



Gabi, A Girl in Pieces

written by Isabel Quintero

About the Book

Genre: Fiction

Format: Paperback
208 pages, 6 x 9

ISBN: 9781935955955

Reading Level: Grade 8

Interest Level: Grades 8–College

Guided Reading Level: Z+

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Families, Identity/Self Esteem/
Confidence, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican
Interest, LGBTQ, Mothers, Overcoming
Obstacles, Poetry, Realistic Fiction, Spanish,
Teen Interest, YA interest

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/gabi-a-girl-in-pieces

SYNOPSIS

Gabi Hernandez chronicles her last year of high school in her diary: college applications, Cindy's pregnancy, Sebastian's coming out, the cute boys, her father's meth habit, and the food she craves. And best of all, the poetry that helps forge her identity.

July 24

My mother named me Gabriella, after my grandmother who, coincidentally, didn't want to meet me when I was born because my mother was unmarried, and therefore living in sin. My mom has told me the story many, many, MANY, times of how, when she confessed to my grandmother that she was pregnant with me, her mother beat her. BEAT HER! She was twenty-five. That story is the basis of my sexual education and has reiterated why it's important to wait until you're married to give it up. So now, every time I go out with a guy, my mom says, "Ojos abiertos, piernas cerradas." Eyes open, legs closed. That's as far as the birds and the bees talk has gone. And I don't mind it. I don't necessarily agree with that whole wait until you're married crap, though. I mean, this is America and the 21st century; not Mexico one hundred years ago. But, of course, I can't tell my mom that because she will think I'm bad. Or worse: trying to be White.

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

BACKGROUND

A Note Prior to Reading

Drug use, addiction, self-esteem/body image issues, pregnancy, sexual exploration, story of coming out and dated stereotypical rules about gender roles in Mexican-American culture along with friendship are some of the most prevalent themes discussed in *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*. Some of these themes and topics can and may be triggering for students. Considering using plenty of resources to help prepare students for this title.

Addiction & Discussing Addiction with Teens

Addiction is a disease. Like heart disease or diabetes, addiction is a chronic health condition that runs in families. Children with a family history of addiction are more likely to develop a substance use disorder, but knowing about one's family history can be a protective factor against early and risky use. Consider sharing the facts about addiction with students and consulting the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation on how to talk about addiction with students of all ages (<https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/articles/prevention/talk-about-addiction-with-students>)

The organization Kids Health provides great information and resources on explaining what the difference between drug abuse and addiction is, the different types of addiction and what the signs of addiction are. Consider consulting this source for more information on how to discuss addiction with teens (<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/addictions.html>)

Body Image and Self-Esteem Issues

Gabi deals with a great amount of body issues and this affects her self-esteem and how she interacts with her friends and her romantic interests. Consider consulting the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families on what educators can do in the classroom to help combat negative self talk (<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/risks-and-protective-factors/lifestyle-factors/body-image/>).

Teen Pregnancy

In *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*, Gabi's best friend Cindy finds out she is pregnant and then later Georgina confides in Gabi that she is also pregnant, the reader is exposed to the fallout and issues that the girls go through. Consider consulting other resources to help educate and inform students on teen pregnancy. Youth.gov is a government website that helps create, maintain and strengthen effective youth programs (<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/expectant-parenting-young-families>). Fact Forward also provides resources for educators on helping empower adolescents (<https://www.factforward.org/resources/educators>)

Coming Out: Resources for LGBTQ+ Students

Sebastian comes out to his parents that he is gay and his parents do not respond in a welcoming way which forces him to stay with Gabi and her family for a while. Consider consulting resources on

how to support students who may identify similarly with Sebastian. GLSEN is a resource that was founded by educators that believe in creating a better world for LGBTQ+ students (<https://www.glsen.org/activity/coming-out-resource-lgbtq-students>)

Sexual Abuse

Gabi's best friend Cindy is a victim of sexual abuse. This can be triggering for students and it is important to be able to help students process this part of the story. Marking Caring Common project by Harvard Graduate School of Education has a guide on "How Adults Can Promote Young People's Healthy Relationships and Prevent Misogyny and Sexual Harassment". You can find it here (chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b7c56e255b02c683659fe43/t/5bd51a0324a69425bd079b59/1540692500558/mcc_the_talk_final.pdf)

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:

Teachers must be aware and prepared that by teaching this novel (and the corresponding topics addressed in it) they may be addressing a legacy of harm and violence, specifically within largely minority and underrepresented socioeconomic groups.

