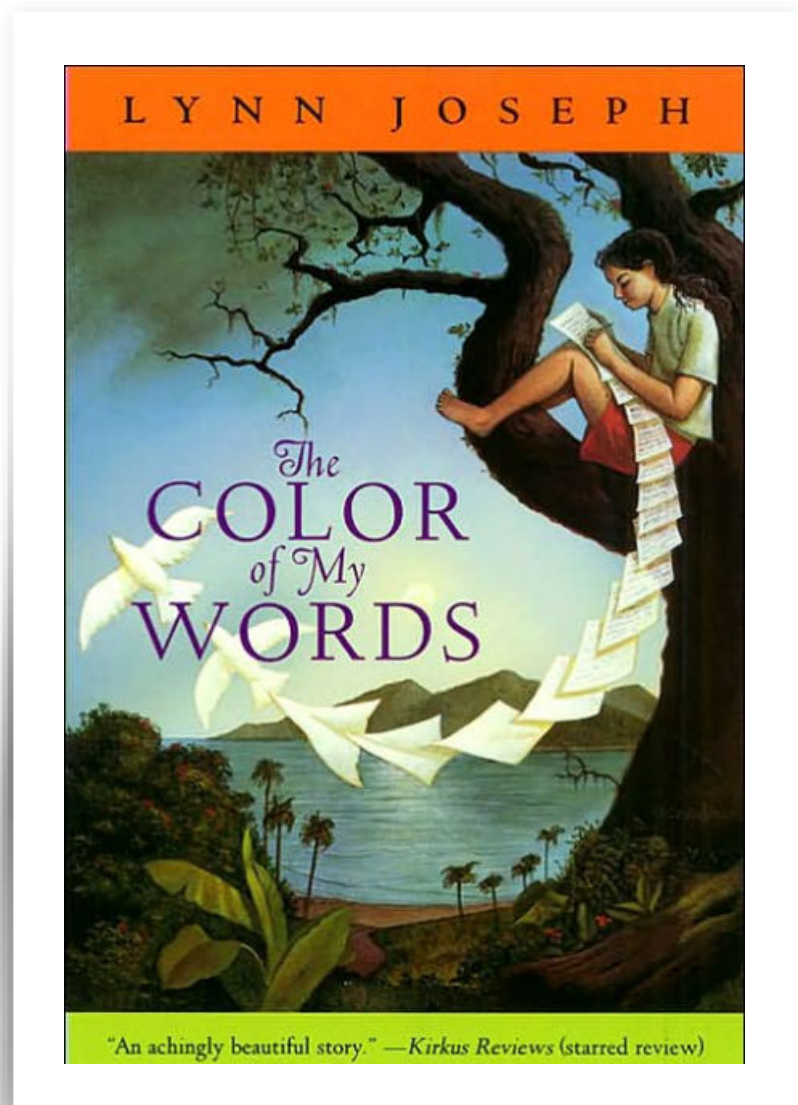


# VAMOS A LEER

*teaching latin america through literacy*



# VAMOS A LEER

## Educator's Guide

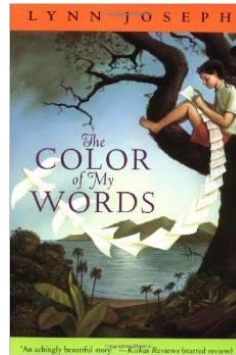
### **The Color of My Words**

Written by Lynn Joseph

Published by HarperCollins, 2001

ISBN: 9780064472043

Age Level: 8 and up



### **BOOK SUMMARY**

Twelve-year-old Ana Rosa is a blossoming writer growing up in the Dominican Republic, a country where words are feared. Yet there is so much inspiration all around her- watching her brother search for a future, learning to dance and to love, and finding out what it means to be part of a community- that Ana Rosa must write it all down. As she struggles to find her own voice and a way to make it heard, Ana Rosa realizes the power of her words to transform the world around her- and to transcend the most unthinkable of tragedies.

### **AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS:**

- International Reading Association - Notable Book for a Global Society
- ALA Notable Children's Book
- Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies
- Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature
- Jane Addams Book Award Honor Book
- CBC/NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People 2010
- 2010 IRA Notable Books for a Global Society

## AUTHOR'S CORNER

### About Lynn Joseph:

Born in Petit Valley, Trinidad, Joseph began her journey into creative writing with poetry at the age of eight. At nine her family moved to the United States, but Joseph would return to Trinidad each summer where she continued to write. She often refers to having felt as though she lived in two different worlds.



