

**Objective:** Reading to infer the author's interests and possible themes.

**Activity**

Read the following quotations from and about Sandra Cisneros. What themes or motifs do you think she might address in this novel?

"As a person growing up in a society where the class norm was superimposed on a television screen, I couldn't understand why our home wasn't all green lawns and white wood like the ones in 'Leave It to Beaver' and 'Father Knows Best.'"

"The meaning of literary success," she [Cisneros] declares, "is that I could change the way someone thinks about my community, or my gender, or my class."

"Cisneros' brothers sought to control and mold her according to this dominating, male-oriented ideology so much so that she later professed that she felt as if she had 'seven fathers' instead of one. Consequently she confesses in a 1990 interview: 'to this day when any man tells me to do something in a certain way, the hair on the back of my neck just stands up.'"

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**Objective:** Drawing conclusions and writing poetry.

**Activity**

- A. As a child, one of Sandra Cisneros' favorite books was *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton. The following is an excerpt from this story:

Once upon a time  
there was a Little House  
way out in the country.  
She was a pretty Little House  
and she was strong and well built.  
The man who built her so well said,  
"This Little House shall never be sold  
for gold or silver and she will live to see  
our great-great-grandchildren's  
great-great-grandchildren living in her."

*The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton  
Houghton Mifflin Company Boston 1969

Identify the traits you think Cisneros is looking for in a house.

- |          |            |           |             |           |          |
|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| _____ 1. | permanent  | _____ 6.  | strong      | _____ 11. | pretty   |
| _____ 2. | feeble     | _____ 7.  | attractive  | _____ 12. | brawny   |
| _____ 3. | enduring   | _____ 8.  | loathsome   | _____ 13. | stable   |
| _____ 4. | rattletrap | _____ 9.  | picturesque | _____ 14. | decrepit |
| _____ 5. | rural      | _____ 10. | ancestral   | _____ 15. | snug     |

- B. Rewrite the excerpt from *The Little House* so that it reflects your home. Be sure to use words that convey the mood of your home.

*Example:*

*Once upon a time  
there was a large White House  
in a quiet part of a small city.  
She was a comely colonial house  
nestled between four tall trees.  
The man who built her said,  
"This large White House will be cherished  
and filled with our children's laughter, love,  
and the promise of our great-great-grandchildren's  
great-great-grandchildren's joyful smiles.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ pd. \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer questions according to p. 3-5 of "House on Mango Street" in complete sentences:**

1. What information does the reader get from the first paragraph?
2. What can you infer from the fact that the family has moved so frequently?
3. Note the verb tense in paragraph 4: "we would." How does the verb tense affect the reader? What is the importance of the author's choice to write in this verb tense? Connect thoughts also to the sense of dreams, hopes and aspirations.
4. Identify the contrasts between ideals (paragraph 4) and reality (paragraph 5)

5. What do you learn from the narrator's conversation with the nun? Why does she say, "I knew then I had to have a house."?

6. Explain the significance of the final sentence.

### Activity

A. Identify the traits you think Esperanza possesses.

___ 1.	aloof	___ 11.	difficult	___ 21.	wise
___ 2.	conventional	___ 12.	practical	___ 22.	compassionate
___ 3.	courageous	___ 13.	reliable	___ 23.	understanding
___ 4.	energetic	___ 14.	resourceful	___ 24.	thoughtful
___ 5.	honest	___ 15.	intelligent	___ 25.	simple
___ 6.	insensitive	___ 16.	sensitive	___ 26.	imaginative
___ 7.	methodical	___ 17.	diligent	___ 27.	persistent
___ 8.	confident	___ 18.	conscientious	___ 28.	stubborn
___ 9.	coarse	___ 19.	tender	___ 29.	reasonable
___ 10.	cautious	___ 20.	callous	___ 30.	impudent

B. Of the traits you identified for Esperanza:

- Which of the traits did you infer from the character's comments or actions?
- Which traits did you learn of because the narrator or another character told you?