- Collaborate with students to establish guidelines early on. This will serve as a reminder for discussion etiquette as thought-provoking topics are developed.
- Anticipate how your students will respond to controversial topics presented in the novel (sexual abuse, addiction, etc). While teachers should encourage students to share their views without fear of judgment, teachers should consider how to respond to emotion, and use this to guide instruction and for future instructional planning.
- Don't be afraid to share your own learning journey as it pertains to cultural identity and grief. This will create a positive classroom climate and an overall feeling of sameness.
- Aim to include and discuss outside materials that align with the text and essentially address underrepresented groups' experiences in ways that do not trivialize or marginalize their experiences.

These are a few questions that you may wish to develop before reading to help promote anticipation and build background knowledge:

You may want to have students journal their responses to these questions or pose the final question as a KWL discussion and chart so that you can refer back to it throughout and after the reading of the book to further their thinking on the topic(s).

- Do you imagine going to college? Why or why not? What does college represent for you?
- How can poetry influence someone's life?
- Ask students what they know about addiction. If you wish to provide some drug education for your students, be sure to tailor your discussions to students' age and maturity levels. There are many resources online with information on how to talk about drugs in the classroom, such as this one from the Hanley Rehabilitation Center (<https://www.originsrecovery.com/locations-staff/florida-hanley-center-origins/>).
- What do you enjoy about your family and what do you dislike? Why may a person have complicated feelings about their family dynamics?
- As a hook for readers, consider showing students a brief book promotion on *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*, posted on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oQoUm5V680>
- Bilingual Word Search: This activity can be done prior to reading the novel and during whole class or guided reading groups. *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* contains many Spanish words, as well as English words with Spanish cognates. Present the students with a vocabulary list of content specific words. Which ones do they know? Which ones do they not know? Invite them to look up the meanings of the words using a translation website. Students may keep records of the translations. Once they've been introduced to the vocabulary, introduce the treasure Hunt. The teacher may hide the "treasure" with both Spanish and English vocabulary. During the reading, student(s) who identify the word or translation will pause the lesson and go on an treasure hunt. The first student to locate the proper "treasure" wins a prize.

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)

- Book Walk: Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, table of contents, author's dedication, and author's note at the end. Display the book and analyze the cover. What do students notice in the illustration?
- Book Title Exploration: Talk about the title of the book, *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*. Talk about the titles that have a strikethrough on the cover. Ask students what they think this book will most likely be about. What does it mean to be in pieces? What do students think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that? Discuss the cover illustration and have students talk about how the picture might relate to the title of the book.
- Read about Isabel Quintero: Read about the author in her interview for School Library Journal. What was the story behind *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*? What do you think her process for writing is? Visit the interview here (<https://www.slj.com/story/constructing-a-life-a-conversation-with-isabel-quintero>)
- Encourage students to stop and jot in their notebooks when they: Learn new information, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or see new words.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

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

Have students read to find out:

- how does creative writing influence Gabi's life?
- how did gender, class, and sexuality shape the experiences of the characters in the story?
- what is the importance of self-expression in the story?
- how do young people show resilience through difficult times?

Encourage students to consider why the author, Isabel Quintero, would want to share this story with young people.

Before beginning to read students can write down questions of their own that they think the story might answer.

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. (Many of the Spanish words can be found in the book glossary, but there are also some that are not included. Students could be encouraged to create a log of these words—they will not be listed here.)

