Please be sure to share this guide with all teachers who are taking their students to see this production. Photocopy or download additional copies from www.firststage.org!

Adapted from the book by Pam Muñoz Ryan
By Lynne Alvarez
In partnership with Latino Arts, Inc.

School Dates:
SEPT. 15 – OCT. 1, 2006
Dear Teachers and Parents,

ESPERANZA RISING is a story of family, change, struggle, and hope. Told from the perspective of a young girl, this story recounts an entire people’s challenging journey, leaving their homeland of Mexico and starting a new life in the United States. It is not possible to present ESPERANZA RISING without addressing the issues surrounding immigration—currently a hot political topic in the United States. Neither the production nor this guide intend on offering solutions to issues regarding immigration. Rather, they are intended to provide you with ideas on how to start communication with your young people concerning immigration, and how these issues affect everyone.

Enclosed in this enrichment guide is a range of materials and activities intended to help you discover connections within the play throughout the curricula. It is our hope that you will use the experience of attending the theater and seeing ESPERANZA RISING with your students as a teaching tool. As educators and parents, you know best the needs and abilities of your students. Use this guide to best serve your students—pick and choose, or adapt, any of these suggestions for discussions or activities.

We encourage you to take advantage of the enclosed student worksheets—please feel free to photocopy the sheets for your students, or the entire guide for the benefit of other teachers.

Enjoy the show!
Julia Newby
Education Director
414-267-2971
jnewby@firststage.org

ATTENDING THE PLAY—GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS
Discuss proper audience behavior with your students. While applause and laughter, when appropriate, are appreciated and anticipated, unnecessary noise or movement by audience members can distract the actors and other audience members and affect the quality of the performance for everyone. It is very important that students understand how their behavior can affect a live performance. You, the teacher, and other adult chaperones for your group have the primary responsibility for being sure your students behave appropriately. We ask that chaperones sit among the students, and not together in a group behind the students. Our ushers will react to disruptions and attempt to quell them, and we reserve the right to remove any student causing a distraction from the theater.

FIRST STAGE POLICIES
• Because of union regulations the use of recording equipment and cameras is strictly forbidden in the theater.
• Food, drink, candy and gum are not permitted in the theater.
• Any portable radios brought to the theater by students will be kept by the House Manager during the performance and returned to the group leader at the conclusion of the play.
• There is no smoking in the theater, by order of the Fire Marshal.
• Should a student become ill, suffer an injury or have another problem, please escort him or her to the theater lobby and ask an usher to notify the House Manager immediately.

In the unlikely event of a general emergency, the theater lights will go on and someone will come on stage to inform the audience of the problem. Remain in your seats, visually locate the nearest exit and wait for First Stage ushers to guide your group from the theater.

SEATING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: If you have special seating needs for any student(s) and did not indicate your need when you ordered your tickets, please call the Box Office at (414) 267-2962 NOW. Our knowledge of your needs will enable us to serve you better upon your group’s arrival at the theater.

ESPERANZA RISING is most appreciated by adults, teens and young people ages 8 and older.
The story begins in the year 1929, at Rancho Linda Flor, a large ranch, or hacienda, in northern Mexico owned by Don Sixto. A mariachi band serves as chorus throughout the story, setting the scenes and taking us from one location to the next.

It is Esperanza’s twelfth birthday, and her parents, Don Sixto and Ramona, are throwing an elaborate party in her honor. She lives a very privileged life, with servants, beautiful clothes and toys, an excess of the finest food and the opportunity to attend excellent schools. Esperanza’s friends are at the party, along with her malicious uncle, Tio Luis, and servants and laborers who work on the ranch. Miguel is one of the servants at the party. He is the son of Hortensia, Esperanza’s nanny, and he and Esperanza are very close friends. Don Sixto has always treated his workers kindly and generously—giving them land of their own and houses—and the workers show great gratitude to him and his family.

Esperanza’s father presents her with a doll at the party, like he does every year. However, this doll is special—it is the last one her father will give her—and Esperanza cherishes it.

During the party, bandits attack Don Sixto’s land. He and his men, including Miguel, set out to defend the land and their families. When Miguel returns much later that night, he informs Ramona and Esperanza that Don Sixto has been killed by the bandits.

That night Esperanza’s house is set on fire. Everyone escapes—and Esperanza is able to save her special doll—but Ramona breaks her ankle, the house is burnt to the ground and the vineyards, crops, and cattle are all lost. Ramona and Esperanza are suddenly destitute, along with all the laborers.

Luis offers to care for Ramona and Esperanza if Ramona marries him, and Ramona agrees. Since it is a disgrace for a man and woman to live together before marriage, Ramona asks Luis for permission for herself and Esperanza to live with the nuns at La Gloriosa while her ankle is healing and they make preparations for the wedding. Luis agrees, but Esperanza is furious about this arrangement. Once Luis leaves, Ramona tells Esperanza that she will not marry Luis, and she reveals a plan for their escape.

