

Overview

Summary

Paz Gonzalez, the matriarch of the fictional Gonzalez clan, lives in San Antonio, Texas. As she strolls through San Antonio taking photographs for her grandchildren, she decides to organize a family reunion. Granddaughter Lina lives in Cambria, California, on an avocado farm not far from the Pacific Ocean. Lina enjoys helping her parents sell their avocados at the farmers' market in San Luis Obispo. But this market day Lina is preoccupied with trying to convince them to attend the reunion. Grandson Gil, who is also excited about the reunion, introduces his community of Lawrence, Kansas, where his parents teach at local universities. In June, the two families travel to San Antonio for the family reunion. Everyone has such a wonderful time they decide to have a family reunion next year in Cambria, California.

Background Information

The Gonzalez family is Mexican American, the largest group of Hispanics in the United States. An estimated 32 million, or 12 percent, of the U.S. population is Hispanic. This group increased by 10 million from 1990 to 2000. About 90 percent of the Mexican American population came from regions in northern Mexico during the early 20th century. The remainder trace their roots back to earlier colonists who settled in Mexican territories that are now part of the United States: California, Texas, and the states of the Southwest. Most Mexican Americans still live in the Southwest, but many live in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City. Most Mexican Americans are Catholic and most speak Spanish as well as English.

Communities Across America Today

By Sarah Glasscock



Learning Objectives

Genre/Text Features

- first-person narrative
- photographs
- captions
- map
- contents and glossary

Reading Skills

Skill Focus

- draw conclusions
- use sensory words

Supporting Skills

- make judgments
- summarize
- compare and contrast
- paraphrase

Writing Skills

Writing Focus

- plan a Web site home page (expository)

Supporting Skills

- prewrite
- conduct research

Viewing

- analyze a Web site

Social Studies Skills

- explore similarities and differences across communities
- identify features that make a community unique
- examine the effect of the natural environment on people's work and recreation
- appreciate the importance of extended family
- use maps to locate cities and towns

Focus on Reading

Before Reading

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask students to list the places where extended family members live. Do all members of the family live in the same state? In the same country? Locate the places students name on a map. Talk about the advantages and disadvantages of having family close by and throughout the country or world. Ask whether anyone has ever attended a family reunion. Have volunteers share

experiences. Then tell students that this book is about a family from different parts of the country who come together for a family reunion.

Preview

Give students time to preview the book. Have them look at the photographs and read the chapter titles. Ask:

Will you be reading about people in the present or in the past? What makes you think as you do?

Will you be reading about one place or several places? How do you know?

Set Purpose

Ask students whether this book reminds them of other books they have read. Help students set a purpose for reading. Ask:

What do you hope to learn by reading this book?

Encourage students to give reasons for their answers. Model your own purpose for reading, if necessary.

 **Vocabulary Strategy:**
Use sensory words

Activity Master, Page 60

Read aloud the description of the farmers' market on page 11. Ask students to close their eyes and think about what they might see, hear, touch, smell, and taste at the market. Record some of their responses on the board. On the Activity Master students complete a similar activity using these words:

adobe harvest
fort reunion
fossil



Correlation to National Standards

Language Arts

- read to understand the cultures of the United States
- apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend and interpret texts
- use visual and written language to communicate effectively
- apply knowledge of media techniques
- use technological resources to gather, synthesize, and communicate information

Social Studies

- culture
- people, places, and environments
- production, distribution, and consumption

Geography

- places and regions (4, 5)
- human systems (10, 1b)
- environment and society (15)

State/Local

See Standards Chart on pages 282–287.

During Reading

 **Read Strategically:**
Draw conclusions

Activity Master, Page 61

Assign each chapter of the book as independent reading. Have students use the Activity Master on page 61 as a study guide to help them draw conclusions as they read. Explain that readers draw conclusions about people and events using facts and details they read and what they already know. Model drawing conclusions using the first set of facts and details shown in the chart below.

Strategy Tip: Paraphrase

If students have difficulty understanding a sentence or group of sentences in the story, suggest that they retell (paraphrase) the part in their own words. Explain that paraphrasing helps identify what parts of the text they don't understand. If students continue to have difficulty, they can ask for help during the class discussion.



Meeting Individual Needs

For specific strategies on meeting individual needs, see pages 264–269.

After Reading

Responding

Initiate a class discussion with such questions as:

Which tourist attractions in San Antonio would you like to visit most? (make judgments)

How do the three climates described differ? (contrast)

What does the Gonzalez family do at the reunion? (summarize)

Why do you think the Gonzalez family decides to make family reunions an annual event? (draw conclusions)



Writing and Research: Plan a Web site home page

Activity Master, Page 62

Tell students they are to plan a home page for the Web site for Cambria, San Antonio, or Lawrence. What facts would

they want to include on the home page? How would they present the material in a way that would encourage people to further explore the site? Students can use the Activity Master on page 62 to help them generate ideas and choose content.

Communicating: Viewing

Analyze a Web site

Urge students to view the home pages of various cities and towns to get an idea of how information is presented. Talk about which sites are more interesting and why. Ask students to illustrate the home page screen for their chosen place. They can include “buttons” and pictures and show the location of their introduction.

Completed screens should

- ✓ show the placement of information and links
- ✓ be appealing and well organized

Facts and Details from the Book

The Gonzalez family keeps in touch. Paz, Lina, and Gil are excited about the family reunion. Paz takes photos of San Antonio for her grandchildren.
She remembers their visits fondly. She makes an album for them.
Lina loves to eat avocados. She likes working at the farmers' market.
Gil visits the Natural History Museum frequently. He stares at the fossils in the museum. He goes on a fossil hunt and finds a fish fossil.

