

# Tejas Star Reading List 2019-2020 Activity Guide



Prepared by the Tejas Star Reading List Committee  
<http://www.txla.org/tejas-star>

# Acknowledgements

## About this Guide

Prepared by the Tejas Star Reading List committee, this activity guide was designed to support using the 2019-20 Tejas Star Reading List titles with children ages 5-12 in classrooms and libraries.

## About the Tejas Star Reading List

The Tejas Star Reading List (TSRL) provides a recommended reading list to encourage children ages 5-12 to explore multicultural books and to discover the cognitive and economic benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism. The Tejas Star Reading List is intended for recreational reading, not to support a specific curriculum.

## About the Texas Library Association

TLA was established in 1902 to promote, support, and improve library services in Texas. Our 6,000+ members are from all library types: academic, public, school and special. TLA provides expertly curated reading lists and programs for ages 2 - 102 - from fiction, nonfiction, and graphic novels, to picture books, bilingual and multicultural lists.

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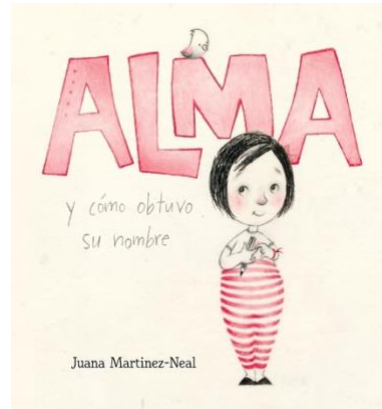
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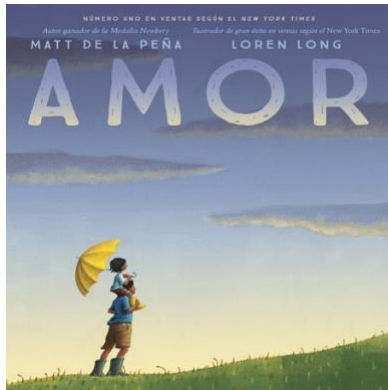
**Alma y cómo obtuvo su nombre (Alma and How She Got Her Name)** by Juana Martinez-Neal (Candlewick Press, 2018)



From the author's website:

- Have children research the origin of their own names by using a baby name book (or online name resource) and by asking their parents.
  - Pose these questions to get students thinking about their names: How did your parents choose your name? Is your name a family name? If so, who else in your family has the name? What would your name have been had you been born a boy/a girl? Do you have a nickname? What do you like about your name? Ask students to use these same questions to interview a relative about the origin of their name.
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- Research and discuss naming conventions from other cultures. For instance, in China the family name comes before the given name. Native American naming conventions are varied and fascinating.
  - Have students write and illustrate the story of their own name or that of someone in their family.
  - Writing activities in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
  - [Interview with author Juana Martinez-Neal - Spanish](#).
  - [Author Juana Martinez-Neal demonstrates how she draws and illustrates Alma - English](#)

**Amor (Love)** by Matt De La Peña, illustrated by Loren Long, translated by Teresa Mlawer (G.P. Putnam's Sons, an imprint of Penguin Random House, LLC, 2018)



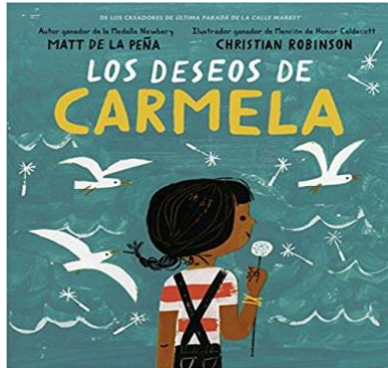
Ideas from School Library Journal:

- **Books about Love.** There is a plethora of books for children that attempt to teach them what love is. With the help of your school or local librarian or local bookstore, gather a selection of these books to share with your students. After reading them, either as a class or in small groups, have students think more critically about the content of each book.

How does each explain what love is (e.g., with examples, with description, with explicit definition, etc.)? What kinds of love are included in the book? Which ones offer a simplistic portrayal of love, and which ones offer a more complex understanding of it? Which book(s) would they say most accurately communicates their own, current personal understanding about what love is? Set up a class bulletin board or website that showcases students' choices and understandings.

