



**Classroom Guide for**  
**THE POT THAT JUAN BUILT**  
by Nancy Andrews-Goebel  
illustrated by David Diaz

### Reading Level

\*Reading Level: Grades 2–3

Interest Level: Grades 1–6

Guided Reading Level: P

(Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula)

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 6.2/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: 1000

### Themes

Traditions, Excellence, Heritage, Community, Art (pottery), Latino/Hispanic Interest

### Synopsis

This informational picture book about the renowned potter Juan Quezada of Mexico is organized in a three-part structure. The basic story of how Quezada makes his pots according to the ancient methods of the Casas Grandes people is told in the form of a rhyme based on “The House That Jack Built.” Narrative prose accompanies each verse with more detailed information about the process. Photographs and additional information about the artist and the community in which he lives and works are given at the end of the book.

### Background

While still a young boy, Juan Quezada became fascinated with pottery after finding potsherds, pieces of broken pottery, from the Casas Grandes civilization in northern Chihuahua, Mexico. Quezada began experimenting with local clays and with colors mixed from local minerals. He was soon using traditional methods to produce clay pots of a fine arts caliber. In time Quezada was discovered and gained worldwide recognition for his art. He taught members of his family and some neighbors the methods he used and helped transform his small village of dirt roads, Mata Ortiz, into an internationally known community of potters. Today collectors from around the world visit the village to acquire the pottery of Mata Ortiz.

### Teacher Tip

You may wish to feature this book as part of your celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15). *The Pot That Juan Built* is available in Spanish as well as English.

**BEFORE READING****Prereading Focus Questions**

Before introducing the book, you may wish to have students discuss one or more of the following questions as a motivation for reading.

1. What are some art forms you know? Where have you seen this kind of art? What was it like?
2. Have you ever watched an artist at work? How is the way they work different from the way things are made in factories?
3. What kinds of things have you made by hand? How did it feel to make them? How do you feel about the objects you made?
4. How do you think an artist's life might differ from other peoples' lives?
5. What is excellence? What does "excellence" mean to you? What things would you like to excel in?

**Exploring the Book**

Display the book and read aloud the title. Ask students to comment on what they think the book will be about.

Point to the illustrator's name and ask if students have ever seen his work before. Mention that Diaz created the pictures on the computer using a program called Adobe PhotoShop.

Invite students to do a "page flip" through the book. Talk about the impression they get as they turn the pages. What do the illustrations show? What do they think the man in the pictures is doing?

**Setting a Purpose for Reading**

Ask students to read the book to learn about the life and work of artist (potter) Juan Quezada.

**VOCABULARY**

The following multisyllable words may be unfamiliar to students. Write them on the chalkboard, review their meanings, and help students divide each word into syllables for reading purposes. Follow up by having students copy the list and either a) draw a picture illustrating the word, b) find a synonym for the word, or c) find an antonym. Encourage students to share their work with a partner.

rediscovered  
impoverished  
abundant  
solitude

vanished  
prosperous  
inspiration  
sharecropper

professional  
commercial  
burdened  
economy

## READING AND RESPONDING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to help guide their understanding of the book. Encourage students to refer to passages or pages in the book to support or illustrate their responses.

1. What three things is this book about?
2. What are the three ways used to tell the story of Juan Quezada?
3. How does Juan use natural resources in his work?
4. Why do you think Juan Quezada taught his family and neighbors the things he learned about making pottery?
5. Where does Juan Quezada get his inspiration?
6. How is Juan a link to the past?
7. Why is Juan Quezada's story important to the people of his village? Why is his story important to the art world? Why is his story important to Juan? Why is it important to you?
8. What does Juan Quezada want for the future?
9. Why do you think people appreciate beautiful handmade things?

### Teacher Tip

Because the story of Juan Quezada is told in several ways, this book is perfect for readers of differing levels. You might assign some students to read the poem lines, while others read the narrative text. Still others might be responsible for the additional information at the end of the book. Invite students from each group to meet and share information and their responses.

### Literature Circles

If you use literature circles during reading time, students might find the following suggestions helpful in developing the roles of the circle members.

- The **Questioner** might use questions similar to those in the Discussion Question section of this guide to help group members explore the book.
- The **Passage Locator** might look for words that describe the pottery of Juan Quezada.
- The **Illustrator** might draw the villagers at work making pottery.
- The **Connector** might do Internet research to find out more about the Casas Grandes people who lived in the eleventh to fourteenth centuries.
- The **Summarizer** might provide a brief summary of the group's reading and discussion points for each meeting.
- The **Investigator** might find out about other famous pottery makers—the materials they use, the traditions they follow, where they work, and so on.

\*There are many resource books available with more information about organizing and implementing literature circles. Three such books you may wish to refer to are: *Getting Started With Literature Circles* by Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 1999), *Literature Circles: Voice And Choice In Book Clubs And Reading Groups* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse, 2002), and *Literature Circles Resource Guide* by Bonnie Campbell Hill, Katherine L. Schlick Noe, and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 2000).

### **Reader's Response**

Use the following questions or similar ones to help students practice active reading and personalize what they have read. Suggest that students respond in reader's journals, sketches, or in oral discussion.

1. Why do you think people take pride in traditional ways of doing or making things?
2. Why is it important for people to know about Juan Quezada?
3. Why do you think the author chose to write the book in the way she did?
4. What did you learn about art from this book? Why is art important?
5. What are some of the ways Juan Quezada has been honored? How would you honor him?

### **Other Writing Activities**

You may wish to have students participate in one or more of the following writing activities. Set aside time for them to share and discuss their work.

1. Ask students to reread the rhyming lines in the book, and then have them write their own versions of "The House That Jack Built" about topics of their own choice. Remind students to try and use the same rhyming pattern and rhythm used in the book.
2. Make a list on a chart or poster pad of art terms introduced in the book such as: pottery, potter, fire a pot, potsherds, clay, pinch, pattern, decorative, kneading. Have students find the word in the book and use the context to write a definition. Students can check their definitions in a dictionary.
3. Have students make a chart comparing life in the village of Mata Ortiz before and after Juan Quezada made it a pottery center.
4. Assign students to write an ad for the pottery of Juan Quezada. Point out that students can find ideas for promoting his work in the book. For example, an ad might focus on the traditional aspect of his work or the fact that he uses only natural resources for his materials.
5. Have students pretend they are television reporters. Ask them to write a list of questions they might ask Juan in an interview.

### ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English language learners or who are learning to speak English as a second language.

1. If there are native Spanish speakers in the class, have them pronounce and explain in English the meanings of Spanish words in the book such as: tortilla, chorizo, barro blanco, frontera, puki, metate, quemador.
2. Use the illustrations to help students identify concrete nouns from the book such as: pot, cactus, flames, man, hat, cow, tree, manure, shovel, wheelbarrow, brush, hair, girl, paint, burro, potsherd, cat, ant, rooster, sun, house, bone, skull.
3. Pair ELL students with strong English speakers to read the poem together. Instruct the English speakers to read the poem several times so that the ELL students begin to sense the rhythm and rhyme and can memorize the words.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

To help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas, introduce some of the following activities.

#### Social Studies

1. Have students locate Mexico on an atlas map. Point out that Mexico shares a border with the United States. Then have students use the map to find the following:
  - The state of Chihuahua in the north
  - Sierra Madre Mountains
  - Mata Ortiz
  - Palanganas River
2. Suggest that students work in groups and use facts from the book to make a timeline of events in Juan Quezada's life. Students might also want to illustrate the different events.

#### Art

1. Students might make a flow chart to illustrate the steps Juan Quezada follows in making his pottery. If clay is available, give students the opportunity to follow the flow chart and fashion their own pots using the method of making a tortilla, wrapping a chorizo around the edges, and pinching and pulling up the walls.
2. The book provides a good opportunity for students to learn about, discuss, and try out a variety of art materials. Invite the art teacher to do a special presentation of art materials students might not normally encounter in art class. Have the teacher demonstrate the properties of each material and techniques for using it. Then let students try out the materials that appeal to them most.

#### Language Arts

Use the poem in THE POT THAT JUAN BUILT to teach or review poetic devices such as alliteration, metaphor, repetition, and onomatopoeia. For example:

- alliteration: Give the example "that flickered and flared."
- metaphor: Give the example "sausage of clay."
- repetition: Point out how the lines of the poem are repeated on each page.
- onomatopoeia: Give the example "crackling flames so sizzling hot."

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Nancy Andrews-Goebel** was born in Bakersfield, California. She worked in early childhood education for many years and produced cross-cultural videos for Head Start. *The Pot That Juan Built* is her first picture book, and it was inspired after Andrews-Goebel met Quezada while vacationing in Mexico. She was fascinated by his work and inspired by his spirit, and together with her husband she wrote and produced a documentary video titled "Mata Ortiz Pottery: An Inside Look." Says Andrews-Goebel, "My ideas for stories come from the interesting, out-of-the-way places I visit, and from the extraordinary people I've had the privilege to know." *The Pot That Juan Built* was named an ALA Notable Children's Book and has won numerous other awards including the Children's Book Award from the International Reading Association (IRA), the 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing list from the New York Public Library, Best Books of the Year awards from *School Library Journal*, *Parenting* magazine, and *Nick Jr. Family* magazine, and a "Choices" selection from the Cooperative Children's Book Center. Andrews-Goebel and her husband live in the northern California town of Cayucos.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**David Diaz** traces his love of drawing to first grade when he drew a face around a nose on a worksheet. He was personally drawn to the story of Quezada because he, too, is an accomplished potter and he was inspired by the story of a man who has made significant artistic, inspirational, financial, and spiritual contributions to his community. Diaz won a Pura Belpré Illustrator Award Honor for *The Pot That Juan Built*, and in 1995 he won the Caldecott Medal for his illustrations in *Smoky Night* by Eve Bunting. Diaz was born in New York and grew up in Florida. His art blossomed as he attained success in contests while in high school. Today Diaz is a resident of Carlsbad, California, where he enjoys reading, collecting furniture and glassware, and his art.

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Learn more about *The Pot That Juan Built* at:

[http://www.leeandlow.com/books/92/hc/the\\_pot\\_that\\_juan\\_built](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/92/hc/the_pot_that_juan_built)

*The Pot That Juan Built* in Spanish:

[http://www.leeandlow.com/books/165/hc/la\\_vasija\\_que\\_juan\\_fabrico](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/165/hc/la_vasija_que_juan_fabrico)

### BookTalk with Nancy Andrews-Goebel

<http://www.leeandlow.com/p/goebel.mhtml>

### BookTalk with David Diaz

<http://www.leeandlow.com/p/diaz.mhtml>

### Book Information

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Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 6.2

Lexile Measure®: 1000

Scholastic Reading Counts!™: 4.5

### **Order Information**

#### **On the Web:**

[http://www.leeandlow.com/books/92/hc/the\\_pot\\_that\\_juan\\_built](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/92/hc/the_pot_that_juan_built)

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