

***Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan** (Published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston)

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 6

Summary

Esperanza is a 14-year-old girl who grows up in a wealthy family in Mexico. Her family faces many challenges (including the murder of her father and the loss of her home in a fire) and loses its wealth. Her family is forced to move to California with the family's servants (during the 1930's) and live in an agricultural work camp. Esperanza must face her life no longer as a princess but as a member of lower class society who must work long days for very little. She continues to face challenges dealing with her mother's health, fitting in to a lower-class society, and learning to live without the comforts of wealth. Through all of her struggles, Esperanza learns what is truly important to her and how to live independently. Her struggles pay off in the end when she is reunited with her beloved Abuelita (grandmother).

Connection to the Curriculum

Loosely based on the life of the author's grandmother, *Esperanza Rising* presents an authentic story with an element of historical fiction. This well-written novel portrays a story of Mexican immigration to California in the 1930's. It presents many aspects of immigration including deportment and immigrants' fighting for equal pay and improved living conditions. In addition to the historical elements and exposure to multi-cultural literature, this novel captures many timeless themes through the challenges Esperanza faces. Through her fall from wealth, she learns the importance of loyalty and faith to family and friends above all else. She also learns courage, the lesson that through every challenge some good will come, and that life is not complete without "esperanza" (Spanish for hope).

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.2.1- The student uses knowledge of conventions and text features to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.

1.4.3- The student uses prior knowledge, content, text type and text features to make, revise, and confirm predictions

1.4.4- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after the reading of the text.

1.4.5- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.11- The student identifies and describes the author's purpose (e.g. to inform, to give directions, to entertain) and basic techniques the author uses to achieve that purpose.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of major and minor characters (e.g. their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and explains how those aspects influence characters' interactions with other characters and elements of the plot, including resolution of the major conflict.

2.1.2- The student identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and explains the importance of the setting to the story or literary text.

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor events related to the conflict in a story (e.g., crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution) and explains how one event gives rise to another.

2.1.4- The student understands aspects of theme (e.g. moral, lesson, meaning, message, author's ideas about the subject) and supports

2.2.1- The student understands the effects history and cultures may have on works of literature

2.2.2- The student compares and contrasts various languages, traditions, and cultures found in literature

2.2.3- The student makes connections between specific aspects of literature from a variety of cultures and personal experiences

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

This novel does contain reference to a death. It is not, however, graphically described. Although the book is about Esperanza's challenges, it ends on a positive note as she finds hope.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities