

Grade 5 Reading & Writing

Unit 1: They Call Me Güero

16 lessons (the last is the Pausing Point review) and a words quiz. Use this pack with the unit's **Teacher Guide** and **Activity Book** (download them once from the course) to teach the whole unit without the internet.

For parents: This unit reads *They Call Me Güero*. The book is not included here: borrow it from your library or buy a copy before you start (Core Knowledge lists it on the unit page).

What is in this pack

- A plan for each lesson: the Teacher Guide pages to follow, words to know, what to read, questions to talk over and the Activity Book pages to print.
- The words quiz, ready to print.
- Answers for the teacher at the back: every discussion question and the quiz key.

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Lesson schedule

One lesson a school day, about 60-90 minutes; split long lessons over two days. Tick each one off as you go.

	Lesson	Reader pages	Activity Book
☐	Lesson 1: Reading “border kid?”, “Border Kid” and “Checkpoint”	see lesson	AP 1.1, SR 1
☐	Lesson 2: Reading “Border Kid” and “Checkpoint”	see lesson	AP 2.1
☐	Lesson 3: Reading “Our House”, “Fingers & Keys” and “Lullaby”	see lesson	AP 3.1
☐	Lesson 4: Reading “Our House”, “Fingers & Keys” and “Lullaby”	see lesson	—
☐	Lesson 5: Reading “Learning to Read” and “Nagual”	see lesson	AP 5.1, AP 5.2, AP 5.3
☐	Lesson 6: Reading “First Day of Seventh Grade” and “Los Bobbys, or the Bookworm Squad”	see lesson	AP 6.1, AP 6.2
☐	Lesson 7: Reading “They Call Me Güero”, “Ms. Wong & the Rabbit” and “Trickster”	see lesson	AP 7.2
☐	Lesson 8: Reading “They Call Me Güero” and “Ms. Wong & the Rabbit”	see lesson	AP 8.1, AP 8.2
☐	Lesson 9: Reading “Records” and “La Mano Pachona”	see lesson	AP 9.2
☐	Lesson 10: Reading “The Newcomer”, “Christmas Concrete” and “Uncle Joe’s History Lessons”	see lesson	AP 10.1
☐	Lesson 11: Reading “The Newcomer”	see lesson	—
☐	Lesson 12: Reading “Answering the Bully”, “Playoff Game” and “Spanish Birds”	see lesson	AP 12.2
☐	Lesson 13: Reading “Answering the Bully”, “Playoff Game” and “Spanish Birds”	see lesson	—
☐	Lesson 14: Reading “Mis Otros Abuelos” and “Losing Puchi”	see lesson	AP 14.1
☐	Lesson 15: Reading “Carne Asada” and “The Refuge on the Ranch”	see lesson	AP 15.1, AP 15.2

	Lesson	Reader pages	Activity Book
☐	Pausing Point: Review, extra practice and answer keys	—	—
☐	Words quiz	—	—

Page numbers are the PDF page numbers of the Student Reader file, so they match what your PDF reader shows.

Lesson 1: Reading “border kid?”, “Border Kid” and “Checkpoint”

Words to know

- **roots** — part of a plant that holds the plant firmly in the ground; used figuratively in *The Call Me Güero* to mean “your relatives” or “where you come from”
- **invading** — disturbing or intruding upon
- **bank** — the ground at the edge of a river
- **ancestors** — people from one’s family that were part of an earlier, or older, generation
- **heritage** — a person’s family or ethnic background, including culture and traditions

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 39–48: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “border kid?”, “Border Kid” and “Checkpoint” in *They Call Me Güero*.

Talk it over

1. What are the “both languages” the narrator refers to in this line?
2. What causes the narrator’s smile to fade in these lines?
3. What does the narrator’s father mean by the line “a foot on either bank”?
4. How do you think the narrator is feeling while he is experiencing the events described in these lines?
5. What do the words “Mom clutches los papeles” reveal about the narrator’s mother in this moment?
6. How do the narrator and his brother and sister feel about the dog that sniffs the tires of their car, and the agent who asks questions at the checkpoint?
7. What does the narrator’s father say will be needed to change the situation that they were experiencing at the checkpoint?
8. Why is the narrator called a “border kid”?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 1.1: Letter to Family — Activity Book, PDF pages 5–6
- Student Resource 1: destiny, n. — Activity Book, PDF pages 45–54

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 2: Reading “Border Kid” and “Checkpoint”

Words to know

- **ancestors** — people from one’s family that were part of an earlier, or older, generation
- **bank** — the ground at the edge of a river
- **border kid** — a child who lives near the border between two countries and travels between, and feels a part of, the culture of both countries
- **checkpoint** — a place where someone is stopped to be examined and looked over
- **diverse** — having variety or made up of different kinds
- **heritage** — a person’s family or ethnic background, including culture and traditions
- **literal** — referring to the exact, or true, meaning of a word or phrase; not figurative
- **refugees** — people who are forced to leave their homes because of some danger or threat
- **roots** — part of a plant that holds the plant firmly in the ground; used figuratively in They Call Me Guero to mean “your relatives” or “where you come from”

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 49–56: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “Border Kid” and “Checkpoint” in They Call Me Güero.

Talk it over

1. What type of figurative language is used in the line “like grains of sugar on a chili pepper”?
2. What is café de olla?
3. What does the narrator mean by the line “tasty reminders of our roots”?
4. What is the carrizo?
5. What is m’ijo?
6. How and when does the narrator’s tone change from the beginning of “Border Kid”? How does his father try to reassure him?
7. What is los papeles?
8. What does los jóvenes mean?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 2.1: Elements of My Heritage — Activity Book, PDF pages 7–8

Check for understanding

- Use one of today's words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 3: Reading “Our House”, “Fingers & Keys” and “Lullaby”

Words to know

- **sturdy** — strong and solid
- **spare** — extra; not needed

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 57–62: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “Our House”, “Fingers & Keys” and “Lullaby” in They Call Me Güero.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 3.1: Vocabulary for “Our House,” “Fingers & Keys,” and “Lullaby” — Activity Book, PDF pages 9–10

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 4: Reading “Our House”, “Fingers & Keys” and “Lullaby”

Words to know

- **fused** — combined, often by melting together
- **heritage** — a person’s family or ethnic background, including culture and traditions
- **immigrant** — a person who moves from one country to live permanently in another country
- **lit** — slang meaning exciting or positive
- **literal** — referring to the exact, or true, meaning of a word or phrase; not figurative
- **lore** — traditional knowledge or belief passed down through families that often teaches a lesson
- **lullaby** — a soothing song or melody, meant to put a baby or child to sleep
- **parish** — a place with a church; a church community
- **serenaded** — performed music for

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 63–68: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “Our House”, “Fingers & Keys” and “Lullaby” in *They Call Me Güero*.

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 5: Reading “Learning to Read” and “Nagual”

Words to know

- **spine-tingling** — very exciting or frightening
- **literal** — referring to the exact, or true, meaning of a word or phrase; not figurative
- **bug** — to pester or annoy
- **delighting** — taking great joy or pleasure in something
- **nerd** — someone who reads and studies more than other people

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 69–76: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “Learning to Read” and “Nagual” in They Call Me Güero.

Talk it over

1. What effect did abuelita’s stories have on the narrator?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 5.1: Vocabulary for “Learning to Read” and “Nagual” — Activity Book, PDF pages 11–12
- Activity Page 5.2: 5. What happened at the narrator’s first day of kindergarten, and what does this tell — Activity Book, PDF pages 13–14
- Activity Page 5.3: Practice Writing Paragraphs — Activity Book, PDF pages 15–16

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 6: Reading “First Day of Seventh Grade” and “Los Bobbys, or the Bookworm Squad”

Words to know

- **hang (with)** — (slang) spend time
- **diverse** — having a variety, or made up of different kinds
- **schedules** — in middle and high school, lists of the different subjects and classes, with times, that students will study in school.
- **navigating** — steering a course through something, such as a body of water
- **woke** — (slang) aware of and concerned with social issues of fairness
- **smirks** — smiles in a rude or offensive manner

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 77–84: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “First Day of Seventh Grade” and “Los Bobbys, or the Bookworm Squad” in *They Call Me Güero*.

Talk it over

1. Based on these lines, why do you think the narrator is excited to be going back to school?
2. What is unusual about the narrator’s friends?
3. In addition to having the same first name, how are the narrator’s friends similar?
4. Do you think the narrator is offended by his sister calling him and his friends *los Derds* – *Diverse Nerds*?
5. What simile does the narrator use to describe walking down the school halls? What does it mean?
6. What is an origin story?
7. When in time, compared to the other stories, does this selection take place? How do you know?
8. How did the narrator feel about being in sixth grade the previous year?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 6.1: Vocabulary for “First Day of Seventh Grade” and “Los — Activity Book, PDF pages 17–18
- Activity Page 6.2: 4. If I had to choose between broccoli or tomatoes said Mia I would choose — Activity Book, PDF pages 19–20

Check for understanding

- Use one of today's words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 7: Reading “They Call Me Güero”, “Ms. Wong & the Rabbit” and “Trickster”

Words to know

- **pasty** — pale; lacking much color
- **tussles** — vigorously shakes or causes to be out of order
- **complexion** — the color and texture of one’s skin especially on the face
- **taunts** — insults or challenges

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 85–94: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “They Call Me Güero”, “Ms. Wong & the Rabbit” and “Trickster” in They Call Me Güero.

Talk it over

1. In these lines, the narrator discusses the color of the skin of various members of his family. Why do you think he does that?
2. How do some members of the narrator’s family refer to him?
3. What do most people call the narrator, and what does that name mean?
4. What do all these names (El Pecas, Red, and Güero) have in common?
5. What are the differences between the ways the narrator’s family and the people at school respond to the color of the narrator’s skin?
6. What are the differences between the ways the narrator and his father feel about the narrator’s pale skin?
7. Do you agree with the narrator and his father that it is unfair for people to be judged or given privileges simply because of the shade of their skin?
8. What are the similarities between the Korean and Mexican cultures discussed in these lines?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 7.2: Practice Writing with Strong Action Verbs — Activity Book, PDF pages 21–22

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 8: Reading “They Call Me Güero” and “Ms. Wong & the Rabbit”

Words to know

- **complexion** — the color and texture of one’s skin especially on the face
- **heritage** — a person’s family or ethnic background, including culture and traditions
- **immigrant** — a person who moves from one country to live permanently in another country
- **lit** — slang meaning exciting or positive
- **literal** — referring to the exact, or true, meaning of a word or phrase; not figurative
- **pasty** — pale; lacking much color
- **symbolize** — to represent or be a symbol of something

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 95–100: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “They Call Me Güero” and “Ms. Wong & the Rabbit” in They Call Me Güero.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 8.1: Plan Topic Sentences for Your Informational Essay, — Activity Book, PDF pages 23–24
- Activity Page 8.2: 5. Describe how the narrator feels about his house and his room. — Activity Book, PDF pages 25–28

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 9: Reading “Records” and “La Mano Pachona”

Words to know

- **frail** — weak or easily broken
- **turntable** — a platform that rotates and is used to play recorded discs, such as those containing music
- **emerge** — to come out of
- **transported** — carried across or through something

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 101–108: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “Records” and “La Mano Pachona” in They Call Me Güero.

Talk it over

1. Have you ever heard a particular song or music that brought back a memory from your past?
2. Why did the narrator’s grandmother tell him this story?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 9.2: Plan topic, detail, and concluding sentences — Activity Book, PDF pages 29–32

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 10: Reading “The Newcomer”, “Christmas Concrete” and “Uncle Joe’s History Lessons”

Words to know

- **immigrant** — a person who moves from one country to live permanently in another country
- **halting** — lacking certainty or confidence

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 109–118: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “The Newcomer”, “Christmas Concrete” and “Uncle Joe’s History Lessons” in *They Call Me Güero*.

Talk it over

1. What is a newcomer?
2. What does ESL stand for?
3. Why does Andrés get so upset upon hearing about the train as he reads the problem at lunch?
4. How does Andrés feel about being in the United States?
5. What does *Generaciones de albañiles* mean?
6. What figure of speech is the phrase, “like grey ice cream in a wheelbarrow”?
7. What are some of the things that upset the narrator’s uncle when he was in elementary school?
8. What advice does Uncle Joe give to the narrator?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 10.1: Vocabulary for “The Newcomer,” “Christmas Concrete,” and — Activity Book, PDF pages 33–34

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 11: Reading “The Newcomer”

Words to know

- **heritage** — a person’s family or ethnic background, including culture and traditions
- **immigrant** — a person who moves from one country to live permanently in another country
- **literal** — referring to the exact, or true, meaning of a word or phrase; not figurative
- **mature** — fully grown
- **refuge** — a place that provides safety and security
- **refugees** — people who are forced to leave their homes because of some danger or threat

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 119–124: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “The Newcomer” in They Call Me Güero.

Talk it over

1. How do you think Andrés is feeling now that he has arrived in a new country?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 12: Reading “Answering the Bully”, “Playoff Game” and “Spanish Birds”

Words to know

- **sneers** — makes a facial expression that shows a lack of respect
- **gringo** — a foreigner; often used as an insult to refer to someone who is seen as being out of touch with Hispanic/Latino culture.
- **ignorant** — lacking knowledge or intelligence
- **lit** — slang meaning exciting or positive

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 125–130: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “Answering the Bully”, “Playoff Game” and “Spanish Birds” in *They Call Me Güero*.

Talk it over

1. Why is Snake acting this way toward the narrator?
2. How does the narrator respond to the bullying by Snake?
3. How does the narrator feel about the way he responds to the bullying?
4. What is the setting for this poem?
5. How are the taunts in this selection different from the ones the narrator received from Snake in the previous selection?
6. How does the narrator feel about this taunting?
7. How do the team and their fans respond to this taunting?
8. What does the narrator say about the types of Spanish that are spoken by different people he knows?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 12.2: Peer Review Checklist for Informational Essay — Activity Book, PDF pages 35–36

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 13: Reading “Answering the Bully”, “Playoff Game” and “Spanish Birds”

Words to know

- **frantic** — very excited, often with fear
- **furiously** — done with great speed and deliberation
- **heritage** — a person’s family or ethnic background, including culture and traditions
- **lit** — slang meaning exciting or positive
- **lore** — traditional knowledge or belief passed down through families that often teaches a lesson
- **lullaby** — a soothing song or melody, meant to put a baby or child to sleep
- **trickster** — a character in stories who is usually smart and plays tricks on others

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 131–136: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “Answering the Bully”, “Playoff Game” and “Spanish Birds” in They Call Me Güero.

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 14: Reading “Mis Otros Abuelos” and “Losing Puchi”

Words to know

- **inspection** — a location where an official review or examination takes place
- **nudges** — gently pushes
- **looming** — appearing very large

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 137–142: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “Mis Otros Abuelos” and “Losing Puchi” in They Call Me Güero.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 14.1: Vocabulary for “Mis Otros Abuelos” and “Losing Puchi” — Activity Book, PDF pages 37–38

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Lesson 15: Reading “Carne Asada” and “The Refuge on the Ranch”

Words to know

- **ritual** — a ceremony performed on a regular basis
- **blazing** — extremely hot, as in a fire
- **douses** — extinguishes or puts out
- **jams** — slang for favorite music or songs
- **grace** — a prayer of thanks said before eating a meal

Teacher’s lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 143–148: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Read

Read “Carne Asada” and “The Refuge on the Ranch” in They Call Me Güero.

Talk it over

1. What is the ritual the narrator describes in this selection?
2. What other food is likely to be a part of the meal?
3. Who is likely to participate in the meal?
4. What does it tell you about the importance of this event that the narrator calls it a ritual?

Answers are at the back of this pack.

Activity Book pages

- Activity Page 15.1: Vocabulary for “Carne Asada” and — Activity Book, PDF pages 39–40
- Activity Page 15.2: 3. The narrator tries to help a new student named Andrés. Describe how — Activity Book, PDF pages 41–44

Check for understanding

- Use one of today’s words in a sentence of your own.

Pausing Point: Review, extra practice and answer keys

Teacher's lesson plan

Follow the Teacher Guide, PDF pages 149–229: the steps, materials and timing for this lesson.

Check for understanding

WORDS QUIZ

They Call Me Güero

Name: _____ Date: _____

Circle the letter of the best answer.

1. Which word means “a long, narrow body of water that connects two other, larger bodies of water”?

- a) alcove
- b) mischievous
- c) channel
- d) reveal

2. Which word means “a platform that rotates and is used to play recorded discs, such as those containing music Unit 1 | Activity Book Grade 5 |”?

- a) frail
- b) turntable
- c) din
- d) awe

3. Which word means “simple; not fancy”?

- a) modest
- b) serenaded
- c) smirks
- d) slain

4. Which word means “a trusted guide or teacher who plays an important role in someone’s life”?

- a) mystify
- b) mentor
- c) origin
- d) nerd

5. Which word means “slang for the smallest one in a group, as in a litter of puppies”?

- a) immigrant
- b) awe
- c) canine
- d) runt

6. Which word means “damaged or worn down because of overuse”?

- a) battered
- b) awe
- c) destiny
- d) nerd

- 7.** Which word means “having to do with forces that cannot be seen or explained”?
- a) supernatural
 - b) trill
 - c) rage
 - d) wetback
- 8.** Which word means “taking great joy or pleasure in something”?
- a) ritual
 - b) delighting
 - c) sewer
 - d) shrug
- 9.** Which word means “a person who plays a musical instrument called an organ, similar to a piano”?
- a) contemplate
 - b) ritual
 - c) persuasive
 - d) organist
- 10.** Which word means “pride; self-respect”?
- a) dignity
 - b) aviary
 - c) shrug
 - d) destiny
- 11.** Which word means “a prayer of thanks said before eating a meal”?
- a) translations
 - b) victorious
 - c) grace
 - d) spare
- 12.** Which word means “killed”?
- a) woke
 - b) mature
 - c) slain
 - d) green card

Answers

Lesson 1: Reading “border kid?”, “Border Kid” and “Checkpoint”

1. **What are the “both languages” the narrator refers to in this line?**
Spanish and English
2. **What causes the narrator’s smile to fade in these lines?**
They are returning home from their day in Mexico, and they have to cross near a border fence that causes the narrator to worry.
3. **What does the narrator’s father mean by the line “a foot on either bank”?**
The Rio Grande separates Mexico and the United States, and the narrator’s father says the narrator is part of the two countries on both sides – banks – of the Rio Grande. Line 19—[Have a student refer to Activity Page 1.2 to define heritage. Explain that in this unit students will explore and write about their own heritage.]
4. **How do you think the narrator is feeling while he is experiencing the events described in these lines?**
Answers may vary, but should include that he feels anxiety or fear because of the patrol guards with guns on their belts.
5. **What do the words “Mom clutches los papeles” reveal about the narrator’s mother in this moment?**
Answers may vary, but may include that the narrator’s mother is anxious about going through the checkpoint.
6. **How do the narrator and his brother and sister feel about the dog that sniffs the tires of their car, and the agent who asks questions at the checkpoint?**
The narrator and his sister are angry, and the narrator’s brother is frightened.
7. **What does the narrator’s father say will be needed to change the situation that they were experiencing at the checkpoint?**
He says the narrator and his friends will need to bring about change. SUPPORT: Point out that the translation of Lines 42-43 is “Neither doors nor a hundred locks will be able to stop me.”
8. **Why is the narrator called a “border kid”?**
He travels between the two countries frequently.

Lesson 2: Reading “Border Kid” and “Checkpoint”

1. **What type of figurative language is used in the line “like grains of sugar on a chili pepper”?**
It is a simile, which is a comparison of two things, using the words like or as.
2. **What is café de olla?**
It is a Spanish term for coffee with cinnamon. SUPPORT: Remind students to refer to the glossary of Spanish terms at the back of the book.
3. **What does the narrator mean by the line “tasty reminders of our roots”?**
The foods that are listed in lines 11 and 12 (Mexican cokes and Joya, avocados, and

cheese) are commonly part of the culture in Mexico and are part of the narrator's "roots," or family heritage.

4. **What is the carrizo?**

It is a Spanish term for reeds, or plants that grow on the banks of a river.

5. **What is m'ijo?**

It is a Spanish term for my son.

6. **How and when does the narrator's tone change from the beginning of "Border Kid"? How does his father try to reassure him?**

In the beginning of "Border Kid", the narrator's tone is happy and full of anticipation. However, once he sees the border fence, he becomes more anxious. His father tries to reassure him by saying "No wall, no matter how tall can stop your heritage from flowing forever, like the Rio Grande itself."

7. **What is los papeles?**

It is a Spanish term for the papers. SUPPORT: When students consult the Spanish glossary to define los papeles, they will note that they must look for papeles. The term los means "the" and does not precede the noun in the glossary.

8. **What does los jóvenes mean?**

It means the young. SUPPORT: Note that this term does not appear in the Spanish glossary, but students may infer the meaning of the term from the context (i.e., the narrator's father says "you and your friends.").

Lesson 5: Reading "Learning to Read" and "Nagual"

1. **What effect did abuelita's stories have on the narrator?**

The stories sparked his imagination and his love of books. Lines 72 -76:

Challenge—What simile does the narrator use in these lines? What does it mean? The narrator says the words he heard in his abuelita's stories when he was young stayed in his brain, waiting until he was able to read on his own. He compares this to what happens when a larvae changes to a butterfly.

Lesson 6: Reading "First Day of Seventh Grade" and "Los Bobbys, or the Bookworm Squad"

1. **Based on these lines, why do you think the narrator is excited to be going back to school?**

He seems to like it and enjoys spending time with his friends.

2. **What is unusual about the narrator's friends?**

They are all named Bobby and they - or their parents - come from many diverse backgrounds and countries.

3. **In addition to having the same first name, how are the narrator's friends similar?**

They all like comics, gaming, and books.

4. **Do you think the narrator is offended by his sister calling him and his friends los Derds - Diverse Nerds?**

Answers may vary, but may include that he does not seem offended. He doesn't try to

argue against that label, but instead lists some of the reasons she may call them that.

5. **What simile does the narrator use to describe walking down the school halls? What does it mean?**

The narrator says that walking down the school hallways is like traveling down the Rio Grande. It means that the hallways are crowded with students and things that a person walking down the hall would have to “navigate” or move around.

6. **What is an origin story?**

It is a story about how something started, or originated.

7. **When in time, compared to the other stories, does this selection take place? How do you know?**

It takes place prior to the previous selection. The narrator begins talking about what it was like when he was in sixth grade, and in the previous selection, he was talking about starting seventh grade.

8. **How did the narrator feel about being in sixth grade the previous year?**

He felt uncomfortable at the beginning of sixth grade (middle school’s kind of a shock).

Lesson 7: Reading “They Call Me Güero”, “Ms. Wong & the Rabbit” and “Trickster”

1. **In these lines, the narrator discusses the color of the skin of various members of his family. Why do you think he does that?**

Answers may vary, but may include that some people respond to or interact with the narrator, and members of his family, based simply on the shade of their skin.

2. **How do some members of the narrator’s family refer to him?**

His uncle calls him El Pecas, which means “freckles,” whereas his grandfather calls him Red because of his red hair.

3. **What do most people call the narrator, and what does that name mean?**

Most people call him Güero, which means “person with pale skin.”

4. **What do all these names (El Pecas, Red, and Güero) have in common?**

They are all based on the narrator’s appearance.

5. **What are the differences between the ways the narrator’s family and the people at school respond to the color of the narrator’s skin?**

His family likes the paleness of his skin, whereas the people at school do not like it and call him “el Canelo chafo,” or “cinnamon-colored, cheap knock-off.”

6. **What are the differences between the ways the narrator and his father feel about the narrator’s pale skin?**

The narrator wishes his skin were darker, like his father’s skin. The narrator’s father says that people with pale skin “catch all the breaks.” The narrator’s father acknowledges the unfairness of that, and the narrator is angry that that is the case.

7. **Do you agree with the narrator and his father that it is unfair for people to be judged or given privileges simply because of the shade of their skin?**

Yes, because the shade or color of one’s skin has nothing to do with a person’s

behavior, character or values.

8. **What are the similarities between the Korean and Mexican cultures discussed in these lines?**

According to lore in both cultures, the marks on the moon form the shape of a rabbit and were put there by the gods.

Lesson 9: Reading “Records” and “La Mano Pachona”

1. **Have you ever heard a particular song or music that brought back a memory from your past?**

Answers will vary. Have students turn to their partner and read the second selection, “La Mano Pachona” on pages 42-45. Circulate around the room as students read this selection. After students finish reading “La Mano Pachona,” bring the class together as a whole and ask the following question:

2. **Why did the narrator’s grandmother tell him this story?**

She told him this story as a way to teach him a lesson about snatching cookies from his cousins’ plates when they weren’t looking.

Lesson 10: Reading “The Newcomer”, “Christmas Concrete” and “Uncle Joe’s History Lessons”

1. **What is a newcomer?**

someone who is new to an area SUPPORT: Have students note the two parts of the compound word: new and comer.

2. **What does ESL stand for?**

It stands for “English as a Second Language” and refers to people whose primary, or first, language is something other than English. Line 18: SUPPORT: Explain that the new student, Andrés, in this selection is from the Central American country of Honduras.

3. **Why does Andrés get so upset upon hearing about the train as he reads the problem at lunch?**

It reminds him of the tragedy his family experienced on the train as they fled Honduras to come to the United States.

4. **How does Andrés feel about being in the United States?**

Although he lives in a place with no water or electricity, he feels safe. However, he still has nightmares about the previous dangers he faced.

5. **What does Generaciones de albañiles mean?**

generations of construction workers

6. **What figure of speech is the phrase, “like grey ice cream in a wheelbarrow”?**

It is a simile.

7. **What are some of the things that upset the narrator’s uncle when he was in elementary school?**

He was not allowed to speak Spanish; his name was changed from José to Joseph; he was told by a school guidance counselor that he should not attempt to go to college

and become a lawyer as he wanted to and that he should instead become a mechanic; and he was accused of plagiarizing a paper he wrote himself because the teacher did not think he was smart enough to have written it himself.

8. **What advice does Uncle Joe give to the narrator?**

He tells him not to let anyone stop him from fulfilling his dreams, but that he should also not forget his heritage when he does achieve them.

Lesson 11: Reading “The Newcomer”

1. **How do you think Andrés is feeling now that he has arrived in a new country?**

Answers may vary. Explain that, today, students will learn about the experiences of other children who have immigrated to the United States. Explain that they will view a short video in which immigrant children talk about their experiences. Play the video located online at <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts/smalltruths-the-immigration-experience-through-the-eyes-of-children>.

Lesson 12: Reading “Answering the Bully”, “Playoff Game” and “Spanish Birds”

1. **Why is Snake acting this way toward the narrator?**

Answers may vary, but may include that he is ignorant, angry, offensive, and jealous. He says he is doing this to the narrator because the narrator has a “fancy house,” writes poetry, and has freckles.

2. **How does the narrator respond to the bullying by Snake?**

He writes about how he feels in his journal, saying that he is just as Mexican as Snake.

3. **How does the narrator feel about the way he responds to the bullying?**

He was proud that he did not fight back with violence, but instead used poetry/rap to respond to Snake.

4. **What is the setting for this poem?**

The setting for this poem is the basketball court and its surroundings. The narrator’s sister is a member of a girls’ basketball team that has made the playoffs to determine which team will be the state champions.

5. **How are the taunts in this selection different from the ones the narrator received from Snake in the previous selection?**

In the previous selection, Snake was bullying the narrator because he didn’t consider the narrator “Mexican enough” – he had pale skin, freckles, etc. In this selection, the white fans at the game taunted the narrator and the others because they are Mexican; they said the narrator and his friends should “go back” to their country. SUPPORT: Be sure students understand that sometimes people inappropriately use offensive, and very hurtful, names to refer to groups of people. The use of the term wetbacks in Line 13 is one such term and should not be used to refer to groups of people.

6. **How does the narrator feel about this taunting?**

He is angry because he and the others are Americans, and this is also their country.

7. **How do the team and their fans respond to this taunting?**

The team continues to play and wins the game. In the end, the team and fans “swallow their disgust” and fear and walk away without directly engaging with the offensive people.

8. **What does the narrator say about the types of Spanish that are spoken by different people he knows?**

They speak Spanish, but the type of Spanish varies among different groups. Explain to students that, depending on what region or where a person is from, there may be slight differences in what certain words mean and/or how they are pronounced.

Lesson 15: Reading “Carne Asada” and “The Refuge on the Ranch”

1. **What is the ritual the narrator describes in this selection?**

It is building a fire for grilling some meat, and then talking, laughing, and listening to music with his father as the meat cooks.

2. **What other food is likely to be a part of the meal?**

guacamole, potato salad, beans, spicy pico

3. **Who is likely to participate in the meal?**

The narrator, his father, mother, and sister, as well as any relatives who may have also stopped by.

4. **What does it tell you about the importance of this event that the narrator calls it a ritual?**

It is an important event in the narrator’s life.

Unit quiz key

1. c 2. b 3. a 4. b 5. d 6. a 7. a 8. b 9. d 10. a 11. c 12. c