# Esperanza Rising

## Discussion Guide #4

NOVEL STUDY

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.

### CHAPTERS: Los Duraznos (Peaches) – Las Uvas (Grapes)

## Comprehension:

- How does Esperanza feel about Isabel's desire to be crowned Queen of the May?

- What causes Esperanza's temper to erupt?

- How do Miguel and Esperanza differ in their reactions to the discrimination that they face as Mexicans?

- Why doesn't Esperanza tell anyone about the conversation she has with Miguel before he leaves?

- How does Esperanza convince Isabel to accept the gift of her doll?

- When Abuelita arrives, why does Esperanza want to show her the blanket? Why does she finish it that same night?

- How does Esperanza measure time when she tells Abuelita about their eventful year?

- The author calls both the first chapter and the last "Las Uvas." Why? What details from the first chapter are repeated or reflected in the final chapter?

## Text Analysis:

- How are Isabel's situation with the Queen of the May and Miguel's situation at the railroad similar?

- Just before her birthday, Esperanza and Miguel go out to the foothills to see the sunrise. What happens on this outing, and why is it significant?

## Personal Connection:

Many well-known stories are "rags-to-riches," but Esperanza's story is the reverse—she goes from riches to rags. Which version is more appealing to you? Why?

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### CHAPTER: Author's Note

## Questions:

- How is *Esperanza Rising* similar to and different from the author's grandmother's life?

- Why do you think Pam Muñoz Ryan changed details about her grandmother's story when writing this novel?

- How did the author's own personal experiences impact the novel?

- Why do you think Pam Muñoz Ryan included the author's note? Why did she put it at the end rather than at the beginning of the novel?

- Knowing this book is inspired by a real person and place in time, does it impact your thoughts or feelings about the story? Why or why not?

- After reading this novel, what new information have you learned about Mexico and California in the 1930s? What questions do you still have?