Meanwhile, Hortensia and Miguel have made preparations to emigrate to the United States, where they have relatives who can arrange jobs and housing for them on a migrant farm work camp. Ramona can’t make the journey to the U.S. with a broken ankle, so she asks Hortensia to secretly bring Esperanza to the United States with her and Miguel. Ramona plans to stay with the nuns until her ankle is healed and she can find money to make the passage to the U.S.

Esperanza is devastated, having to leave her mother so shortly after the passing of her father, but it is their only choice if they want to be together and live a free life away from Luis. The next morning Hortensia, Miguel, and Esperanza cross the border into the United States. They are welcomed to their new home in California by Alfonso—Hortensia’s brother—his wife, Modesta, and their children. They live in a small shack, along with other Mexican migrant workers. Esperanza has to share a bed with Alfonzo’s young daughter, Isabel.

Esperanza’s first months at the camp are difficult. She is always dirty, cold, and hungry, and she has to learn many new skills, such as cleaning, taking care of babies, and cooking. When Esperanza’s hopes of ever seeing her mother again are almost completely lost, Miguel surprises her with roots from roses he managed to rescue from the fire. These roses are special to Esperanza and Miguel because Don Sixto planted the roses especially for them. Miguel and Esperanza take special care of these rose roots, to ensure they will grow and bloom again.
One day, Alfonso’s niece, Marta, visits Esperanza and Isabel. Marta is organizing a Mexican workers strike to fight against the poor working and living conditions, and low wages. Although the conditions of their life are poor, Alfonso is grateful for his job and the opportunity to live in the United States. He makes Marta leave at once. He does not want to get in trouble by striking, which could lead to his deportation.

Esperanza rarely hears from her mother, and she begins to worry that she may never see her again. Esperanza decides she needs to earn money to bring her mother to California, so she takes Modesta’s place in the potato factory. When an immigration strike paralyzes the factory, agents begin arresting Mexican strikers—including Marta—and sending them back to their homeland.

Miguel has been working for the railroad company, but he suddenly loses his job when a group of “Okies,” farmers from Oklahoma forced to migrate to California because of the Dust Bowl, come into town and replace the Mexican workers. Miguel and Esperanza argue about decision to immigrate. As Esperanza furiously walks out on Miguel, he grabs her doll and money drops out of it. Unseen by Esperanza, Miguel picks up the money and stuffs it in his pocket. The next day he is gone. Hortensia believes Miguel has gone up north, to Oregon, to find work, and Esperanza is hopeless—the money she has been saving to help her mother immigrate is now gone.

One day, Esperanza gives Isabel a special gift—her doll—and in that moment her mother enters the house with Miguel, who has used Esperanza’s money to bring Ramona to California. Ramona immediately recognizes the roses from her ranch, now flourishing in their house at the work camp. Ramona and Esperanza notice the roses outgrowing their pots, so they replant them, letting their roots grow and spread in the new soil.

Other books by Pam Muñoz Ryan
Nacho and Lolita
Becoming Naomi León
Amelia & Eleanor Go for a Ride
Riding Freedom
When Marian Sang
California Here We Come

Related Books
Mexico and Central America: A Fiesta of Cultures, Crafts, and Activities for Ages 8 – 12.
   By Mary C. Turck
Historia de Mexico/History of Mexico: De la Epoca prehispanica a nuestros dias
   By Fernando L. Orozco
Mexico: 40 Activities to Experience Mexico Past & Present (Kaleidoscope Kids)
   By Susan Milord
La mariposa
   By Francisco Jiménez
My Diary from Here to There/Mi Diario De Aqui Hasta
   By Amada Irma Perez
Javier’s Dream
   By Linda Sibley
The Girl from Playa Blanca
   By Ofelia Dumas Lachtman
Dust to Eat: Drought and Depression in the 1930s
   By Michael L. Cooper
Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp
   By Jerry Stanley
Survival in the Storm: The Dust Bowl Diary of Grace Edwards, Dalhart, Texas, 1935
   By Katelan Janke
Pam Muñoz Ryan was born on December 25, 1951, in Bakersfield, California. She grew up in a large family with three sisters, and 23 cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents all living nearby. Her grandparents on her mother’s side came to the United States from Mexico in the 1930s. *Esperanza Rising* is based on her grandmother’s journey to the United States when she was a young girl. Her grandparents regularly spoke Spanish to Pam, and she became fluent in Spanish. During the summer, Pam spent many days at the public library. It was during these summer trips to the library when Pam got hooked on reading. After Pam finished college at San Diego State University, she knew she wanted to work in a profession that had something to do with books, so she became a teacher for a bilingual Head Start program.

