

English II Honors
The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros
Socratic Seminar

On a separate sheet of paper, and in a clear, concise, and textually-supported manner, respond to the assigned questions for our final discussion of the novel.

1. To what different cultures does Esperanza belong? How do these cultures uniquely shape Esperanza's identity? What inner conflicts or tensions might Esperanza experience as a result of her many cultures.
2. When does Esperanza fight for her personal identity and when does Esperanza sacrifice a part of her identity? What determines whether she fights or sacrifices? What are the consequences of her decisions?
3. The vignettes of *The House on Mango Street* offer us a window into the world of race, housing, and even gender. How do the dynamics of race and housing impact life on Mango Street? How are women treated? What greater messages might Cisneros be sending about race, housing, and the role of women in society through Esperanza's story?
4. The circle is an important symbol in *The House on Mango Street*. Examine the ways many characters are trapped in a cycle of violence and poverty. Do any characters escape the cycle because of their own resilience or the community's assistance?
5. In *The House on Mango Street*, Cisneros writes of "those who don't know" about her neighborhood and the people in it. Reflecting upon her words concerning prejudice, what does the author imply about the way prejudices shape our perceptions of "us" and "them"?
6. Although much of the novel details experiences outside the narrator's house, why does Cisneros choose *The House on Mango Street* as her title? What does it reveal about her connection to her family, her home, and her neighborhood?
7. Discuss the role of parents in the novel. How can Esperanza's relationship with her parents be characterized? In what ways is it different or similar to other characters' parent / child relationships in the novel?
8. Literary scholar C. Hugh Holman defines a Bildungsroman as "a novel that deals with the development of a young person as he grows up." In what ways does this novel represent a coming of age tale? Is this Bildungsroman only focused on Esperanza or does someone or something else "come of age"?
9. Sandra Cisneros has said that her "first love" in writing is a fascination with speech and voices. How is that interest exemplified in *The House on Mango Street*? Do the characters that Esperanza introduces us to have any common bond in regard to speech and voice?
10. Cisneros' narrator describes herself from two points of view – as she sees herself and as she believes others see her. Where does Cisneros convey this dual consciousness? How does Esperanza see herself? How does she think other people perceive her?