

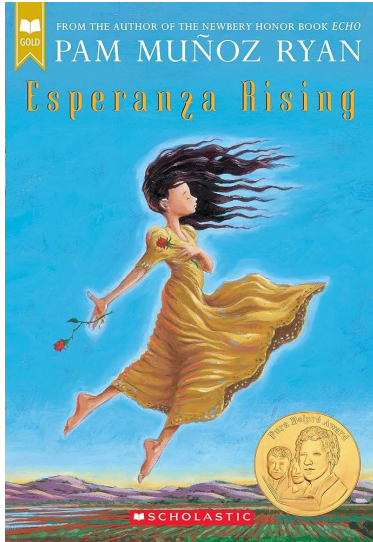


# The Book Planter



**Ag in the Classroom**

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## April 2024 Chapter Book *Esperanza Rising* Written by: Pam Muñoz Ryan

Esperanza Ortega possesses all the treasures a girl could want: dresses; a home filled with servants in Mexico; and the promise of one-day presiding over El Rancho de las Rosas. But a tragedy shatters that dream, forcing Esperanza and her mother to flee to Arvin, California and settle in a farm camp. There, they confront the challenges of work, acceptance, and economic difficulties brought on by the Great Depression.

### Writing and Discussion<sup>1</sup>

1. Why does the author open with a scene of Esperanza and her father lying down to hear the heartbeat of the earth? How does this shared experience seem to affect Esperanza's relationship with her father?
2. Explain Mama's reasons for leaving Mexico. Would you have been willing to make the same decision if you were in her situation? Why or why not?
3. Esperanza and Miguel take a train ride together as young children. Compare this train ride to the one they take when going to live in America.
4. What does Esperanza mean when she says to Miguel that there is a "deep river" that runs between them? Does this change in California? If so, describe how their relationship changes and give reasons for why this might happen.
5. Describe the cabin where Esperanza must live in America. How does this home compare to her home in Mexico? When Esperanza points out these differences, why does Mama become angry with her? Is Mama right to be angry with her? Why or why not?
6. A poor woman on the train to Los Angeles explains that although she is poor, she is rich. How can a poor person be rich? How can a rich person be poor?
7. Why does Esperanza dislike Marta when they first meet? What makes Esperanza change her mind about Marta?
8. After the dust storm, Mama is the only one of the workers in the cabin to become ill. Why is this so? How does her illness affect Esperanza? Why does Esperanza agree to cut the eyes out of the potatoes?

9. When Esperanza is told she cannot visit her mother for several weeks, she describes her life as going through "the motions of living." Have you ever felt this way? If so, describe how. What does Esperanza do to increase the amount of joy in her life?
10. Why does Miguel drive out of his way to shop at the Japanese store? What does Alfonso mean when he tells Miguel that Mr. Yakota is "getting rich on other people's bad manners?"
11. Compare the strikers' camp to the camp in which Esperanza lives. How does seeing this camp and its inhabitants affect Esperanza?
12. Alfonso and Miguel keep telling Esperanza that if she does good work the farmers will keep employing her. Do you believe that philosophy applies in today's world? Why or why not?
13. What do you think of "voluntary deportation"? Is this a peaceful or violent way to handle the situation with the strikers? Did Esperanza do the right thing by helping Marta and risking the chance of being deported herself?
14. Papa's words, "Wait a little while and the fruit will fall into your hands," are said by Miguel in a heated argument with Esperanza. How does this idea relate to the titles of the chapters in this novel? How does this relate to the end of the novel when Esperanza is retelling all the events from California to Abuelita?
15. When Esperanza finds out Miguel has taken her money orders, she is devastated. Describe how she must feel when Alfonso comes to take her to the train station to pick Miguel up. Is she justified to feel this way? What was Miguel's reason for taking the money? What do his actions mean?
16. The last section of the novel has Esperanza and Miguel listening to the heartbeat of the earth. What does this parallel to the first chapter mean?
17. The novel ends with Esperanza teaching Isabel how to crochet the zigzag stitch. How do the "mountains and valleys" compare to the plot of the novel? Is there a skill or talent that someone in your family has that you have learned or would like to learn? Please describe.
18. Read the last sentence of the novel and explain how it relates to the book's themes.

### **Activity 1: Adjectives Describing Character/Vocabulary<sup>3</sup>**

Tell students that the author chooses words carefully to describe the characters in the book. These words create a picture in the reader's mind of how the character acts, moves and talks. The list below contains words that describe different characters in the book. Ask students to look for clues in the text to figure out the meanings of the words then check dictionary definitions.

Use *Resource #1 Vocabulary Cards* and distribute copies to students. Ask them to write down the definitions of the words as they read them in the book.

**Elegant** (p. 5)

**Capricious** (p. 13)

**Pretentious** (p. 33)

**Devious** (p. 33)

**Extravagant** (p. 136)

**Despondent** (p. 207)

**Weary** (p. 223)

**Obsessed** (p. 244)

### Activity 2: Analyzing Character Change<sup>3</sup>

1. Esperanza Rising is a novel about a young protagonist who deals with challenges and changes in her life and finally rises above self-pity to become a strong and resilient person. Help students identify how the author expresses this character change through key dialogue in the book. Remind students that a reader can get to know a character by paying close attention to how he or she speaks, thinks, and acts. These pieces of evidence are clues to the character's traits or personality.
2. Use the graphic organizer on *Resource #2: Analyze Character* to model for students how to use Esperanza's words as text evidence to analyze her character. Project the page on a whiteboard and pass out copies to students.
3. Model: We're going to think deeply about things that Esperanza says in the story and what they tell us about her character. A trait is a quality or habit that a person has. The first quotation is from page 67. Esperanza is getting on the train to leave Mexico. She says, "Mama, we cannot travel in this car. It . . . it is not clean. And the people do not look trustworthy." Esperanza's words tell me that, even though she has lost her home, she still thinks that she is above other people in Mexico. She does not yet understand what has happened to her life.
4. Have students fill in the rest of the organizer, analyzing the remaining quotes for what they reveal about Esperanza's character and how she has changed. Discuss students' answers as a group and encourage them to support their answers with other evidence from the text.

### Activity 3: Making Mama's Yarn Doll<sup>2</sup>

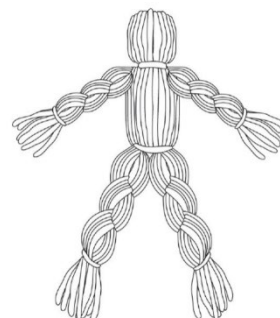
Mama made a yarn doll for the child on the train (much to Esperanza's chagrin at the time). You can create one too!

#### Materials

- Ball of yarn
- Scissors
- Rule
- Book to wrap the yarn around

#### Instructions

1. Cut 7 12"-long pieces of yarn and set them aside. You'll use these later.
2. Holding the ball of yarn in one hand, and the book in the other, wrap the yarn around the book from top to bottom 50 times. Then, cut the yarn to separate it from the ball.
3. Use one of the 12" pieces of yarn and place it between the book and the yarn. (Imagine you are putting the yarn through the center of a doughnut.) Tightly tie together the 50 strands of yarn wrapped around the book.



4. Pull the yarn off the book. Hold the yarn loop so the tie is at the top. This will be the top of your doll's head. Tie another 12" piece of yarn an inch or two below the first one, gathering all 100 strands of yarn to create a round head. Tie it tightly with a double knot.
5. Cut the yarn loops apart at the end opposite the head. These strands of yarn will be used to make the doll's body and limbs.
6. Separate the yarn below the head into three sections—two arms (12 strands each), and the torso (26 strands). Tie a 12" piece of yarn around the middle section, 2" below the head, to form the doll's torso. Remember to leave the arms free.
7. Separate the bottom yarn below the torso into two legs. Braid each arm and leg and use the 4 remaining 12" pieces of yarn to tie at each end. Leave at least an inch of loose yarn at the ends as hands and feet. Trim any stray yarn.

#### **Activity 4: Those Familiar Sayings<sup>2, 3</sup>**

Esperanza's father says to her, "*Aguántate tantito y la fruta caerá en tu mano*. Wait a little while and the fruit will fall into your hand." This is a proverb, a saying that guides or advises. Most proverbs are passed down verbally, and the origins of many proverbs are unknown. Almost every culture and country has proverbs or sayings that are used on a regular basis. Have you ever heard: "People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" or "Like father, like son?" These are proverbs too. Pam Muñoz Ryan offers a few Mexican proverbs at the beginning of this book, and below is an additional sampling from *Mexican Sayings: The Treasure of a People* by Octavio A. Ballesteros, Ed. D and Mari del Carmen Ballesteros, M. Ed. Whether your family is from Aguascalientes, Mexico or Florence, Italy, or Tulsa Oklahoma, there are probably proverbs to be found, considered, and talked about. Some may be funny, others more thoughtful. What proverbs do you know?

*No hay rosa sin espinas.*

There is not a rose without thorns.

*Quien adelante no mira, atrás se queda.*

The person who does not look ahead stays behind.

*El sabio muda consejo, el necio, no.*

The wise man changes his opinion, the foolish man does not.

Display the two proverbs below on the board or chart paper. Ask students to explain why they agree or disagree with each proverb. You can also share the proverbs from *Mexican Sayings* for this activity. Tell them to keep the proverbs in mind as they read the book and see if their opinion changes.

Proverb	Agree/Disagree
The rich person is richer when he becomes poor, than the poor person when he becomes rich.	
There is no rose without thorns.	
He who falls today, may rise tomorrow. The person who does not look ahead stays behind.	

## Make Your Own Jamaica Flower Punch (Recipe from Pam Muñoz Ryan)<sup>2</sup>

### Ingredients

- 30 single red hibiscus blooms, rinsed well. (If you can't find hibiscus flowers, try using 6 hibiscus-flavored tea bags.)
- ½ oz. fresh ginger root (rinsed, patted dry, and then grated)
- 3 quarts of water
- Juice from 6 limes
- Sugar for sweetening

Boil the ginger in one quart of water for about 2 minutes. Add the hibiscus blooms (or tea bags), remove from heat and cover. When the liquid is cool, strain it into a pitcher or large bowl. Add the remaining water and lime juice. Sweeten to suit your taste. Chill and serve.

### Sources

1. <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/teaching-tools/articles/lessons/18-discussion-writing-prompts-help-teach-esperanza-rising.html>
2. <https://www.esperanzaacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Esperanza-Rising-by-Pam-Munoz-Ryan.pdf>
3. <https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/lesson-plans/migrated-featured-files/esperanza-rising-storia-tg.pdf>

### 3-8 Subject Areas: English Language Arts and Social Studies

#### English Language Arts (Reading and Writing)

- RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- RL.3.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
- RL.3.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.
- RL.3.5 Use text features and search tools to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- RL.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text.
- RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL.4.2 Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- RL.4.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.
- RL.4.5 Describe the overall structure of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
- RL.4.7 Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

- RL.5.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area.
- RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.6.2 Determine a theme of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- RL.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
- RL.6.6 Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
- RL.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.7.2 Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.7.3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact.
- RL.8.1 Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.8.2 Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision

## Social Studies

- I.1.1 Identify content required to provide an answer to compelling questions.
- I.1.3 Understand how responses to supporting questions provide responses to compelling questions.
- I.1.6 Organize relevant information from primary and secondary sources using the origin, authority, structure, credibility, reliability, and context of the sources to guide the selection.
- I.1.7 Construct claims in response to compelling and supporting questions.
- I.1.8 Accurately use information from sources when making claims.
- I.1.9 Make inferences from information in sources.
- I.1.10 Construct responses to compelling questions with specific claims and information from teacher-provided sources.
- 3.B.1.1 Explain how the values, beliefs, and cultures of various indigenous, religious, racial and other groups contribute to the development of local communities and the state.
- 3.B.1.2 Compare values, beliefs, cultural practices and traditions of various groups living in local and regional communities.
- 3.G.1.1 Explain how the absolute and relative location of places impacts the development of communities.
- 3.G.1.2 Explain how climate and physical characteristics affect the ways in which people live in a place or region.
- 3.G.1.3 Explain how movement of goods, people, and ideas is impacted by the geography of a place or region.
- 3.H.1.1 Explain how the experiences and achievements of women, indigenous, religious, and racial groups have contributed to the development of the local community.
- 3.H.1.2 Explain the lasting impact historical events have had on local communities.
- 5.B.1.1 Explain how traditions, social structure, and artistic expression have contributed to the unique identity of the United States.
- 5.B.1.2 Explain how the values and beliefs of various indigenous, religious, and racial groups have contributed to the development of American identity.
- 5.E.1.1 Explain factors that led to economic growth and decline within the United States at various times in history.
- 5.E.1.2 Compare economic decisions in terms of benefits and consequences.
- 5.E.1.3 Explain the impact of production, specialization, technology, and division of labor on the economic growth of the United States.
- 5.E.1.4 Summarize the role of trade between the United States and other countries.
- 5.G.1.1 Explain the relationship between location, physical environment, and human activity in the United States.
- 5.G.1.2 Explain ways in which voluntary and forced migration and slavery led to changes in the landscape of the United States, using maps.
- 5.H.1.1 Explain how the experiences and achievements of women, minorities, indigenous groups, and marginalized people have contributed to change and innovation in the United States.
- 5.H.1.2 Summarize the changing roles of women, indigenous, racial and other minority groups in the United States.
- 6.B.1.1 Explain how religion, tradition, and cultural practice influence the development of civilizations and societies in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas.
- 6.G.1.2 Explain how movement and settlement patterns affected the development of civilizations, empires, and societies in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.
- 7.B.1 Understand how individual and group values and beliefs have influenced various cultures.
- 7.E.1 Understand the economic activities of modern societies and regions.
- 7.G.1.2 Explain reasons why societies modify and adapt to the environment

- 7.H.1 Evaluate historical and current events from a variety of perspectives.
- 8.B.1 Analyze the impact of group behavior on the development of North Carolina and the nation.
- 8.E.1 Understand the economic development of North Carolina and the nation.



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**obsessed (p. 244)**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## RESOURCE #2: Analyze Character

Read each quotation. Explain what it tells about Esperanza at each point in the story.

Quotation	What It Tells About Esperanza
"Mama, we cannot travel in this car. It . . . it is not clean. And the people do not look trustworthy." (p. 67)	
"I said I could work. I told Mama I could help. But I cannot even wash clothes or sweep a floor. Does the whole camp know?" (p. 117)	
"Don't worry. I will take care of everything. I will be <i>la patrona</i> for the family now." (p. 178)	
"I can't stand your blind hope. I don't want to hear your optimism about this land of possibility when I see no proof!" (p. 224)	
"Do not ever be afraid to start over." (p. 253)	