Pam is married to Jim Ryan. They have four children, two dogs, and live near the beach in San Diego, California. After her children were born, Pam went back to school at San Diego State University for her Masters degree. It was after that when Pam became a professional writer.

Pam has written more than 25 books, many being bilingual. Her first published children’s book was *One Hundred Is A Family*. *Esperanza Rising* was the winner of the Pura Belpre Medal, the Jane Addams Peace Award, an ALA Top Ten Best Book for Young Adults, and the Americas Award Honor Book. Her novel for young adults, *Riding Freedom*, also won numerous awards, including the national Willa Cather Award and the California Young Reader Medal. Pam loves writing for many reasons. Writing is something she really enjoys, and she loves that she can work from home. She also likes the fact that every new book she writes is a new project for her to take on.

Resources:
http://www.pammunozryan.com/bio.html
http://books.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsandbooks/authorstudies/authorhome.jsp?authorID=1406&collateralID=5277&displayName=Biography

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**Director’s Notes – Norma Saldivar**

Sometimes as a director you have to work very hard to find a personal connection to the play. At other times, it comes much easier. You may be moved by the poignancy of the story and be washed with empathy for the characters. You may be quite distant from their struggle but understand their determination or desires. In *Esperanza Rising*, Lynn Alvarez’s stage rendering of Pam Muñoz Ryan’s novel, we’re asked to understand the life of Esperanza—a very lucky young girl who is deeply loved by her parents and has everything that she could ever want at her beck and call. She is the luckiest girl in the world. But however lucky she may be, she is unaware of the world, and how in the blink of an eye, the world can change.

In *Esperanza Rising* the world changes completely for Esperanza, as everything in her life is taken from her—including her family. It forces her to reexamine herself, and to face a world that she didn’t even know existed. Change can be very powerful. It can make situations better, but it can also be challenging. It can bring out the best or the worst in people. How will Esperanza deal with change? Will it bring out the best or the worst in her?

That is the question of the play.

Muñoz Ryan has woven a beautifully personal story about her family—her grandmother and grandfather. Her grandmother’s story has been said to be the inspiration for the novel and for our main character. Muñoz Ryan asked the question, “How did she deal with it?” and created a moving tale about growing up, tolerance, determination and love. Esperanza is not alone; she is surrounded by people full of life and strength who serve as powerful examples as she struggles with the changes around her. They become her teachers, her supporters and her advocates. They become the most important influences in her life. They become her family.

This story has a very personal connection for me that goes beyond the fact that it is about a family that comes to the United States, which is my story, as well. It is a play about change and learning to adapt to it. It is a play about letting go of things no longer true and moving on to learning how to deal with change. It is a play about learning to be open to the people around you who care and want to help. It is a perfect play for people of all ages because we all have to deal with change—and it’s always hard. But with family and friends around we can survive the change and grow.

-Norma Saldivar
The Effects of the Great Depression on Mexican Immigrants

The Great Depression, which was set off by the stock market crash of 1929, hit Mexican immigrants especially hard. As unemployment and food shortages swept across the U.S., along with the influx of American migrants to California from the Dust Bowl, an American sentiment of hostility grew towards immigrant workers who appeared to be occupying jobs that American citizens needed.

The United States government began a program that sent Mexican immigrants back to Mexico—sometimes by voluntary will, but usually by force. Many Mexican immigrants found temporary stability in migrant work camps. Although poorly funded, these federally run camps provided migrant workers and their families with housing, food, and medicine. The homes the migrant families lived in were small shacks that were patched together from different materials, including burlap, canvas, cardboard, and palm branches. In order to earn a living wage, the migrant workers would follow the harvest around the state of California. When it was potato season, the migrants moved to the potato farms, and then moved again when the potato season had ended and a new harvest was ready to be picked. Migrant families lived in these temporary camps as they moved from farm to farm to follow the seasonal work. Each camp housed several immigrant families, and provided them with a sense of community. The work camp communities eventually began organizing to discuss labor issues and initiate unions, in order to attempt to obtain higher wages and better working conditions.

Migration to the United States

Between 1910 and 1930, more than 680,000 Mexicans immigrated to the United States. Mexicans migrated north to escape the violence of the war, economic turmoil, and social disorganization of Mexico. In 1917, the United States implemented the Immigration Act of 1917. To enter into the United States, immigrants had to pass a literacy test—they had to be able to read and write in either English or Spanish—and pay a tax of $8.00 per person. This act also placed a prohibition against temporary contract labor; therefore, Mexican immigrants had to obtain contracts for long-term work in order to enter the United States. Mexicans were desperate for food, money, and jobs. These new restrictions caused them to start entering into the United States illegally.

