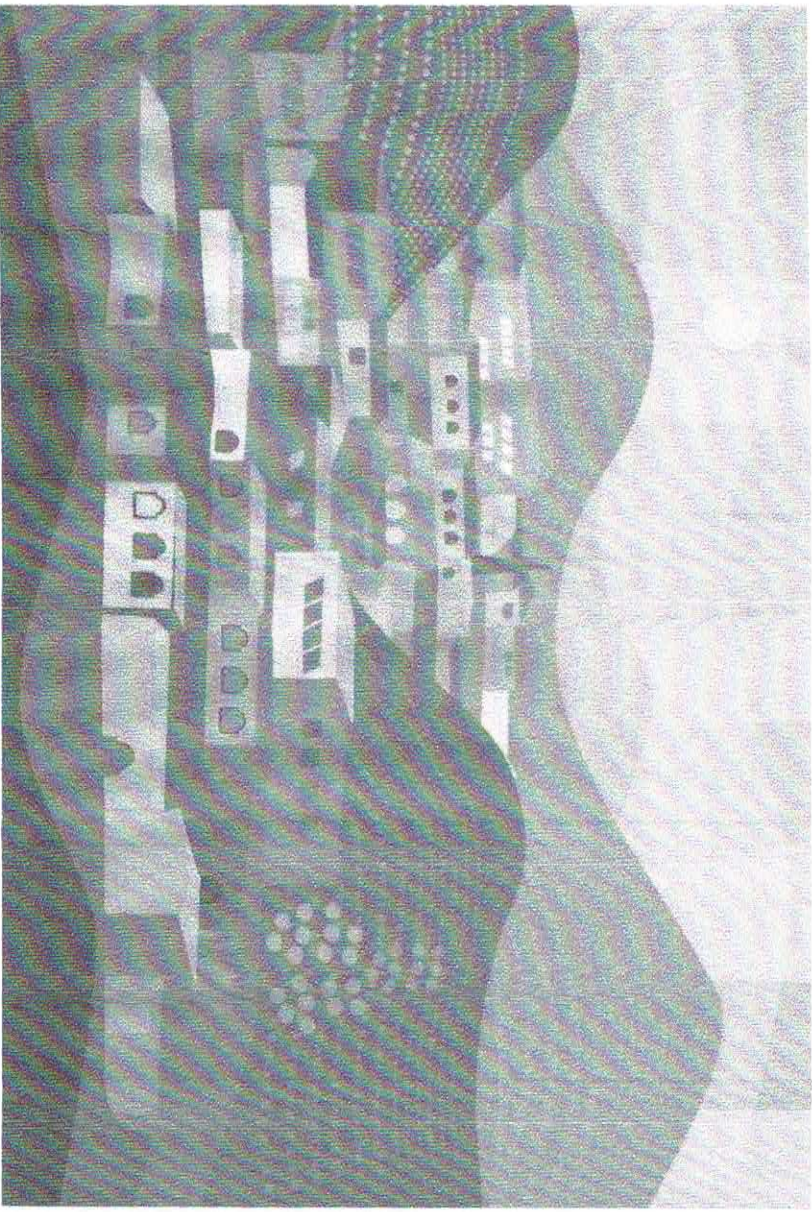


---

# **The House on Mango Street**

by Sandra Cisneros

---



**Yonkers Montessori Academy**

**SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT 2023**

**For Students Entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade**

## 9<sup>th</sup> GRADE SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

This is the summer reading assignment for students entering ninth grade at Yonkers Montessori Academy in September 2023. The goal of summer reading is to maintain and enhance your reading, writing, and vocabulary skills while you are away from school.

### REQUIRED READING:

#### The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

- ✓ This book is widely available to purchase at bookstores and online. If you have a public library card, you may request it through the Westchester Library system. I have also found it on a google by searching grades9 houseonmango.pdf
- ✓ Complete this packet as you read. Write in complete sentences unless the directions say otherwise, or the activity requires a different type of response.
- ✓ Summer Reading will be collected when students return in September and calculated into the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter grade.
- ✓ There will be several follow-up activities and a test will be given too. These grades will be part of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter as well.

