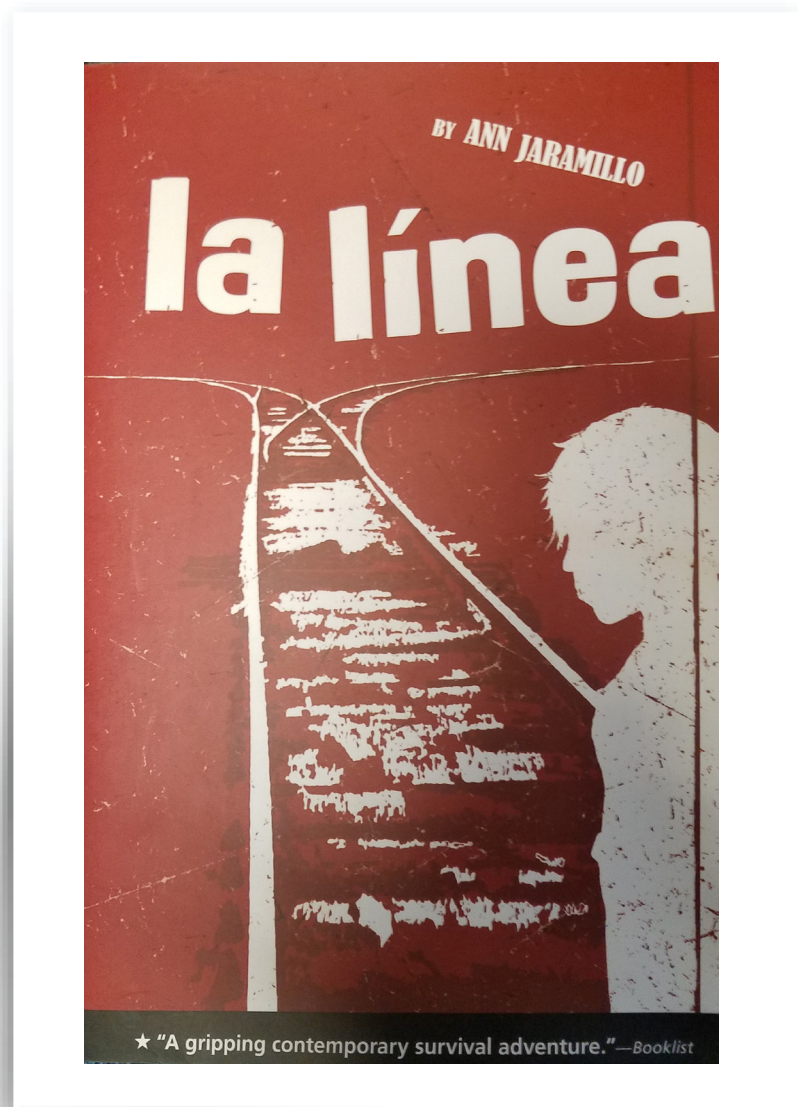


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teaching latin america through literacy



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Educator's Guide

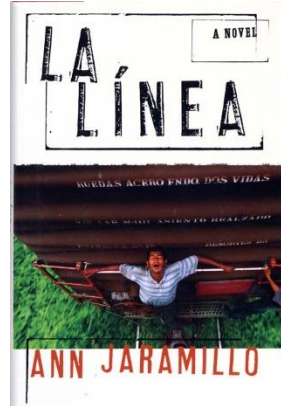
La línea

Written by Ann Jaramillo

Published by Roaring Book Press, 2006

ISBN: 9780312373542

Age Level: 10 and up



BOOK SUMMARY

Miguel's life is just beginning. Or so he thinks. Fifteen-year-old Miguel leaves his *rancho* deep in Mexico to migrate to California across *la línea*, the border, in a debut novel of life-changing, cliff-hanging moments. But Miguel's carefully laid plans change suddenly when his younger sister Elena stows away and follows him. Together, Miguel and Elena endure hardships and danger on their journey of desperation and desire, loyalty and betrayal. An epilogue, set ten years after the events of the story, shows that you can't always count on dreams--even the ones that come true.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS:

- Florida Sunshine State Young Readers Award Master List
- James Cook Book Award Nominee 2007
- ALA Best Books for Young Adults 2007
- ALA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults 2010
- Young Hoosier Book Award Nominee 2008-2009
- Texas Lone Star Book 2007-2008

AUTHOR'S CORNER

About Ann Jaramillo:



Ann Jaramillo teaches English as a Second Language to Mexican-American seventh and eighth graders in Salinas, California, many of whom are migrants. *La línea* is her first novel. Over ninety-five percent of her students are of Mexican descent, and many are first generation, new arrival immigrants themselves. She wrote this story for them, for the kids who come into her classroom, ready to learn, after surviving a daunting journey. “From them I have learned the meaning of optimism, courage, and determination” (pg 128).

