

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



In this three-day unit, students will use the story, *Dreamers*, by Yuyi Morales to learn about context clues, summary, topic, and theme. In addition, they will start to develop a broad understanding of what it is like to be an immigrant in the United States, which is a concept that can be built upon in further lessons and grade levels. Using the various graphic organizers provided, teachers will help students build upon their understanding from each previous lesson to meet the current day's objectives.

Unit Title/Focus: Understanding Immigration

Grade Level: 4th/5th

Length of Unit: 3 class periods

Desired Results	
<p>Content Standard(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standard 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RL.4.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including words that affect meaning and tone. ○ RL.5.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, recognizing specific word choices that contribute to meaning and tone. ● Standard 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RL.4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text. ○ RL.5.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text. 	
<p>Understandings/Goals Students will understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How to make inferences about a book's topic from its cover, title, and description. ● How to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words by using context clues. ● The difference between the topic and the theme of a story. 	<p>Essential Question(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does a book's cover and title tell us about its content? ● How do context clues help determine the meaning of an unknown word? ● What is a theme? What is a topic? What are the differences between the two?
<p>Student Objectives (Outcomes) Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Form and write about an opinion about a text. ● Use context clues to help understand the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. ● Summarize a text. 	

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



- Determine the theme of a story.
- Describe the difference between the topic(s) and the theme of a story and apply it to an example text.

Assessment Evidence

Performance Task(s)

- Day 1: Reflection writing assignment about students' opinions and feelings about book.
- Day 2: Summary of book.
- Day 3: Exit ticket describing the difference between topic and theme.

[Optional]: Voice recording of what students have learned over the past three lessons.

Other Evidence:

- Listening to and monitoring group and individual work.
- Attention to reading guide instructions.
- Completion of context clues table.

Learning Plan

Materials

- Copies of *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales- one per table group
 - If you have only one copy, carry out Version B of Day 1 in the learning plan.
- Notebook paper (if students do not have their own)
- Dictionary(ies)
- Spanish to English dictionary(ies)
- Reading guide*
- Context clues table*
- Chart paper and markers
- "Finding Theme" graphic organizer* - 2 versions
- 3rd day exit ticket*

*Available in the Additional Resources section.

Day 1: Introduction/Before (:00 - :30):

Version A: Table Group Read Aloud

Introduce the title and author of the story. Instruct students to look at the book cover and title without opening it, then brainstorm with their group what they think the book is about for 1 minute. After time is up, ask for a few volunteers to report what they think the book will be about. Then, allow them 2 minutes to read the front and back inside cover descriptions (about the story and the author) and discuss what they now think the book's main topic is. Have a few volunteers share.

Instruct groups to start reading aloud with their groups. They must stop after reading page six; when they reach that point, ask students what just happened in the text. Groups should discuss the question, "What major event just happened in the text?" (Answer: The main character and her baby immigrated to a new place). Instruct them to continue reading, but stop after pages 13 and 14. Ask students to talk with their groups about what the main character and her baby discovered at this point in the text. Call on a volunteer to answer. Instruct them to continue reading, but stop after pages 23 and 24. Ask students how finding the

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



library helped the main character and her baby. After they discuss with groups, call on a few volunteers to report what their groups talked about. Instruct groups to finish reading the story. Ask students to describe how the main character and her baby felt at the end of the story, compared to how they felt at the beginning. Allow them to discuss with groups, then call on a few volunteers to answer.

Allow students the remaining time to write an individual reflection on a piece of notebook paper to turn it at the end of class. Their reflections should answer the following two questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not? Provide specific examples from text.
2. How did the text make you feel? How would you feel if you had to move to a different country all alone?

[Option: allow students to complete reflection in groups.]

Version B: Full Class Read Aloud

Introduce the title and author of the story. Display the book cover via a Document Camera or an online image. Instruct students to look at the book cover and title, then brainstorm with their group what they think the book is about for 1 minute. After time is up, ask for a few volunteers to report what they think the book will be about. Display the inside front cover description (about the story) via your chosen technology, and allow them time to read it. Once all students are finished reading, display the inside back cover description (about the author) and allow them time to read it. Instruct them to discuss with their groups what they now think the book will be about after reading the cover information. Have a few volunteers share.