In 1920, an estimated 60,000 illegal immigrants entered the U.S. Because Mexicans were desperate to flee Mexico to find some form of employment, American farmers started recruiting Mexican migrants, believing these desperate workers would tolerate living conditions that other workers would not. Although Mexican migrant workers earned less than white, American migrant workers, they still earned significantly more than they could in Mexico’s war and post-war economy. During the 1930s Mexican migrant workers earned about 15 cents an hour, an average of $254 annually.
The History of the Dust Bowl
The western Great Plains of the United States—including Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Colorado—were originally covered with hardy grasses that held the fine-grain soil in place, despite the droughts and torrential rains common for this area. A substantial number of wheat farmers and cattle ranchers made this region their homes. Years of constant plowing and improper irrigation techniques left this delicate soil exposed to the elements. In the early 1930s this region suffered from a massive drought, and the soil quickly dried out, turned into dust, and blew away. The wind blew this dust into massive black clouds that traveled all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. This phenomenon lasted from 1934 – 1939. One of the worst dust storms, called “Black Blizzards,” occurred on April 14, 1935. The storm on this date, known as “Black Sunday,” caused extensive damage. The dust turned the air black, and people who endured the storm reported that they could not even see five feet in front of them because of the dust. Eventually, the soil in the Great Plains completely blew away. More than 500,000 Americans were left homeless due to this disaster. A majority of farmers and ranchers migrated west to California, which was not devastated by the Dust Bowl and where there were abundant opportunities for work. Because a large majority of the migrants were from Oklahoma, where more than 15% of the state’s population was forced to leave, they adopted the nickname “Okies.” California was now being inundated with immigrants from the Great Plains, as well as from Mexico. Although work was available in California, the country was suffering from the Great Depression, and employers didn’t have the money to pay all the people who needed jobs. As a result, migrant working conditions suffered, and wages were extremely low. Many “Okies” got jobs over Mexicans, because they were white and American, and Mexican immigrants were forced to work for next to nothing, live in horrible conditions, or return to Mexico.

Pre-Show Discussion Questions
1. Have you ever had to deal with a life change? Was the change easy at first? Why or why not? How did you get through the transition period?
2. Do you remember a time when you learned a new skill? How did mastering that new skill make you feel?
3. What is a special present you have received? Who gave you this present? Why is this present so special to you?
4. Do you know anyone who immigrated to the United States from another country? If possible, talk to this person, or someone who knows this person, and ask them what challenges they faced when they first arrived in the United States.
5. How has Mexican culture benefited the United States? Where do you see the influence of Mexican culture in the United States (think about food, entertainment, language, holidays)?
6. Has there ever been a time in your life where you felt like you were treated unfairly? What was that time, and how did you deal with this unjust treatment?
Group Discussion: The Hardships of Immigration

After reading the book or seeing the play, *Esperanza Rising*, hold a class discussion about immigration.

1. Define Immigration, Immigrant and Migrant.

2. What do you think the difference is between voluntary and involuntary immigration? Was Esperanza’s migration to the United States voluntary or involuntary? Support your answer.

3. What do you think are some of the challenges Esperanza faced, living in a new country?

4. What are current problems, or challenges, Latino immigrants face? What challenges might they face that are particular to the Milwaukee community?

Group Discussion: Coping With Change

Esperanza’s life suddenly changes overnight. Her father is murdered, her house burns down to the ground, and she must leave her mother and move to the United States to work as a migrant farmer. Her beautiful dresses have all been burned in the fire, but she manages to save the special doll her father gave her for birthday. This doll is also the only meaningful belonging reminiscent of the life Esperanza leaves.

1. In small groups, have the students tell their peers about a time in their life when they went through a major change in life. Did they ever move into a new house, or a new neighborhood, or state? Have they ever changed schools? Did their family ever need to adjust to having a new baby in the house?

2. Once everyone in the groups has shared their stories, come back together as a class. Share some of these stories with the class and discuss how daily life became different when these students underwent these changes. Was it hard to endure the change? How did they feel about having to go through this change? How do they feel now about having gone through the change?

3. Discuss the change Esperanza goes through by coming to America. She brought her most prized possession with her—the doll her father gave her for her twelfth birthday. Using the suitcase worksheets, have the students draw a picture of what they would bring with them if they were moving to a foreign place and could only bring one possession. Below the picture, have the students explain why they would bring that object, and its significance to them.
This suitcase is significant. It holds something very special.

In the suitcase, draw or paste a picture of what you would bring with you, if you were moving away from your homeland and could only bring one possession.

The possession I would bring with me, no matter where I traveled, or who I traveled with is: 

__________________________________________________________________________ .

I would bring this with me because...
The decision to leave your homeland is a difficult one, and there are many factors to take into account. When making the choice, families have to consider the pros and cons of both leaving their homeland and staying.

