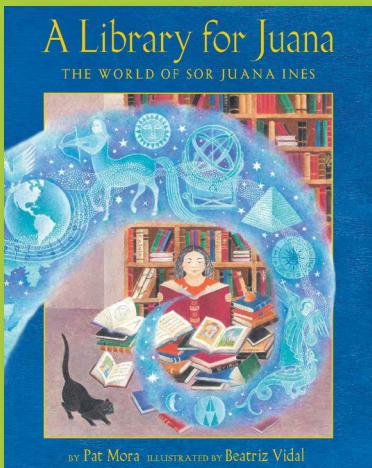


TEACHER'S GUIDE



A Library for Juana: The World of Sor Juana Inés

written by Pat Mora

illustrated by Beatriz Vidal

Reading Level

*Reading Level: Grade 3

Interest Level: Grades K–3

Guided Reading Level: N

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: 3.7/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: 600L

Genre: Biography

Themes: Identity, Self Esteem and Confidence, Overcoming Obstacles, Persistence and Grit, Biography, Dreams and Aspirations, Discrimination, Education, Literacy, Careers (Writer), Curiosity, Women's History, Breaking Gender Barriers, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Mexico, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

Synopsis

From a very young age, Juana Inés loved words. When she was three years old, she followed her sister to school and begged the teacher to let her stay so she could learn how to read. Juana enjoyed poring over books and was soon making up her own stories, songs, and poems.

Juana wanted to become a scholar, but career options for women were limited at this time. She decided to become a nun—Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz—in order to spend her life in solitude reading and writing. Though she died in 1695, Sor Juana Inés is still considered one of the most brilliant writers in Mexico's history: her poetry is recited by schoolchildren throughout Mexico and is studied at schools and universities around the world.

The recipient of the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award, *A Library for Juana* celebrates Juana Inés's incredible thirst for knowledge, and is lovingly written by renowned children's book author Pat Mora and gorgeously illustrated by Beatriz Vidal.



BACKGROUND

Sor (Sister) Juana Inés de la Cruz (From the Author's Note): Poet, defender of women's educational rights, intellectual, playwright, environmentalist, wit. I'm fascinated by the seventeenth-century Mexican author Juana Ramírez de Asbaje, known as Sor (Sister) Juana Inés de la Cruz. We know few facts about this child prodigy, born in the rural village of San Miguel de Nepantla when colonial Mexico was ruled by a viceroy appointed by Spain.

Her words reveal her deep love of knowledge and her inquiring mind. Known for her poems in the Baroque style, which was popular at that time, she also enjoyed painting, playing music, collecting scientific instruments, reading, and studying the thousands of books in her large and famous library. When a plague spread through Mexico, Sor Juana helped to care for the sick nuns in her convent but became ill herself. She died on April 17, 1695. The image of the proud Mexican Muse and Phoenix of Mexico is printed on Mexican currency. Her words are memorized and recited by children and adults throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Sor Juana: the first great Latin American poet.

Additional information and resources on the work of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

- <https://poets.org/poet/sor-juana-ines-de-la-cruz> includes several poems in translation
- <http://womenthecenter.nyhistory.org/juana-ines-de-la-cruz-feminist-poet-of-new-spain/>
- Dartmouth's Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz project <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sorjuana/>, especially the chronology of her life
- <https://edsitement.neh.gov/curricula/sor-juana-ines-de-la-cruz-first-great-latin-american-poet>

Additional portraits and depictions of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

- Google Art Project https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/juana-in-%C3%A9s-de-la-cruz/mo1_q7y
- Philadelphia Museum of Art <https://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/39031.html>

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- What do you know about the word "scholar?" (Introduce the word if it is unfamiliar by saying, "A scholar studies and learns about topics interesting to them to become an expert.") What kind of scholar would you most like to be? What are you passionate about learning?
- Have you ever written a poem? What does it mean to be a poet? (If needed, share a handful of simple examples of poems that reflect observations about people and the world.)
- What do you know about Mexico? What language do many people speak now in Mexico? How do you think Spanish was introduced in Mexico? (If students are unfamiliar, briefly introduce the idea that Spanish rule of Mexico significantly impacted the indigenous cultural landscape.)

