

Teacher's Rationale

School: Arrowhead Union High School

Teacher: Budzien / Balistreri / Judd / Frieburg

Title: The House On Mango Street

Grade or Course: Modern Literature X

Approximate date(s) a book will be used:

Semester 1

Semester 2

This book will be (check one or more):

studied by the whole class. (But students have option to choose different text).

studied by small groups.

placed on a reading list.

placed in a classroom library.

recommended to individual students.

part of a larger study of (explain):

other (explain):

Ways in which the book is especially appropriate for student in this class:

Sandra Cisneros' The House On Mango Street is a coming of age story about an Hispanic girl growing up in the Latino section of Chicago. The protagonist, Esperanza, is wiser than her years and makes observations about her peers, neighbors, parents, and culture. Esperanza's insights into Life and the ways of the world provide food for thought for Arrowhead teens, who are forced to contemplate differences and similarities between their world and Esperanza's.

Ways in which the book is especially pertinent to the objectives of this course or unit:

Hopefully, students from the white, upper middle class, homogeneous culture of Hartland will expand their literary, cultural, and philosophical horizons having read this winner of the American Book Award (1985). Learning tolerance for racial, economic, and cultural diversity are likely outcomes of reading this poetic, picaresque novella.

Special problems that might arise in relation to the book and some planned activities that handle this problem:

Esperanza is molested at a carnival, though the degree to which this occurs remains vague and unspecific. Certain neighbors are shady and have questionable ethics, but again their behavior is more implied than specified.

Some other appropriate books an individual student might read in place of this book: Bless Me, Ultima, by Rudolfo Anaya**Summary of the book:**

Told in a series of vignettes stunning for their eloquence, Esperanza makes and loses friends as she engages in typical childhood activities such as jumping rope, dressing up, riding bikes, and playing make-believe. Esperanza sees the difficulties of making her way as a strong, sensitive, and independent young woman in a world and a Latino culture

dominated by males. Eventually, refusing to be a “red balloon tied to an anchor,” Esperanza decides to shed her mantle of cultural oppression and break away to a world of self-fulfillment as a poet, yet resolved to remember her roots.

Reviews and/or awards of the book or author:

Cisneros’ awards include two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships (1982 and 1988); the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation, for *The House on Mango Street* (1985); the Paisano Dobie Fellowship (1986); first and second prizes in Segundo Concurso Nacional del Cuento Chicano, sponsored by the University of Arizona; the Lannan Foundation Literary Award (1991); an honorary doctorate from the State University of New York at Purchase (1993); and a MacArthur fellowship (1995). Sandra Cisneros’ work has been praised by critics for many reasons, from the authenticity of her characters’ voices and experience to the marvelous simplicity of her style. Perhaps more important than critics are ordinary readers, who find Cisneros’ writing to be moving, funny, direct, and true on the most basic of human levels. Her fiction, in *The House on Mango Street* and “*Woman Hollering Creek*” and *Other Stories*, is often compared to poetry—or even identified *as* poetry. The two books will be treated in the following pages as fiction; yet, like the best of poetry, these books can bring new discoveries, insights, and surprises with each rereading.