Read the story below about a family in Mexico who is deciding whether or not to move to the United States. After thoroughly reading the piece, get with a partner or move into small groups. Discuss the family’s options, and what you think they should do. Listed beside the story are considerations to be aware of before making any decisions.

The Ibanez family lives in a small town in Mexico. Juana and Alberto have three children, ages 2, 6, and 12. They live in a farming community with many other families sharing a small amount of land. Juana and Alberto do not have much money. Alberto works on large farms, harvesting fruits and vegetables, but the work is seasonal. Juana grows beans and chilies and washes clothes for a nearby hotel. They can only afford to buy the basics—food and clothing—for their family. The children cannot attend school because they need to learn to work in the fields and take care of the home as quickly as possible. Juana and Alberto want to improve their family’s life. They do not want to move to another town in Mexico because employment is scarce and they are afraid they will not find jobs. They are thinking of immigrating to the United States. What do you think?

Consider the following:
1. In the United States, Alberto and Juana could probably find work in factories.

2. Dollars are worth more than pesos, because of the exchange rate, and their salaries would be higher than the ones they are now receiving in Mexico.

3. The children could go to school for free in the United States.

4. Crossing the border into the United States without a work permit is illegal, and it is highly difficult to obtain a permit.

5. If the Ibanez family crosses the border illegally and begins working in the U.S., they could be caught by U.S. authorities and deported immediately.

6. Illegal immigrant workers do not receive any rights or benefits that U.S. workers have.

7. The Ibanez family only speaks Spanish.

8. Both Juana and Alberto’s entire families live in the same town, and they are very traditional. If they leave, they will miss their extended families and their traditions.

9. Only Juana or Alberto could go to the United States, while the rest of the family stayed in Mexico. The person who immigrates could send money back to the family, but they wouldn’t know when the family would ever be back together again.

Using information from Internet resources, answer the following questions. Work individually or in groups on this project.

**Refer to the following Internet sites for local and nationwide census facts:**
- http://www.gcir.org/about_immigration/usmap.htm
- http://www.census.gov/

1. What percentage of the United States population was Latino in 1990?

What percentage of the U.S. population was Latino in 2000?

What percentage of the U.S. population was Latino in 2004?

Is the Latino population in the U.S. growing or shrinking? Brainstorm reasons for why the population may be shifting up, down, or staying the same.

2. Research the most current census data to determine the Latino population in Wisconsin.

Research the most current census data to determine the Latino population in Milwaukee County.

3. Research recent census data to determine the Latino population for the Los Angeles, Houston, and Indianapolis counties.
   - Los Angeles, CA County:
   - Houston, TX County:
   - Des Moines, IA County:

Compare these numbers to the Latino population in Milwaukee County. Do these counties have a greater or smaller population of Latinos than Milwaukee?

Brainstorm reasons for why these other counties either have greater, smaller, or equal Latino populations to that of Milwaukee County.
“In Mexico, I was a second class citizen. A peasant. I could never change that! I was born on the wrong side of a river—do you remember, reina? At least here I have a chance, however small, to become more than what I was.” – Miguel

The United States bears the title of “melting pot” of the world. What does the phrase “melting pot” mean?

The end of the famous inscription on the Statue of Liberty reads:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

What does this inscription mean to you? Put the inscription into your own words.

Do you believe the United States’ current policies on immigration are still reflective of the words written on the Statue of Liberty? Why or why not?

Immigration and immigration law is a hot topic at the moment in U.S. politics. What are some of the concerns of immigration that many U.S. politicians and citizens have? Do you think these concerns are valid? Why or why not?
Mexican immigrants travel throughout California and the Southwest United States to find work. Migrant farmers move several times during the year, following the work of the harvesting season. Even Mexican families living on the U.S.–Mexican border, like Esperanza’s family, have to travel long distances to come to the United States and find work.

Below is a list of U.S. cities with substantial migrant farming communities and Mexican “border cities.” Using an atlas, map, or Internet resources, identify the following cities on the attached map of the Southwest United States:

1. Yuba City, CA
2. Bakersfield, CA
3. Grayson, CA
4. Chandler, AZ
5. Nogales, Mexico
6. Tijuana, Mexico
7. Ensenada, Mexico
8. Agua Prieta, Mexico
9. El Paso, TX
What’s in a Name? Poetry

The name Esperanza, which comes from Spanish origin, means “hope.” After seeing the play or reading the book, ESPERANZA RISING, identify how Esperanza embodies hope throughout the story. List at least three different situations where Esperanza inspires hope for herself, her family, or her people.

1.

2.

3.

Using the Internet, books, or personal resources, figure out what your name means. How is your name representative of your personality and values?