Start reading aloud. Stop on page 6. Ask students what just happened in the text. Model how to answer the question, “What major event just happened in the text?” (Answer: The main character and her baby immigrated to a new place). Continue reading. Stop on pages 13 and 14. Ask students what the main character and her baby discovered at this point in the text. After giving them a moment to discuss with their groups, call on a volunteer to answer. Continue reading, and stop on pages 23 and 24. Ask students how finding the library helped the main character and her baby. After they discuss with groups, call on a few volunteers to report what their groups talked about. Finish reading the story. Stop on the last pages and ask students to describe how the main character and her baby felt at the end of the story, compared to how they felt at the beginning. Allow them to discuss with groups, then call on a few volunteers to answer.

Allow students the remaining time to write an individual reflection on a piece of notebook paper to turn it at the end of class. Their reflections should answer the following two questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not? Provide specific examples from text.
2. How did the text make you feel? How would you feel if you had to move to a different country all alone?

[Option: allow students to complete reflection in groups.]

Day 2: Instruction for Learning and Engagement/During (:00 - :50):

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



For day 2, each group needs a copy of Dreamers. If this is not an option, simply project the book using a Document Camera or another technology so that the whole class can see, and instruct them to complete their reading guide using the displayed copy. Instruct groups that finish each step before others to be patient and to sit quietly until their classmates are finished.

Allow students one minute to read over the reading guide, reading instructions carefully. Then, instruct students to complete step 1 of their reading guide. For 3-4 minutes, allow them to discuss the topic of the book and what they wrote about in yesterday's reflection. After time is up, ask for a few volunteers to share what their group talked about.

Allow students 3 minutes to complete step 2 of the reading guide. After time is up, call on a group to share what they recorded in the context clues table, including the word, its part of speech, what they think it means, and the context clues they used to make that guess. (Example answer: "I don't know the meaning of 'resplendent.' It is an adjective because it is describing the noun 'life.' I think it means 'united, shared' because of the context clue 'together.'") Hold up one student's table and model to the whole class how that student correctly filled in the context clues table with this information, pointing to each column on the table.

Allow students 25 minutes to complete steps 3 and 4. Circulate around the class while they are working. Remind them to follow instructions carefully. When groups raise their hands to indicate they are finished with their context clues tables, check them over and allow them to move on to the last steps.

Allow students the remaining time to complete the last two steps in their reading guide. Be sure to instruct students whether you want them to complete their summaries individually (recommended) or as a group (alternate).

Day 3: Engagement and Practice/During: (:00 - :30):

Classroom Setup: One piece of chart paper describing topic and examples. One piece of chart paper describing theme and examples. Paste each piece on opposite walls of the room. See the Additional Resources section for ideas about what this should look like.

Instruct students to take notes on their own paper during this part of the lesson. Do a quick lesson on topic, using the chart paper as a guide. Then, do a quick lesson on theme, using the chart paper as a guide.

Direct students' attention to the theme worksheet for *Dreamers*. Go through the title, author, and topic together, asking for a volunteer to answer each. Have them write each answer next to the corresponding blank. Then, explain and model how to complete the table. Give students a moment to work with their group to fill in the first row of the table. Then, call on a group to provide their answer (unnamed immigrant mother and newborn). Make sure students understand how to complete the table, and answer any questions they may have.

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



Set a timer for 15 minutes. Ask students to work together with their groups to complete the rest of the worksheet*, including the question about theme at the end.

**There are two versions of this worksheet. The first version asks students what they think the theme of the book is in multiple choice format. The advanced version asks students to write the theme out in complete sentences.*

Closure/After: (:30 - :35): When the timer goes off, review the correct answer to the theme question. Instruct students to complete the exit ticket.

[Optional: Additional Closure Activity]: Have students record themselves speaking about what they have learned the past few days about immigration, context clues, topic, and theme. This could easily be done as a homework activity.

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



Additional Resources

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



Reading Guide: Dreamers by Yuyi Morales

Read all instructions carefully!