La línea, though fiction, is based on real events. Jaramillo was inspired to write *La línea* when one of her students revealed that she had grown up without knowing her mother until she arrived to the U.S. She writes, “That conversation was the seed of this book. My students find very few books that reflect their lives and experiences. I was determined to write one that did” (pg. 131).

Jaramillo’s husband is Mexican-American and he works as a lawyer seeking justice for migrant farmworkers. As she has become a part of his Mexican family, she has seen first-hand the complexities of culture, language and citizenship within immigrant and borderland communities. She has commented that *La línea* is the “result of the fortunate convergence of my married and professional lives” (pg 127). Her husband’s family history also impacts how she views immigration in the U.S. She describes, “Jaramillos have lived for many, many generations in New Mexico. My father-in-law, Lalo, Liked to remind us “we didn’t come to the United States. The United States came to us”. My mother-in-law, Tomasa, grew up in El Paso, Texas. Both her parents were immigrants from Mexico” (pg 127).

Inspired by what she saw through her personal and professional life, she wrote *La línea* represent an important, though marginalized group; thereby raising awareness of the dangers, trials and tribulations that many migrant children face. The book was chosen as a 2006 Américas Award Commended Title.

(All citations from additional resources section in *La línea*)

USING *La Línea* IN THE CLASSROOM

La Línea is about the journey of two young teenagers trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border to be reunited with their family in California. It’s an incredibly poignant and moving novel. The trip North is hard for Miguel and Elena, and it’s not always easy to read about what the two had to endure. I certainly cried through a number of parts. It’s difficult to read about how dehumanizing and traumatic the experience is. While it’s fiction, it’s based on the lived experiences of some of Jaramillo’s own students. Knowing how close the story is to the accounts of many

immigrants makes the reading even more intense. Jaramillo manages to communicate the danger, violence, and sacrifice while avoiding overdramatizing the emotions, which allows the story to remain accessible both to students who have had similar experiences as well as those who haven't.

While it's certainly a realistic account, there are times when I can imagine that Miguel and Elena were luckier than many in terms of the people they encountered, like Javi and Moises, who led to their ultimate success in making it to the U.S. They met people who sacrificed their own lives so that the two teenagers would make it to their families in the U.S. Yet the story is not overly romanticized, by any means. Even though Elena and Miguel survive the journey, they lose a great deal. Such an experience can't be forgotten; my guess is it forever changes a person. It's one that perhaps you never fully recover from. When we consider the fact that some of our own students may have experienced the same thing, we realize how important a book like this is.

The novel puts a very human face on immigration. It's a counter story to the narratives that incite fear of immigrants by painting them as terrorists, drug dealers, or criminals. Instead we see the financial desperation that forces people to risk everything, including their own lives and the lives of their families, to make it to the U.S. We see how poverty forces parents to leave children behind to find work in the U.S., and the emotional strain this puts on the entire family. When used in the classroom, the book can raise awareness and hopefully empathy for the risks so many immigrants take when they try and cross the border. For those students whose families have experienced crossing the border, the book provides protagonists with whom they can identify, and the space to discuss what is an often silenced experience.

The documentary *Which Way Home* would be an excellent complement to the film, with a free teacher's guide available for the film. If you'd like to read what others have thought about the book, check out the links to other reviews below:

- [Kirkus Review](#)
- [Paper Tigers Review](#)
- [Socio-Cultural Competence University of Graz Review](#)

The book has been selected as part of the AILF's "[Immigration Resource Guide for K-12 Educators](#)".

**LESSON
PLANS
& ACTIVITIES**

The following lesson plans are comprised of two sections:

- A short section of suggested activities that can be used before, during or after the reading of the novel which are organized thematically by different subject areas
- Guided reading questions organized by parts of the book and

extended response writing prompts. These questions have been written to support the types of reading and critical thinking skills required in standardized reading comprehension tests. The following key words and skills are highlighted: analyze, infer, evaluate, describe, support, explain, summarize, compare, contrast and predict.