Using the letters in your name, write an acrostic poem that exemplifies the meaning of your name. An acrostic poem is a poem where a word is chosen, and the poet uses each letter from that word to start a line of poetry about the original word. Begin by writing your name, letter by letter, lengthwise down a piece of paper. Make sure that the new words or lines of poetry you create from each letter of your name illustrate what your name means. An example of an acrostic poem for the name Esperanza is:

Encouraging
Sympathetic
Passionate
Elevating
Roses
Anticipating
Nurturing
Zealous
Awaiting

Eco-Friendly Agriculture Activity

1. Read the provided historical information on the Dust Bowl and identify the five-state region known as the Dust Bowl on a map of the United States. Research information about these states’ terrains, weather patterns, sources of water, etc.

2. Research these states’ most prominent economic activities (e.g., farming, ranching, etc.). There are numerous agricultural water conservation practices that help to prevent another disaster like the Dust Bowl from occurring again. Investigate the three forms of irrigation: surface (gravity), sprinkler, and drip irrigation. How do these different irrigation methods work, and what types of land and crops are they best suited for? Also research how soil moisture and weather monitoring are used to determine when to irrigate.

3. There are many other ways in which humans have affected the natural landscape for survival and economic gain. Some of these practices include: clear cutting, hydroelectric dams, and clearing the land in the rainforest for farming and cattle ranching. Research one of these procedures, explaining where it takes place, why it takes place, how it harms the land, and alternative methods that could be used that would be less destructive.
The *corrido* is a ballad style mariachi song that tells a story, either fictional or historical, to its audience. Some of the more popular topics sung about in a corrido are: animals, migration and migrant labor, social and political events, the struggles of everyday life along the border, embarrassing moments, humorous events, love relationships, catastrophes, miraculous events, wars, and heroes.

This corrido may be sung by a mariachi band at Esperanza’s father’s, Don Sixto’s, funeral:

A Here fell Don Sixto Otega  
B In the dust of his ranch Linda Flor.  
C Shot in the back by bandidos  
B Who kill the rich and rob the poor!  

A Ramona his widow is crying  
B His daughter distraught and in tears  
C His ranch Linda Flor in disorder  
B His brother Luis much too near.

**Structure**

The corrido follows a very particular structure.

- 36 lines divided into 9 stanzas of 4 lines each
- 7 – 10 syllables per line
- Rhyme scheme: ABCB (The rhyme scheme for a song is the sequence in which the rhyme occurs. •
- The first line’s end sound is represented as the letter “a”, the second is “b”, etc.)
- Traditionally, the first stanza provides a setting for the story, including specific dates and places.

Begin writing your own corrido! Although traditional corridos are nine stanzas long, see if you can start by writing three stanzas of a corrido.

Title______________________________________
The currency in Mexico is the peso. The value of the peso is much lower than the dollar—one U.S. dollar is just over 10 pesos. Mexican laborers working in the “border city” of Nogales might earn as little as 50 pesos a day, or $5. Laborers working in the southern Mexican states of Chiapas or Oaxaca might only earn 50 pesos a week, or less.

Assuming that one dollar is the equivalent to ten pesos, solve the following problems by converting the peso and the dollar.

1. Sara is staying at a hotel in Nogales, Mexico for 155 pesos a night. She is staying there for four nights. How many pesos is her stay? How many dollars is her stay?

2. Julio is a migrant farmer in California. His wife, four children, and his parents live in Mexico. Julio works six days a week and earns $55 a day. He sends $400 back to his family each month. How many pesos does he send to his family each month? After he sends $400 to his family, how many dollars does he have left each month?

3. Miguel is visiting Mexico. He spends $3 on a taxi, $7 for dinner, and $25 for his hotel room. How many pesos does Miguel spend?

4. Maria lives in Agua Prieta, a Mexican city on the U.S.–Mexico border. She has been offered two different jobs. The first job is in Mexico. It will pay her 115 pesos a day, and she will work seven days a week. The other job is across the border, in a factory in the United States. It will pay her $25 a day, and she will work five days a week. Which job will pay her more money?

5. Angel and Michelle are visiting Mexico City. They have $20 each to spend. Angel and Michelle want to stay the night at a hotel that is 185 pesos, and dinner will cost them 70 pesos each. The cab from the hotel to the restaurant and back will cost them 20 pesos each way. Will Angel and Michelle have enough money for their room, dinner, and the cab ride? Will they have any money left over, and if so, how much?
• How much do you remember about the play? Try to figure out who said each line, when during the play they said it, and why they said it.

• That’s life. No hay rosas sin espinas. You can’t have roses without thorns.

• “Always” no longer exists. You’re older now. So is she. You can’t be friends in the same way.

• The land will speak to you. If you are very very still and very patient you can hear its big heart beat and if you wait even longer, you can feel it breathe.

• White is the color of money. Brown is the color of work.

• We are going to be like that beautiful bird, the phoenix, that dives into the fire and rises, reborn from the ashes. We will rise again—with a new life ahead of us.