Content Specific

caliente, payasa, spiel, probrecita madre, herpes, dopamine, fornication, receptors, methamphetamine, neurotransmitter, intravenous, hepatitis b and c, xerostomia, rosary, salvationist, pagans, sanación birria, trimester, cochinadas, quadratic, precarious, quinceanera, porcelain, tomatindo, dialysis, haiku, prostate, callous, cucarachas, torrid, profound, didgerido, prophecy, refuge, revive, chisme, pariah deranged, placenta, mucus, ovaries, libertinaje, zealot, bruja, curandera, convalescent, viejita

Academic

intimacies, embryos, irrationally, compassion, dysfunctional, hypothetical, flouncy, chagrin, treasonous, forbidden, affliction, nopal, addict, chronic, psychotic, sinew, resurrect, coerced, semination, kindred, dissipation, stupor, machete, cascade, callous, anguish, erratically, gluttonous, deranged, reprimand, corporal, endorphins, euphoria, generic, karma, nemesis, pensive, penitent, erratic, calloused, mellow, mantra, fugitive, rendezvous, tirade, noxious, levee, vicious, penitentiary, elated, vigorously, hymen

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 textual 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. Who is Gabi named after?
2. What season does the story start?
3. What advice does Gabi's mom give when Gabi goes on dates?
4. What year of high school is Gabi in?
5. How does Gabi feel after Cindy reveals that she might be pregnant?
6. Who is Beto?
7. Where does Gabi first see her dad in the text?
8. How does Cindy's mom react to Cindy's pregnancy?
9. Why do Sebastian's parents kick him out of the house?
10. How does Gabi feel about dresses and why?
11. Why do Gabi and her mom have a "lightswitch" relationship? Refer to page 25
12. How does Gabi feel about the start of senior year?
13. How do people at school find out about Cindy's pregnancy? How do they react?
14. What addiction impacts Gabi's dad? How does it impact his relationship with his family?
15. Why does Gabi start to write letters to her dad?
16. Who is Sandra and how does Gabi feel about her?
17. How does Gabi describe what it means to have an addiction?
18. What deal does Gabi's dad make when he is in debt? How does this impact Gabi and her mom?
19. Why does Gabi think Beto is the favorite child?
20. Who is Tía Bertha? How does Gabi feel about her and why?
21. What trimester is Cindy after being 4 months pregnant?

22. What happened when Tía Bertha met Sebastian?
23. When and how does Gabi have her first kiss? Who did she share her first kiss with?
24. Why does Gabi write a poem about her grandfather?
25. What is the relationship between Beto and his father?
26. How does Gabi's dad try and get sober?
27. How does Gabi feel about having a boyfriend?
28. Why does Gabi write letters she doesn't send?
29. Why does Beto get arrested? How does it impact Gabi's family?
30. When Gabi's mom tells the family she's pregnant, how does the family react?
31. Which university does Gabi hope to attend? Where is it?
32. Why does Sebastian's boyfriend Pedro get arrested?
33. How does Eric break Gabi's heart?
34. Although Gabi feels betrayed by Eric, why is she also secretly relieved?
35. What secret gift did Gabi receive in the mail after Christmas? Who sent it?
36. Where does Gabi go to perform her poetry outside of school?
37. When is Gabi's birthday? How did she celebrate?
38. How does Gabi's father die? Who finds him?
39. Why does Gabi want to look inside her dad's casket?
40. Why does Gabi slap Georgina?
41. Who in Martin's family passed away? How did he grieve?
42. How does Ms. Abernath help Gabi grieve?
43. Why does Beto come home drunk?
44. Why does Gabi's mom go into labor early?
45. Who is Gabi's baby brother named after? What is his name?
46. Why does Martin suggest that him and Gabi go running?
47. When Cindy goes into labor, who goes into the delivery room with her?
48. Who does Cindy name her baby after? What is the baby's name?
49. What family issues does Georgina have to deal with? How does she feel about being pregnant?
50. What does Georgina decide to do with her pregnancy?
51. How does Gabi feel about her first college acceptance?

52. Why does Gabi think Georgina is strong?
53. Why does Gabi's mom not want Gabi to move away from college?
54. How does Gabi's family react when she gets into Berkley?
55. Why is prom such an important to event?
56. What is the inspiration for Gabi's zine?
57. Why can't Gabi share her zine with the class?
58. How does Martin find out that Ian kissed Gabi? What are the consequences?
59. How does Gabi feel about going to Tijuana and why?
60. What does Gabi expect to happen when she goes shopping with her mom? What happens instead?
61. How was Cindy violated?
62. What are Gabi's fears about college?
63. How does Gabi feel about love poems?
64. What concerns does Gabi have about having sex for the first time?
65. Why does Tía Bertha Bertha admire Gabi for protecting herself?
66. What happens between Gabi and Martha on prom night?
67. Why does Gabi slap German? What are the consequences? How does Cindy feel?
68. Why are the high school seniors emotional about graduating?
69. How does Tía Bertha learn to be true to herself? Who inspires her?
70. How does Gabi feel by the end of the story?

