

NAME: _____



Activity One



Local News Story

The House on Mango Street is set in Esperanza's mostly Latino Chicago neighborhood. The area she grows up in shapes her perspectives and influences her future dreams. The people she encounters end up being a big part of her childhood experience.

What is the story of your neighborhood? Imagine that your local newspaper, radio station or TV station has hired you. You need to write an article or record a segment about the neighborhood you've grown up in. It can be from any perspective.

Write the article or record the segment with the following questions as inspiration.

- What does your neighborhood look like?
- What are the people like that live in your neighborhood?
- What is a story that you'll remember about your neighborhood for years to come?
- Does your neighborhood have an interesting history? If so, what is it?
- Does your family have a long history in your neighborhood? If so, how did they end up there and what has happened along the way?
- Are there any significant past or current local heroes that are worth mentioning?
- What makes your neighborhood what it is?

You may want to read stories from your local newspaper. You could also listen to your local radio station or watch your local TV station for inspiration on how to structure your story.

Once you've brainstormed your story, write it or record in the style of a local news outlet. You may want to consider including quotes or a short interview with neighbors or well-known locals.

Be creative and try your best to bring your neighborhood to life through your story!

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Activity Two

Vignettes of Your Life

The House on Mango Street is made up of a series of vignettes. Vignettes are short, descriptive pieces of writing. They tell stories of a particular experience or moment. A vignette might not mean a lot on its own, but a series of vignettes is like a mosaic. Together they tell a bigger story. The vignettes in the book tell stories of Esperanza's encounters, conversations and interactions. Each of these together make up pieces of her identity.

What life experiences make up your identity? Write a series of 5-8 vignettes about your own life. Use the same style that Sandra Cisneros uses in *The House on Mango Street*.

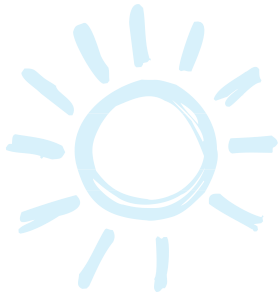
Consider the following.

- The style of writing should match the voice of the character telling the story.
- The story should be relatively brief.
- Individual vignettes may not seem like a big deal on their own.
- They should be stories that tell the reader something about you.
- You may want to tell stories that explain your family's heritage.
- Try to write each vignette from a different stage of your life.

You may want to present your vignettes to your class. Some suggestions for presenting your vignettes are below.

- Read or perform your vignette. You may need classmates to participate.
- Paste your vignettes on a Bristol board. Mount it on the wall for your classmates to read as they circulate the room.
- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation with pictures relating to each vignette.
- Record yourself reading your vignettes in the style of a podcast. Include intro music and additional participants if necessary.

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Activity Three



Bringing Mango Street to Life

As we read *The House on Mango Street* and meet different characters, we create mental images.

Create a visual relating to the Mango Street neighborhood. Use details from the text as well as the mental images you created as you read the book. You may wish to create the entire neighborhood the way you visualized it. You can also choose a specific character from the book or part of the neighborhood (i.e. Esperanza's home, the Monkey garden, Gil's Furniture Bought & Sold, the schoolyard etc.).

You can present your visual any way you'd like. Here are some suggestions:

- A bird's eye view of the neighborhood.
- A portrait of your chosen character.
- A drawing or painting of your chosen aspect of the neighborhood.
- A physical 3-dimensional model made from materials of your choice.
- A virtual model using a software of your choice.

Prepare a brief written description of your creation to share with others. Your description should include the following.

- Why you chose the subject.
- Your process (how you created it and materials used).
- Challenges you faced.
- Any interesting artistic or stylistic choices.

Be prepared to share your creation with your class!

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Activity Four



Guess Who: Mango Street Edition

The House on Mango Street features a wide range of characters with different experiences, personalities and identities. Each one is as unique as the next. In order to get to know the characters better, you will create a game of Guess Who using the characters from *The House on Mango Street*.

Step 1: Choose 12 characters from the book.

Step 2: Draw your character based on details from the book. You can also print out a picture of someone who you think looks similar to your chosen character.

Step 3: Create a bio for each character. Include details from the book about their appearance, perspective, experiences, personality traits, profession and other relevant characteristics.

Step 4: Cut out each of your character cards.

To play:

- Each player must choose a character from their deck of character cards.
- You must ask questions about the character your partner has chosen. Once you have narrowed it down to one or two characters, you can guess.
- You have 3 guesses. The first person to guess the character correctly wins.

*For more than two players, questions will be directed to the person on your right.