*Enjoy your summer & enjoy your reading!*

*Any questions or concerns, you may reach out to Mrs. Schleifer by email  
eschleifer@yonkerspublicschools.org*



# Background Information

This novel is written as a series of 44 short scenes which zoom in and focus closely on a moment or character, to give a vivid picture about that character, an idea, setting, and/or object.

## *These are known as vignettes.*

The word 'vignette' comes from the French *vigne* meaning "little vine," and the term came from the small vines drawn on the pages of printed texts. So, like the vines on the page, vignettes are little sections of a much bigger work.

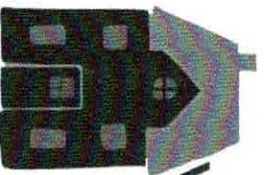
Vignettes are mostly descriptive. They often include little or no plot development. They are not stand-alone literary works, nor are they complete plots or narratives. Instead, vignettes are small parts of a larger work, and when placed together they combine to create a complete story.

## Why did Cisneros write this book as a series of vignettes?

"She thinks people who are busy working for a living deserve beautiful little stories, because they don't have much time and are often tired. She has in mind a book that can be opened at any page and will still make sense to the reader who doesn't know what came before or comes after."

## What about that title?

The house from the title is a combination of the author's many homes, but is placed on a street, 'Mango Street', where the Cisneros family never actually lived.



**Sandra Cisneros** was born in Chicago in 1954, the only daughter in a Mexican-American family of seven children. She had many home spaces as her family traveled frequently between Chicago and Mexico, often settling in a different house upon each return.

Cisneros started writing at a young age: encouraged by a teacher, she began writing poetry in high school, worked on her school literary magazine, and then even deciding to study English at University. She went on to work as a teacher, while still investing in her own writing in her spare time.

Cisneros received a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship in 1982, allowing her to focus on her writing. She published *The House on Mango Street* in 1984, which was a huge success and even won the American Book Award.

Drawing on the unsettled nature of her own childhood, as well as her identity as the only girl growing up with many brothers, the novel creates an vivid picture of one girl's search for a sense of belonging and identity.

# Vignette 1: The House on Mango Street

Describe the Narrator as best you can using complete sentences.

Why do you think the author is using first person point of view?

What are some positive aspects of the house on Mango Street?

Is this the Narrator's dream home? Explain your answer.

What does the **final line** of this vignette (1) illustrate about the narrator and her parents?

- ☐ **She has a bad relationship with her parents.**
- ☐ **Her parents often disappoint her.**
- ☐ **She thinks that her parents are liars.**
- ☐ **She is hopeful that they will move again soon.**
- ☐ **She is very perceptive and insightful.**
- ☐ **Her parents often make promises they don't keep.**

Vignette 2:

*Cisneros uses lots of descriptive imagery to help paint vivid pictures in the reader's mind.*

Hairs

List the key words used to describe her mother's hair

She describes the smell of her mother's hair as...

What do these descriptions tell us about her relationship with her mother?

Identify a **SIMILE** in this vignette:



How is the topic of gender introduced in this vignette?

Boys & Girls



**"Until then, I am a red balloon tied to an anchor."**

Explain in 2-4 sentences what this metaphor illustrates about the narrator's feelings.

---



---



---



---

### Vignette 4: My Name

*Write about your feelings about your own name or nickname*

Why doesn't the narrator like her name?

---



---



---



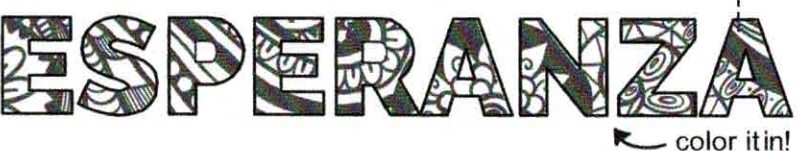
---



---

"I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window."

What deeper point is the narrator making about her dreams for the future? Respond in 3-5 complete sentences.



Identify words/lines which relate to the issue of poverty, shame, and social class:

### Cathy Queen of Cats Vignette 5

Provide evidence to support this statement (a direct quote)

Cathy believes she is superior to others on Mango Street

---



---



---



---



---

## #6 Our Good Day



Why doesn't Cathy want to befriend Rachel & Lucy?

But Esperanza does, which shows that she is...

Find a quote which shows that Esperanza identifies with the girls' social status and write it here:

Find a quote from this vignette that shows the Happiness the narrator feels:

## Vignette 8:

### Gil's Furniture Bought & Sold

Then he starts it up and all sorts of things start happening. It's like all of a sudden he let go a million moths all over the dusty furniture and swan-neck shadows and in our bones. It's like drops of water. Or like marimbas only with a funny little plucked sound to it like if you were running your fingers across the teeth of a metal comb.

## Vignette 7: Laughter

Rachel & Lucy's laughter is compared to: Esperanza & Nenny's laughter is compared to:

Create a **SIMILE** to describe your own laughter:

How would you describe the narrator's relationship with her sister?

Give this vignette a new **TITLE**:



Describe a time you did something daring or risky like the children do in the First Annual Tarzan Jumping Contest?

Esperanza describes her neighbors in great detail. What does this convey about the type of **community** she lives in?

## Vignette 9: Meme Ortiz

### Louie, His Cousin & His Other Cousin



Vignette  
11

Why do you think Louie's cousin drives the children around?

(check all that apply)

- Why do you think that Louie's cousin reacts wildly when he hears the sirens?
- ☐ He has heard of situations of police brutality.
  - ☐ The car he is driving is stolen.
  - ☐ He is driving without a license.
  - ☐ He has an illegal number of people in the car.
  - ☐ He is wanted for a crime.
  - ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank each of the following in terms of how prominent and significant they are as core concepts in this vignette. (1-most / 4-least)

- ☐ Home, Family & Community
- ☐ Social Class
- ☐ Identity & Maturity
- ☐ Foreignness & Culture
- ☐ Women & Girls

BIG CONCEPTS

How does the way this story of the Cadillac is narrated emphasize the fact that the narrator is a young child?

Content

Words / language

Who is Marin?

Why does she sit outside at night?

Summarize why Esperanza likes her:

What is meant by: "Marin is already older than us in many ways"?

Pick another character mentioned previously and compare and contrast them with Marin:

Character  
name: \_\_\_\_\_

Similarities:

Differences:

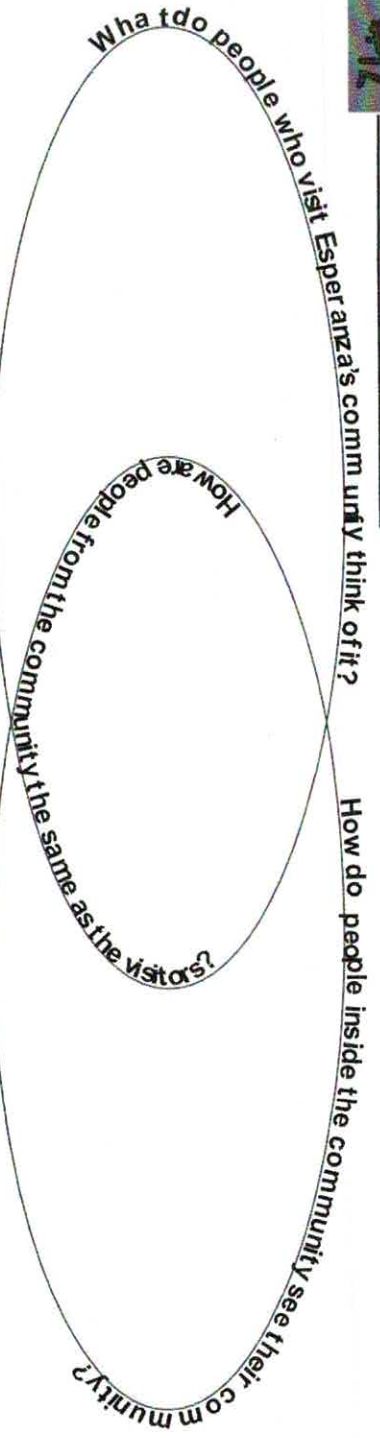
Vignette 11:  
Marin

Do you think that Marin's dreams will come true?

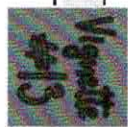
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe



## Those Who Don't



What point do you think Cisneros is making about how we view other people?



