

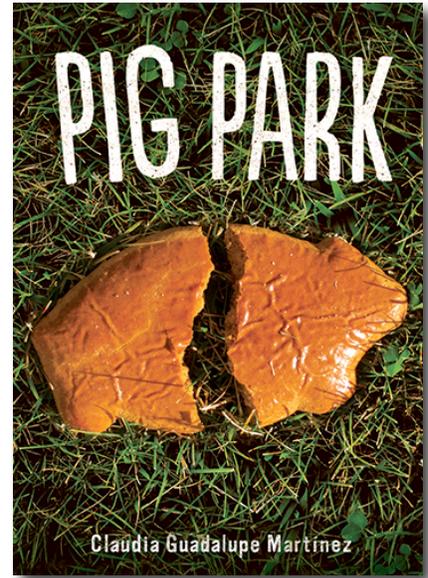
TEACHER'S GUIDE

ALIGNED WITH COMMON CORE STANDARDS

PIG PARK

by Claudia Guadalupe Martinez

Masi and her family live in a neighborhood called Pig Park in Chicago. After a major factory closes down in the area, many families in Masi's neighborhood struggle to make ends meet, or they leave for better opportunities. Hoping to promote tourism and visitors to the neighborhood, the residents work together to build *La Gran Pirámide* at the recommendation of Dr. Vidales Casal, a community development specialist. When the pyramid burns down, Masi, her family, and friends are concerned they will lose everything, but are surprised when a newspaper article about the neighborhood saves Pig Park.



The following questions are aligned with CCSS standards for literature for grades 8-9. You will find the corresponding standard after each question.

Whole Text Questions

1. Choose one theme from the book such as economic struggle, race, ethnicity, gender. How does the author convey the theme through the thoughts, words and actions of the characters? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.2, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.2)
2. Choose a character and explain how he/she changes from the beginning through the end of the book? What specific events cause these changes? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.3)
3. Is the *La Gran Pirámide* project a success or failure? Support your response with evidence from the text. (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.1)
4. If you lived in Pig Park, would you have participated in the building of the pyramid? Why or why not? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.6)
5. What do you think will happen to Pig Park in the future? Cite specific examples of past events in the text that support your response. (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.5, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.5)

Chapters 1-6

1. Why are families leaving Pig Park? Do you believe that Masi and her family will also move? Why or why not? Support your answer with details from the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1)
2. What does Masi mean when she says, “Seriously. We’re not Aztecs.”? What does this reveal about her character? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.6)
3. What is the relationship between Marcos and Masi? How do you think their relationship will change as they build the pyramid? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3)
4. Josefina exhibits her reluctance to participate in the building of the pyramid, while Masi is more willing to help. Find specific examples of actions, thoughts, or words that show their respective attitudes. Explain why you believe each girl exhibits reluctance or willingness and cite examples from the text that support your answer. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4)

Chapters 7-12

1. What is Casey trying to point out when she says, “You don’t have any rights. Look at yourself. Not with a name like Sanchez.”? How would a last name give someone more rights or permit them fewer rights than another? (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.6)
2. Masi says “[My voice] was like city asphalt in the spring.” Describe what she means by this. Why does Masi’s voice crack? Why might she choose to compare her voice to asphalt? (CCSS.ELA.Literacy.8.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.9-10.4)
3. Why does the Colonel relegate the girls to the basement while the boys work outside? In your opinion, is it fair for girls and boys to be given different responsibilities? Why or why not? In the story, are there cultural norms that guide the division of labor? Use specific evidence from the text to support your answer. (CCSS.ELA.Literacy.8.1, CCSS.ELA.Literacy.9-10.6)
4. What tensions does the division of labor cause between Masi and Marco, between Masi and Josefina, between Masi and the Sanchez girls? How do you believe the tension will be relieved? Cite specific evidence from the text to support your answer. (CCSS.ELA.Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA.Literacy.9-10.3)

5. Thus far in the text, how do Masi’s expectations of the summer fit with what has actually happened? How are her expectations different from reality? How are they the same? How do these expectations affect the actions of the girls? Use specific examples from the text to support your answer. (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.3)

Chapters 13-18

1. How does the author use word choice and short sentences to create a sense of tension when Felix finds Masi, Josefina and Marcos watching the fireworks from the top of *La Gran Pirámide*? How does the way that Chapter 12 finishes and Chapter 13 starts contribute to that tension? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.4, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.5)
2. How are Felix and Masi alike? How are they different? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.1, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.1)
3. Masi believes that perhaps she is the reason her mother did not go to school to be an accountant. Do you think Masi and her father are the reason Masi’s mother didn’t achieve her dreams? Why or why not? Why is this scene important to the story thus far? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.5)
4. How is Felix feeling when he asks the girls to leave after meeting Belinda? How do you know? Use specific examples from Felix’s thoughts, words, and actions. Do you think that Masi understands that he is uncomfortable? Why or why not? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.4)
5. Is Masi’s mom going “on vacation,” or is her trip to her parents’ house more serious? Explain your answer using specific evidence from the text. (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literature.8.1, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.1)