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author and illustrators' dedications, illustrations, glossary, and author's note.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:



VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Content Specific

Nueva España, Mexico City, university, poem, palace, tutor, Latin, habits, convents, viceroy, lady-in-waiting, Bible, scholar, religious, riddles, rhyme

Academic

gasped, stubborn, study, firmly, prove, attend, decorate, curious, languages, serious, treasured

- What Sor Juana's passions were and how she chose to pursue them
- How different people influenced Sor Juana's life, both during her childhood and as an adult
- How Sor Juana changed the way others thought with her actions and words

Talk briefly about the genre of biography. Why might the author, Pat Mora, have been motivated to write a biography of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz? Encourage students to consider why the author wanted to share this story with young people, in particular.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Where does Juana live as a child? What does she love about her grandfather's house?
2. What does Juana do with her grandfather's books?
3. What kind of questions does Juana most often ask?
4. What kind of flower does Juana like best?
5. How does Juana play with words and sounds?
6. How does her sister's going to school influence Juana?
7. When Juana goes to school, what does she say? What does the teacher say?
8. Why does Juana say she won't eat cheese anymore? What does she say she wants to do?
9. What does Juana do when she's told that only boys can go to university? How does her mother react?
10. What does Juana do in Mexico City?
11. What does Juana ask her tutor to teach her?
12. What places and people does Juana see with her aunt? What makes Juana want to live at the palace?
13. What does the viceroy's wife say when Juana's aunt and uncle take her to the palace?



“This story of persistence and pioneering will inspire youngsters.” —**Publishers Weekly**

“The text is perfectly complemented by Vidal’s brilliant, detailed illustrations that have the look and exactitude of Renaissance miniatures. This is an exceptional introduction to an exceptional woman, and would enhance any collection.”

—**School Library Journal**

“Children will enjoy Mora’s inspiring, anecdote-filled account of a Latin American woman who loved learning during a time when few women were educated, and Vidal’s delicate, watercolor-and-gouache illustrations, reminiscent of elegant folk art, are beautiful.”

—**Booklist**

14. What does Juana do at the palace?
15. What happens when the forty scholars visit? What does Juana say to them?
16. Why does Juana leave the palace? Where does she move and what does she do?
17. What does Juana’s friend bring her? Why is it significant?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What do Juana’s childhood habits show about her as a person?
2. What might Juana think when she sees girls reading and writing through the school window?
3. What does Juana’s reaction to hearing that only boys can go to university show about her as a person?
4. What does the author mean when she writes “Books were Juana’s teachers?”
5. Why do you think Juana’s mother finally sends her to Mexico City, even when she said she wouldn’t? How does this decision change Juana’s life?
6. What do you think Juana means by “Why decorate the outside of my head if the inside is empty?”
7. About what parts of living in a palace might you expect someone to be excited? What does Juana’s excitement about the palace library show about her?

8. Why do you think the viceroy invited the forty scholars to come question her? Do you think Juana was nervous? Why or why not?
9. What might the scholars have been thinking as they questioned Juana? Do you think anyone in the room was surprised by how the questioning went? Why do you think the viceroy’s wife gave Juana a rose?
10. Why do you think the author chose to end the book with Juana receiving a copy of her book of poems as a gift? How is this event a fitting end to the book? What else do you want to know about Juana’s life?
11. What do you think the illustrator had to research in order to create realistic illustrations for this book?
12. Who is another person (famous, or someone you know) you think Juana would have wanted to spend time with? Why?
13. How might Juana’s life be different if she were alive today?
14. What can we learn from Juana’s story that’s relevant to life today?
15. Do you think it was a good idea for the viceroy to invite the 40 scholars to question Juana? Why or why not?

Reader’s Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their



responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about the relationship Juana had with libraries. Libraries were a favorite place of Juana's. Do you think libraries are relevant today? Why or why not? What is a special space to you and why?
2. What do you think the author Pat Mora's message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind the author's intentions to write the book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers? Do you think Pat Mora wants readers to be inspired by Juana or draw caution from her life?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Juana's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *A Library for Juana*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.

3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about a topic about which they are passionate about studying.
5. The book contains content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
6. Create a timeline of the story that includes key vocabulary about where Juana lived and with whom, and key events. Review the timeline before re-reading the book.
7. Use the Spanish language edition of the book if it is helpful to your students: *Una biblioteca para Juana: el mundo de Sor Juana Inés* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/una-biblioteca-para-juana>).

Social and Emotional Learning

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships. Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of *A Library for Juana*.



1. Create a simplified comic strip version of the story. Include thought bubbles that show how Juana may have felt during each major event. Discuss vocabulary related to her various emotions.
2. As a class or in pairs, have students make a list of decisions Juana made during her life. For each decision, write or discuss how that decision reflected grit or perseverance.
3. Discuss Juana's "slogan" that she repeats several times during the book: "Yes, girls can do more than spin and sew. We can study and prove all we know." Using this as inspiration, have students create signs with catchy slogans to encourage positive social and emotional behaviors in your school around kindness, acceptance, etc.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

(Note that some of the resources and activities listed in this guide come from author Pat Mora's website: <http://www.patmora.com/books/a-library-for-juana/>.)

ELA and Foundational Skills

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9, Writing Standards, Text Types and Purposes, Strand 3, Production and Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9)

1. Imagine what articles may have appeared in a printed newspaper if one was published during Juana's lifetime. In pairs, have students choose an article topic to write about and illustrate. (You might stick close to the story events, or have students research the colonial Mexico time period to for a broader scope.)

2. Return to the sections of the book that highlight Juana's love of rhyme and word play. Have students write their own rhyming poems or songs similar to hers about her mother. Discuss how her sample rhymes are in Spanish; do the same words rhyme in English? If students in your class speak languages other than English, experiment with creating simple rhymes in the languages they know.
3. Read other books that depict life in Mexico. Ask students to compare and contrast details from the time period of this book with those in books like *My Papa Diego and Me/Mi papá Diego y yo* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/my-papa-diego-and-me-mi-papa-diego-y-yo>).
4. What do you find most interesting about Juana? If you lived in colonial Mexico, do you think you would have enjoyed being friends with Juana? Why or why not?
5. Make a chart with the headings, "Childhood," "Royal Palace," and "Convent." Write down circumstances that were the same and different for Juana in each of these phases of her life.
6. Libraries were a favorite place of Juana's. Make a list: If you had a personal library, how would you fill it? Be specific. Write down why you would include each item you mention.
7. Read about other prominent writers in books such as *Love to Langston* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/love-to-langston>), *Marti's Song for Freedom/Marti y sus versos por la libertad* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/marti-s-song-for-freedom-marti-y-sus-versos-por-la-libertad>) or *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/zora-hurston-and-the-chinaberry-tree>). Make connections between texts.
8. Read other biographies of influential females, such as *Malala Yousafzai* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/malala-yousafzai>). Compare and contrast the character traits, experiences, and impacts Juana and other notable women in history.

Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strand 3, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7, Writing Standards, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Speaking and Listening



Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strand 1)

1. Have students create a timeline of Mexican history that includes events both leading up to and following Juana's lifetime. Discuss how one event led to another. Discuss how events impacted marginalized groups — indigenous people, girls and women, etc.
2. Look at images of Mexican 200 peso note that depicts Sor Juana. Read with students about the reasons for changing the design of this note at <https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/new-200-peso-note-coming-in-september/>. Discuss whether they agree or disagree with the change and why. View additional images of Mexican money to note who else is depicted and have students research their stories. Students might also extend this research to other currencies. What common themes do they notice about who is chosen to be portrayed on a nation's currency? Have students write or draw about the people they would choose to portray on a bill and why.
3. Stage a reenactment of the “forty scholars” event in the story. Have students take turns acting the part of Juana and the scholars. Have them write, ask, and answer questions related to your social studies, science, math, and literature curriculum topics.
4. Encourage students to write a letter to the editor or opinion piece defending Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz during her lifetime. Why should she be considered an important poet? Why is her writing groundbreaking?
5. EDSITEment, a project of the National Endowment for the Humanities, has a strong recommended unit: “Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: The First Great Latin American Poet” (<https://edsitement.neh.gov/curricula/sor-juana-ines-de-la-cruz-first-great-latin-american-poet>). It is geared for grades 9–12 but can be adapted for elementary and middle school students. Spanish version of the lessons are available.

Science

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7, Writing Standards, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9)

1. Review the sections of the book that discuss Juana's love of “why” questions. Have students pose their

own “Why” questions about the world, make hypotheses, and design experiments or do research to find out answers.

2. In addition to books, Sor Juana collected scientific instruments. Have students research the types of instruments that may have been in her collection and share their findings with the class.

Art

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7, Writing Standards, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9)

1. Ask students to use the details in the book illustrations (and additional research, if desired) to plan and create their own depiction of an event or situation that includes historically accurate details. Or, make a list of types of historical details (e.g., clothing, dwellings, etc.) reflected in one of the illustrations in the book and have students use that list to plan a historically accurate illustration depicting another time in history with the same types of details relevant to that time.

Home/School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7, Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strand 1)

1. In her author's note, Pat Mora details the significance of Sor Juana's lifetime achievements; her admiration of Sor Juana is evident. Ask students to ask an adult at home about a figure they admire. Have students research the person mentioned and share information gathered at school. Create a class list of the qualities that may make person admirable.
2. Have students survey adults at home or within your school about their favorite poems and poets. Read aloud sample works by each poet, as appropriate. Create a chart listing key characteristics of each one, including the time period in which they lived and their cultural background.
3. Compose questions as a class and ask students to interview a parent, grandparent, other family member, or community member who strived to further his or her education despite challenges. Share and compare responses received at school.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pat Mora is the author of numerous acclaimed books, including children's stories, biographies, poetry, and adult poetry, memoir and nonfiction. She is also the founder of the family literacy initiative Children's Day, Book Day~*El día de los niños, El día de los libros* (Día), April 30th and every day of the year. You can learn more about Día at <http://www.patmora.com/whats-dia/>. Mora and her husband live in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Visit her online at www.patmora.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Beatriz Vidal is an award-winning painter, illustrator, and teacher. Her work has appeared in well-known publications such as *The New York Times Magazine*, *Woman's Day*, and *The New Yorker*. Her artwork has also been featured on PBS programs and in numerous exhibitions around the world, including the International Exhibition of Illustrations for Children in Italy and the Society of Illustrators in New York. Vidal divides her time between New York City and Buenos Aires, Argentina. You can visit her online at beatrizvidal.com.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering (general order information)

<https://leeandlow.com/books/a-library-for-juana> (secure online ordering)

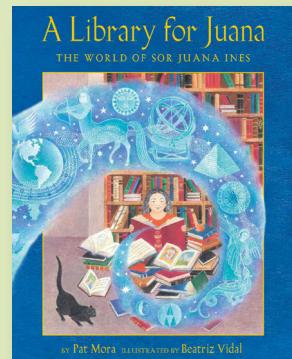
By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25 | **By Fax:** 212-683-1894

By Mail: Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

A Library for Juana:
The World of Sor Juana Inés

Book Information for

*A Library for Juana:
The World of Sor Juana Inés*



\$10.95, PAPERBACK

9781643790589

32 pages, 8 x 10

*Reading Level: 3

Interest Level: K-3

Guided Reading Level: N

Accelerated Reader Level: 3.7/0.5

Lexile Measure: 600L

Themes: Identity, Self Esteem and Confidence, Overcoming Obstacles, Persistence and Grit, Biography, Dreams and Aspirations, Discrimination, Education, Literacy, Careers (Writer), Curiosity, Women's History, Breaking Gender Barriers, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Mexico, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

Resources on the web:

<https://leeandlow.com/books/a-library-for-juana>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.