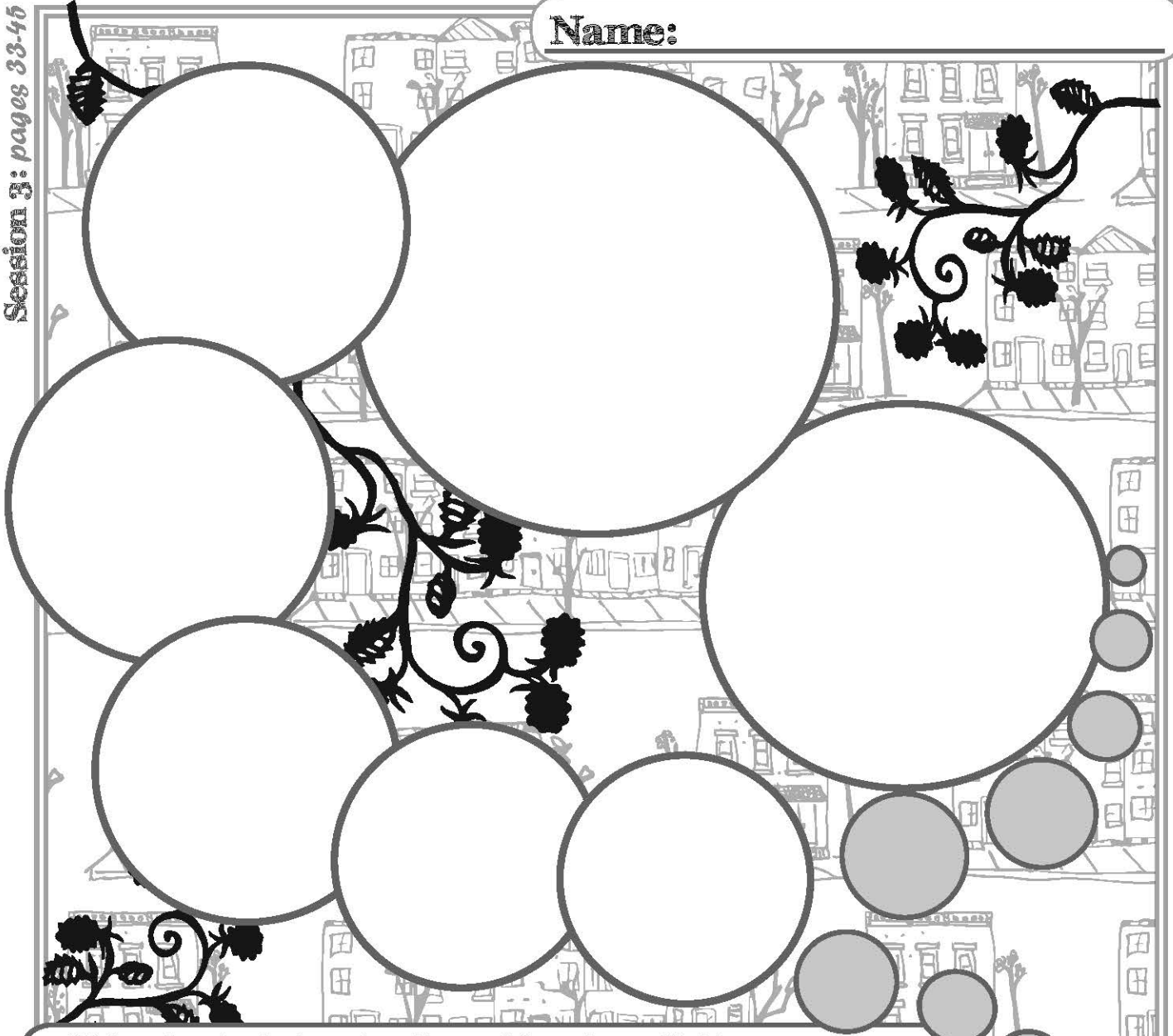
Extension Activity

Esperanza can find the beauty in everyday things—much like Darius can find the profound in the clouds. Have students think about a number of normal, everyday things that make life beautiful. Maybe it's a mural on the underpass, or a surprise flower in the crack in the cement. Maybe it's the sound of a loved one laughing even in hard times. Have students write in the bubbles a number of surprising, beautiful, everyday things with as much detail as possible. Be sure they explain what makes them so beautiful.

Materials:

- » Everyday Beauty Handout

Name: _____



Write about what makes these things beautiful to you:

Esperanza can find the beauty in every day things—much like Darius can find the profound in the clouds. Think about a number of normal, everyday things that make life beautiful. Maybe it's a mural on the underpass, or a surprise flower in the crack in the cement. Maybe it's the sound of a loved one laughing even in hard times. In the bubbles, write out a number of surprising, beautiful, everyday things. Describe them in as much detail as possible, and explain what makes them so beautiful to you.

Everyday Beauty

Appendix

Additional Activities

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About Us

MOVING FORWARD™ I N S T I T U T E

Get to Know MFI

Moving Forward Institute is a nonprofit publisher of social justice educational materials. The organization was created by the founders and staff of Moving Forward Education, a multi-generational tutoring and mentoring organization aimed at fostering academic and emotional success for underserved students in California. Since our founding in 2003, MFE has provided tutoring and mentoring services to thousands of students and has trained hundreds of young adults to enter careers in the educational field. This reading curriculum was developed by our leadership team and its advisory group, including credentialed teachers and college professors. This program has been successfully facilitated throughout California by achieving powerful and measurable results for students and schools. To learn more about our organization, or our research and data, please contact us today.

Our Purpose

At Moving Forward Institute, we know that students can be successful learners when their social and emotional needs are met.

We empower educators to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of their students by using culturally-relevant and gender-responsive reading curricula.

Training and Professional Development Services

While lesson plans are designed to be easily facilitated by classroom teachers and after-school staff alike, our in-person training and professional development services will ensure fully effective implementation of the literacy curricula.

Additionally, we offer technical support, classroom observation, and program evaluation services to help your program be successful. Contact us for more information about these services!

Contact Us

Contact us today to learn more about how the Moving Forward Institute can support your students and staff!

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Emeryville, CA 94608

If your students liked *The House on Mango Street*. . .

*...they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out *The Hunger Games* or *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!*