Chapters 19-24

1. The author uses a number of phone calls throughout Chapter 19 to communicate what is happening in Masi’s home. How do these phone calls contribute to the feeling of confusion that is echoed in Masi’s statement, “It was just one more thing I didn’t know what to make of.”? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.5)
2. Masi describes the pictures of diabetic kidneys as looking like her “grandfather’s famous Texas brisket.” She also says, “My eyes felt like they might pop out.” Does the use of exaggeration make the situation seem more or less suspenseful for you as a reader? What do these similes reveal about Masi’s character? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.3)

3. When discussing the departure of Masi’s mother, the author says that “It [the story] spilled out like soup left to boil over.” Describe the way that Masi talks with Josefina about her parents’ separation. What is the tone of this conversation and how do you know? Cite specific examples from the text. (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.4, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.4)
4. When Masi’s parents separate, her mother goes to stay with Masi’s grandparents. Why does Masi’s mother choose to live with her parents instead of moving out on her own? How is Masi’s mother reflecting cultural values in this decision? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.6)

Chapters 25-30

1. When Masi calls her mother on the phone, she asks where the laundry detergent is instead of discussing how she feels. Why doesn’t she share her thoughts? How does the way Masi responds during this incident add to the tension of the situation? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.1, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.5)
2. What cultural assumptions does Belinda make about the neighborhood? How do you know what she assumes by her thoughts, actions, and words? How do the residents respond to her assumptions? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.6)
3. Colonel Franco attempts to teach the girls about *papel picado*. How is he both reinforcing traditional cultural values and going against them in doing so? What statements in the text reveal that the Colonel is a multi-faceted character? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.3)
4. How do you think that Masi’s father intends to fix the problems with her mother? Cite specific evidence from the text to support your response. (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.1, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.10.1)
5. Felix says to Masi, “I wasn’t supposed to say that. Please don’t repeat it.” Why doesn’t he want Masi to tell anyone? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.4)

Chapters 31-36

1. Marcos says, “He’s [Felix is] not one of us, Masi.” What does Marcos mean? Support your response with examples from the text. (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.1)

2. Loretta first asks how Masi’s father is. When Masi answers that he is fine, she asks again, “Mija, but how does he feel?” What is the difference in these two questions? How do you know? Cite specific evidence from the text to support your answer. (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.4, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.3)
3. When Masi decides to stay home from the park after overhearing Felix and Belinda, her father replies, “If that’s how you want to treat your responsibilities.” What are the two viewpoints presented in this paragraph? What interior conflict is revealed for Masi in this section of the text? Cite specific examples from the text to support your response. (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.1)
4. Why doesn’t Masi want to call the new cookies/cakes “Patricia’s Marronitas”? What connotation does the name carry? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.4, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.4)
5. Why are the young people of Pig Park upset that Belinda asks them to wear “traditional” clothing? What is her opinion of the outfits, and how does it differ from how the young people view them? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.6)

Chapters 37-42

1. Masi overhears a conversation between Belinda and Felix, but isn’t sure what it means. Later Felix tells Masi not to let her father buy the oven. How do these events foreshadow what Belinda is planning? What expectations do these conversations create for the fate of Pig Park? What mood/tone do the conversations about these events evoke? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.5)
2. How does the phrase “the old goat” reveal Felix’s feelings about Dr. Vidales Casal? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.4, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.4)
3. What mood does Felix’s response to kissing Masi evoke? Why? Cite specific examples from the text to support your response. (CCSS.ELA. RL-Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.1)
4. Why does Masi use the word “coward” to describe herself? (CCSS.ELA-RL-Literacy.8.4, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.4)
5. Why do Josefina and Marcos view Masi’s relationship with Felix as a betrayal to them? What is each motivated by? How are their opinions on the matter different or the same? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.3)

Chapters 43-47

1. How do you believe the fire will affect the neighborhood of Pig Park? How would the story have been different if the fire occurred earlier in the text? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.5)
2. Why is what happens with the pyramid ironic, and how does the author create this dramatic irony? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.6, CCSS.ELA. RL-Literacy.9-10.6)
3. Did Felix start the fire in the dumpster? How do you know? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.1, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.1)
4. Do you believe that Masi and Felix will see each other again? What evidence from the text supports your response? (CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.8.3, CCSS.ELA.RL-Literacy.9-10.3)