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INTRODUCTION

Read through today's national or state standards for "Reading: Literature," and you will find that the work expected of students is expressed using such academic terminology as *describe*, *determine*, *develop*, *support*, and *cite*. Requirements such as these cannot be met via the comprehension-question worksheets and culminating quizzes that have long been the staples of literature guides designed for classroom use. The primary objective of those traditional activities was to make sure that students were keeping track of what was happening in the section of the novel that they had just read. Very little rigor and synthesis was asked of students—and usually none until the entire novel was read.

From a teacher's standpoint, this style of classroom analysis misses multiple opportunities to delve deeply into the details that make a specific piece of literature a classic. From a student's standpoint, this way to reflect on literature is monotonous and inflexible, and it fails to nurture the momentum experienced when one is invested in a compelling work of art. That is why the guides in the *Rigorous Reading* series aim to do much more: they aim to transform the reading of a great novel into a journey of discovery for students.

Instead of merely asking students what happened in any given section, this resource asks questions that require closer reading and deeper analysis—questions such as, “Why did the author choose to include this information?” and “How does this information further the plot or offer more insight into the themes, characters, settings, etc.?” And instead of waiting until the end of the novel to put the pieces of the puzzle in place, students will learn to add to and alter their understanding of the novel *as they are reading it*. The various activities in this resource systematically prompt students to consider and appreciate the many ingredients the author has combined to form the novel as a whole.

A CUSTOM RESOURCE

This in-depth guide has been written specifically for Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Esperanza Rising*. The lessons and activities have been structured and scaffolded to maximize the experience of reading and teaching this novel.

To prepare your students for their reading of *Esperanza Rising*, utilize the **novel information** and **pre-reading activities** included on pages 7–9 of this guide. Included in this section is information about the book and its author, along with activities designed to acclimate students to the themes and concepts present in the book they are about to read.

This resource provides activities that help foster comprehension and reinforce knowledge of literary elements as students read the novel. These **section activities** allow students the opportunity to process short sections of the novel individually, laying a strong foundation for their ability to engage more deeply with the chapters to come. For each section of the novel, students will complete individual and collaborative activities that encourage close reading, referencing textual evidence, and drawing their own conclusions about the text.

Additionally, this resource provides students with another avenue through which they can reflect on recurring literary elements while also connecting personally with the novel. Each student maintains his or her own **Interactive Novel Log**, using it as a way to consider and then reconsider various aspects of the novel.

Upon completion of the entire novel, students can synthesize their ideas about the novel by completing several individual and/or collaborative **post-reading activities** (pages 55–73). This section of the resource includes such larger assignments as group projects and essay prompts.

On pages 74–75, **vocabulary** lists are provided for each section of the novel, along with suggestions for ways to teach vocabulary during reading and after completing the novel.

At the end of this guide, an **answer key** is provided for activities that require specific answers, and a list identifies how each activity correlates to **standards**.

Teacher Tips

For a description of Interactive Novel Logs and how to use them in your classroom, see page 5 of this guide.

An ideal way to use this resource would be to follow the complete lesson plan given on page 6 of this guide.

The use of multiple texts can help build and extend knowledge about a theme or topic. It can also illustrate the similarities and differences in how multiple authors approach similar content or how an individual author approaches multiple novels. See the bottom of page 7 for suggestions about using this novel as part of a text set.

When teaching other novels in your classroom, consider using the specific ideas and also the general approach presented in this resource. Ask students to mine small sections of a novel for clues to theme and characterization. Examine the craft, structure, and purpose of select passages. Explore inferences and encourage connections.

This guide is designed for use in grades 5–8, and the standards correlations on pages 79–80 reflect this range. This leveling has been determined through the consideration of various educational metrics. However, teacher discretion should be used to determine if the novel and guide are appropriate for lower or higher grades, as well.

KEEPING NOVEL LOGS

Great works of literature are complex texts, and complex texts are multilayered. They enrich and reveal as they go along. Successful readers are those who “go along” with the novel, too. Interactive Novel Logs give students a place and a space to record their thoughts and observations as they journey through the book. After each section of the novel is read, students use their Interactive Novel Logs to track the introduction and development of such literary elements as plot, setting, theme, characterization, craft, and structure, while also choosing their own ways to connect the novel to their own life experiences.

Materials needed for each student:

- ✦ a three-ring binder or presentation folder
- ✦ a sheet of plain paper for the title page
- ✦ two or three sheets of lined paper for a Table of Contents
- ✦ several extra sheets of paper (both lined and plain) for student’s responses to the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” prompts at the end of each section

Teacher Tip

One Interactive Novel Log can be kept for multiple novels, in which case a larger three-ring binder will be needed. If it will be used only for the activities included in this guide for *Esperanza Rising*, a 1½-inch binder or presentation folder will be adequate.

