



# Esperanza Rising

## Discussion Guide #1



Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion.

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**CHAPTERS:** Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1924 – Las Uvas (Grapes), six years later

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### Comprehension:

- Describe Esperanza's father. What is his position in society in Aguascalientes, Mexico?
- What does the short first chapter, set in 1924, tell you about the relationship between Esperanza and her father?
- After Esperanza pricks her finger on a thorn, how does she react? What do Mama and Abuelita say?
- What does Mama tell Esperanza about the bandits that have been seen in their area?
- Abuelita tells Esperanza she will teach her to crochet the zigzag stitch while they are waiting for Papa to return. Why does Abuelita do this?
- Who are Hortensia and Alfonso?
- Who is Miguel, and how does Esperanza feel about him?
- Who are Tío Luis and Tío Marco, and what are they like?
- Whose body is in the back of the wagon?

### Text Analysis:

- Based on Esperanza's lifestyle and her actions in the story so far, what kind of person would you say Esperanza is?
- In the scene marking the beginning of the grape harvest, how do the characters' clothes reflect their class status?
- Describing the scene as the household waits for news of Papa, the author uses words to create tension. What are some examples of this?

### Personal Connection:

-  Esperanza and her family face a terrible, unexpected loss. What are some of the feelings that Esperanza is probably experiencing?



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### CHAPTERS: Las Papayas (Papayas) – Los Higos (Figs)

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#### Comprehension:

- Who are Señor Rodríguez and Marisol?
- How does Esperanza feel about the doll Papa gave her as a birthday gift? What makes her feel this way?
- Sitting in the meeting with the lawyer and her uncles, Esperanza feels that everything is "wrong." What specific details make her feel this way?
- In the meeting between the lawyer and the family, what does Tío Luis propose to Mama, and why?
- Why do Hortensia, Alfonso, and Miguel decide to move to the United States?
- What do Esperanza and Abuelita each save from the fire?
- When Esperanza and Mama first discuss leaving, what advice does Abuelita share with Esperanza?
- What does Esperanza expect her life to be like in California?
- Why does everyone laugh when Esperanza says she can work in the United States?
- What are Abuelita's parting words for Esperanza?

#### Text Analysis:

- Abuelita refers to the legend of the phoenix. What is this legend, and how is it relevant to their lives at this moment?
- How do things change between Hortensia, Alfonso, and Mama in Papa's absence?
- Why does Mama tell Esperanza, "Papa's heart will find us wherever we go," as they prepare to leave?

#### Personal Connection:

-  In this story, Mama must decide whether or not to marry Luis. She can either maintain her wealth, position, and comfort or keep her self-respect and sense of dignity. She opts to leave her wealth and privilege behind and save her dignity. What are the pros and cons of each choice? Which would you choose?