• And I will think of you and I will pray for you every minute of every day and every night until we are together again.

• Do you know how lucky you are? Please be grateful for the favors bestowed on us.

• My father died too. Before he came to this country he fought in the Mexican Revolution against people like her father—people who owned all the land.

• Our work is power! Our hands, our backs, our minds! If we strike, if we stop working—the bosses will have no one to plant their food, clean their homes, dig their ditches, drive their trucks, take care of their children. If we take all that away from them, they’ll have to pay us more, give us running water, electricity and decent homes!

• That is right. You do good work. They will see it. They will keep you! You see, this is America.

• If I had been rich, it might seem like we have nothing. But for us, it is enough to live on.

• If any of you hide a striker—We’ll pack you on a bus and send you back to Mexico.

• “Okies,” short for Oklahoma. It’s a state. There was no rain and all the land blew away in the wind—so the Okies had to come here like us. Only they’re lucky. They have no water and they’re going to have a swimming pool. They can use it everyday, but we can only use it on Fridays.

• In Mexico, I was a second class citizen. A peasant. I could never change that! I was born on the wrong side of a river—do you remember, reina? At least here I have a chance, however small, to become more than what I was.

• It’s not fair! I didn’t win Queen of the May. I had the best grades but the teacher said she chose on more than just grades! The Queen has to be blonde!

• I think Our Lady knew things you didn’t know. I think Our Lady was very wise in not granting your prayers. She wanted you to have something that would last more than one day.

• Our lives will not get better until we take action ourselves.
1. Why is the doll that Don Sixto gave to Esperanza so special to her?

2. Why do Esperanza, her mother, and the laborers who work on the ranch have to leave suddenly? Who is Tio Luis, and what does he have to do with their fleeing?

3. Describe Esperanza and Miguel's friendship. What do they have in common? What are their differences? How do they support each other throughout the play?

4. List some challenges Esperanza encounters when she first comes to the United States. Why is life on the farm so difficult for her? How does Isabel help Esperanza?

5. If you suddenly had to leave your homeland and move to a different country, where no one spoke your language, and you were put in a work camp, how would you react? What would be the most challenging part of this move for you?

6. What is the significance of the roses in the play? What do the roses stand for, and how do they help Esperanza?

7. Explain what you think the title of the play means.

Resources
Southwest map template: http://geography.la.asu.edu/lukinbeal/southwestus.pdf
Mexico Para Ninos: http://www.elbalero.gob.mx/index_esp.html
Discovery Education: http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/destinationamerica/
Mexican Embassy: http://www.mexican-embassy.dk/history.html#revolution
Oakland Museum of California: http://www.museums.ca.org/picurethis/3_2.html
Pam Munoz Ryan: http://www.pammunozryan.com/index.html
How much do you remember about the play? Try to figure out who said each line, when during the play they said it, and why they said it.

That’s life. No hay rosas sin espinas. You can’t have roses without thorns.

**Don Sixto**

“Always” no longer exists. You’re older now. So is she. You can’t be friends in the same way.

**Hortensia**

The land will speak to you. If you are very very still and very patient you can hear its big heart beat and if you wait even longer, you can feel it breathe.

**Esperanza**

White is the color of money. Brown is the color of work.

**Miguel**

We are going to be like that beautiful bird, the phoenix, that dives into the fire and rises, reborn from the ashes. We will rise again—with a new life ahead of us.

**Ramona**

And I will think of you and I will pray for you every minute of every day and every night until we are together again.

**Ramona**

Do you know how lucky you are? Please be grateful for the favors bestowed on us.

**Hortensia**

My father died too. Before he came to this country he fought in the Mexican Revolution against people like her father—people who owned all the land.

**Marta**

Our work is power! Our hands, our backs, our minds! If we strike, if we stop working—the bosses will have no one to plant their food, clean their homes, dig their ditches, drive their trucks, take care of their children. If we take all that away from them, they’ll have to pay us more, give us running water, electricity and decent homes!

**Marta**

That is right. You do good work. They will see it. They will keep you! You see, this is America.

**Alfonzo**

If I had been rich, it might seem like we have nothing. But for us, it is enough to live on.

**Modesta**

If any of you hide a striker—we’ll pack you on a bus and send you back to Mexico.

**Immigration Agent**

“Okies” short for Oklahoma. It’s a state. There was no rain and all the land blew away in the wind—so the Okies had to come here like us. Only they’re lucky. They have no water and they’re going to have a swimming pool. They can use it everyday, but we can only use it on Fridays.

**Isabel**

In Mexico, I was a second class citizen. A peasant. I could never change that! I was born on the wrong side of a river—do you remember, reina? At least here I have a chance, however small, to become more than what I was.

**Miguel**

It’s not fair! I didn’t win Queen of the May. I had the best grades but the teacher said she chose on more than just grades! The Queen has to be blonde!

