

Name: Lesson 1

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## *The House on Mango Street* (pp. 3-7) "One I could point to."

**Lesson Objective:** Describe the significance of houses and rooms to Sandra Cisneros and the narrator.

Do Now

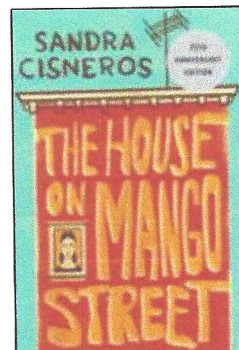
- Silent Solo (6-7 min)

- Take hands to review (3-4)

**Directions:** Rather than following the structure of a typical novel, *The House on Mango Street* is composed of many **vignettes**, short scenes meant to capture a single impression or memorable moment. Sandra Cisneros, the author of the book, writes:

*The book, a series of vignettes, is semi-autobiographical, the story of a young girl's transition from girlhood to adolescence<sup>1</sup> in a neighborhood she both loves and hates.*

<sup>1</sup>adolescence: the period of time between childhood and adulthood



1. What aspects of this quote remind you of books or stories you've read before? What might be new or unfamiliar about this book?

Familiar	Unfamiliar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• girl moves from girl-hood toadolesc. ("coming of age")</li> <li>• neighborhood setting</li> <li>• autobio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vignettes = structure</li> <li>• "semi" autobiographical = new</li> </ul>

2. An autobiography is an author's account of their own life. What might it mean for a book to be "semi-autographical"? (Note: the prefix "semi-" means partly or somewhat). Why might Cisneros describe the book in this way?


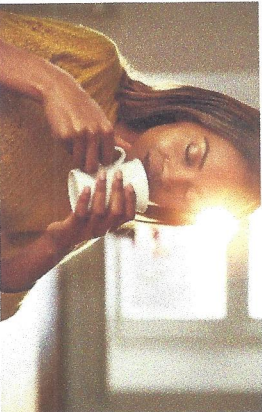
• Some fiction or made-up events mixed in with some real experiences/  
what actually happened

3. Rather than being written like a typical novel, this book is told as "a series of vignettes," or short scenes that capture a single moment or a defining detail about a character or idea. How might this change our experience as readers?

• might seem choppy/jumping around → could cause confusion  
→ or could be like a puzzle you put together

→ might mean we infer things, read between the lines

Vocabulary: Scold, Savor (5 min Roll out)

Word	Definition	Related Parts of Speech	Situations	Image
scold verb	to find fault noisily or angrily; to criticize	scold noun scolding noun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She jumped in the mud puddle even though she knew her mother would scold her for getting dirty.</li> <li>How does the image → represent all parts of the definition of "scold"?</li> </ul>	
savor verb	1) to taste or smell with pleasure 2) to delight in or enjoy	savor noun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He ate the delicious chocolate cake slowly so he could savor every bite.</li> <li>What other foods or drinks might you savor? Why?</li> </ul>	



# Vocabulary Active Practice

(5 min Active Pract.)

As we apply our new word knowledge, be sure to use the vocabulary word in your answer!

1. Give an example of something a parent might **scold** a child for doing. Can you think of a situation in which a child might **scold** his or her parents?  
↳ never! ↳ teasing sibling, playing roughly in the house

2. How might a championship team **savor** their victory?  
• have a party • pass the trophy around

3. Complete this sentence (Challenge: Include the word **scold**):

I was trying to **savor** every last bite of my ice cream cone  
but my aunt scolded me for letting it drip all over her table.

4. Is there a space that you **savor** spending time in? Describe this space. What do you **savor** about it?

library - quiet place filled w/ books, no distractions



Cycle 1 20 mins



*Read Aloud* → A House of My Own  
Sandra Cisneros

The young woman in this photograph is me when I was writing *The House on Mango Street*. She's in her office, a room that had probably been a child's bedroom when families lived in this apartment. It has no door and is only slightly wider than the walk-in pantry. But it has great light and sits above the hallway door downstairs, so she can hear her neighbors come and go. She's posed as if she's just looked up from her work for a moment, but in real life she never writes in this office. She writes in the kitchen, the only room with a heater.

1. **Turn and Talk:** Why might Cisneros have chosen to include a photograph of herself in the introduction to *The House on Mango Street*? What do you notice about the photograph?

*Cold Call 2-3 responses*

Notes

- semi-autobiographical = remind readers that the story is partially her real life.

*she seems young, posed (looking at camera), w/ the "tools" of a writer near her (that is a typewriter-pre-laptop!)*

2. When Cisneros writes "She's in her office," who is she referring to? What's unusual or surprising about the pronoun she uses?

*Silent Solo, then take hands to review.*

*Cisneros is both writing about herself (me, I) and writing as if she is someone else (she, her) • Shifts from 1st person to 3rd person*

*• separates from herself*



**Annotation Task:** As we continue to read excerpts from the introduction, annotate any descriptions of physical space (houses, rooms, etc.). What does Cisneros seem to value or want in her physical space? What kinds of spaces seem less desirable? Why?

③ brief discussion after Silent Solo

- | Notes  | dislikes:  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• she likes "magical" things that invite her to "play" and be creative</li> <li>• she likes to be quiet and alone to hear her voice</li> <li>• she likes to "let in the sky" and "white walls"</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• she feels uneasy when things "scold" her or force her to clean them</li> <li>• she doesn't want marriage/people around</li> </ul> |

① FASE Reading (4-5 min)      ② Silent Solo  
After reading - tell students to jot what Cisneros seems to want/ value in her physical space?

teacher The young woman fills her "office" with things she drags home from the flea market at Maxwell Street. Antique typewriters, alphabet blocks, asparagus ferns, bookshelves, ceramic figurines from Occupied Japan, wicker baskets, birdcages, hand-painted photos. Things she likes to look at. It's important to have this space to look and think. When she lived at home, the things she looked at scolded her and made her feel sad and depressed. They said, "Wash me." They said, "Lazy." They said, "You ought." But the things in her office are magical and invite her to play. They fill her with light. It's the room where she can be quiet and still and listen to the voices inside herself. She likes being alone in the daytime.

teacher As a girl, she dreamed about having a silent home, just to herself, the way other women dream of their weddings. Instead of collecting lace and linen for her trousseau<sup>1</sup>, the young woman buys old things from the thrift stores on grimy Milwaukee Avenue for her future house-of-her-own—faded quilts, cracked vases, chipped saucers, lamps in need of love.

stu 4 The young woman returned to Chicago after graduate school and moved back into her father's house, 1754 N. Keeler, back into her girl's room with its twin bed and floral wallpaper. She was twenty-three and a half. /  
stu 5 Now she summoned her courage and told her father she wanted to live alone again, like she did when she was away at school. He looked at her with that eye of the rooster before it attacks, but she wasn't alarmed. She'd seen that look before and knew he was harmless. She was his favorite, and it was only a matter of waiting.

teacher The daughter claimed she'd been taught that a writer needs quiet, privacy, and long stretches of solitude<sup>2</sup> to think. The father decided too much college and too many gringo<sup>3</sup> friends had ruined her. / In a way he was right. In a way she was right. When she thinks to herself in her father's language, she knows sons and daughters don't leave their parents' house until they marry. When she thinks in English, she knows she should've been on her own since eighteen.  
[...]

teacher When she's alone, she savors her apartment of high ceilings and windows that let in the sky, the new carpeting and walls white as typing paper, the walk-in pantry with empty shelves, her bedroom without a door, her office with its typewriter, and the big front room windows with their view of a street, rooftops, trees, and the dizzy traffic of the Kennedy Expressway.

<sup>1</sup>trousseau: the clothes, linen, and other belongings collected by a bride for her marriage

<sup>2</sup>solitude: the state of being alone

<sup>3</sup>gringo: an often-disparaging slang term for a person who is not Latino/a



3. Turn and Talk: What does "the young woman" want in this excerpt? What obstacles does she face? How is this conflict resolved? *wants: solitude, time to write and listen to her own voices*  
*obstacles: Her father, her culture tell her not to want these things - to live w/ family until she marries, to avoid college + "gringo" cultural norms.*



4. Consider these excerpts from the passage above:

- It's the room where she can be quiet and still and listen to the voices inside herself.
- As a girl, she dreamed about having a silent home, just to herself, the way other women dream of their weddings.
- The daughter claimed she'd been taught that a writer needs quiet, privacy, and long stretches of solitude to think.

- a. What similarities do you see in all three excerpts? *Silent Solo (1-2 min)*

Notes

*quiet, solitude, privacy; ability to think for herself + listen to herself*

- (2-3) Silent Solo, then share out; Make sure students STAMP resp.*  
 b. What might having a space of her own represent to Cisneros?

*Having a space of her own might represent the freedom to write, to capture her own thoughts and imagination.*

*Having a space of her own might represent independence to be different from what society expects or to be/live separately from her family.*

Additional Insights *Silent Solo, then Show Call if pacing allows.*

*If pacing allows: Revise your response from Q4b by adding a quote from the excerpt or an idea from your peers:*

*Having a space of her own might represent the freedom "to look and think;" a space to be "quiet and still and listen to the voices inside of herself" to encourage her imagination.*



Cycle 2 20 mins

FASE Reading (6 min)

Annotation Task: As you read, annotate any details describing the narrator and her family.

Take Hands: What observations do you have about the narrator/her family? (2-3 min)

Notes

- move a lot
- live in run-down circumstances
- 6 peop. crowded in small house
- house not what they hope/dreamed for

5. Turn and Talk: Answer the following questions with your partner:

Cold Call 2-3 people to review

- Why did the family move to Mango Street? landlord refused to fix water pipe - family had no water
- What do you notice about the house they move into? - small, a bit run-down, not really what they want

6. Reread this scene from the end of the vignette on p. 5:

Where do you live? she asked.

There, I said pointing up to the third floor.

You live there?

There. I had to look to where she pointed—the third floor, the paint peeling, wooden bars Papa had nailed on the windows so we wouldn't fall out. You live there? The way she said it made me feel like nothing. There. I lived there. I nodded.

Silent Solo; brief discussion (5 min) - allow time to stamp for parts a/b (3-4)

a. What does the nun see when she looks at the narrator's home? How does this change what the narrator sees?

- The nun sees the run-down, broken, patched up nature of the house. She can't believe someone lives there.
- The narrator now realizes what the house - and the people who live there - look from the perspective of others.

b. What might the narrator mean when she says this conversation "made [her] feel like nothing"? Why might she feel this way?

- Imagine the tone the nun uses when she speaks - what are her exact words? what word is italicized? why?
- The narrator starts to feel worthless, as though the house and the way it looks represents her own worth.
- She starts to realize that others will judge her based on these externals.



Cycle 3: On Your Own 20 min

AIR + annotation - 5 mins.

Annotation Task: Reread the opening vignette (pp. 3-5) and annotate any descriptions of physical space (rooms, houses, etc.). What do you notice? *(don't process annot. separately as Q7 does that!)*

the house everyone wants is large + spacious, inside + out (basement, 3 washrooms, great big unfenced yard)  
house she gets is tight, cramped, crumbling (small windows, tight steps, sharing rooms)

7. Contrast these descriptions of the house the narrator and her family imagine with the house on Mango Street (p. 4):

Imagined	Real
And we'd have a <u>basement</u> and at least <u>three washrooms</u> so when we took a bath we wouldn't have to tell everybody. Our house would be white with trees around it, <u>a great big yard</u> and grass growing without a fence. This was the house Papa talked about when he held a <u>lottery ticket</u> and this was the house Mama dreamed up in the stories she told us before we went to bed.	It's <u>small</u> and red with <u>tight steps</u> in front and windows so <u>small</u> you'd think they were holding their breath. Bricks are crumbling in places, and the front door is so swollen you have to push hard to get in. There is <u>no front yard</u> , only <u>four little elms</u> the city planted by the curb [...] the house has only one <u>washroom</u> . <u>Everybody has to share</u> a bedroom—Mama and Papa, Carlos and Kiki, me and Nenny.

- a. What do you notice about the house the narrator and her family imagine? How is the narrator's real house different? **Challenge:** What might be preventing them from living in a house like the one they imagine?

House they buy is different from what they imagine because it is smaller and more cramped. Instead of many dif. rooms and a big yard, there's small windows, shared rooms, no front yard at all.

They are probably prevented from living in the house of their dreams because they can't afford it - Papa only talks about the house when he has a lottery ticket - the hope of winning \$.

- b. Consider this description from the excerpt above:

It's small and red with tight steps in front and windows so small you'd think they were holding their breath.

Personification refers to attributing human characteristics to non-human things. How does the narrator personify the windows of the house? Why might she describe the windows in this way? What does this suggest about her reaction to the house?

- Brief discussion using Qs 1 Then Silent Solo to stamp response.*
- When might a person hold their breath? How might it make them feel?
  - How do those answers <sup>might</sup> apply to ~~understand~~ the narrator? What might they reveal about her feelings?

When a person holds their breath, they might be waiting for something, trying to be quiet, afraid, trying not to take up space. The narrator might feel unable to take up space, or constrained + held back in this house. She may be afraid to take up the space she wants or needs to be free.



8. Reread the final paragraph of the vignette (p. 5):

*I knew then I had to have a house. A real house. One I could point to. But this isn't it. The house on Mango Street isn't it. For the time being, Mama says. Temporary, says Papa. But I know how those things go.*

- a. Turn and Talk: What is the narrator referring to when she says, "One I could point to"? (Consider the exchange with the nun on p. 5). What do you think she means by this? *A house she feels proud of; a house that makes her feel worth something*
- b. What might having a "a real house" represent to the narrator? *try to think of more than one response*
- Share Out 2-3 responses (2-3 mins)*

*A real house might represent freedom + comfort, space for solitude, dreams or wealth to achieve.*

9. Turn and Task: Cisneros titled her introduction "A House of My Own," and the book is called *The House on Mango Street*. With your partner, jot a few notes about what these titles might mean. Consider the following questions:

*Whole class discuss w/ teacher charting*

- What physical spaces do these titles refer to?
- What similarities do you see in the narrator's and Cisneros's views on rooms and houses? Have you noticed any differences?
- What themes or ideas have you started to see emerging in these two texts?

Notes	
<u>A H of my Own</u>	<u>TH on Mango St</u>
↳ freedom, space, place to think + write	↳ space
↳ escape from what parents, culture society want for you	↳ freedom
	↳ ability to dream/afford bigger house
both want space to create, to have privacy	
different - C. mentions writing specifically, narrator more economic concerns	

*Themes: freedom/independence*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Exit Ticket (8-10 mins)

1. Recall these lines from Cisneros's introduction:

When she's alone, she **savors** her apartment of high ceilings and windows that let in the sky, the new carpeting and walls white as typing paper, [...], and the big front room windows with their view of a street, rooftops, trees, and the dizzy traffic of the Kennedy Expressway.

Why might Cisneros "**savor**" this apartment? Try to think of multiple reasons and include at least one direct quote from the text in your response.

Cisneros might savor the "high ceilings and windows that let in the sky" because they provide her the feelings of freedom and openness she needs to write. Cisneros might also savor quiet time to be creative, and walls that look "white as typing paper" probably give her the solitude and encourage her to capture her ideas on actual paper.

2. In our Do Now, we learned Cisneros describes *The House on Mango Street* as "semi-autobiographical." What does this mean? How have we seen this reflected in the first vignette?

Semi-autobiographical means that Cisneros will combine actual life events or emotions with some fictional imaginings. We see that the narrator in the first vignette hopes for a home with space to spread out from her family, as Cisneros does (hoping to create a space for her writing self, which is not what her family envisions.) Both long for some type of freedom/independence and use their home/space to help understand their emotions/feelings.



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## Homework

Nightly Reading: *The House on Mango Street* pp. 6-7 ("Hairs")

Annotation Task: Cisneros uses figurative language (similes, metaphors, and personification) frequently in this vignette. Review the definitions below and find one example of each.

Term	Definition	Example from pp. 6-7
Simile	A direct comparison between two unlike things using the words "like" or "as"	my papa's hair is <u>like</u> a broom Kiki [has] hair <u>like</u> fur my mother's hair <u>like</u> little rosettes
Metaphor	A figure of speech that states one thing is another thing to make an implicit or hidden comparison	[my mother's hair] is the warm smell of bread before you bake it
Personification	A figure of speech in which something non-human is given human attributes or characteristics	my hair is lazy [my hair] never obeys barettes or bands.

1. Jot a few notes to describe the narrator's relationship with her mother. What in the vignette makes you think this?

close (when she is holding you)

Notes

loving (candy, curly, pretty, sweet) = so positive

warm (smell of bread, makes room for you in bed)

2. Cisneros is also a poet, and she describes the vignettes in *The House on Mango Street* as "lazy poems." What about this vignette reminds you of poetry? Why might Cisneros have chosen to use this as the second vignette in the book?

This is like poetry because it is filled up images (like poetry does) and because the images make you infer/guess at the family's relationships. Like a poem, you figure out a meaning from more sensory details.

2nd vignette so we see that, while Cisneros might be disappointed in the structure of her house, she still loves the people within.