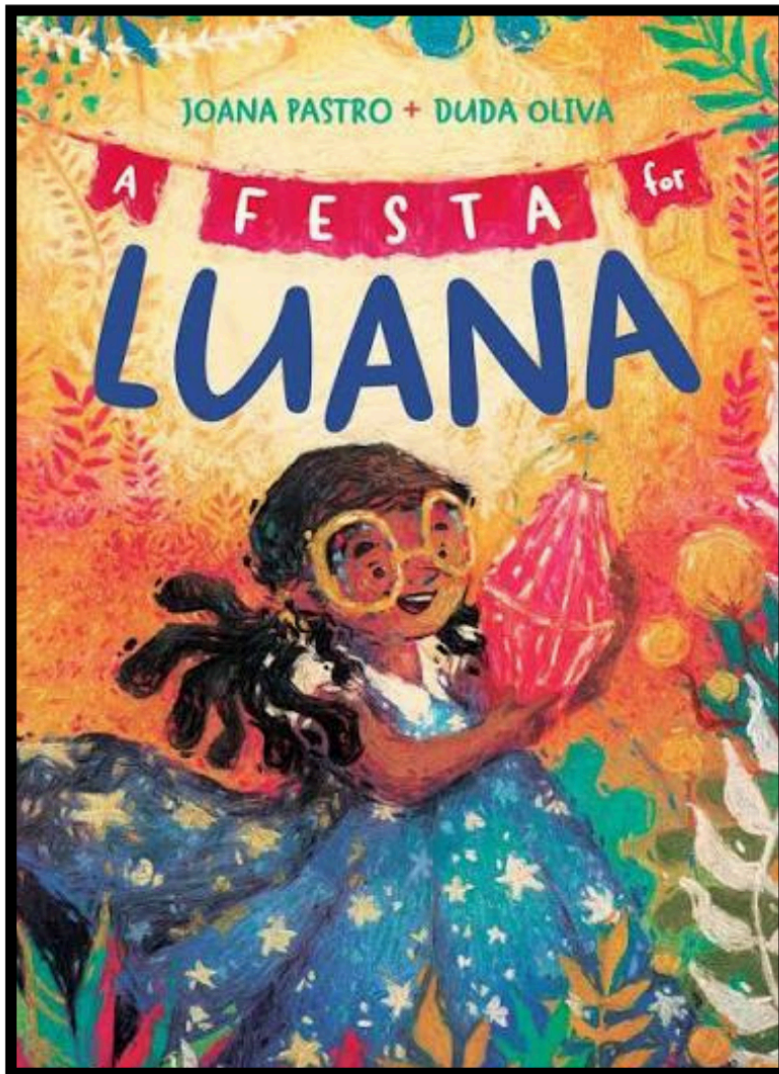


América's Book Award

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



PRODUCED BY THE CONSORTIUM FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

PROGRAMS

WRITTEN BY KRISTINE WITKO



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This educator's guide was written to support using *A Festa for Luana* in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. Produced by the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) at the University of Arizona on behalf of the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) and the Américas Award, it was written in 2025 by Kristine Witko, Curriculum Consultant, with support from Katrina Dillon, Assistant Director of Outreach at CLAS.

ABOUT THE AMÉRICAS AWARD

CLASP founded the Américas Award in 1993 to encourage and commend authors, illustrators, and publishers who produce quality children's and young adult books that portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinx communities in the United States, and to provide teachers with recommendations for classroom use. CLASP offers up to two annual book awards, together with a list of honor books and commended titles. For more information concerning the Américas Award, including additional classroom resources, please visit the [CLASP website](#).

The awards are administered by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) and coordinated by both Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies and the University of Arizona's Center for Latin American Studies. Generous support is also provided by Florida International University, Michigan State University, Stanford University, University of California, Berkeley, University of California, Los Angeles, UNC-Duke Consortium in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, University of Florida, University of Michigan, University of New Mexico, University of Texas at Austin, University of Utah, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Vanderbilt University.

ABOUT CLASP

CLASP's mission is to promote all facets of Latin American studies throughout the world. Its broad range of activities include the encouragement of research activities, funding of professional workshops, advancement of citizen outreach activities, and development of teaching aids for the classroom.