**Isabel**

I think Our Lady knew things you didn’t know. I think Our Lady was very wise in not granting your prayers. She wanted you to have something that would last more than one day.

**Esperanza**

Our lives will not get better until we take action ourselves.
Using information from Internet resources, answer the following questions. Work individually or in groups on this project.

Refer to the following Internet sites for local and nation-wide census facts: http://www.gcir.org/about_immigration/usmap.htm
http://www.census.gov/
http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en
http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab08.html
http://www.nd.edu/~latino/research/pubs/LatinoResearch1.pdf

4. What percentage of the United States population was Latino in 1990?
   9.0%

What percent of the U.S. population was Latino in 2000?
   12.5%

What percent of the U.S. population was Latino in 2004?
   14.1%

Is the Latino population in the U.S. growing or shrinking? Brainstorm reasons for why the population may be shifting up, down, or staying the same.

   The Latino population in the U.S. is growing. It could be growing because there are more job opportunities in the U.S., because people in Mexico and Central and South America are coming to the U.S. to join their family who already lives here, because the value of the dollar is much greater than that of the pesos, or because opportunities for their children are better here—better schooling, better healthcare, better quality of life.

5. Research the most current census data to determine the Latino population in Wisconsin.
   In the year 2000, the Latino population was 4.3%

Research the most current census data to determine the Latino population in Milwaukee County.
   In the year 2000, the Latino population was 8.8%

6. Research recent census data to determine the Latino population for the Los Angeles, Houston, and Indianapolis counties.
   Los Angeles, CA County: 44.6%
   Houston, TX County: 9%
   Des Moines, IA County: 1.7%

Compare these numbers to the Latino population in Milwaukee County. Do these counties have a greater or smaller population of Latinos than Milwaukee?

   Los Angeles and Houston counties have a greater percentage of Latinos living there than Milwaukee does. However, Milwaukee has a greater percentage of Latinos than Des Moines.

Brainstorm reasons for why these other counties either have greater, smaller, or equal Latino populations to that of Milwaukee County.

   There is a greater number of Latinos living in the Los Angeles and Houston counties because both of those cities are close to the Mexican border. They are also states that have milder weather, so are able to farm (and provide farming jobs) throughout the year. In addition, the Latino communities are large there, and many new Latino immigrants may go there because there is already a strong, well established, community there. Milwaukee County and Des Moines counties are northern states, quite far from the Mexican border. However, Milwaukee has a greater population of Mexicans than Des Moines, because Milwaukee has a fairly strong, well established Latino community, and because there are many job opportunities in Milwaukee, being a farming state, and having numerous factories and large businesses in the area.
The currency in Mexico is the peso. The value of the peso is much lower than the dollar—one U.S. dollar is just over 10 pesos. Mexican laborers working in the “border city” of Nogales might earn as little as 50 pesos a day, or $5. Laborers working in the southern Mexican states of Chiapas or Oaxaca might only earn 50 pesos a week, or less.

Assuming that one dollar is the equivalent to ten pesos, solve the following problems by converting the peso and the dollar.

1. Sara is staying at a hotel in Nogales, Mexico for 155 pesos a night. She is staying there for four nights. How many pesos is her stay? How many dollars is her stay?
   Sara’s stay is 620 pesos.  
   Sara’s stay is $62.

2. Julio is a migrant farmer in California. His wife, four children, and his parents live in Mexico. Julio works six days a week and earns $55 a day. He sends $400 back to his family each month. How many pesos does he send to his family each month? After he sends $400 to his family, how many dollars does he have left each month?
   Julio sends 4,000 pesos to his family in Mexico.  
   Julio has $920 left, after he sends $400 to his family.

3. Miguel is visiting Mexico. He spends $3 on a taxi, $7 for dinner, and $25 for his hotel room. How many pesos does Miguel spend?
   Miguel spends $350 pesos during his visit to Mexico.

4. Maria lives in Agua Prieta, a Mexican city on the U.S.—Mexico border. She has been offered two different jobs. The first job is in Mexico. It will pay her 115 pesos a day, and she will work seven days a week. The other job is across the border, in a factory in the United States. It will pay her $25 a day, and she will work five days a week. Which job will pay her more money?
   Maria will earn $85.50 each week working in Mexico.  
   Maria will earn more working in the U.S.

5. Angel and Michelle are visiting Mexico City. They have $20 each to spend. Angel and Michelle want to stay the night at a hotel that is 185 pesos, and dinner will cost them 70 pesos each. The cab from the hotel to the restaurant and back will cost them 20 pesos each way. Will Angel and Michelle have enough money for their room, dinner, and the cab ride? Will they have any money left over, and if so, how much?
   Angel and Michelle will spend $36.50.  
   They will have money left over.  
   They will have $3.50 left over.