As a young writer, her work won contests and was published in literary magazines and newspapers. She was editor of her high school and college newspapers. Joseph graduated from the University of Colorado and was hired to work at a prestigious publishing house. She went on to receive an advanced degree in law and eventually practiced at a top law firm.

On her [website](#), she writes that “*Eventually, I took a hiatus from law and traveled back and forth between New York and the Dominican Republic researching and writing [The Color of My Words](#) for two years. That country dazzled me. I loved the music, the people, and the culture--it all reminded me of Trinidad...I felt as if the Dominican Republic was calling me. So, I went by myself and traveled around exploring and meeting people. [The Color of My Words](#) was the result of those encounters.*”

After writing the *Color of My Words*, Joseph returned to work as a trial lawyer in New York. Her experience during the 9/11 attacks affected her so deeply that she stopped writing. “*I left New York and relocated with my sons to a tiny island in the Caribbean: Water Island, far from the troubles of the world... It was years before I started writing again. Sometimes in life you just have nothing to say.*”

Later, Joseph moved back to New York with her family, where she currently resides and works as a part-time lawyer and full-time writer. She published a second YA novel after *Color of My Words* and is working on yet another that tackles the theme of cyber-bullying from the perspective of a mixed-raced protagonist. Anecdotally, she credits her return to writing to an Eminem’s song ‘Not Afraid’ which, she says, “woke me up-his incredible intensity got me writing seriously again.”

Joseph’s newest novel, *Flowers in the Sky*, is a striking story about a girl who must leave her home in the Dominican Republic for an uncertain future in New York City. Among her other books for young adults are *Jump Up Time and An Island Christmas*, as well as the paired *A Wave in Her Pocket* and *The Mermaid’s Twin Sister*. She has also written a number of children’s books, including *Fly, Bessie, Fly*; *Coconut Kind of Day*, and *Jasmine’s Parlour Day*.

Writing for the blog Allison’s Book Bag, Joseph offered her thoughts about diversity in young adult literature in a post titled “[Writing Across Racial/Cultural Barriers for Authentic Multicultural Storytelling.](#)”

Check out [Lynn Joseph's](#) website for more information about the author.

## **USING *Color of My Words* IN THE CLASSROOM**

Each month as I sit down to write the review for our featured book, I find myself stuck. I've run out of different ways to say "I love this book." I'm certainly not complaining. As educators, I think we're quite lucky to have access to so much amazing literature that also provides a way for us to teach about Latin America. This month's book was no different—I loved it. Oddly enough, I've found that the more I love a book, the harder it is for me to convey my thoughts and feelings in a review. I usually feel like I just can't do the experience of reading it justice. But, here's my attempt. If my words fall short in convincing you, I hope you'll still give Joseph's book a chance. It deserves it.

As a mix of both poetry and prose, *The Color of My Words* was the perfect follow-up to last month's *Caminar*. Each chapter opens with a poem written by the protagonist, Ana Rosa. While it reads as a novel, each chapter functions as a vignette or short story told from Ana Rosa's point of view, allowing the reader to experience some of the more significant events of Ana Rosa's life the year she was 12. With openness and vulnerability Ana Rosa walks us through the year that would forever change her. This aspect of the book is reason enough to use it in the classroom. Part of what Ana Rosa learns in this year is the power of words, particularly her words. Ana Rosa finds her voice in her writing. The power of writing is something that I wish all students would learn. While we may not all be writers like Ana Rosa, our writing is still powerful. It's a way to express and process one's experiences, thoughts, and emotions. It's important for our students to see that there's more to writing than essays, reports, and extended response questions on standardized tests. While these are important skills that we often need at some point in our lives, the ability to process our experiences and how they have impacted us is equally essential. This is a novel that would pair really well with Linda Christensen's "Where I'm From" poetry in which students reflect on the people and events that have most influenced the person they've become.

It would also be a great novel to pair with an activity in memoir writing. While it's fiction, it provides a creative and approachable way to do more autobiographical writing. I love the way each chapter's poem is focused on an event or object that then becomes the central theme for the whole chapter, such as "Wash Day," "The Gri Gri Tree," or "One Sunday." We often ask students to write autobiographies, but it could be a far more reflective and personal activity if we asked them to write about one object, experience, or day that was especially meaningful. Asking them to not only describe it, but to explain why it was so profound. There's also something to be said for how Joseph portrays Ana Rosa's family members. One of the struggles in doing autobiographical writing is how to portray the people who've played such important roles in our lives. No one is perfect, but how much of those imperfections do we want to share in our writing. Joseph lets us see Ana Rosa's family as flawed, real people, but she also lets us see those moments where they shine. She depicts them as the complicated and complex people that they are. This is a valuable lesson to learn in doing this kind of writing.