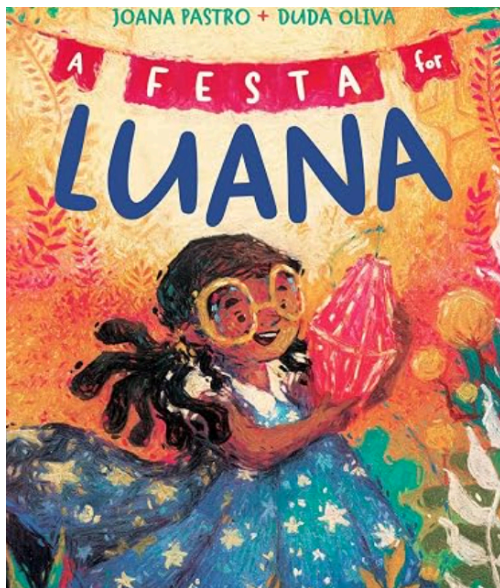


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OVERVIEW

A Festa for Luana

Written by Joana Pastro

Illustrated by Duda Oliva

Published 2025 by Atheneum Books for Young Readers

ISBN: 1665924799

THEMES

Family, Identity, Cultural Traditions, Place, Home, Belonging, Emotions

SYNOPSIS

Pretty little details can help...

tell the story of who I am.

Luana has been counting down the days until she can visit her grandparents in Brazil. She's just in time for Festa Junina, a vibrant celebration where people dance, eat, and dress up in all sorts of colors!

But Luana feels...different. Her clothes are too plain, and her cousins comment on her American accent. She doesn't feel Brazilian. Luckily, with a little help from her family and a new tradition, Luana learns that every part of her story is important, and she belongs after all!

READING LEVEL

Grades P-3 / Ages 4-8

REVIEWS

★ "This heartfelt journey celebrates the beauty of embracing multiple cultures and the joy of finding one's place within a loving family. . . . A delightful story of cultural connection and belonging." – *Kirkus Reviews*



★ "Oliva's vivid pastel and colored pencil illustrations blend relaxed strokes of warm cinnamon and maroon, lush emerald and juniper, and vibrant plum and orchid. . . . Pastro seamlessly integrates Brazilian Portuguese words, which are easily decipherable from context clues for readers not familiar with the language. . . . A rare representation of the Brazilian celebration Festa Junina, this tender story of identity and belonging will linger in the hearts of readers." – *School Library Journal*

★ "The illustrations shimmer with saturated colors, rendering the people and festivities in vibrant detail as Luana throws herself into preparations, helping the adults set up games and start the bonfire, and dancing to the music of the quadrilha. Pastro depicts a confident protagonist who is vulnerable to feeling different but bold enough to reclaim it as an asset. Back matter adds the author's personal touch, and a recipe for bolo de fubá invites everyone to celebrate Festa Junina." – *Booklist*

AWARDS

- Américas Award, Commended title, 2025



APPLICABLE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

K-12 READING

Key Ideas and Details

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.



K-12 WRITING

Text Types and Purposes

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: JOANA PASTRO

Joana Pastro is the award-winning author of *Lucas and the Capoeira Circle*. Originally from Brazil, Joana lives in Georgia with her husband, her three extremely creative children, a rambunctious Morkie, and a needy Maltipoo. Visit her at joanapastro.com.



IN HER WORDS: ABOUT ME

Taken from <https://www.joanapastro.com/>:

“For as long as Joana can remember, she wanted to be an artist of some kind. So, she became an architect. But once her first child was born, all the visits to the library, and the countless story times made Joana start dreaming of becoming a children’s book author. She had no idea how to start, so for seven years all she did was collect story ideas on a little notebook. Finally, one Sunday afternoon she decided to sit down and write... Soon Joana discovered that writing children’s books isn’t easy. But she didn’t give up. She became a member of SCBWI (Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators), joined a critique group, made many writing friends, took classes, workshops, went to conferences, and did a lot of reading, writing and revising. One day, she sent out a story to an agent. The agent loved it and decided to help Joana share her stories with the world.

She is the author of *Lillybelle, A Damsel Not in Distress* (Astra Kids, 2020); the International Latino Book Awards winner *Bisa’s Carnaval* (Scholastic, 2021), which received a Kirkus starred review. She is also the author of *Lucas And The Capoeira Circle* (Atheneum, 2024) for which she received another Kirkus starred review, and *A Festa For Luana* (Atheneum, 2025). Her next book, *Amazing Amazon River*, a non-fiction picture book, is coming soon with Kiwi Press.