What I Can Conclude

The Gonzalez family is close and loving.
Paz enjoys her grandchildren's visits to San Antonio.
Lina likes living on an avocado farm.
Gil is interested in fossils.

Focus on Social Studies

Write a Radio Spot

In pairs, students can create a one-minute radio spot designed to increase tourism for one of the three communities from the student book or for their own community. First, have students identify one natural feature and one aspect of culture for the community of their choice. Students can then write a script for a one-minute ad that includes a slogan or a catchy phrase that helps listeners remember the main idea.

Radio ads should

- ✓ include a catchy slogan
- ✓ describe natural and cultural attractions
- ✓ describe the community accurately and in its best light
- ✓ explain why tourists would want to visit



Activity Master, Page 63

Students can use the Activity Master to locate the three communities discussed in this book. Students then use the map to answer questions about the places and the states in which they are located.

Assessment Options

Use the following assessment options.

Questions

Ask the following questions during individual conferencing

or ask students to write the answers independently in their notebooks:

- 1 What do Paz, Lina, and Gil like best about where they live?
- 2 Choose two communities from the book. In what two ways are the communities similar? In what two ways are they different?
- 3 Why were all the family members excited about the reunion?
- 4 What did the family do at the reunion?
- 5 What conclusions can you draw about the Gonzalez family? Use details from the story to support your answer.

Assessment Activity

Have students design a graphic symbol, such as a simple picture or logo, for each of the three communities in *Communities Across America Today*. Each logo should be an attractive yet simple picture that distinguishes each community.

Logos should

- ✓ clearly differentiate among the three communities
- ✓ identify a feature of each community

Multiple-Choice Test

See the multiple-choice test in the Assessment Booklet.

Cross-Curricular Connection

Science

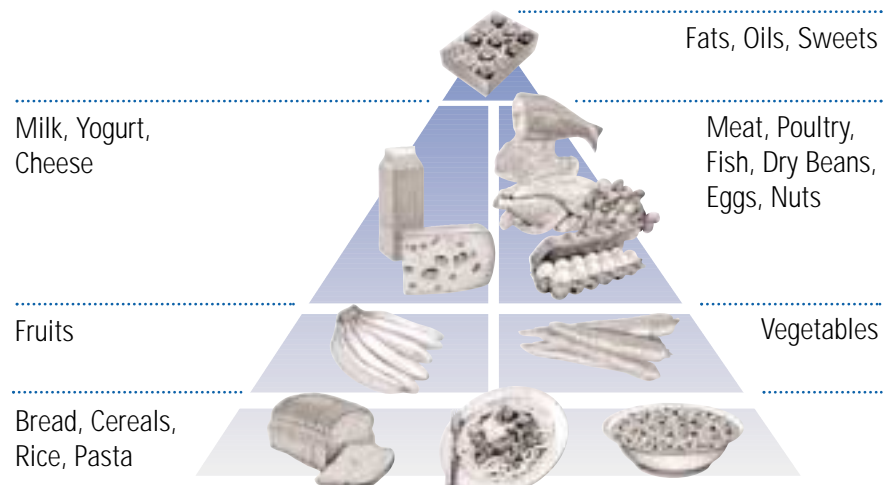
Ask students to list all the different foods mentioned in *Communities Across America Today* and then place them in a drawing of a pyramid. (See below.) Discuss the food pyramid with students. Ask:

What is the food pyramid?

Where do the foods mentioned in the book fit?

Home-School Connection

Students and their parents can review travel sections of newspapers and travel magazines looking for articles about California, Texas, and Kansas. What attractions and interesting facts about these places can they discover?



Vocabulary: Use Sensory Words

The words below are from *Communities Across America Today*. What sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and textures does each word make you think of? Write the meaning of each word. Then write as many “sense” words as you can for each one. For example, write words that tell how adobe feels, looks, and smells. Then write a sentence for each word using some of the “sense” words.

adobe

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

fort

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

fossil

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

harvest

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

reunion

Meaning:

“Sense” words:

Your sentence:

Reading: Draw Conclusions

You draw a conclusion by putting facts and details together with what you already know. Finish the chart below adding facts and details or conclusions you can draw.

Facts and Details from the Book	What I Can Conclude
<p>The Gonzalez family keeps in touch. Paz, Lina, and Gil are excited about the family reunion. Paz takes photos of San Antonio for her grandchildren.</p>	
	<p>Paz enjoys her grandchildren's visits to San Antonio.</p>
	<p>Lina likes living on an avocado farm.</p>
<p>Gil visits the Natural History Museum frequently. He stares at the fossils in the museum. He goes on a fossil hunt. He finds a fish fossil.</p>	

Writing: Prewriting

Web Site Home Page

Be a Web designer for the town of your choice! Choose Cambria, California; San Antonio, Texas; or Lawrence, Kansas, and plan a home page for the town. Plan your home page below.

Place I will write about _____

Facts about the natural environment _____

Facts about what people do for work _____

Facts about what people do for fun _____

Ways to make my home page interesting _____

Maps and/or illustrations to include _____

Other ideas _____

Now write a paragraph for your home page that introduces your town. Include some of the information you listed above. Tell people what they will find on your Web site.

Write two links you will include on your Web site.

Social Studies: : Label a Map

Label the map with the states and cities listed below. Then answer the questions.



Label these places

-
- | | | |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| California | Lawrence | San Luis Obispo |
| Cambria | San Antonio | Texas |
| Kansas | | |

1. Which family had to travel farther to get to the family reunion, Gil's or Lina's? _____
2. Who lives the farthest north, Gil, Lina, or Paz? _____
3. Who lives the farthest south? _____
4. In which part of the country does each family live, the Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, or Southwest? _____
5. What are four places to visit in San Antonio? _____