Character Name:
Character Image:



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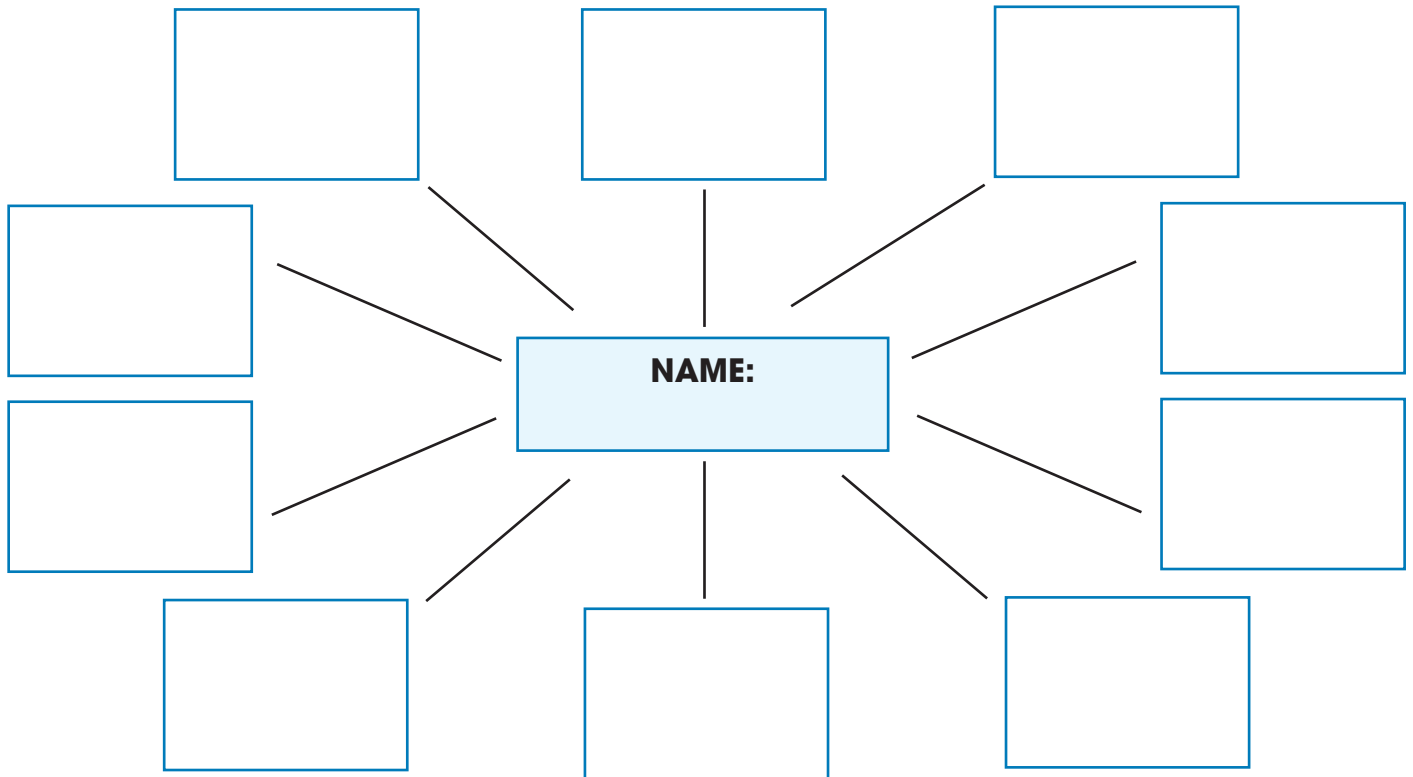
Activity Five

Who Are You?



Esperanza's identity is shaped by her experiences and interactions with others. It is also shaped by her perspective as a female, a Latina and American and an English speaker. Some of these parts of her identity bring her more power in society. Others bring her less power. These labels were given to her by the society in some cases.

What makes up the different parts of your identity? Brainstorm the different identities that make up who you are. Record them on the identity chart below. Start by writing your name in the center. Add a different identity or label at the end of each branch.



Some parts of your identity to consider: age, gender, relationships, religion, race, ethnicity, languages spoken, nationality, interests/hobbies, neighborhood, ability etc.

Optional reflection task: Everyone's identity is made up of many parts. Some parts bring them privileges. Some cause them to face certain hardships. Write down some of the ways that parts of your identity have resulted in more power in society throughout history. Then, record some of the ways that parts of your identity have historically resulted in less power in society. What does this tell you about the way that some groups of people are treated in society?

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Activity Six

A Home in the Heart

When Esperanza visits Elenita, her fortune is 'a home in the heart'. This represents the idea that Esperanza will find a metaphorical place in her life where she feels comfortable and safe. A place that is not confined by physical walls.

Group task:

1. Watch *The House on Mango Street - The Story* on YouTube.
2. Brainstorm the differences between a house and a home. Write your ideas on chart paper or a large surface big enough for everyone to see and contribute.
3. Once you've finished brainstorming, come up with a definition of 'home' as a group based on everyone's suggestions.

Individual task:

1. Using your definition as inspiration, create a representation of your 'home'. You can express your home as a poem or song, a painting, a PowerPoint or a short story, for example.

Some questions to consider:

- What or who makes you feel safe?
 - What or who makes you feel welcome?
 - What or who makes you feel comfortable?
 - What expectations do you have of your home?
 - What feelings do you associate with your home?
 - How does it match the description of 'a home in the heart'?
2. Present your 'home' to your class, sharing your answers to some of the questions above.
 3. Reflection questions: How was your home similar to your classmates'? How was it different? What can you take away from this activity about a person's sense of what it means to have a home?