When Joana isn't writing, she enjoys curling up with a good book, baking delicious desserts, and dancing like no one is watching!

Originally from Brazil, Joana lives in Georgia with her amazing husband, her three extremely creative children, a rambunctious Morkie, and a needy Maltipoo.”



AUTHOR'S NOTE OF *A FESTA FOR LUANA*

“In *A Festa for Luana*, a Brazilian American girl experiences Festa Junina—a festival that takes place throughout the month of June—for the very first time. Luana is swept away by the bright colors and patterns, scrumptious food, warm bonfires, fun games, and lively music and dancing...but nothing captures her heart more completely than the celebration of tradition, family, and love.

I have many fond memories of the festas I have attended throughout my life. The pictures below show me dancing *quadrilha* during Festa Junina in the first grade. I attended a small Catholic school with (mostly) the same group of kids from preschool to eighth grade. We were like a big family!”



CLASSROOM RELEVANCE AND APPLICATIONS

What does it mean to belong to two different worlds? In *A Festa for Luana*, we meet a young Brazilian-American girl named Luana who is excited to prepare for a celebration with her family. After a long journey to Brazil, she finally arrives at her grandparents' house and cannot wait to get started. However, during the joyful reunion, Luana is dismayed to be called an "American granddaughter." She has to remind everyone that she is Brazilian, too! Then, when everyone is putting on their colorful dresses for *Festa Junina*, a traditional celebration, Luana is disappointed to see that her dress looks different than that of her Brazilian cousins. Suddenly, she no longer feels as though she fits in. What does it mean to be both American and Brazilian?

This book provides a valuable opportunity for students to reflect on their own cultures while learning about Brazilian culture and traditions. Many students will relate to the excitement of seeing their family and preparing for a special gathering, whether it is a holiday, birthday, religious celebration, or community event. By connecting Luana's experiences to their own lives, students can explore how traditions help families create memories and maintain connections—across borders and generations.

A Festa for Luana also lends itself well to discussions about cultural identity and belonging. As students read about Luana's celebration, they can think about ways that food, music, language, clothing, and customs help shape a person's sense of self. The story encourages students to appreciate cultural diversity while recognizing that many families share similar experiences of gathering together, celebrating important milestones, and passing traditions on to younger generations.

Students can learn more about the history and culture of Brazil. Classroom activities may involve researching Brazilian holidays and celebrations, comparing cultural traditions across Latin American countries, or exploring the geography of Brazil. They can also expand upon the glossary at the end of the book and look up more words and phrases in Portuguese, making a small learner's dictionary. *Festa Junina* is grounded in music, including the traditional songs and the *quadrilha*, which is similar to a square dance; for that reason, students have many opportunities to research the history of the dance (with origins in 18th-century France, brought over to Brazil by Portuguese royalty) and even try to dance it themselves. They can learn about the types of music played during the festa, including *forró*, a genre with its origins in the rural Northeast region of Brazil.

Music is not the only thing that defines *Festa Junina*; food also plays a central role in the celebration. At the end of the book, Pastro provides a recipe for bolo de fubá, a traditional cake commonly eaten during this party. This is one of the delicious recipes that Luana's grandmother was cooking in the kitchen, along with canjica, pé-de-moleque, and cocada. The smell of these familiar foods make Luana feel at home, deepening her connection to Brazil, her family, and its culture.



Just as Luana grows closer to her family throughout the story, students can deepen their connections with their own family members by interviewing them about traditions or learning the history behind cultural events that they often celebrate. As a result, students can gain a deeper appreciation for their own heritage.

Ultimately, *Festa for Luana* is a poignant story about family, culture, tradition, and identity that students of all ages can relate to. Its opportunities for both interdisciplinary learning and personal reflection make it a meaningful text to center a unit around.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before reading the book with students, you may want to introduce some of the important themes, activate any prior knowledge, and generate interest and anticipation through the following activities and/or discussion questions.

VOCABULARY

accent

amarelo

bolo de fubá

canjica

cocada

doce de leite

dois

estou indo

Festa Junina

frown

glisten

mamãe

papai

pé-de-moleque

pipoca

que lindo

tia

três

um

verde



viva
vovó
vovô

ACTIVITY 1: PICTURE WALK

Pique students' interest, activate prior knowledge, and introduce the book through a picture walk.