## There Was an Old Woman She Had So Many Children She Didn't Know What to Do

Question / Answer	How do you know? Explain / Give evidence.
Does Esperanza have a positive opinion of the Vargas children? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> It's complicated	
Does Esperanza feel any sympathy for Rosa Vargas? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> It's complicated	
Does Esperanza think that the community holds responsibility for other people? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> It's complicated	

What happens to Angel Vargas?



## Alicia Who Sees Mice

What does Alicia's father see as the role of women?      What does Esperanza admire about Alicia?      How is Alicia different than Marin?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



What does the sky  
symbolize to Esperanza?

(check all that  
apply)

- ☐ A feeling of deep sadness
- ☐ A place of peace and security
- ☐ The potential for beauty
- ☐ The great equalizer in an unfair world
- ☐ A world of possibilities
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

A quote which shows that Esperanza's  
community is not a very pretty place:

“

”

15

## Darius & the Clouds

Do you find peace and security in nature, or natural  
elements?

Explain why (or when) or why not.



## And Some More

Vignette  
#16

this chapter is not written conventionally  
with quotation marks. Why do you think  
Cisneros decided to write like this?

---



---



---



---

Do you enjoy this style choice? Why or why  
not?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How else does Cisneros create an  
active, impassioned conversation  
between the girls?

---



---



---

## The Family of Little Feet

Vignette  
#17

TWO reasons

why the heels might be dangerous:

“  
They are  
dangerous,  
he says. You girls  
too young to be  
wearing  
shoes like that  
”

How do men react to the girls wearing heels?

---



---



---

Rank each of the following  
in terms of how prominent  
and significant they are as  
core concepts in this  
vignette. (1-most / 4-least)

- ☐ Home, Family & Community
- ☐ Social Class
- ☐ Identity & Maturity
- ☐ Foreignness & Culture
- ☐ Women & Girls

BIG CONCEPTS

Think about the high heel shoes, then finish the following sentences:

At first, I thought \_\_\_\_\_

But now I realize \_\_\_\_\_

# A Rice Sandwich

18

3 reasons Esperanza uses to try to convince her mother to let her take a packed lunch to school:

---

---

---

---

How is the experience with the nun here similar to a previous story mentioned?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Identify what you think is an important quotation from this vignette:

“  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_”

## Vignette 19: Chancla

What evidence is there that Esperanza is feeling self-conscious at the party?

Which of the following words relate to the narrator's emotions in this vignette?

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflicted  | <input type="checkbox"/> Proud      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protective  | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritated  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent | <input type="checkbox"/> Identity   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angry       | <input type="checkbox"/> Power      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shame       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sad        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amusing     | <input type="checkbox"/> Complex    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loving      | <input type="checkbox"/> Understood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural    | <input type="checkbox"/> Maturing   |

(check all that apply)

List WORDS used to describe Esperanza's FEET:

How does this relate to the topic of growing up?

Let us focus on Nenny:

How is Nenny different to the other girls?

## 20: Hips

Identify a **SIMILE** used to describe hips:

Summarize this Vignette:

---

---

---

---

---

---

*“She is in a world we don't belong to anymore.”*  
What does Esperanza mean by this?



Vignette:  
21

## The First Job

Why does Esperanza's father send his children to Catholic school? This shows us that he is...

- ☐ He is very religious.
- ☐ He has a very negative opinion of public schools.
- ☐ He went to Catholic school himself.
- ☐ He wants to appear wealthy.

Why do you think Esperanza lets Tito push her?

How might Esperanza feel when the older man forces her into kissing him?

## Vignette 23: Analyzing Imagery

Cisneros uses language to paint vivid pictures.

How is **COLOR** used in this vignette to help paint a picture and illustrate Esperanza's feelings about her aunt?

