



TeachersFirst READING TREKS

The Distance Between Us

Teacher Guide

Grade Level & Content Areas

Access Reading
Trek Map

Ages: 10–14

Grades: 5–9 (independent reading)

Reading Level: 5.0

Lexile Measure: 780L

Guided Reading Level: N/A

Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA): N/A

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, literature, and social studies, including immigration, individual development, identity, and geography.

Synopsis of Book

In this Young Readers Edition, Reyna Grande shares memories of her childhood in Mexico, her family's journey to "El Otro Lado" (literally, "The Other Side"—figuratively, the United States), growing up as an undocumented teen, and her quest for an education and citizenship. The story tells of her search to find her identity, both in Mexico and in the United States, to navigate a new culture without giving up her past, and to learn a new language through the help of books and her own writing. Reyna Grande introduces readers to the many people who shaped her life and helped her reach her goals.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Common Core State Standards for 6–12

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes

- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING

National Health Education Standards

- **Standard 1:** Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- **Standard 7:** Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying [Reading Trek map](#) as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the whole class on an interactive whiteboard using the [Reading Trek map](#) and highlighting its various layers.
2. Create a vision board to depict how an immigrant might envision the country they seek to make their new home and what their new life would be like. This activity can be done digitally using Padlet ([TeachersFirst review](#)) or on paper using hand-drawn images and pictures from magazines.
3. Use this [Quizlet study guide test](#) and flashcards to check for comprehension.
4. Create a digital bulletin board using Stormboard ([TeachersFirst review](#)) where students can post sticky notes of difficult vocabulary or phrases and collaborate to



<https://teachersfirst.com/reading-treks/content/distance-between-us>

- provide answers. This could be in groups or as a whole-class activity.
5. Health issues like intestinal worms, lice, and malnourishment interfere with the children in this book reaching their potential in school. Research the causes and solutions to these ailments and create infographics with Canva Infographic Maker ([TeachersFirst review](#)) that could be shared within the community.
 6. Create an “I Wish I had Known” survey using Slido ([TeachersFirst review](#)) that asks your class to share some information that would help a person new to the school or even the community find helpful resources available.

Extension Activities:

1. Create a running list of the struggles that Reyna and her siblings faced in the story and how/if they overcame each one. Divide the list into physical, emotional, and other categories.
2. Word clouds are a fun way to show the commonalities in texts. Have each student list terms, feelings, or places from the story and share them digitally with the teacher in a single document. Copy the combined text into the box in Word Cloud Generator ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to find the commonalities noted within the class.
3. Working with the school’s nurse or guidance counselors or a local charitable organization, plan and host a donation drive to assist local immigrant families, collecting items such as school supplies or clothing.
4. As a group, create illustrations to accompany each chapter or parts of chapters (depending on class or group size), allowing students to make their artistic response in the medium of choice. Create a gallery walk by digitally uploading each finished piece on the class’s LMS or

7. Reyna Grande saw the “broken beauty” in her world. Students can create a collage of actual photos or drawings that show the broken beauty where they live using Photo Joiner ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
8. Discuss “[The Trauma Of Immigrating Didn’t Stop When I Crossed the Border](#)” and generate guidelines for how immigrant families within the school and community should be treated.

webpage or by displaying the pieces in a public area. Use Sutori ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to create a timeline with text captions or chapter summaries.

5. Identify cultural traditions that may be unfamiliar to the class. Students, individually or as a collaborative group, could choose a tradition to research and present their findings on a video created with Adobe Express ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
6. Learn about the requirements for becoming a United States citizen by playing *Immigration Nation* ([TeachersFirst review](#)).
7. Take an interactive tour of Ellis Island ([TeachersFirst review](#)) and learn how many individuals traveled great distances to seek a new life in America. This is a simulation of the immigration experience.
8. View “[Feel Like You Belong - Reyna Grande](#)” and “[Feel Like You Belong - Robyn Afrik](#).” Compare and contrast these women’s experiences in their quests to belong, then brainstorm ways to help immigrant classmates have a feeling of belonging.

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Engage & Inspire with Reading Treks](#)

Other Resources:

- [Reyna Grande](#)
 - [Lesson Plan Ideas](#)
 - [Discussion Questions and Vocabulary](#)
 - [Curriculum Guide to The Distance Between Us](#)
- [Aladdin Books Reading Group Guide](#)
- [Highland Park Angel Walk](#)
- [StudyLib Discussion Questions for The Distance Between Us](#)
- [Melina Telles-The Distance Between Us-Book Talk](#)
- [Reyna Grande-Beyond Borders: Immigration, Trauma, and the American Dream](#)
- [Background Cultural Information](#)