

Literature Circle Questions

Use the questions and activities to get more out of the experience of reading *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan.

1. How is Esperanza planning to spend her birthday? What does she anticipate happening? What actually happens?
2. Who is Tío Luis? What does he want from Esperanza's mother? Does Esperanza like him? Why?
3. Why do Esperanza and Mama have to leave El Rancho de la Rosas? Why do they have to leave in secret?
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?
5. Describe Miguel and Esperanza's friendship. What do they have in common? What are their differences?
6. List some of the challenges that Esperanza's encounters when she comes to the farm workers' camp. Why were they so difficult for her?
7. Who are you more like—Esperanza when she first arrives at the farm camp or Isabel? Why?
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?
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?
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.
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?
12. Imagine you could write a letter to Esperanza. What would you want to say to her? What would you want to ask her?
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?

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.

Note: The questions are keyed to Bloom’s Taxonomy as follows: Knowledge: 1-3; Comprehension: 4-5; Application: 6-7; Analysis: 8-10; Synthesis: 11-12; Evaluation: 13-14.

Activities

1. On a map, draw the journey that Esperanza takes from Mexico to California. Illustrate key places on the map, such as El Rancho de las Rosas and the company farm.
2. At the end of the book, Esperanza counts how much time has passed in crops instead of months. Create a calendar that counts time in an unusual manner, for example, by what sports are played or what clothes you might wear.
3. Imagine that Esperanza had been allowed to write a letter to Marisol while she was in America. What would she tell her friend about life in California?

Other Books by This Author

Novel: *Riding Freedom*

Picture Books: *Amelia and Eleanor Go For a Ride, Mice and Beans, When Marian Sang*

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