Identify an example of **PERSONIFICATION** used:

“

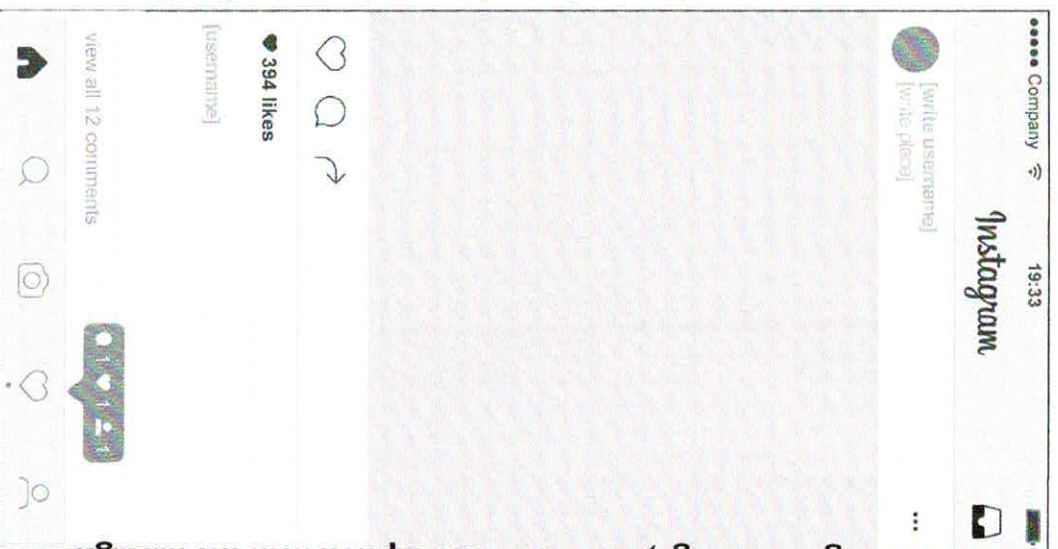
”

List all the negative words used in to describe Aunt Lupe.

Papa Who Wakes Up Tired in the Dark

#22

Imagine you are Esperanza, posting about your abuelito's death.



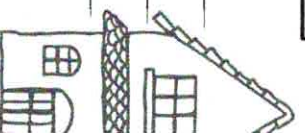
Go back to the "Big Concepts" pages and complete for "Home, Family and Community" with evidence from this vignette. Draw / collage the image; then write the caption with the hashtags.

Elenita, Cards, Palm, Water

24

Why is Esperanza disappointed with the fortune she is read?

What might "A Home in the Heart" mean?



Vignette  
#25

## Geraldo No Name

What are SIX key phrases used to describe Geraldo?

---

---

---

---

---

---

What do these details tell us about him?

"That's the story, That's what she said again and again. Once to the hospital people and twice to the police. No address. No name. Nothing in his pockets. Ain't it a shame."

Circle a word above which you think is key to the author's underlying message about the deeper theme.

What is the **TONE** of the last line above?

---

Why do you think Cisneros included this vignette? What do you think she is trying to say about language and social status?

---

Vignette  
#26

## Edna's Ruthie

In what way is Ruthie **trapped**?

---

---

---

---

---

---

What quote from this vignette do you think is most important? Why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

This vignette is packed with description and imagery. See if you can find examples of each of the following techniques, and then discuss and explain their effect.

## The Earl of Tennessee

Vignette  
#27

SIMILE	
PERSONIFICATION	
ONOMATOPOEIA	



Esperanza is not scared of the boys outside.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	Evidence and Explanation
Esperanza feels superior to Sire's girlfriend.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	Evidence and Explanation
Esperanza desires to be more grown up.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False	Evidence and Explanation