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. Why do you think Isabel Quintero decided to write this book using journal entries? Why not use prose? Do you agree with her decision? Why or why not?
2. What is Gabi's relationship to being Mexican American? How does her mother view her and how does she view herself?
3. What impact does Ms. Abernard have on Gabi throughout the story?
4. When dating, Gabi feels self-conscious about making the first move to kiss the boys she likes. Why do you think that is? What are the gender expectations of dating that Gabi is concerned about?
5. Gabi writes that "poetry helps heal wounds". Do you agree or disagree? Why?
6. Gabi's mom has traditional views on women's role in society. How does this impact Gabi as

she grows into her womanhood?

7. What are the different emotions that come up for Gabi when her father dies?
8. How does empathy play a significant role in the story?
9. What is Gabi's emotional relationship to food? Why are some links people make between feelings and food choices?
10. Both Cindy and Georgina become pregnant in their senior year of high school. Compare and contrast the different ways each girl handles her pregnancy. Why do you think teenage pregnancy is such a reoccurring theme in this story?
11. As a teenage mother Cindy faces many obstacles, but also receives support. What are some of the challenges Cindy faces?
12. Compare and contrast the reactions of Gabi and Beto to their dad's death. Why are their reactions different?
13. Gabi does not believe that her dad is condemned to eternal damnation. What does she believe instead?
14. Why do you think it took Cindy a long time to tell Gabi and Sebastian what German did to her? Have you ever been scared to share something that happened to you? What feelings came up?
15. How does the notion "boys will be boys" impact the girls in the story?
16. How is whiteness positioned in the story?
17. How are Gabi and Beto are raised differently? Why are different things expected of them?
18. Compare and contrast what sex represents to different characters in the story.
19. What is Gabi's relationship to religion in the story? How and when does it change?
20. Sebastian tells Gabi that "people are who they are, no matter how much you want them to be somebody else." Do you agree or disagree?
21. What is the role of family and friendship in helping Gabi become who she is by the end of the book?
22. The story is told from Gabi's perspective. How would the story have been different if it were told from Cindy's perspective? Sebastian's perspective? Beto's perspective? How does the perspective of the narration affect how you experience the story?
23. How does Gabi's relationship to her body change at different moments?
24. How did you feel about the way *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* ended? Were you satisfied with the ending? Why or why not?
25. What is the significance of the title '*Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*' after reading?

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 do you think the author's message to the reader is? Think about possible motivations behind Isabel Quintero intentions to write the book. What do you think they wanted to tell young readers?
2. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Gabi's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you? What are ways you express yourself after life changing experiences?
3. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*? Why did you make those connections?
4. 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 or on the news? Why did *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* make you think of that?
5. How has reading *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* impacted your understanding of how identity matters? What aspects of your identity matter to you? How does this shape the way you see the world? How does this shape the way you think the world sees you?
6. Double standards are rules or principles which are unfairly applied in different ways to different people or groups. Have you or someone you know ever had different rules or standards applied because you belonged to a certain group? How did you feel experiencing this or witnessing it? How did you react? What can we do to confront this inequity?
7. Gabi's friendships have challenges at different points in the story, but ultimately are an important part of her journey. What does friendship mean to you? Think of the friends in your life who you look to for guidance and support. How do these people support and help you? How have these people helped you overcome obstacles and challenges?

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 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. Have students give a short talk about either Gabi, Cindy, Sebastian, or another character in the book. Have them discuss what characteristics they admire about the person they chose. If necessary provide examples of some characteristics each character displays to help students

get started on their character talk.

4. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review several chapters and have students summarize what happened, first orally, and 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, or opinion about what they have read.
5. Have students illustrate a goal or dream of their own they have.
6. Link concepts of discomfort and persistence, such as Gabi passing Algebra II, to the student's learning of a new language.
7. The book contains several 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.

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

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

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 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 this book.

1. Throughout the story Gabi, Cindy, and Sebastian feel a lot of pressure to be a certain kind of person. Have you ever felt pressure to be someone you are not? What does this pressure feel like and what strategies do you use to overcome the feeling?
2. How does Gabi deal with her grief? How did people in Gabi's life support her when she needed help? Have you ever lost someone? What did you learn about dealing with difficult feelings from Gabi's experience?
3. Cindy takes a while before she can forgive Gabi for violating her trust. Why do you think Cindy needed space initially? How were Cindy and Gabi able to repair their relationship? What did you learn about trust and forgiveness from their friendship?
4. Gabi experiences anger, and sometimes that anger manifests physically. What are some healthy and unhealthy ways of dealing with anger? In times of anger what are different ways you can express yourself?

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.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Challenge students to explore the characters more deeply with writing tasks that require perspective-taking.** Write a letter from one character to another (i.e. from Beto to his dad, Cindy to German, Sebastian to his parents). Have students read/share their letters with the class.
- **In her senior year, Gabi is exposed to many different forms of poetry.** She reads 'Still I Rise' by Maya Angelou, "The Raven" by Edgar Allen Poe, 'Tonight I Can Write' by Pablo Neruda, 'Lady Lazarus' by Sylvia Plath, 'We Real Cool' by Gwendolyn Brooks, and many others. Look up some of the poems Gabi reads and recite it to the class.
- **Poetry often uses rich figurative language.** Search through *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* to identify one example of each: simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. Record your answers in your journal.
- **A haiku is a traditional Japanese form where a a three-line poem has seventeen syllables, written in a 5/7/5 syllable count.** Write your own haiku inspired by *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*.
- **Identify three major themes of the story.** Use details from the novel to support each theme in an analytical essay about *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*.
- **Assign students different characters from the book and have them brainstorm about a guiding question: what and how can this character teach us?** Students can think about different characters to examine as a whole class and then break into smaller, specific character groups. Encourage students to think about how characters have made mistakes and also have done good things in the book, and ultimately what they learned from that character. Have students share out their findings: How is this character important to the book, and what lessons did they teach us over the course of the story? How did their actions develop the narrative, and why are they crucial to understanding the meaning of the book?
- **Write an alternative ending to the story that is different from the one the author wrote.** Ask students to think about the following questions: What would you change about the ending? What would you change about the characters? Why did you write the ending in this way?

- **Have students read *Thirty Talks Weird Love* ([leeandlow.com/books/thirty-talks-weird-love](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/thirty-talks-weird-love)) which is a coming of age story about a Mexican girl who must learn to love herself and use poetry to find her voice in the midst of tragedy.** As students reflect on the story, ask them to compare it to *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*. What are the differences and similarities between Gabi and Anamaria? What does each story demonstrate about family and friendship? What does each story reveal about the value of poetry and storytelling?
- **Have students read *Bird* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/bird>).** Ask students to compare and contrast each book, What is the central idea of each title? How are the titles connected? What themes or ideas do they share? Have students plan their thoughts in a graphic organizer and write an analytical essay afterwards.
- **Have students read *Rise! From Caged Bird to Poet of the People, Maya Angelou* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/rise>).** Ask students to compare and contrast each book. What is the central idea of each title? How are the titles connected? What themes or ideas do they share? Have students plan their thoughts in a graphic organizer and write an analytical essay afterwards.

Social Studies & Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; and Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, and Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Gabi's grandfather was brought to the United States and picked crops.** Design a lesson plan around Mexican Farm Labor Program in the United States. Learning goals should highlight key aspects including, but not limited to, time period, media coverage, class backgrounds, and community responses. What challenges were laborers facing due to race, gender, class, sexuality, or other factors? Consult the Library of Congress to learn more about the 1942: Bracero Program (<https://guides.loc.gov/latinx-civil-rights/bracero-program#:~:text=An%20executive%20order%20called%20the,on%20short%2Dterm%20labor%20contracts.>)
- **Ask students to research Tijuana.** How did it become a border city? What is its political history? Discuss how this information helps students understand Anamaria's childhood and experiences.
- *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* **offers students the ability to research historical, legal and social arguments.** Consider providing several resources for students to conduct their research on each topic. Then divide students into groups and have them debate the following:
 - Abortion. What disagreements are historically and currently central to laws and policies regarding abortions and reproductive rights? CSPAN has a great lesson plan resource on the abortion debate in the United States (<https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?18165>) *The New York Times* also has a history detailing abortion in the United States (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/04/arts/roe-v-wade-abortion-history.html>).

- Legalization of Marijuana. What disagreements are historically and currently central to laws and policies regarding marijuana? Consider consulting this resource by Street Law on how to conduct a debate on the legalization of Marijuana in the classroom (https://www.streetlaw.org/assets/site_18/files/our%20work/pipeline%20-%20corporate/e-library/marijuana%20legalization%20-%20classroom%20lesson%20-%20lawmaking%20and%20marijuana%20policy.doc)
- College admissions matters a lot to Gabi and her friends. Research different colleges and universities that you would like to attend. What about the school excites you? What are the demographics of the school? Can you see yourself living and studying there? Why? If you are not interested in college, research opportunities that excite you.

Arts/Performing Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Review Gabi's zine (p194-202).** What do you like about it and why? Create your own zine. Refer to Barnard College's Zine resource: <https://zines.barnard.edu/zine-basics/how-make-zine>
- **Gossip and rumors impact a lot of the characters in *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*.** Have student play telephone and reflect on the impact of misinformation. Refer to <https://icebreakerideas.com/telephone-game/>
- **Use a movie or video platform to create a book trailer for the novel.** Refer to ReadWriteThink.org (<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/book-report-alternative-creating-c>).
- **Put students in small groups where each group is assigned to read and perform one of Gabi's poems to the rest of the class.** Have students discuss what they liked or did not like about the poem and why.
- **Ask students to write their own poem about a cause they care about or difficult moment they had to overcome.** Encourage students to have their poems reflect their personal experiences and/or their feelings and opinions. Set up the classroom like a coffee shop and have students perform their work.
- **Have students create a book cover for a book about their life.** Provide students with time and materials to create their book cover and display them in your classroom or hallway.

School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Gabi makes a list of questions she would like to ask her mom but is afraid to.** Make a list of questions you would like to ask your caregiver or an adult in your life.
- **Ask students to create portraits of their close friends through drawing, collage, or photograph.** In writing, students should describe what actions and qualities they admire about their friend/s. Students can write in prose or submit a poem or song.
- **Interview a friend or family member who has lost a loved one in the past.** Question their strategies for how they coped both before and after the loss. What lessons were learned? What memories will always be cherished?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Isabel Quintero is an award-winning writer from the Inland Empire of Southern California. She is also the daughter of Mexican immigrants. In addition to *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*, she has also written a chapter book series for young readers, *Ugly Cat and Pablo* (Scholastic, Inc.), a non-fiction YA graphic biography, *Photographic: The Life of Graciela Iturbide* (Getty Publications, 2018), which received the Boston Globe Horn Book Award, and most recently, a picture book, *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* (Kokila, 2019). Isabel also writes poetry and essays. Her work can be found in *The Normal School*, *Huizache*, *The Acentos Review*, *As/Us Journal*, *The James Franco Review*, and other publications.

REVIEWS

"Meet Quintero's Gabi, eating and starving and fighting and writing her way through the crushing pressures of high school boy desire, religious approval and Mexican cultural taboos. Reminiscent of early Chicana writers such as Evangelina Vigil and Lorna Dee Cervantes, I cannot think of any book today for young adults as voracious, bold, truthful and timely." —*Juan Felipe Herrera, 2015-2017 US Poet Laureate*

"Believing she's not Mexican enough for her family and not white enough for Berkeley, Gabi still meets every challenge head-on with vulgar humor and raw honesty." —*School Library Journal, starred review*

"Quintero is utterly confident, gifting us with a messy, complicated protagonist who isn't defined by ethnicity, class, weight, or lifestyle. Gabi is purely herself—and that's what makes her universal." —*Booklist, starred review*

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