As we focus on the many different ways we can teach and talk about love in February's upcoming posts, I've been thinking about how we teach about emotions, and specifically love. Emotions are a seemingly basic part of our human experience, but how much time do we really spend discussing these

things, helping our students understand their emotions, or deal with situations or experiences that bring about difficult emotional responses? If we look at our common core, standardized test based curriculum, there doesn't seem to be much space for topics like this, yet they seem like such essential parts of an education that prepares our students to be successful both in and outside of the classroom. Literature is one way to begin to encourage these kinds of conversations with our students. *The Color of My Words* is one means to provide the space to begin these conversations, as we find love of family, community, and love and acceptance of one's self as important themes. But love isn't the only emotion that Ana Rosa learns about in this pivotal year, she, and so the reader, must also grapple with loss and death. As much as Ana Rosa loves and is loved by her family and her community, she must also realize that these things can't protect her from the deep hurt of loss and grief. However, she will come to recognize that it is love that can help her move through and survive those painful experiences, so she can continue to do the work that gives her life meaning.

There's so much I could continue to write about *The Color of My Words*, but I'll wrap it up here with one last thought. Here at Vamos a Leer, social justice is an important piece of the work we do. It's a topic that we feel needs to have a prominent place in the curriculum taught in classrooms. *The Color of My Words* aligns perfectly with that aspect of our approach to education. As I mentioned above, this is a story of a young girl finding her voice through her writing, but what I haven't discussed is why this becomes so important to her. At the climax of the story, Ana Rosa's village is told that the government is selling all of their land to foreign investors. The villagers are expected to move from the only homes their families have known for generations, with no compensation, and somehow start their lives over. The village comes together to fight back, and Ana Rosa's writing becomes a pivotal part of their campaign as her brother travels throughout the Dominican Republic telling others of the corruption of the government. Despite the dangers in doing this, both Ana Rosa and her brother make the commitment to save their village. While Ana Rosa will experience a tragedy she never imagined, she's also empowered to continue her battle for social justice. I'll end with a quote from the opening of the book. It's one that I hope student readers will get the chance to contemplate because I think the truth in it is quite empowering:

“Sometimes you have no control over what will happen next, as I discovered the year I was 12 years old—but sometimes you do. And when you do, that's when it is time to take charge because you sure don't know when the chance will come again.”

If you'd like to read what others have thought about the book, check out the links to other reviews below:

- [Kirkus Reviews](#)
- [Book Page](#)
- [Publishers Weekly](#)

If you're interested in hearing what the author herself has to say about the book, check out the following online interview:

- [The Brown Bookshelf](#).

**LESSON  
PLANS  
& ACTIVITIES**

Lastly, here's a video to accompany the novel:

- [The Color of My Words Student Video Review](#)

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 other curricula:

- [Teachers Guide](#) including discussion questions and [activity](#) on the role of nature from Lynn Joseph's website.
- Hampton-Brown [lesson plan](#) and [journal activity](#).
- The Americas Book Award [teaching guide](#).
- [Lesson plan](#) created by Katherine Bomer.

**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.

## Social Studies and History

### 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 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.

### Background on the Dominican Republic:

- In “[Geography, Climate, and Community in the Dominican Republic](#)” students will begin to familiarize themselves with the geography and culture of the Dominican Republic through Language Arts & Literature, Social Studies & Geography. For Grades 6-8 and 9-12  
Found at: <http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/lesson-plans/geography-climate-and-community-dominican-republic/>
- In “[Geography of the Caribbean](#)” students will use the *Geography of the Caribbean* video (or other resource on the Dominican Republic/Caribbean), the Internet, and library sources to learn about the geography and culture of the Caribbean. They will learn about the importance of tourism to the region and create descriptive postcards; and use their descriptive postcards to share their knowledge of the different Caribbean nations and to discuss some of the issues the islands face.

As tourism plays an important role in the book, both as Ana Rosa’s family’s livelihood and a main reason for the conflict between the village and the government, this would be a great activity to deepen students’ understanding of the importance of tourism for the Dominican Republic,

and both the pros and cons to depending upon this as a means of economic stimulation.

Found at: <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/geography-of-the-caribbean.cfm>

- [History of the Dominican Republic](#) is a travel site that provides quite a bit of legitimate information on the general history of the Dominican Republic. It includes information on the Taínos, Spanish conquest and settlement, and post independence history, including the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. This site contains lengthy text that is best utilized when forming content for a classroom discussion.

Found at: [http://hispaniola.com/dominican\\_republic/info/history.php](http://hispaniola.com/dominican_republic/info/history.php)

- Lesson Planet has a [number of resources for teaching about the Dominican Republic](#). If you don't already have an account with them, they do offer a free 10 day trial.

Found at: <http://www.lessonplanet.com/lesson-plans/dominican-republic>

### **Merengue:**

- Kid World Citizen's post "[Let's Dance Merengue with Juan Luis Guerra](#)" offers great background information on the history of the merengue and an introduction to the Dominican musician Juan Luis Guerra.

Found at: <http://kidworldcitizen.org/category/the-americas/dominican-republic/>

- Kennedy Center's ArtsEdge created the lesson plan "[Baila! Latin Dance in the Spanish Classroom](#)." In this lesson students will demonstrate and learn about the Latin dances of salsa, mambo, merengue, rumba, cha cha, bachata, and samba through oral group presentations on each dance. Students will also research and present information about the countries from which the dances originated. Using Spanish, students will write written reports on their respective dances and their countries of origin and will provide answers to classmates' questions (in Spanish, English optional) regarding their presentations.

Found at: [http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-9-12/Baila\\_Latin\\_Dance](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-9-12/Baila_Latin_Dance)

### **Where I'm From Poetry:**

I first read about the "Where I'm From" poem in Linda Christensen's [Reading, Writing and Rising Up](#) (Rethinking Schools, 2000, pages 18-22). As I read the poems in *The Color of My Words* I was reminded of this activity (check out our blog post on it [here](#)). Ana Rosa's poems in the book are about who she is, and the significant events that shape her childhood. The "Where I'm From" poem would allow students to do the explore the same ideas. Below are various lesson plans and resources for "Where I'm From" poetry available online.

- [Lesson Plans and Instructions: Where I'm From Poetry](#)



## Guided Reading Questions

- [A Teacher's blog post on using this activity, with a template for creating the poem with your students](#)
- [Lesson Plan from Facing History and Ourselves: Where I'm From Poems](#)

### Reading Comprehension:

#### Wash Day | Pages 2-9

- What style is the beginning of this chapter written in? What do we learn from this poem? What day is wash day? What happens on wash day? Does your family have a wash day? How does your family wash their clothes? (p. 2-3)
- Re-read the poem. Does it sound like Ana Rosa likes to do the laundry? How do you think she feels about doing the laundry with Mami? How would you feel? (p. 2-3)
- Why is wash day special to Ana Rosa? (p. 3)
- What one thing has Ana Rosa shared with Mami that no one else knows? (p. 4)
- Does Mami encourage Ana Rosa to be a writer? (p. 4-5)
- What do you think it means when Ana Rosa says "In daylight, silence is louder and angrier than at any other time" (p. 6)?
- Re-read pages 7-9. Think about what Mami says: "You are this river, Ana Rosa, but you must flow softly around the rocks on your way to meet the sea. There you can do as you wish" (p. 7). Now, think about what Ana Rosa says about writers dying in the Dominican Republic and silence being a form of self-defense. What is Mami telling Ana Rosa or warning her about? Why is Mami scared?

#### Words | Pages 10-23

- What do you think Ana Rosa means about her words walking away? (p. 10)
- What is it that Ana Rosa wants more than anything? Can you imagine what it would be like to not have paper to write on? Why can't Ana Rosa get a notebook just for her poems? (p. 11)
- Why can't Ana Rosa have Guario's notebook? What does Guario do? (p. 12)
- What does Ana Rosa do when she finds herself alone with Guario's notebook? (p. 13-15)
- What happens the next morning when Guario realizes that his notebook is missing? (p. 16-18)
- Do you think that Mami knows what happened to the notebook (p. 17)? Why do you think Mami makes such a special lunch? What effect does it have on the family? (p. 19-21)
- How does the family solve the problem of Guario's notebook? (p. 21)
- How does Guario respond when Ana Rosa admits what she's done? (p. 22-23)
- What do Guario and Ana Rosa both have in common? (Hint: it's a feeling) (p. 22)
- Have you ever wanted something as bad as Ana Rosa wants a notebook

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and Guarío wants a future? What was it? Were you able to get it?

### **The Gri Gri Tree | Pages 24-43**

- How does Ana Rosa feel when she's in her Gri Gri Tree? (p. 24-25)
- Why do people think that there is something wrong with Ana Rosa? (p. 25-26)
- What can Ana Rosa see from the Gri Gri Tree? (p. 27-28)
- What surprising thing does Ana Rosa see from the Gri Gri tree one day? (p. 28) How do her neighbors and family react when she tells them? What changes their minds? (p. 29-33)
- Why doesn't Ana Rosa rush to tell anyone the second time she sees the sea monster? (p. 32)
- Do you think that the sea monster is really a monster? What else could it be?
- There is some disagreement among the neighbors as to whether or not they should let anyone know about the sea monster. What are the two opinions? (p. 34-35)
- Who suggests that Ana Rosa should write the story about the sea monster? What do we learn about Mami from this? (p. 37)
- How does the community respond to Ana Rosa's story? How is this a turning point for Ana Rosa and her writing? (p. 40-42)
- Why do you think that Ana Rosa names the sea monster Guarío? Explain. (p. 43)

### **Merengue Dream | Pages 43-59**

- What is Ana Rosa describing in her merengue poem? (p. 43)
- What are the merengue, salsa and bachata? (p. 44)
- Does it sound like music is an important part of life in the Dominican Republic? (p. 44)
- Describe what Ana Rosa's neighborhood looks like. (p. 44)
- What happens on Guarío's payday? (p. 46)
- Why does Ana Rosa love and hate the fiesta days? (p. 47-48)
- How does Ana Rosa's Papi change on fiesta days? What is he like? What is the cause of this change? (p. 46,49-50)
- How is Papi different the morning after the fiesta? What is his plan for Ana Rosa? (p. 51-52)
- How does Ana Rosa do with the dance lessons? What does she mean when she says "that words could not help me"? (p. 52-53)
- Where does Papi take Ana Rosa on the second day of dance lessons? Why do you think he chooses the sea? (p. 56-58)
- In the end, does Ana Rosa learn how to dance? (p. 59)
- What does this chapter tell us about the kind of person Papi is?

### **My Brother's Friend | Pages 60-77**

- Just from reading the poem on pages 60-61, describe how Ana Rosa feels about her brother's best friend. Predict what you think this chapter will be about.
- What is the one thing that can distract Ana Rosa from her writing? (p. 61)

- How does Ana Rosa describe what loving Angel is like? What does she compare it to? (p. 62) Have you ever loved something or someone in a similar way?
- How are Angel and Guarío different? (p. 63-64)
- Describe the Nochebuena traditions. (p. 65)
- Why is Ana Rosa more excited than usual for this particular Nochebuena? (p. 65-67)
- What happens when Angela, Guarío and Ana Rosa arrive at the party? Who does Angel notice? How does this make Ana Rosa feel? (p. 71-72)
- How does Guarío attempt to comfort Ana Rosa at the party? What does this demonstrate about their relationship? (p. 73-75)
- Do you think that Guarío has never really loved anyone? Or is he trying to protect Ana Rosa by not telling her the truth? (p. 75-76)
- Joseph is foreshadowing something with the last sentence: “What I didn’t know was that my own future was galloping toward me like a riderless horse, and with it were a lot of questions that only I could answer” (p. 77). Make a prediction: what do you think might happen to Ana Rosa and her family?

### **One Sunday | Pages 78-93**

- Re-read Ana Rosa’s poem “One Sunday.” Predict what you think she’s going to find out that changes her and who she thinks she is? (p. 78-79)
- What does Ana Rosa love about Sundays? What does she fear about Sundays? (p. 79-82)
- What does Papi say over and over to Mami? To Ana Rosa? (p. 82)
- Who does Ana Rosa encounter on her way home from school? What does he say to her? What does he give her? (p. 83-84)
- How does Mami respond to the treats? What does she think Ana Rosa has done? Does it help when Ana Rosa explains that she didn’t steal the money? (p. 84-86)
- Who is the man on the mule? What does Mami explain about this man? (p. 87-88)
- How does Ana Rosa respond to the news about her father? (p. 89-90)
- What does Ana Rosa realize about Mami? (p. 92)
- How does Ana Rosa choose to use words to help her and her family deal with this news about her father? (p. 92-93)
- Do you think that Papi suspected he wasn’t Ana Rosa’s father? Think about the things he repeated over and over on the beach. Does this tell us anything?

### **The Colors of Power | Pages 94-125**

- How does Ana Rosa’s family respond to her poem? (p. 95)
- What really helped the family get over the news of Ana Rosa’s father? (p. 95)
- How long have the people in Ana Rosa’s village lived there? (p. 96)
- What kinds of promises does the man talking to the crowd make? (p. 96)
- How does Guarío become the leader of the villagers? (p. 97-98)
- What is it like in the village during election time? What sorts of things do you see during this time? (p. 99)

- What are birthdays usually like in Ana Rosa’s family? Why does Ana Rosa think this one might be different? (p. 100-101)
- What does Ana Rosa want to do more than anything when she turns 13? What does this say about her relationship with Guario? (p. 101)
- Who is Guario named after? How does Ana Rosa think this affects him? (p. 102-103)
- What does Mr. Moreno tell the villagers when he returns? (p. 104)
- What gesture changes the history of the village? What happens to the village because of this? (p. 105)
- What does Mr. Moreno reveal right before he leaves? (p. 106)
- Why do you think Mami cries over Ana Rosa’s article? Why does she become silent? (p. 110-11)
- Who is coming to the village on Ana Rosa’s birthday? (p. 113-114)
- As soldiers of words why is the resistance of the village not enough? (p. 114)
- How do the neighbors prepare to defend their village? (p. 116-117)
- What does Ana Rosa see from her Gri Gri tree? (p. 119-122)
- What does La Guardia bring with them that the neighbors cannot fight so easily? (p. 121-123)
- What happens to Guario? (p. 125)

#### **The Color of My Words | Pages 126-138**

- Where does Ana Rosa stay in the aftermath of Guario’s death? Why do you think she does this? (p. 127)
- What does Ana Rosa decide to do as punishment for her brother’s death? Do you think that Ana Rosa should be punishing herself for what happened? (p. 129)
- How do things change after Guario’s death? (p. 130-131)
- Why do you think Mami and Papi think it’s important to celebrate Ana Rosa’s birthday? Does Ana Rosa want to celebrate? Why not? (p. 131-132)
- What does Ana Rosa get for her birthday? Whose idea was it? (p. 134-135)
- How does Ana Rosa respond to the gift? What does Mami say to her? (p. 135)
- Why does Ana Rosa decide to write again? What will she write? (p. 138)

### **Reflective Writing Questions**

#### **Reflective Writing:**

- Re-read the following quote from the beginning of the book: “Sometimes you have no control over what will happen next, as I discovered the year I was twelve years old—but sometimes you do. And when you do, that’s when it is time to take charge because you sure don’t know when the chance will come again” (p. 1) Think of a time that you felt you had no control over a situation or what was going to happen. Describe the context of the situation. How did it make you feel? Now, think of a time when you did have the chance to “take charge” or you had some control over what would happen. Did you take advantage of your power to affect change in the situation? Describe the context of this

situation. How did it make you feel?

- For Ana Rosa the beach is the one place that it is hard for her to be unhappy, despite all of the pain of losing her brother. Do you have a place like that? Where is it? Re-read Ana’s description of the beach on pages 136-137. Her description uses lots of sensory details so that the reader can almost imagine that he or she is also at the beach. Describe your happy place using sensory details that make a reader feel like he or she is there with you.
- Guarío defines future as “something special you do with your life” (p. 102). What do you want to do with your future? Guarío is always looking for his future. What do you hope to find in your future? What is something special that you want to do with your life?
- Think about Mami and the role she plays in the novel. Mami doesn’t usually say much, but she’s still a very powerful presence in the novel. Describe the kind of person you think Mami is. Explain why she is so important in the novel. Explain how she can have such an important role even if she doesn’t say as much as the others.
- Imagine that you are given a typewriter like Ana Rosa. Whose story would you tell? Whose story must the world know? Write that person’s life story.
- Think about the poems that begin each chapter. Which poem is your favorite? Why? Write a poem that shares in some way an important part of your childhood.
- The village resists the government’s attempt to take their land from them. Do you think they win that battle with the government? What was the cost? Do you think it was worth it?

## **ABOUT US & THIS GUIDE**

The Latin American & Iberian Institute (LAI) receives resources from the U.S. Department of Education to support K-12 teaching about Latin America. Our goal is to provide a supportive environment for teaching across grade levels and subject areas so educators can bring regional and linguistic knowledge of Latin America into their classrooms. For more information and materials that support teaching about Latin America in the classroom, visit our website at <http://laii.unm.edu/outreach>

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 on *Vamos a Leer*, visit our blog at [bit.ly/vamosaleer](http://bit.ly/vamosaleer). This guide was prepared 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>.