Sire

**"Everything is holding its breath inside me"**

*What does Esperanza mean by this?*

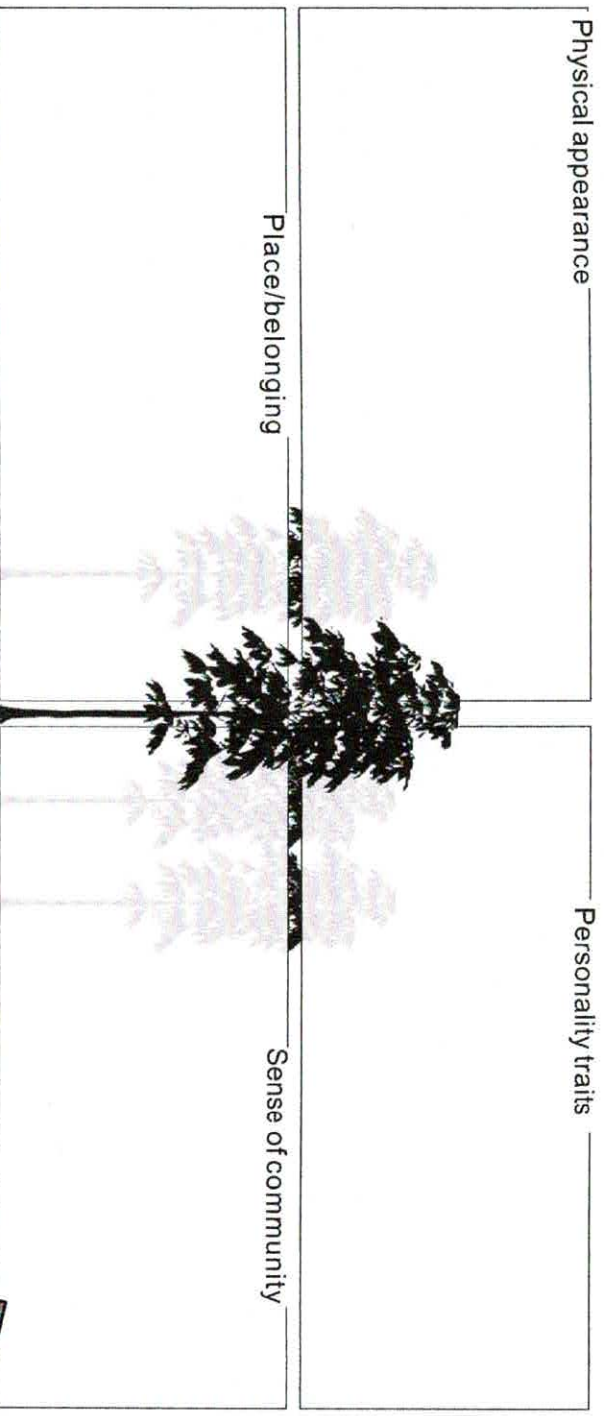
- ☐ She feels scared and anxious.
- ☐ She feels excited about the possibility of desire.
- ☐ She is uncomfortable about Sire's attention.
- ☐ She is hiding her feelings from her parents.

**Four Skinny Trees**

Vignette #29

In what ways is Esperanza like the four skinny trees?

Physical appearance	Personality traits
Place/belonging	Sense of community



**No Speak English**

Vignette #30

By what is Mamacita trapped?

What are 2 possible meanings of the title?

Why do you think that Mamacita **doesn't learn English?**

- ☐ She hates America and so doesn't want to speak the language.
- ☐ She misses her home and doesn't want to get integrated into a new culture.
- ☐ She is uneducated and doesn't have anyone to teach her.
- ☐ She doesn't want to talk to her husband.

Find a quote to show that Esperanza tries to **empathize**

31

Rafaela Who Drinks Coconut &  
Papaya Juice on Tuesdays

A character who Rafaela  
is similar to: \_\_\_\_\_

An **allusion** is a reference to another piece of  
literature, art, history, religion, or culture.

**How and Why** is  
**allusion** used in this  
vignette?

Pick a **color** to  
symbolize Rafaela: \_\_\_\_\_

### 33: Minerva writes poetry

You write poetry

1. Re-read the vignette, thinking about the deeper theme. As you read, underline any sentences, phrases, or key words which you think are essential to the theme.
2. Get a scrap piece of paper. Write out 8-10 phrases or groups of words you have underlined.
3. Spend time making these lines into a poem. You may need to add in your own words, rearrange lines, etc.  
*Remember: poems don't need to rhyme, but do think about line structure, imagery, rhythm, and tone.*
4. Once you are happy with your poem, give it a title, and then write it out below.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

32: Sally

How is Sally seen by <b>others?</b>	What is the reality of Sally's life?
--	---

Can you think of somebody you know who  
people seem to judge, yet you know there is  
more to them than meets the eye? **Explain**  
(but don't use real names).

### 34: Burns in the Attic

Which of the following lines illustrates

Esperanza's ability for empathy?

- ☐ "I don't tell them I am ashamed--all of us staring out the window like the hungry."
- ☐ "They don't look down at all except to be content to live on hills."
- ☐ "I'll offer them the attic, ask them to stay. because I know how it is to be without a house."
- ☐ "Burns, I'll say, and I'll be happy."