PROCESS:

1. Show students the front and back cover of the book. Ask them to predict what they think the book will be about. Then, slowly flip through the pages of the book without reading any of the words. As students ask questions about each picture they see, guide them to make inferences based upon their observations. Focus on who, what, when, where, why and how questions such as: "What is happening here?" "What will happen next?" "Who do you think this is?" "How does he feel? What makes you say that?"
2. Once students have read the book, return to their thoughts and predictions, comparing them to the actual events of the book.

ACTIVITY 2: OBSERVATION CHARTS

Observation charts offer one way for students to pique their interest about a book they will begin to read. As students will be analyzing illustrations from the book, it is helpful to select pages in advance that may spark some interesting conversations. Examples include the following:

- page 5 (Luana arrives at her grandparents' house in Brazil)
- pages 7–8 (the extended family greets each other)
- pages 11–12 (Luana prepares for the celebration)
- page 13 (Luana feels uncertain upon seeing her Brazilian cousins)
- page 15 (Luana laughs with her grandmother in the kitchen as she cooks)
- pages 19–20 (Luana and her cousins decorate for the party, the tablecloths dancing high in the sky)
- page 24 (Luana gets a new idea)
- page 25 (Luana shows off her new dress)
- pages 29–30 (Luana and her cousins dance the quadrilha)

PROCESS:

1. Explain to students that they will work in small groups, rotating around the room to view and discuss each illustration. One person per group will be the recorder. When looking at an illustration, students will spend at least one minute silently reflecting on the following questions:



“What do you see?” “What do you think is happening?” “How does this illustration make you feel?” Then, students will discuss their thoughts in the small group. The recorder will write down their reflections and answers to the questions on the observation chart. Sticky notes can also be used to record the group's thoughts. Set a timer, and when time is up, the teacher will give the signal to transition to the next station.

2. Divide students into small groups. Place an illustration and marker at various stations in the classroom. After guiding each group to their initial station, begin the activity. Continue rotating groups through the illustrations until each group has seen them all.
3. Hang up all of the observation charts with students' comments. As a whole group, discuss each image, giving students time to share and respond to what they posted. Keep the charts posted throughout the reading and discussion of *A Festa for Luana*. Allow students to revisit the charts as they think more about what the illustrations represent.

ACTIVITY 3: FAMILY TRADITIONS

This activity will enable students to think about their own family traditions and celebrations. Just as Luana looked forward to celebrating Festa Junina with her family, many students likely have a celebration that they look forward to with their family or community.

PROCESS:

1. Explain to students that soon, they will read a book about a cultural celebration and traditions that bring families together. Before they begin reading, they can reflect on their own family traditions and celebrations. This will help them connect to the main character, Luana.
2. Ask students open-ended questions like, “What is a tradition?” “What are some traditions your family celebrates?” “How do people learn family traditions?”
3. Next, explain that many traditions are passed down through storytelling and shared experiences. Family members often learn what to do during celebrations by listening and watching their older relatives, as well as participating in events and helping to prepare special foods.
4. Ask students to think of one family tradition they engage in. This could be a holiday, an activity, a family reunion, or a routine gathering (such as a Sunday dinner). Give students time to think in their brains and share with a partner in a think-pair-share.
5. Then, ask students to complete a short “tradition story” organizer that includes what the tradition is, who participates in it, what happens, and why it is important to their family. Students can also have a space to illustrate this tradition.
6. After students complete their organizers, ask them to meet in small groups to share their stories. Circulate around the room and ask the groups, “Are you noticing any similarities between your stories? Any differences?”



7. As a class, come back together and create a class tradition web, a constellation of different elements (like food, music, clothing, dancing, or gatherings). Connect them to show how traditions often share common themes across cultures. An alternative activity would be to do a word cloud activity using a free generator, such as [Mentimeter](#). The words will grow more pronounced to illustrate similarities between stories.
8. Bring the activity to a close by explaining that this activity has helped students understand how traditions connect families and groups of people across time and generations. As they begin reading *A Festa for Luana*, they can connect their own experiences to that of Luana's, considering how her moments with her family help to deepen her sense of belonging.