- **Illustrating Love.** While lush and lyrical, Matt de la Peña's and Nikki Giovanni's text also leaves room for readers to envision the situations that he describes. Loren Long's and Ashley Bryan's gorgeously detailed illustrations provide some examples of those situations. What are some others? Pull some text excerpts from either book and project them before the whole class. Ask students to think of and envision other situations or events that the text could be describing. Then have them sketch or fully illustrate what they envision, using whatever media and artistic styles are available to them. Gather and curate their illustrations into a "Love Gallery."
- **Using the Senses to Describe Love.** Rather than offer a single, absolute definition of love, these books provide many wonderful examples of what love feels, looks, sounds, tastes, and feels like. Help students do a close reading of the ways in which Matt de la Peña and Nikki Giovanni center their descriptions of love on what we are able to observe through our senses. Have students try out their own descriptions of what love feels like, looks like, sounds like, tastes like, and feels like. Make sure they study how both authors use precise words, as well as figurative language, to make those descriptions come alive for readers.

**Los deseos de Carmela (Carmela Full of Wishes)** by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson, translated by Teresa Mlawer (G.P. Putnam's Sons, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2018)



- Read about how birthdays are celebrated around the world. Chart the similarities and differences between your traditions and those of others' cultures. Lesson Plan: [How We Celebrate Birthdays](#)
- Engage in a STEM Challenge with Paper Circuit Birthday Cards! Create your own greeting card and share it with a loved one. Lesson Plan: [Paper Circuit Birthday Cards](#)
- Read *Los deseos de Carmela* and then read *Moira's Birthday*. Compare the two girls' birthday experiences and discuss how your birthday would be the same or different. Lesson Plan: [Compare and contrast with Moira's Birthday](#)

**El día en que descubres quién eres (The Day You Begin)** by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López, translated by Teresa Mlawer (Nancy Paulson Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2018)



Discussion Questions from Unleashing Readers:

- What is one way that you feel very different than most people around you? How could people support you? How could you support others who feel different?
- What examples of people's differences did Woodson highlight in the story?
- What was the mood for the first large portion of the text?
- What is the theme of the book?
- Why do you think the author felt compelled to write this book?

- Why are differences important in our community? Nation? Classroom?
- Read the story and talk about all the emotions that were expressed in the book by the characters. Extension Activity: [Have students make Emo\(tion\) Dolls.](#)



**Ella persistió alrededor del mundo: 13 mujeres que cambiaron la historia (She Persisted Around the World: 13 Women Who Changed History)** by Chelsea Clinton, illustrated by Alexandra Boiger, translated by Teresa Mlawer (Philomel Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2018)



- After reading about each woman, divide students into teams and assign teams to conduct additional research on one person. Have students create a “Wax Museum” to present their findings.
- Discuss dreams/goals for the future with the participants.
- Have participants do a words of affirmation craft with smooth, colorful rocks (or have them paint their own!)

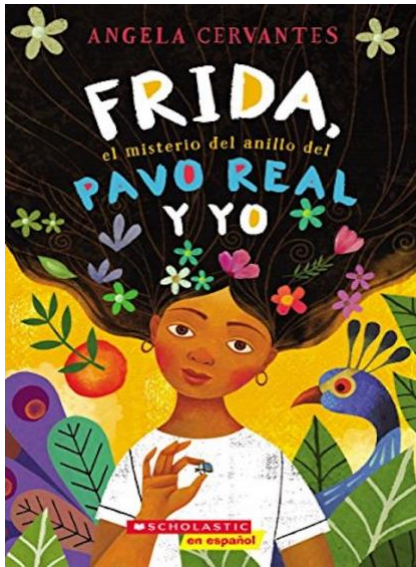
- Create collages of students’ dreams/goals for the future:



INSPIRING PAINTED ROCK IDEAS

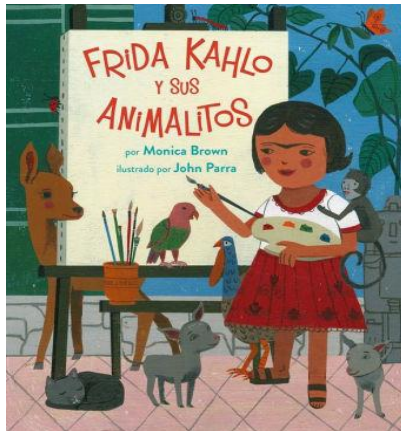


**Frida, el misterio del anillo del pavo real y yo (Me, Frida and the Secret of the Peacock Ring)** by Angela Cervantes, translated by Jorge Ignacio Domínguez (Scholastic Inc., 2018)



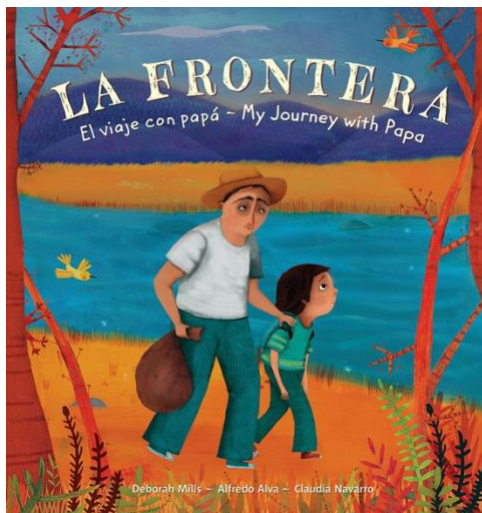
- Have participants create their own self-portrait, similar to the ones described in the book. Ask: What important details about you and your life would you include in your self-portrait? What colors would you use? Would you smile or not smile?
- Frida's husband, artist Diego Rivera, has an important role in the story. After reading, do some research on Diego Rivera, his art, and his relationship with Frida Kahlo.
- Make a personal Memory Box like Paloma's from the book. Have participants select a person who is important in your life to interview. Prepare questions for the selected person to answer about his/her past. Record the answers on notecards. Create a memory box like Paloma's by decorating a shoebox to store the notecards and to preserve the important memories of the selected person's life.
- [Reader's Theater Script](#) in English for *Me, Frida, and the Secret of the Peacock Ring*.
- [Discussion questions](#) from the author's website.

**Frida Kahlo y sus animalitos (Frida Kahlo and Her Animalitos)** by Monica Brown, illustrated by John Parra, translated by F. Isabel Campoy (NorthSouth Books, Inc., an imprint of NordSüd Verlag AG, 2017)



- Read a juvenile biography about Frida Kahlo. What do you find interesting about her life?
- Look at art that Frida Kahlo created, talk about what you think it means and how Frida's life experiences are present in her artwork: [www.fridakahlo.org](http://www.fridakahlo.org)
- Draw your own self-portrait with your favorite pet or animal. What does that say about you and your life?
- Read about Frida's husband Diego Rivera; look at his work. How did these two artists inspire each other or did they? Look at his work [www.diegorivera.org](http://www.diegorivera.org)
- Frida had a lot of animals, what animals were native to Mexico? What are they? Mexico is home of 10 -12% of the world's biodiversity, what does that mean?

**La Frontera: el viaje con papá/ My Journey with Papa** by Deborah Mills and Alfredo Alva, illustrated by Claudia Navarro, translated by María E. Pérez (Barefoot Books, 2018)

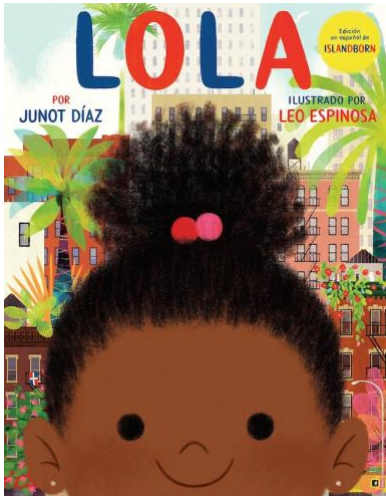


- Discuss different reasons as to why people migrate to the U.S.
- Write a story or draw a picture about a recent trip they have taken with their parents or grandparents.
- Exploring Immigration in the U.S.: [Teacher Resources](#)
- Discuss the unique contributions of immigrants in the U.S.: [Lesson Plan](#)
- [Teaching Ideas](#) for La Frontera and Dreamers (Soñadores) from School Library Journal



- **Co-Authored Stories of Immigration:** What experiences have your students had co-authoring something? Provide students with the chance to write someone else's story with them, as Deborah Mills and Alfredo Alva do. If possible, pair up immigrant students with non-immigrant students. If this is not possible, find older students or adult immigrants in your community who would be willing to tell their story with your students, recognizing that not all will feel safe in doing so. Publish your illustrated picture books and host a reading at your local public library, where all the authors, child and adult, can share in the reading and the celebration.

**Lola (Islandborn)** by Junot Díaz, illustrated by Leo Espinosa, translated by Teresa Mlawer (Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2018)

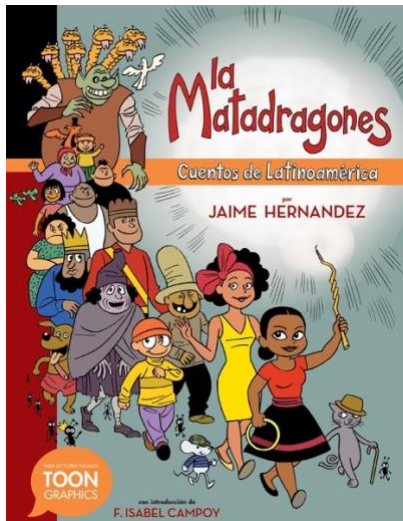


#### Discussion Questions:

- How does Lola feel when she can't remember the country she came from?
  - How does she learn more about it?
  - What do Lola's friends and family tell her about the country she came from?
  - What are the good and bad memories that they share? What might the bad memory represent?
- **Where is Your Class From? Activity** After reading *Lola*, have students share where they and their families come from, going back several generations. Create a questionnaire to support students and their families in identifying the different places in which they have lived. In the spirit of inclusion, have a range of anchor charts posted around the room, and have students document where they were born and where they have lived, where their parents grew-up, where their grandparents grew-up, and where their ancestors came from or may have come from. Support students in creating a map of the world in which they document all the places that their families have touched.

- **Social Studies:** This story is perfect for starting a conversation or school project highlighting students' lives. It can be a simple one like bringing in "All About Me" pictures and information to more in-depth projects about family heritage.
- **Reading:** Use the story to discuss the different between reality and fantasy—both in the illustrations as well as the descriptive elements of the story. Consider why Mr. Muir says a monster took over the island rather than an evil person/government.
- **Art:** Draw or paint an island that blends the real with imaginative.

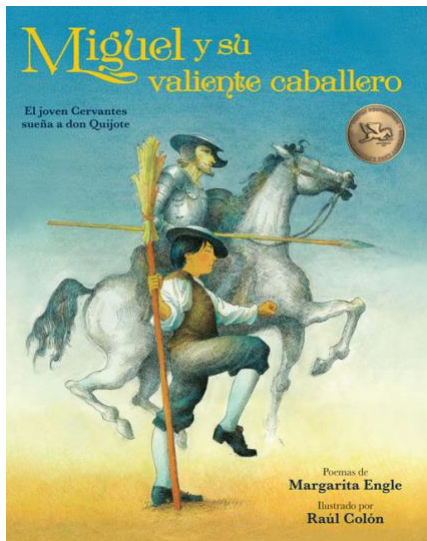
**La Matadragones: cuentos de Latinoamérica (The Dragon Slayer: Folktales from Latin America)** by Jaime Hernandez, translated by María E. Santana (TOON Graphics, an imprint of RAW Junior LLC, 2018)



- Read other Latin-American stories in [English](#) at in English or in [Spanish](#). Choose one and create a comic for it.
- Listen to an [audio version](#) of *La cucaracha Martina y el ratón Perez*. Compare the two versions.
- Read folktales from other countries and see if there are any similar to these three tales. Compare American folktale elements to those in these 3 stories. Do they focus on similar themes or have similar types?
- Students act out one of the stories or create a stop motion animation version. Students could also act out the story and change one element and see if the rest of the group can guess the changed element.
- As is stated in the extra info in the back, many of the stories contain moral lessons. Students can create their own story in a modern version to focus on the same moral lesson or on a more contemporary moral lesson showcasing their own culture and heritage.

- On the last page the author explains that she could relate to a character in each of the stories. What character does each student relate to? Can the student retell the story but inserting him/herself in place of that character and how would the story change?
- Invite immigrant families to come tell their own folktales from their own countries. Could even host a storytelling event.

**Miguel y su valiente caballero: el joven Cervantes sueña a don Quijote (Miguel's Brave Knight: Young Cervantes and His Dream of Don Quixote)** by Margarita Engle, illustrated by Raúl Colón, translated by Teresa Mlawer y Georgina Lázaro (Peachtree Publishers, 2018)



- Expose students to the story of Don Quijote de la Mancha through this [adapted short reading](#) for children: or through [this cartoon version](#) (can be watched in Spanish or English). Compare elements of the Quijote story with different poems in the book and how Cervantes' life is reflected in the story.
- [Watch this short story](#) about Miguel de Cervantes (can also be watched in English or Spanish). Are any of facts in the video similar to facts in the book?
- Create a timeline of Cervantes' life using only info from the book. Create own timeline of student's life and include a dream for the future. Pick some key elements of own life and write a poem to explain each.
- The poems do not rhyme but they create images for the reader. Evaluate the language and vocabulary used in the poems. What images do they create? The teacher/librarian could show students a couple of pages, reading the poems and then looking at the image. Then choose one page and read it to the students, but don't show them the illustration. Have them come up with what they think the illustration should be and compare it to the one in the book.

- Cervantes lived from 1547-1616. Do some research about the time period. What was happening in other parts of the world? What was life like back then?
- The last page of the book highlights how the Don Quijote character has become iconic in so many areas of life and places in the world. Do some research to find images, art, plays, statues, festivals that incorporate the Quixote symbol. Where in the world is this character portrayed and for what purpose? Create your own representation using any media or medium: could be art, music, a dance, a video game, digital image or montage, be creative.
- Have students think of the type of character that would represent them and their ideals and dreams if they were to write a story like Cervantes did. What would that character look like? What would he or she do?

**Las orejas de los animales (Animal Ears)** by Mary Holland, translated by Rosalyna Toth, Federico Kaiser, and Eida Del Risco (Arbordale Publishing. 2018)



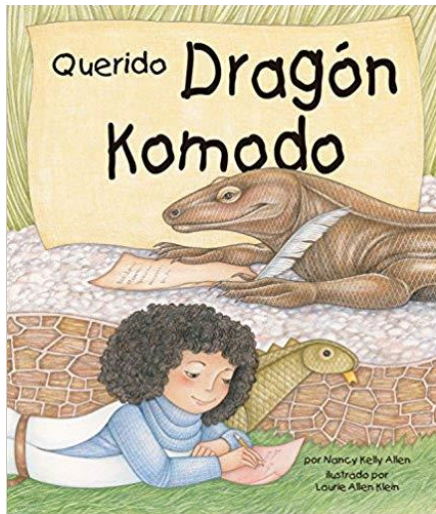
- Have the students [sing along to “Do Your Ears Hang Low?”](#) Teach them the movements and have them dance along.
  - Discuss the role of the ear. Ask them why hearing is important? Ask them what their favorite sounds are? Lesson Plans: [Hearing](#)
  - [Explore the Sense of Hearing](#) with water and household objects.
- 
- Discuss animal hearing and how an animal's hearing adapts to their environment. [Teaching Resource from PBS](#)

**Pasando páginas: la historia de mi vida (Turning Pages: My Life Story)** by Sonia Sotomayor, illustrated by Lulu Delacre, translated by Teresa Mlawer (Philomel Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2018)



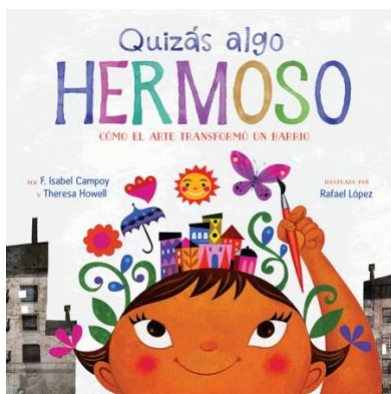
- Pre-Reading Activities:
  - Show the [Book Trailer](#) for the English version of this book.
  - Have a discussion with kids about what role books play in their lives. Invite them to share any books that have been “mirrors” or those which have made an impact in their lives.
  
- During the Reading:
  - Invite the students to create a timeline of important events in the life of Sonia Sotomayor as you read the story. This can also be done as a whole group activity.
  - Challenge the students to make a list of the different books that Sonia Sotomayor mentions in the book and identify how they made an impact in her life.
  
- After the Reading:
  - Talk about the art in the picture book, ask students what they notice.
  - Using the Behind the Art of Turning Pages document created by RIF literacy central to explore the specific illustrations that illustrator Lulu Delacre points out: <https://www.rif.org/literacy-central/material/behind-art-turning-pages%E2%80%94lulu-delacre>
  - Use the turning pages crossword puzzle created by RIF literacy central to review some of the concepts learned through reading the book <https://www.rif.org/literacy-central/material/turning-pages-my-life-story-criss-cross>

**Querido Dragón de Komodo (Dear Komodo Dragon)** by Nancy Kelly Allen, illustrated by Laurie Allen Klein, translated by Rosalyna Toth, Federico Kaiser, and Eida Del Risco (Arbordale Publishing, 2018)



- Pre-Reading Activities:
  - Create a KWL chart with students to determine what they already know about Komodo Dragons
  - Discuss the concept of having a pen-pal.
- During the Reading:
  - As you conduct the read aloud, have kids identify the different questions that Lis asks the Komodo Dragon.
- After the Reading:
  - Talk about Conservation with your students and discuss ways that we can protect Komodo Dragons.
  - Invite students to select an animal they wish to learn more about and to come up with three questions they would like to have answered. Then, they should write a letter to the animal asking the questions.
- Find many more activities for this book on the [Arbordale Publishing Activity Guide](#)

**Quizás algo hermoso: cómo el arte transformó un barrio (Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood)** by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell, illustrated by Rafael López (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018)



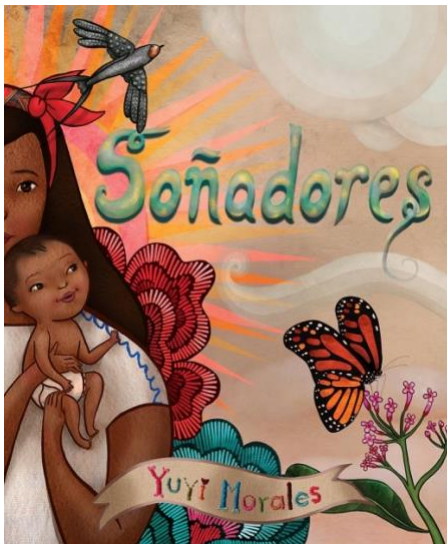
- Read and respond to this book with a reading response journal. Lesson Plan: [Maybe Something Beautiful Teachers Guide](#)
- Go on a walk in your neighborhood and snap pictures of what makes your neighborhood beautiful. Share your stories using the hashtag #maybesomethingbeautiful Lesson Plan: [The World is Your Canvas](#)

- Explore San Diego's [Urban Art Trail](#). Create your own piece of Urban Art or look for Urban Art near your city or neighborhood.

Discussion Questions from The Lemon Tree:

- Who helped paint the murals in the story?
- Why is it important that everyone helped paint the murals instead of only Mira?
- What images do you see in the book/murals?
- What kind of colors did the illustrator use?
- What does community mean?
- At the end of the book when you learn about the real story of Rafael and Candice López, why do you think they asked everyone in the community to help (police, homeless, parents, children, graffiti artists)? What do you think happens when everyone in the neighborhood/community help with a project?

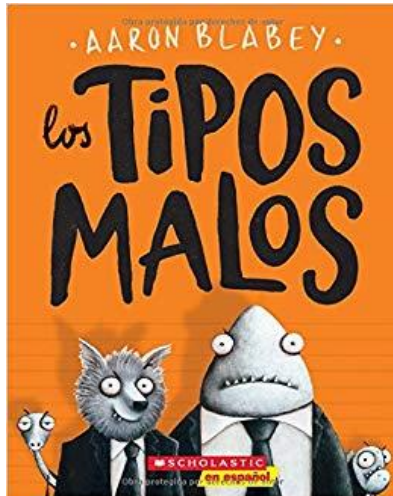
**Soñadores (Dreamers)** by Yuyi Morales, translated by Teresa Mlawer (Neal Porter Books, an imprint of Holiday House, 2018)



- Throughout the book, Yuyi Morales shows us what her favorite books are, draw the cover of your favorite book or books and write about why you like it so much.
- Write and illustrate your own book about a challenge that you've faced and how you overcame it. Use materials that you have around the house to make and illustrate your book.
- Think about your dreams, what are they and how do you plan to achieve them? Have students create a dream board outlining their dreams and goals.

- Ms. Morales used a lot of different materials to illustrate this book. You can read what she used on the back page of the book. Create art using standard and not-so-standard art materials. Think about what you have at home, string, fabric, newspaper, cardboard, etc.

**Los tipos malos (The Bad Guys)** by Aaron Blabey, translated by Juan Pablo Lombana (Scholastic, Inc., 2017)

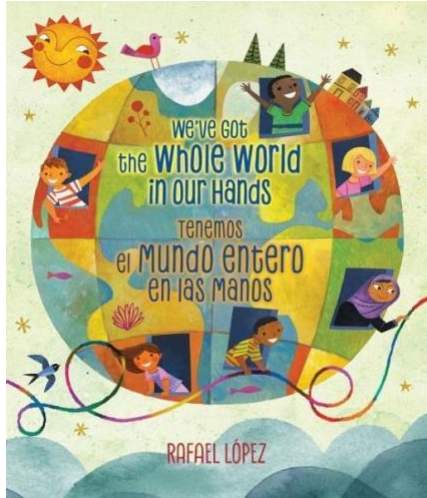


Activity Ideas from Scholastic:

- Where does each of the Bad Guys come from? Reread the first few chapters of the story, paying particularly close attention to the rap sheets that introduce the four main characters. Make a WANTED poster for one or more character.
- Discuss the layout of the book. What sort of a book would you classify it as? Is it a graphic novel/comic book? Is it illustrated fiction? Is it a long picture book? As a class, talk about the categories we generally organize books into. What are the pros and cons of categorizing books? Can the definitions of each category be seen as fluid or static?
- Visit a website for a local animal shelter, such as the RSPCA. Look at the types of animals that end up at the pound. How are they cared for? How is their care funded? Which animals are likely to get adopted first? Write a persuasive text on the topic of whether people should adopt an animal from the local shelter or buy from a pet store.
- The very last page is a written teaser of sorts for the second episode of the series. Predict what you think will happen in the next book based on the clues given on this page. Creating a film trailer for Episode Two based on the information given on this page.



**We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands/ Tenemos el Mundo Entero en las Manos** by Rafael López, translated by Juan Pablo Lombana (Orchard Books, an imprint of Scholastic, Inc., 2018)



- One of the illustration techniques Mr. López uses is cutting shapes out of paper. Introduce students to collages and have them make a collage of their world – home, school, library, etc.
  - What can you do with a ball of string? Try your hand at replicating the string game pictured in the book.
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- Read [Rafael López's blog](#) about the process he took in creating this book. Use this a mentor piece for the writing process – revising, editing, and final drafts. What differences do you see from his earlier images and drafts to the published book?