



School-Home Connection

Your child is reading “Elena” by Diane Stanley. This realistic fiction story tells what happens to a Mexican family in 1910 during the period when Pancho Villa roamed the country fighting to free Mexico from the dictator Porfirio Diaz. After the young narrator’s father dies, she and her siblings are taken by their courageous mother to begin a new life as Mexican-Americans in California. You may enjoy discussing the story and doing these activities with your child. Together you can develop and explore your child’s language skills.

Spanish-English Dictionary

There are many Spanish words in this story, such as *chispa*, *campesinos*, *bandoleras*, and *Villistas*. Work with your child to create an illustrated dictionary of these and other interesting Spanish words. If your child is not familiar with Spanish, you may also want to borrow a basic language audiocassette from your local library and go through the first lessons together.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary and Retellings

The following words are new vocabulary your child has learned while reading “Elena”:

revolution
ravine
determination

plunged
mocking
condolences

Discuss the meanings of these words. Encourage your child to use as many of these words as possible as she or he retells the story in her or his words.

Heroes and Heroines

Discuss your views on what makes a person a hero or heroine. Elicit from your child which person he or she found to be more heroic in the story, Pancho Villa or the mother, and the reasons for that choice. You may wish to research other heroic figures in history based on your child’s interests, such as sports figures, artists, or inventors and guide your child to see the importance of the contributions of these heroic figures.



TIME TO READ

Encourage your child to read for at least 30 minutes outside of class each day.