ACTIVITY 4: SENSORY DETAILS

Luana's senses are activated by the sights of Brazil, the smells of her grandmother's kitchen, the sounds of the music, the taste of the delicious food, and the touch a hand clasped in her own as she dances the quadrilha. Students can prepare themselves to notice these sensory details in *A Festa for Luana* by first thinking about how their own senses are activated during celebrations.

PROCESS:

1. Tell students that soon they will read a book called *A Festa for Luana* about a Brazilian celebration with music, food, and family traditions. Before they begin reading, they will think about how their five senses are activated during these kinds of celebrations.
2. Start by asking, "Can you think of a time when you celebrated with your family, friends or community?" After students have given a thumbs up, say, "These celebrations often activate our five senses. Think to yourselves: how did this activity feel, sound, look, smell, or taste?"
3. Begin recording responses in an anchor chart labeled see, hear, smell, taste, feel.
4. Tell students that they will complete an activity that will enable them to think more about these senses in depth. When these senses are activated during a fun and lively celebration, the experience feels deeply memorable. This will help them to better understand Luana and her excitement during the Festa Junina.
5. At their seats, students will complete a graphic organizer divided by the five senses. For instance:
 - a. What do you see at the celebration? (Decorations, clothing, people, colors.)
 - b. What sounds do you hear? (Music, laughter, voices.)
 - c. What smells do you notice? (Food, spices, perfume, the outdoors.)
 - d. What tastes do you remember? (The flavors of rich food or drinks.)
 - e. What can you touch? (Someone's hand in your own.)
6. Bring the class back together and discuss how these sensory details help us remember important moments. As they read *A Festa for Luana*, they can think about how these sensory details bring her



experience to life and make it feel as though we, the readers, are there with her; in addition, these sensory details show the richness of her experience, creating a memory she will fondly look back on.

GUIDED READING QUESTIONS

BEFORE READING

1. Do you think this is a fiction or nonfiction text? What makes you think that?
2. This book is a work of fiction, meaning it will tell us a story with characters. Let's look at the front cover. What do you think will happen in this story?
3. This is a book

DURING READING

Transferable Questions

1. (Every few pages) What is happening?
2. Who are the characters? What do we know about them?
3. How does the character feel? How do you know?
4. What lessons can we learn from this book?

Text-Based Questions

1. How does Luana feel when they first arrive in Brazil? Why?
2. Describe some of the sights she sees upon her arrival.
3. Why does Luana suddenly feel uncertain when she gets to her grandparents' house?
4. What is Festa Junina?
5. How does Luana begin to get ready for the party?
6. How does Luana feel once she compares herself to her cousins?
7. What do Luana and vovó (grandmother) talk about in the kitchen? How does Luana feel?
8. How does her family prepare for the celebration?
9. How does Luana feel in her new dress? Why?
10. What happens at the end?
11. How do Luana's feelings change from beginning to end?

AFTER READING

1. Have you read any other books about cultural identity or traditions? How were they similar or different?
2. Have you read other books by the same author or illustrator? What were those books about and was this one similar or different?



POST-READING ACTIVITIES

A Festa for Luana has many themes that can be connected with other works of literature, such as family, identity, culture, immigration, place, and emotions. As with any lesson, it's important to consider the needs of your students and plan these post-reading activities accordingly. With this in mind, we've provided a variety of extension activity ideas and resources below that can be used in conjunction with the book.

APPROACH 1: LITERACY CONNECTIONS

To expand the literacy connections made when using *A Festa for Luana*, consider including the readings discussed below.

“Saudade”

Just like *A Festa for Luana*, this book also reflects on what it is like to be both Brazilian and American, straddling both worlds.

PROCESS:

1. Begin by asking students, “Have you ever felt a feeling that you couldn’t really describe or name?” Allow students to share examples, highlighting how some emotions can be difficult to put into words.
2. Explain, “This idea is described in the fiction book *Saudade: Our Longing for Brazil* by Ana Crespo. The word *saudade* is a Portuguese word that does not have a direct translation into English. It is a feeling of longing or loss. It is similar to nostalgia, but deeper than that. We can feel saudade for a person, place, or memory.”
3. Ask students to make predictions by looking at the cover. “What do you notice? What do you think will happen?”
4. Say, “As we read today, we will think about how people stay connected to their culture, family, and members even when they are far away.”
5. Read the book and ask comprehension questions, such as “Who are the characters? What do we know about them?” “What is happening?” More specific questions may include, “What examples of saudade do you notice?” “What does the girl’s mother feel saudade for? What about the girl herself?” “By reflecting on her own saudade, what does the little girl learn?”
6. Once the class finishes the book, ask them to summarize key events. Then ask, “What did you learn about saudade? Have you ever felt saudade before?”
7. Make a connection to *A Festa for Luana*: “How are these two books similar? How are they different? What do they teach us about Brazilian culture?”



