

Prestwick PowerPacks™

Practical Activities for Comprehension and Key Skills



Esperanza Rising

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity I: Connecting with Literature/Coming-of-Age**Pre-Reading**

Esperanza, the main character in *Esperanza Rising*, turns thirteen at the beginning of the novel. On the day before her thirteenth birthday, Esperanza's entire life changes. When the teenage years officially begin at age thirteen, children are sometimes given certain privileges associated with approaching adulthood or are expected to take on new responsibilities. This tradition is called coming-of-age. Many novels that you will read during the next few years will address this theme of growing up and learning to respond like an adult. There are other things that can change people's lives, though. Experiences like making a new friend who introduces you to new ideas, foods, or experiences; getting a new job; experiencing a family tragedy; and moving to a new town or country all change people's lives drastically. In the following **LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS CHART**, list five events that have changed your life or the lives of people you know. You may also use examples from any books you have read at school or home. Then, think about the challenges and benefits that may come from these changes. The first one has been done for you as an example.

When you are satisfied with your answers, your teacher will put you into groups so that you can share and compare answers with one another. Then, complete the **GROUP LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS CHART** and share with the class.

Student's Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS CHART

Life-Changing Event	Challenges	Benefits
Moving to a new place	loss of old friends and security	opportunity to encounter new experiences and new friends

GROUP LIFE-CHANGING EVENTS CHART

Life-Changing Event	Challenges	Benefits

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity I: Family Traditions **1924/Las Uvas**

Part 1

Traditions and celebrations are a part of both culture and family rituals. They are recurring experiences within family or group life. Traditions vary within families, cultures, and countries, but a commonality among people is our need for and use of traditions. In the chapters 1924 and Las Uvas: Grapes, Esperanza describes many of her favorite traditions.

With your small groups, discuss your traditions and those that you find in *Esperanza Rising*. In the following **TRADITIONS CHART**, list examples from the text that describe Esperanza's family traditions. Be sure to provide the page number where you can find the tradition. In the third column, describe a tradition from your family, a group member, or one that you have read about or heard of that you think may be similar to those of Esperanza's family. The first one has been done for you as an example.

TRADITIONS CHART

Page Number of the Tradition	Esperanza's Family Traditions	Your Traditions
Pg. 6	Harvest time...the peasants wear brightly colored shirts, and the grapes are picked and taken into storage each year.	any fall festival; Octoberfest; Halloween; pumpkin carving/pumpkin soup

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part 2

After you have completed your chart with your group, work individually to answer the following questions about traditions. Be sure to use complete sentences.

1. Why do families have traditions and rituals? (What purpose do they serve in society?)

2. On page 14, Esperanza's grandmother recounts a saying to Esperanza: "*No hay rosas sin espinas*. There is no rose without thorns." What does she mean by this? Do you agree or disagree? Develop some examples where this may be true or not true.

3. Do members of your family have quotes or sayings that they like to recount? What are they? What do they say about life? Do you agree or disagree with them?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity II: Learning Stations **1924/Las Uvas**

SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY STATION:

Part 1

Read the Author's Note on pages 255-262, and locate a list of real places in California and Mexico that are relevant to the events in the book. Fill in the **IMPORTANT SETTINGS CHART** below. The first one has been done for you as an example.

IMPORTANT SETTINGS CHART

Place	Relevance to the Story
Aguascalientes, Mexico	the place in Mexico where Esperanza was born

Part 2

If a map is available, find these places on a map and draw a simple copy of the map, labeling only the places from the chart.



Name: _____

Date: _____

WRITING STATION

Good writers often use a technique called imagery as they write. Imagery is the use of vivid language that appeals to the five senses. On the page numbers listed in the **SENSES CHART**, find examples of the way the author has appealed to the readers' senses. Name the sense and the image that appeals to the sense. On the last line, create a description that would appeal to your sense of smell. Do not use the word "smell" in your description. The first one has been done for you as an example.

SENSES CHART

Page Number	Sense	Image that Appeals to the Sense
Pg. 9	Taste	Beef jerky
	Smell	

When you have completed this chart, practice using the technique of appealing to the five senses in your own writing. Write a page describing your weekend. Make sure you use one example of appealing to each of the five senses in your writing. If you need help with this, you may use your group members as resources and/or ask your teacher for assistance.

Name: _____

Date: _____

ART STATION

Good readers create mental pictures in their heads as they read. When you read, you can imagine the book as a movie. Think about what the characters look like, what the setting looks like, and try to imagine the facial expressions of the characters as you read. This will add to your understanding of the events in the novel. The author of *Esperanza Rising* has made this process easier for you by including clear visual descriptions. For example, on page eleven, Esperanza is described for you:

“There was the same black hair, wavy and thick. Same dark lashes and fair, creamy skin. But it wasn’t precisely Mama’s face, because Papa’s eyes were there too, shaped like fat, brown almonds.” (Pg. 11)

Do you feel like you can see Esperanza? Can you imagine her long, black hair and her almond-shaped eyes?

To practice creating visual images, you are going to create a visual response to this chapter. Depending upon what materials are available, you may choose to draw a picture, create a collage or sculpture, or maybe even create a comic or storyboard. A storyboard is a series of pictures that moviemakers make to sketch out each scene from the movie sequentially. If you choose to do the storyboard, you will need to fold your paper into several different sections or boxes, one for each scene you plan to portray.

Name: _____

Date: _____

THINK ALOUD STATION

Good readers pay attention and read between the lines. They make predictions (think about what might happen next or what the story is about), compare characters to people or things they know, guess the meaning of new vocabulary words, imagine pictures in their heads, ask questions about things that confuse them, and mentally summarize what they have read to make sure they understand.

At this station, you will be working in small groups to practice these techniques. Each of you should choose a page-long passage and practice it so you will be able to read it aloud fluently and well. When you read aloud, stop to tell your classmates what you are thinking. For example, if you read the sentence, “Esperanza struggled with her stitches,” you would say, “I wonder why she struggled with them? Is she not a good seamstress? Is she distracted? I predict that she might prick herself with her needle.”

When you are all ready, take turns reading aloud your passage. Pause as you read to share your think-aloud. Make sure you listen respectfully to your classmates’ readings. When they have finished, you can ask them further questions to clarify what they were thinking/feeling as they read.

Name: _____

Date: _____

IRONY STATION

Irony occurs when what happens is the opposite of what we expect to happen. In this chapter, Esperanza is excited about her thirteenth birthday, but she never gets to enjoy her birthday.

1. In your groups, discuss what makes this scene so ironic. Include in your discussion:
 - the family traditions to which Esperanza looks forward
 - the elaborate preparations made for her birthday
 - what actually happens
 - how Esperanza feels in the end
 - what she ends up doing with her presents
 - what happens to all the food preparations
2. Display the results of your discussion in the following **IRONY WORD WEB**. Add more text boxes if you need them.

IRONY WORD WEB

