

***The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros**

English 1-2 Honors

Mr. Coia

“What I remember most is Mango Street, sad red house, the house I belong to but do not belong to.”

~Esperanza Cordero

We are going to read this novel together, even though you could probably read this entire book tonight. We will focus on taking this unit slowly, rather than racing through to the end of the book. As you soon will see, this is not the typical novel like *The Outsiders* or *The Pigman*. This book is a compilation of **vignettes**, short narratives written with careful attention to economy and word choice. These vignettes add up, as Sandra Cisneros has written, “to tell one big story, each story contributing to the whole—like beads in a necklace.” We are going to attempt to find out what this necklace says.

Our focus of study is Esperanza Cordero, a Chicano girl growing up in inner-city Chicago. She is like Ponyboy Curtis, trying to “stay gold” amidst difficult circumstances in life.

Here’s how we will cover this book. We will read the entire novel in class, each taking a vignette to read aloud and lead a discussion on. We will focus on figurative writing, the use of fragments, and creative writing.

Assignments:

Vignette Discussion and Response Paper (25 points each)

You will be assigned one chapter to lead in reading and discussion. You will then complete these steps:

- Read the vignette to yourself. You will be assigned one vignette to read at home (at least three times) and to prepare your presentation.
- Decide what events or characters have personal meaning for you and others in the class. In a way this is no different than a good reader’s response: consider how the characters and events relate to your personal experiences.
- Write a 250 - 350 word response to this vignette. Explore themes, hardships, hope, etc. Make this personal to you and helpful to the class.
- Practice reading this chapter out loud. Be ready to answer questions others might have about the vignette you have been assigned. When we begin to share our novel, you will be the expert for your vignette, so I expect you to know it upside down and inside out.

- In class, you will read your selected chapter to the class, speaking clearly and loudly and using effective inflection to demonstrate the tone of the piece. You will discuss chapter issues with the class that are personally meaningful to the students, and Specify which of these issues could be considered a universal theme or issue for Esperanza.

Your presentation should be between five and ten minutes long (not including reading). I am interested in seeing how you dissect the chapter, looking beyond the obvious into something meaning for the class. Please do not simply stand and ask, “So, what did you guys think of the chapter?” You are the leader of the discussions. Create a few deep questions that get to the heart of the chapter.

You will be graded on how well your presentation shows your knowledge of the chapter.

Personal Vignette Writing Project (100 points)

Each class, you will have time to create your own vignettes about your neighborhood and life in the model of Cisneros’s work. Brainstorm a list of topic ideas for vignettes about your life. Include personal experiences and people. This should cover experiences in a brief amount of time (about a year).

- You will have nine chapters
- You must have: My Name for one of the nine.
- Use a healthy dose of figurative language. The more metaphors, the more better.
- Include a colorful cover and a table of contents
- Show off a creative layout. Use one page per chapter, like *HOMS* does
- Title your work. *The House on _____ Street* could work.
- This should be writing you are proud of and invested in.

Participation Grade (30 points)

In each of our class presentation days (there will be six), you are expected to enter into the discussion. Each day is worth 5 points.

I am indebted to the website http://members.aol.com/ht_a/joporyk/HOMS.html?mtbrand=AOL_US for ideas on the Vignette Discussions.

Fri 2/6

- Share poetry
- Metaphors/similes
- Object writing
- Check out book

Tues 2/10

- Introduction to book and unit
- Define vignette
- Reading chapters 1-4
- Discussion on Esperanza
- Assign chapters
- "My Name"

Homework: Write a chapter on "My Name"

Thurs 2/12

- Proper use of fragments
- Presentation chapters 5-10
- Discussion

Homework: Work on your selected chapter

Tues 2/17

- Presentation chapters 11-15
- Writing on Personal Vignettes

Homework: Work on your selected chapter; Personal Vignettes

Thurs 2/19

- Work time: Work on your chapter or writing on Vignettes

Mon 2/23

- Presentation chapters 16-21
- Writing on Personal Vignettes

Homework: Work on your selected chapter; Personal Vignettes

Wed 2/25

- Work time: Work on your chapter or writing on Vignettes

Mon 3/1

- Presentation chapters 22-26
- Writing on Personal Vignettes

Homework: Work on your selected chapter; Personal Vignettes

Wed 3/3

- Presentation chapters 27-32
- Writing on Personal Vignettes

Homework: Work on your selected chapter; Personal Vignettes

Fri 3/5

- In-class reading 32-end
- Discussion on book

Tues 3/9

- Personal Vignette Project Due today**
- Reading our vignettes
- Turn in book

Assignments:

<i>Personal Vignette</i>	<i>100 points</i>
<i>Vignette Discussion</i>	<i>25 points</i>
<i>Chapter Response Paper</i>	<i>25 points</i>
<i>Participation</i>	<i>30 points</i>