Esperanza still longs for her own home, but how has  
that vision changed?



Esperanza wants to be:

- ☐ Married  
☐ Independent  
☐ Like Nenny  
☐ Unmarried  
☐ Equal to men  
☐ Desired

(check all that apply)

**"I have begun my own  
quiet war. Simple. Sure."**

What is this 'war' Esperanza has  
started? \_\_\_\_\_

Beautiful & Cruel

Vignette  
#35

What are the  
differences between  
Esperanza & Nenny?

A Smart Cookie

Vignette  
#36

**Esperanza's mother says "I could've been somebody, you  
know?"**

Of whom is something similar said? \_\_\_\_\_

Why type of talents does her mother have? \_\_\_\_\_

Why type of intelligence does her mother lack? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did her mother not pursue education? \_\_\_\_\_

What advice does Esperanza's mother give her? \_\_\_\_\_

What Sally Said

Vignette  
#37

## Personal Thoughts

**Sally said, "He never hits me hard."**

Do you think this is true? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Evidence for your opinion:

Why do you think Sally goes  
back with her father?

Why does her father  
hit her?

The Monkey Garden

Vignette  
#38

**"...the family that spoke like guitars"**

This contains...  
☐ Onomatopoeia ☐ Hyperbole  
☐ Metaphor ☐ Personification  
☐ Simile ☐ Allusion

The figurative language illustrates to the  
reader that...

What might the Monkey Garden  
represent for the children?

Why does Esperanza get  
so angry in this vignette?

A question you'd  
ask Esperanza  
at this point, if  
you could:





## Red Clowns

Who is Esperanza most angry with in this vignette?

Do you think that this is who Esperanza should be angry with? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ It's complicated

Explain your choice: \_\_\_\_\_



## Linoleum Roses

Were you **surprised** that Sally got married?

On the one hand, Yes, because... On the other hand, NO, because...



How is Sally's husband like her father?

Do you feel **hopeful** for Sally? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What point do you think Cisneros is making about material wealth and status in this vignette?



## The Three Sisters

What do you think Esperanza wished for?

What do you think the sister means when she says, "**remember to come back for the others**"?

Which of the following words relate to Esperanza's emotions in this vignette?

- |                                    |                                   |  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pride     | <input type="checkbox"/> Empathy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anguish   | <input type="checkbox"/> Jealousy | <input type="checkbox"/> Betrayal      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Maturity | <input type="checkbox"/> Indifference  |

How does Cisneros show these emotions through her use of language:



How do Alicia's words echo the advice Esperanza received in the previous vignette?

## Alicia & I Talking on Edna's Steps

What makes Esperanza laugh?

What does this tell us about the community?

- ☐ It is a fun, cheerful place to be.
- ☐ Nobody really cares about it; it's seen as unimportant.
- ☐ They really hate authority figures.
- ☐ It is somewhere which doesn't photograph well.

Do you think that Esperanza is more or less likely to **take this advice** when it comes from Alicia? ☐ More ☐ Less

Why?

Imagine Esperanza had Twitter.

Write her status at the end of the day.



Esperanza @calmeCassandra • 13h

V

## A House of My Own

How many times is "My" written?

Rank each of the following in terms of how much of a motivating factor you think they are (1-most, 4-least):

☐ She wants to live somewhere other than Mango Street.

☐ She wants to be completely independent.

☐ She doesn't want her life to revolve around men.

☐ She wants to have her own belongings.

## Mango Says Goodbye Sometimes

In your own words, explain what you think Esperanza means when she says that Mango Street is **"the house I belong but do not belong to."**

Pick a color to symbolize the feelings of this final chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Give a reason for your choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify what you think is the most important quotation from this final vignette:

“

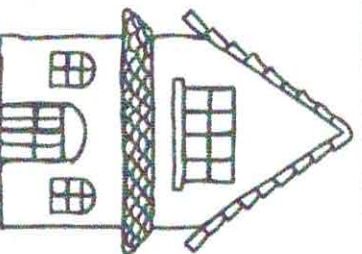
---

---

---

---

”



"... I have gone away to come back.  
For the ones I left behind.  
For the ones who cannot out."

Who might Esperanza be thinking about here? List at least three of the most important, in your opinion.