Step 1: Refresh your memory from yesterday's lesson. Discuss with your group what happened in the book. Also share what you wrote about in your individual reflections about your opinion of the book and how it made you feel.

wait for teacher instruction before moving on to step 2.

Step 2: Re-read the first two pages of the story. Are there any words you do not understand? If so, record them in the context clues table. Make sure to **read the instructions** for completing the table before filling it in!

wait for teacher instruction before moving on to step 3.

Step 3: Continue reading, taking turns reading aloud with your group members. Stop after every two pages, and, for every unfamiliar word, fill in the first three columns of the table.

Step 4: After your group is done reading the book, use a dictionary and a Spanish/English dictionary to search for the meanings of the words you recorded in the context clues table. When your worksheet is done, **raise your hand** to indicate that you are finished. Your teacher will look over your completed context clues table and make sure you completed the activity correctly.

Step 5: Now that you understand all the vocabulary in the book, read it again. Take turns reading aloud with your group members.

Step 6: Write a one-paragraph summary of the book on the blank sheet of notebook paper. When done, turn in summary to your teacher. Sit quietly until everyone is finished with the assignment.

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



FINDING THEME

TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

TOPIC: _____

WHO IS THE MAIN CHARACTER?	
WHAT PROBLEMS/CHALLENGES DOES THE CHARACTER FACE?	
WHAT DID THE CHARACTER DO TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES?	
WHAT CHANGES DO YOU SEE IN THE CHARACTER?	
WHAT DID THE CHARACTER LEARN AS A RESULT?	

THEME: CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER.

A) FAMILY

B) READING KEEPS DREAMS ALIVE

C) HAVING DREAMS IS IMPORTANT

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



FINDING THEME

TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

TOPIC: _____

WHO IS THE MAIN CHARACTER?	
WHAT PROBLEMS/CHALLENGES DOES THE CHARACTER FACE?	
WHAT DID THE CHARACTER DO TO OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES?	
WHAT CHANGES DO YOU SEE IN THE CHARACTER?	
WHAT DID THE CHARACTER LEARN AS A RESULT?	

THEME: _____

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN
LATIN AMERICAN &
CARIBBEAN STUDIES



EXIT TICKET

COMPLETE THESE QUESTIONS WITHOUT USING YOUR NOTES OR YOUR PEERS!

1. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TOPIC AND THEME?

2. NAME ONE TOPIC FROM "DREAMERS."

BONUS: NAME AND DEFINE A NEW VOCABULARY WORD THAT YOU LEARNED FROM THE BOOK.

UNC-DUKE CONSORTIUM IN LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN STUDIES



Ideas for Topic and Theme Lessons

DETERMINING THEME

What is a topic?

Topics are the subject matter addressed in a story. They are typically one word and will tell students what a story is mostly about in a word or two. The list of topics you create about a story will help you find the theme.

Let's take a look at the difference between topics and theme

One-word topics are not themes! But you can use these topics to help you find the theme.

Topics: An issue or subject matter addressed in a text.	Theme: A message or lesson from the story that you can apply to your own life.
Courage	It takes courage to do the right thing.
Justice	Actions have consequences.
Honesty	Always tell the truth.
Love	It's better to love than to hate.

Kristen Harris
Young Teacher Love

Theme: The message

the moral, or the lesson.

Sometimes it's **Stated**
The author tells what the theme is. Fables give the theme at the end.

Sometimes it's **Implied**
You have to use the setting + event to find the theme. Most are this.

Common Themes

- Friendship
- Compassion
- Never give up!
- Be responsible
- Courage
- Acceptance
- Respect
- Kindness
- Honesty
- Perseverance

Ask: What did the characters learn??

*Theme: Message author wants you to come away from the story with

Common Topics for Themes: "Big Ideas"

- courage
- equality
- honesty
- doing the right thing
- dreams
- hope
- love
- acceptance
- kindness
- differences
- family
- achievement
- fears
- friendship
- jealousy
- peace
- being yourself
- hard work
- never giving up

Ask, "What did the characters learn?"
"How did the characters grow or change?"
"Why did the characters act this way?"

"I know the theme is _____"
"I know this because _____ in the text"