In addition to the lesson plans and activities included here, check out these other curricula:

- Classroom resource created by [Barbara Hult](#).

Common Core Standards Addressed:

K-12

Reading

Key Ideas and Details

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the

Social Studies and History

effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

La línea easily lends itself to a history or social studies lesson on immigration. This is a complex issue and there are many different ways to address it in the classroom dependent upon the age level of students and the time available. A number of high quality resources for teaching on the topic of immigration have already been created. For this reason, it seemed it would be most useful to share a sampling of those below.

COMPLEMENTARY TEACHING RESOURCES

[The Line Between Us](#)

Published by Rethinking Schools, *The Line Between Us* explores the history of U.S.-Mexican relations and the roots of Mexican immigration, all in the context of the global economy. And it shows how teachers can help students understand the immigrant experience and the drama of border life. But *The Line Between Us* is about more than Mexican immigration and border issues. It's about imaginative and creative teaching that gets students to care about the world. Using role plays, stories, poetry, improvisations, simulations and video, veteran teacher Bill Bigelow demonstrates how to combine lively teaching with critical analysis. *The Line Between Us* is a book for teachers, adult educators, community organizers and anyone who hopes to teach, and learn, about these important issues.

[The Border: Resources for Teaching](#)

Compiled by the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute, this website is an online space dedicated to sharing educational resources for teachers who intend to explore the U.S.-Mexico border with their students. Here

you will find resources that have been loosely divided according to key themes, from the extensive history of the region to the development of borderland culture. We encourage you to explore all, but feel free to pick and choose the areas that will best serve your classroom instructional needs.

[The Undocumented](#)

This is a PBS documentary with an accompanying free video game (see following entry). Marcos Hernandez lives and works in Chicago. He came to the United States from Mexico, after a life-threatening border crossing through the Sonora Desert in southern Arizona. Each month, he sends money to his mother in Mexico City to buy medicine for his brother, Gustavo, who needs a kidney transplant. *The Undocumented*, by acclaimed filmmaker Marco Williams, is Marcos's story—as well as the story of countless other migrants. Chronicling Arizona's deadliest summer months, award-winning documentary and fiction film director Marco Williams (*Banished*, *Two Towns of Jasper*, *In Search of Our Fathers*) weaves Marcos's search with the efforts of humanitarians and Border Patrol agents who are fighting to prevent migrant deaths, the medical investigators and Mexican Consulate workers who are trying to identify dead border crossers, and Mexican families who are struggling to accept the loss of a loved one. In true *cinéma vérité* style, *The Undocumented* by Marco Williams reveals the ongoing impact of immigration laws and economic policies on the very people who continue to be affected by them. By going beyond politics, the film also tells a story that is deeply personal.

[The Migrant Trail](#)

The Migrant Trail is a video game that introduces players to the hardships and perils of crossing the Sonora Desert. Players have the chance to play as both migrants crossing the desert from Mexico to the United States and as U.S. Border Patrol agents patrolling the desert. As migrants, players are introduced to the stories of the people willing to risk their lives crossing the unforgiving Sonoran desert to reach America. By playing as Border Patrol agents, players see that the job goes beyond simply capturing migrants to helping save lives and providing closure for families who lost loved ones in the desert. Through the use of real-time resource management and by integrating characters, stories, and visuals from the film, *The Undocumented*, with intense gameplay choices, *The Migrant Trail* gives players another way to experience and understand the human toll of our border policies.

[Understanding Migration](#)

Created by The University of Texas at Austin's international outreach consortium, Hemispheres, *Understanding Migration* was conceived in response to numerous requests from educators and curriculum specialists concerning the presentation and discussion of issues related to human migration in the social studies classroom. What are the reasons that large

groups of people have found themselves moving from place to place? What effects does this movement have? And most importantly, how can such a fluid and nebulous concept be presented in a classroom in an easy-to-follow manner with clear lesson objectives and outcomes? Regional case studies were chosen to address these, and other, essential questions. Where possible, primary source documents were used to present the information in each case study.

Films

[Balseros/Cuban Rafters](#), 2002, directed by Carles Bosch and Josep Maria Doménech. Documentary. 120 min. Rating: Not Rated

The story of Cuban refugees who risked their lives in homemade rafts to reach the United States, and what life is like for those who succeed.

[Mojados: Through the Night](#), 2004, directed by Tommy Davis. Documentary. 65 min. Rating: Not Rated

Director Tommy Davis tags along with four migrants from a small village in Mexico as they leave their families and embark on a 120 mile trek across the deserts of Texas, attempting to evade the U.S. Border Patrol. They must overcome dehydration, hypothermia and come face to face with death.

[Harvest of Empire: The Untold Story of Latinos in America](#), 2012, directed by Peter Getzels and Eduardo Lopez. Documentary. 90 min. Rating: Not Rated

A powerful documentary that exposes the direct connection between the long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America and the immigration crisis we face today. From the territorial expansionist policies that decimated the young economies of Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba, to the covert operations that imposed oppressive military regimes in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador, *Harvest of Empire* provides an unflinching look at the origins of the growing Latino presence in the United States. Adapted from the landmark book written by journalist Juan Gonzalez, the film tells the story of an epic human saga that is largely unknown to the great majority of citizens in the U.S., but must become part of our national conversation about immigration.

[Which Way Home](#), 2009, directed by Rebecca Cammisa. Documentary. 90 min. Rating: Not Rated.

Which Way Home is a feature documentary film that follows unaccompanied child migrants, on their journey through Mexico, as they try to reach the United States. We follow children like Olga and Freddy, nine-year old Hondurans, who are desperately trying to reach their parents in the US.; children like Jose, a ten-year old El Salvadoran, who has been abandoned by smugglers and ends up alone in a Mexican detention center; and Kevin, a canny, streetwise fourteen-year old Honduran, whose mother

hopes that he will reach the U.S. and send money back to her. These are stories of hope and courage, disappointment and sorrow. They are the children you never hear about; the invisible ones.

[Classroom Resources: An Educator's Film Guide to Which Way Home](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute

[Indocumentales/ Undocumentaries](#)

Indocumentales/Undocumentaries is a US/Mexico Interdependent Film Series founded by three organizations located in New York City: what moves you?, Cinema Tropical, and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) at New York University. Through collaborative programming, the series has also partnered with other organizations such as the Mexican Cultural Institute and a vast array of host sites representing schools, non-profits, and community organizations. As of 2013 the CUNY Institute of Mexican Studies has also become part of the Indocumentales team of co-presenters.

Classroom Resources: Film guides, lesson plans and bibliographies are available on the [Indocumentales/Undocumentaries website](#).

Guided Reading Questions

Chapter 1 | Pages 1-3

1. What does Miguel usually get for his birthday? What would he like to get for his birthday? What was at the end of his bed this year? (p. 1) What are your birthdays like? Do you get gifts? What kinds of gifts?
2. What is Miguel's father like? Where is Miguel's father now? (p. 1-2)
3. Who is Miguel named after? Why wasn't he named Domingo? (p. 2)
4. What is written in the note from Papá? (p. 2)

Chapter 2 | Pages 4-6

1. Who is Elena? What does she do when she can't sleep? Imagine you were Elena and you had only seen your mother once in seven years. What would that be like? How would that make you feel? (p. 4-5)
2. Why doesn't Miguel want to tell Elena about the note? What will Elena want? (p. 5)
3. Why can't Miguel's family survive by selling their corn anymore? Is there anything that Miguel can do to help his family if he stays on the ranchito? What keeps Miguel, Elena and Abuela from starving? (p. 6)

Chapter 3 | Pages 7-9

1. Where do Miguel and his friends go every year on his birthday? (p.

- 7)
2. Where is Lalo going? (p. 8)
3. Does Chuy expect to ever leave San Jacinto? (p. 8)
4. What is la línea? (p. 9)
5. Why do Lalo and Chuy respond to Miguel's news about leaving the way they do? What has happened before? (p. 9)

Chapter 4 | Pages 10-13

1. How is Elena like a weather vane? (p. 10)
2. What is Elena ignoring that is implicit in the letter from Mamá? What does it mean if she is all that Abuela has left? (p. 11)
3. How does Elena let Miguel know that she knows he's leaving? (p. 12-13) How would you feel if you were Elena?

Chapter 5 | Pages 14-17

1. How is Don Clemente different from the others who live in San Jacinto? What sets him apart? (p. 14)
2. Who is Juanito? What kind of person is he? (p. 14-15)
3. How has Don Clemente arranged for Miguel's trip across the border? (p. 15)
4. What does Miguel learn from Don Clemente? Why does Don Clemente feel like he owes Miguel's father? (p. 16)
5. What kind of work do Miguel's parents do in the U.S.? (p. 17)

Chapter 6 | Pages 18-21

1. Why is Miguel so upset with his father? (p. 18-19)
2. What does Miguel do to prepare to leave? (p. 19-20)
3. Compare what Elena is able to accomplish on the ranchito with what Miguel accomplishes. Who is more successful? (p. 20-21)
4. How does Miguel explain his failures to himself? (p. 21)

Chapter 7 | Pages 22-24

1. Why is Elena critical of the way Tío would slaughter an animal? (p. 22)
2. Elena knows it's a lie when Miguel says they will be able to send for her soon once he's working too. Why does she know this isn't true? What has always been their father's plan for Miguel? (p. 23)

Chapter 8 | Pages 25-28

1. What stories do they tell at Miguel's going away party? How does these stories make Miguel feel this time, now that he's about to leave? (p. 25-28)
2. What stories do they not tell? Why do they avoid these? (p. 28)

Chapter 9 | Pages 29-31

1. What gifts do Chuy and Lalo give to Miguel? Why do you think these mean so much? (29-30)
2. What do the three boys agree to? (p. 30) Do you think it will actually happen?
3. What does Miguel realize about the realities of leaving that the

other two don't? (p. 31)

Chapter 10 | Pages 32-33

1. Why doesn't Miguel say goodbye to Elena? (p. 32)
2. Describe the relationship between Miguel and Elena. Are they close? How do they get along? Do you think their relationship is similar to other sibling relationships?
3. If they aren't a family that typically cries, why do both Miguel and Abuelita cry when Miguel says goodbye? Is it likely that Miguel will ever see Abuelita again? (p. 33).
4. What does Abuelita give Miguel to keep him safe? (p. 33)

Chapter 11 | Pages 34-37

1. What does Miguel think about as he looks at the other passengers waiting for the bus? What are the other passengers like? (p. 34-35)
2. The majority of passengers seem to be a certain type of person. Describe them. (p. 36)
3. Who sits next to Miguel on the bus? What does he ask? How does Miguel respond? (p. 36)

Chapter 12 | Pages 38-41

1. Who stops the bus? How does he treat the passengers? (p. 38-39)
2. Why is Javi worried about the federales who stop the bus? What happened to Javi the last time he was in a similar situation? (p. 38)
3. How does Capitán Morales treat the young couple? What does the father end up having to do? (p. 39)
4. What happens when Capitán Morales pulls the shawl from the indigena's head? Who is she? (p. 40)
5. How does Capitán Morales respond when one of the men calls him a *cobarde*? (p. 40)
6. Where do Miguel and Elena, along with the 15 other men, end up? (p. 41)

Chapter 13 | 42-44

1. Does Javi think that Capitán Morales can really keep most of the men from returning to try and cross the border? (p. 42)
2. How would you describe Capitán Morales' treatment of the passengers? What kind of man do you think he is? Describe his character. (p. 42-44)
3. What does Elena say to Miguel when they argue? (p. 43)
4. How does Morales regain his control and intimidation of the passengers? (p. 44)

Chapter 14 | Pages 45-48

1. How do the passengers take care of each other? (p. 45)
2. What border are they approaching now? Where are they being returned to? (p. 45)
3. How does Javi create a distraction so the other passengers can get away? (p. 47-48)

Chapter 15 | Pages 49-52

1. Where does Miguel choose to run once they've gotten away? (p. 49)
2. What does Elena have in her bag that upsets Miguel? Where did she get it? Why does it upset Miguel so much? (p. 50-51)
3. What is Miguel's new plan? (p. 51) How do they pass the time before the next bus back to San Jacinto? (p. 52)

Chapter 16 | Pages 53-56

1. Where do Elena and Miguel sleep and wait for morning? Describe it. How would you feel if you were Miguel or Elena? (p. 53-54)
2. What happens while Miguel and Elena are waiting? What is taken from them? What does this mean for their trip back to San Jacinto or North? (p. 54-56)

Chapter 17 | Pages 57-61

1. What does Elena show Miguel that she'd been hiding? What does she want Miguel to do with it? (p. 58-59)
2. What does Miguel decide? Will he send Elena back to San Jacinto on her own? Do you think this is the right decision for the two siblings? Why? Explain. (p. 59)
3. What do Miguel and Elena learn when they try and call their parents? Don Clemente? (p. 59-60)
4. What does Don Clemente's death mean for Miguel and Elena? (p. 61)

Chapter 18 | Pages 62-64

1. What is the *mata gente*? What does the name mean? Why is the *mata gente* so dangerous? (p. 62)
2. Who do Miguel and Elena find while they're waiting for the train? (p. 63)
3. How does Javi treat Miguel and Elena? Make a prediction: do you think it's a good or bad thing that they find Javi? Why? Explain. (p. 64)

Chapter 19 | Pages 65-67

1. What does Javi tell Elena she must do? Why? What is he trying to protect her from? (p. 65)
2. Who does Elena remind Javi of? (p. 65)
3. What does Javi tell Miguel to write on Elena's shirt? Why? (p. 66)
4. Do the three make it onto the *mata gente*? (p. 67)
5. Why do you think so many people are willing to risk their lives to get on the train? What does that say about the quality of their lives in their home towns? (p. 67)

Chapter 20 | Pages 68-72

1. How does Javi keep the trio as safe as possible? (p. 68)
2. Who are the other passengers on the train? (p. 68)
3. Why do they have to jump down off the train? Who is searching the train? (p. 69)
4. How long do they ride the *mata gente*? What is like? What are the dangers (p. 69)
5. How do the people from the *pueblito* help the migrants on the

train? What do they do? (p. 70)

6. Why do many of the townspeople tell the passengers to find their mothers and fathers? (p. 71)
7. Why do the *bendiciones* upset Javi so much? How is his situation different from Elena's and Miguel's? (p. 71)
8. Why do you think Miguel feels such emptiness when he thinks about his father? Explain. (p. 72)

Chapter 21 | Pages 73-76

1. Who jumps from the water tower onto the train? Why does Javi get them off the train? (p. 73)
2. How is Javi doing? Do you think he's sick? Why? (p. 73)
3. Why does Elena trust Javi so much? What has he done for them? (p. 74) Do you think Elena and Miguel would have made it this far without him?
4. Why do the three have to jump off the train again? Who's searching the migrants this time? (p. 74)
5. What happens to Javi when he jumps this time? What do Elena and Miguel do? (p. 74-75)
6. Where do the three hide to avoid the soliders? Are they successful? (p. 75)
7. What does Javi's ankle look like? What does this mean for their travels North? (p. 75-76)
8. Javi tells them to go on without him. What do you think they should do? Would you leave Javi? Why? Explain. (p. 76)

Chapter 22 | Pages 77-80

1. Is Elena willing to leave Javi? (p. 77)
2. What options does Miguel come up with as he thinks through how they can get North with Javi? (p. 77)
3. What does Miguel find on his return to Elena and Javi? What arrangements has Elena made? (p. 78)
4. What does Miguel say about Javi? How does Elena defend Javi? (p. 78-79)
5. What does Miguel do to hurt Elena? Why does he do this? (p. 79-80)

Chapter 23 | Pages 81-84

1. What does Miguel decide to do? Does he leave Elena and Javi? Do you think this was the right decision? (p. 81-82)
2. What has changed about how Miguel thinks about the trip North? (p. 83)
3. Does Miguel reunite with Elena and Javi? (p. 83)

Chapter 24 | Pages 85-89

1. When they reach the border town what do they find out about the *mata gente*? Was it really bad luck that they had to jump off the *mata gente* the last time? What could have happened to them had they stayed on? (p. 85)
2. What kinds of things do they sell at the border town mercado? (p. 86)

3. What does the pamphlet from the *Socorro Fronterizo* say about trying to cross *la línea*? (p. 86-87)
4. Who are they looking for at el mercado? (p. 86)
5. How does Miguel determine if the man at the boot stall is really El Plomero? (p. 88) How does El Plomero decide he can trust Miguel? (p. 89)

Chapter 25 | Pages 90-94

1. Has anything so far gone the way Don Clemente intended? (p. 90)
2. What does El Plomero give to Miguel, Elena and Javi? Why does he give these things to them?
3. What kind of coyote is El Plomero? Why do you think Don Clemente chose to work with him? (p. 91-92)
4. Why do they need to take a different route? (p. 92)
5. Why are the backpacks so heavy? Why do they need to bring such a large amount of water with them? (Hint: what will they be walking through to get across *la línea*? Will there be any water available?) (p. 93)

Chapter 26 | Pages 95-99

1. What survival advice does Moisés give them when they take their first break? (p. 95)
2. What are the new enemies they must face now that they've made it to the desert? (p. 95-96)
3. What does Moisés tell Javi when they stop for a break? When Elena asks Miguel what he thinks about Javi, does he tell Elena the truth, or what she wants to hear? Why does he tell her what he does? (p. 97)
4. Why do they all laugh when they realize they've crossed *la línea*? (p. 98)

Chapter 27 | Pages 100-104

1. When do they stop for their longest break? How do they prepare to rest? (p. 100)
2. How does Moisés communicate to them that they've made good progress and that things are going well? (p. 100-101)
3. What happens to Moisés when he goes to investigate the noises he heard? (p. 102-103)
4. What last thing does Moisés do to try and help the three get safely through the desert? What has happened to Elena's water? (p. 103-104)

Chapter 28 | Pages 105-110

1. Based on the math, what is the likelihood that all three can make it through the desert? (p. 105)
2. If they fail now, what does it mean? (p. 106)
3. What is this part of the trip through the desert like? What do they endure to make it through the night? (p. 107-110)
4. How is Javi's condition deteriorating? (p. 109-110)
5. What do you think Javi's words at the end of the chapter mean?

What is he trying to communicate to Miguel and Elena? (p. 110)

Chapter 29 | Pages 111-115

1. What kinds of things do they find as they continue their journey through the desert? What do these things represent? (p. 112)
2. What do they find next to the large rock? Who does Javi think they are? What does this say about the condition he's in? (p. 113)
3. Imagine that you are Miguel or Elena. How would you have felt if you'd come upon that same mother and child? What would it have made you think about your own journey to the North?
4. What kind of storm do they get caught in? (p. 114)
5. How do the three survive the sand storm? (p. 114-115)

Chapter 30 | Pages 116-120

1. What does Miguel awake to? (p. 116)
2. What do Miguel and Elena find in Javi's tent? Has he been drinking his water? Can he survive without it? (p. 117)
3. What has Javi done? How might Javi's sacrifice save Miguel and Elena? (p. 118)
4. What do Miguel and Elena find when they make it to the top of the last hill? (p. 120)

The Phone Call | Pages 121-125

1. What do we learn from the phone conversation between Elena and Miguel? What has Miguel accomplished? Where is he? Where is Elena? Where are their parents? Who has stayed in the U.S. and who has returned to San Jacinto? (p. 121)
2. How has the twins' childhood been different from that of Miguel and Elena? (p. 122)
3. Where has Elena returned to? What has she done with Abuelita's rancho? (p. 122)
4. Why did Elena keep her hair short for so long? (p. 123)
5. Who did Elena marry? (p. 123)
6. Why do you think Miguel says he can't or won't see Lalo, Chuy, Elena, and his nephew? (p. 124)
7. What does Miguel realize about líneas? Do you agree with him? (p. 124)

Reflective Writing Questions

1. In the last chapter Miguel says that there are many líneas in life that we cross knowingly and unknowingly. What are some of the líneas that you've crossed in your life? How have they changed you? Did you realize these were significant moments while they were happening, or only afterward?
2. Even though Miguel and Elena make it through the desert alive, they suffered and lost a great deal on their journey. What sacrifices were made along their journey that allowed them to survive? Do you think they will ever fully recover from the experience of travelling North? Explain your answer.
3. Think about all that Javi risked to take the trip North. What was

he willing to give up in order to go North? Why was it so risky for him to try and attempt this trip? (Hint: think about his health) Despite all of this, he still tried—what would make him take such a trip? Think about the circumstances of his family, his job opportunities, etc. Compare Javi’s situation and motivation for traveling North with what you have heard in the media about immigrants. Are stories like Javi’s represented in the media? How does the media portray immigrants?

**ABOUT US &
THIS GUIDE**

Written by staff at the LAII, **Vamos a Leer Educator’s Guides** provide an excellent way to teach about Latin America through literacy. Each guide is based upon a book featured in the **Vamos a Leer** book group. For more materials that support teaching about Latin America in the classroom, visit the [Latin American & Iberian Institute website](#). This guide was prepared 10/2014 by Katrina Dillon, LAII Project Assistant, and Lorraine Archibald, LAII Graduate Assistant.

To complement this guide, the LAII oversees the **Vamos a Leer blog**, which provides a space for exploring how to use literature to teach about Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the United States. In addition to promoting discussion, the blog shares relevant resources and curriculum materials. Visit the blog at the following address: <http://bit.ly/vamosaleer>.