“Islandborn”

Islandborn, written by Junot Díaz, is about a little girl named Lola who gets a school assignment to write about her first country. However, she had left when she was a baby and could not remember the island. She begins to ask people from her family and her neighborhood what they remember about the island, and their memories become even more vivid with her imagination. At the end, Lola realizes that even if she does not remember the island herself, the island is still in her: she *is* the island. This story connects to *A Festa for Luana* because readers can discuss the importance of cultural identity and belonging.

PROCESS:

1. Ask students several open-ended questions, such as, “Where do you come from? Is this place an important place to you, and if so, why? How would you feel if you did not remember this place?” Give students time to turn and talk and choose some to share with the class.
2. Explain, “Today, we will read a fiction book called *Islandborn* by Junot Díaz. Look at the cover. What do you notice? What do you think this story will be about?”
3. Explain, “In many fiction books, the character learns a lesson by the end. A lesson is something we learn about life. As we read, we will think to ourselves: What lesson does Lola learn?”
4. Read the book. Occasionally stop to ask comprehension questions: “Who are our characters? What do we know about them?” “What is happening here?” “How does this character feel?” “How do you think the story will end?”
5. Pause to think aloud about moments in the book that may provide a hint about the upcoming lesson. For example, “I’m noticing Lola feels sad that she cannot remember where she is from. I am going to remember that. Big feelings can help us to figure out the lesson at the end.”
6. Upon finishing the book, ask students to turn to a partner and re-tell the key parts of the story. Then ask them: “How did Lola feel at the beginning of the story? Why?” Then ask, “How did Lola feel at the end of the story? Why?” Finally, say, “As readers, we’ve noticed that Lola’s feelings changed from beginning to end. Why does she feel so happy at the end? What lesson did she learn?” After students discuss their responses, say, “Lola isn’t the only one who can learn a lesson from this story. Fiction books can teach us about life, too. What is a lesson that WE can learn?” Allow students to turn and talk or share out whole group.
7. Make the connection to *A Festa for Luana*: “Both Lola in *Islandborn* and Luana in *A Festa for Luana* learn a lesson at the end. How are these lessons similar? How are they different?”
8. Students can engage in a variety of activities related to memory, home, and heritage.



APPROACH 2: CREATE A MEMORY TREE

This activity adds a twist to the traditional family tree activity. Each branch can represent someone important to them, and the leaves for the corresponding branch can include a memory, a place, or a shared tradition.

PROCESS:

1. Say to students, “The book *A Festa for Luana* taught us that memories can be tied to people and places. It can even be tied to things that activate our senses, like the smell of cake baking in the oven or the sound of laughter. Today, we will be creating a new kind of family tree that allows us to include some of those important memories.”
2. Begin by modeling for students how to create the tree. The teacher can draw the base of the tree then a branch, labeling it the name of an important person. Emphasize that this person does not need to be a family member; it can be someone who is very close to them. Add one or more leaves that include a special memory. An example could be, “Traveling to New York City” or “Making tamales for Christmas.”
3. Give students the opportunity to design and illustrate their memory trees. Once they finish, they can present to the class or to a partner.
4. Explain that just like in the book *A Festa for Luana*, memories and traditions can make us feel connected to people, even when they are far away.

APPROACH 3: FAMILY INTERVIEW

A Festa for Luana highlights the importance of family, roots, and traditions. A family interview activity would allow students to connect with their family members, learn about the traditions that are important to them, and teach their classmates what they learned.

PROCESS:

1. Tell students, “In the story, Luana is able to go to Brazil and deepen her connections with her Brazilian family, learning more about their past and participating in traditions. Now, you have a chance to learn more about someone in your family.”
2. Ask students to choose someone in their family who they would like to learn more about.
3. In class, students will take 10-15 minutes to develop interview questions for this family member.
4. Students will go home and record their interviews with family members.
5. Afterward, students can create a visual presentation of their interview. