

Approved for use in all English III

Summary of the Work:

In the voice of a coming-of-age Hispanic female, Esperanza, *Mango Street* is captured in a series of vignettes. Every-day events are poetically shared in forty-four short chapters. Reality is inescapable, since even one of the nuns at Esperanza's school asks, "You live *there*?" (Cisneros 5)

The entire neighborhood from Angel Vargas "who learned to fly and exploded without even an O"(30) to Sally who leads Esperanza to the carnival; to the Three Sisters who tell Esperanza: "When you leave you must remember to come back for the others. You must always be Esperanza. You will always be Esperanza" (105) is captured in this remembrance of life in Chicago in the 1960s.

Rationale:

This book is a welcome inclusion for both gender and ethnic merit. Hispanic voices are rare; a coming-of-age female protagonist is rare. The struggles of this family are heroic on a day-by-day basis. The theme of love is prevalent; despite, Esperanza's deep desire to leave her not-so-perfect neighborhood.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

- "Voices of Sadness & Science" by Gary Soto, *The Bloomsbury Review*, Vol. 8, No. 4, July—August, 1988, p. 21.
- "In Search of Identity in Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*" by Maria Elena de Valdes, *The Canadian Review of American Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Fall, 1992, pp. 55—72.

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- Columbus Foundation's American Book Award 1985
- George G. Stone Center for Children's Books Recognition of Merit Award 1994

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 870
- Readability Level: 5.6

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: ([link](#))

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The novel begins with a young girl's yearning to be like everybody else in her school. Esperanza recognizes that reality is not what others reveal. Esperanza's strength is her core when she recognizes coming-of-age includes sexual experience: an old man at her first job aggressively kisses her, and later when Sally leaves her, a boy at the carnival rapes Esperanza.

Connection to the Curriculum:

The theme for junior English is "the American Dream." From the Native Americans, to the Puritans, to the contemporary immigrants, this is a driving goal. With the first semester focus on memoir (*A River Runs through It*, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, and *The House on Mango Street*) there is also merit in the sense of place that is found in all three works.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

The House on MangoStreet has been one novel on the AP exam.