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Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Esperanza Rising

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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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

tendrils – 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 Papayas

Papayas

Vocabulary

ambushed – attacked without warning
anguish – great pain or distress
condolences – expressions of sympathy
indignation – anger caused by an injustice
quivery – shaky
rosaries – strings of beads used during prayer

1. How do others express their condolences to Papa's family? How do Esperanza and Mama comfort each other?

2. Why does Esperanza avoid opening her birthday presents?

3. Explain Esperanza's reaction when she opens the doll that Papa bought her.

4. Tío Luis and Tío Marco appear to be taking over Sixto's study and position. What do they do to make this clear to Esperanza, Mama, and Abuelita?

11. Why does Esperanza not understand that the clothes from the poor box are for them?

12. Who is the only person Esperanza and Mama can trust to help them escape? Why?

13. When it is time to escape, when do the two families leave the ranch, where are they going, and what route do they take? Explain why they must travel this way.

14. Why do Esperanza and Mama stop at the edge of the fields and look back at El Rancho de las Rosas? What is Esperanza think and feeling?