Assembling the Interactive Novel Log:

1. On the plain paper, allow students to design and decorate their own title pages. Have them write “Interactive Novel Log” and “*Esperanza Rising*” in the middle of the page. They should include their name and grade at the bottom.
2. Add blank lined paper for the Table of Contents. Have students write “Table of Contents” at the top. They will add to this list as they create new pages.
3. Before reading each section of the novel, photocopy and distribute new copies of the Interactive Novel Log worksheets (pages 11–18). Directions for completing these activities can be found in the “Teacher Instructions” on page 10.
4. For the final activity in each section, photocopy and distribute the “Section Log-In” page for the section. Follow the directions given. Students begin by completing a copy of the “Examining Endings” worksheet (page 19), which asks them to predict what will happen next in the novel. Students then select one or more of the four prompts in the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” section, and they create an Interactive Novel Log page that responds to that topic.
5. After the class has completed the entire novel and the post-reading activities, you may have students include the “My Book Rating” worksheet (page 73) as a final entry in their Interactive Novel Logs.

Teacher Tip

Consider allowing your students to preview the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” prompts a day or two before they are asked to respond to them. When asking students to reflect on past experiences and articulate their personal connections to a work of art, give them the time and space they need to collect their thoughts. By allowing your students to sit with the ideas presented in these prompts, you will relieve the pressure an immediate response can cause.

NAME: _____

THE HEART OF THE SCENE

Esperanza Rising opens with a short scene that takes place between Esperanza and her father. Take a closer look at this scene to see what information it reveals.

On the Surface

This short scene is our first introduction to the world of the novel. What basic information does it give you? How does it answer the basic questions?

Where does this scene take place? (location) _____

When does this scene take place? (time) _____

Who do we meet in this scene? _____

What are these characters doing in this scene? _____

Deeper Down

At first, Esperanza cannot hear the heartbeat of the land. In order to do so, she must get closer to the land and listen closely. Do the same with this scene. Look at it more closely to see what it reveals.

1. What do we learn about Esperanza's relationship with her father? How does the author give us this information? Use examples from the text to support your claims.

2. From this first scene, what can we learn about the way the author will present this story? Give examples of the way she uses language to describe the characters or the land.

**Section III
through "Plums"**

NAME: _____

THREE IN ONE

In *Esperanza Rising*, several storylines are going on at once. For this activity, look at three storylines: one in which Esperanza works around their new home, one in which her mother begins to work in the sheds, and one in which Marta's people try to organize a strike. Complete the diagram below to show the most important events that happen in each storyline during this portion of the novel. In the final box, show the event that happens near the end of this section and affects all three storylines.

**Storyline #1:
Esperanza**

**Storyline #2:
Mama**

**Storyline #3:
Marta**

Which event affects all three storylines? _____

Effect on Esperanza: _____

Effect on Mama: _____

Effect on Marta: _____

Section V
through "Grapes"

NAME: _____

SECTION V LOG-IN

Now that you have finished *Esperanza Rising*, take some time to add to your Interactive Novel Log.

✦ **Make a more personal connection to what you have read.**

Choose one of the suggestions below and use it to fill a page in your Interactive Novel Log. Take this opportunity to connect with the novel in a way that appeals to you.

Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log

1 Tweet It!

Write a series of four tweets. In the first three, offer a quick insight into what happens in the beginning, the middle, and then the end of *Esperanza Rising*. In the last tweet, give your overall impression of the novel as a whole. Each tweet can be no more than 140 characters in length.

4 Speaking of This Book

Do you know someone who would really like the style or story of this book? Write a dialogue between you and this person. Tell this person about the book and why you think he or she would love it. Try to use almost all dialogue as you write this scene.

2 Your Turning Point

Novels often have a turning point when something happens that changes everything for the main character. What was your turning point as you read *Esperanza Rising*? What one moment made you suddenly realize that you were going to really like (or really not like) this novel? Name the moment and explain why it had such an effect on you.

5 Pitch the Sequel

Once you have finished reading the last page of the novel, the story is over and nothing else can be known about what happens to the people that populate the novel. But it doesn't have to be this way! Imagine you have been asked to write a sequel to *Esperanza Rising*.

- What would the plot of the sequel be?
- What would happen to Esperanza?
- How about Miguel?
- Would Marta be a part of the sequel?

Write a paragraph or two describing what would happen in a sequel to this novel.

3 "Like" I Said

Use similes to describe characters, settings, or events from *Esperanza Rising*. You might even create a few similes to describe your experience of reading the novel. In all, form five similes and explain each.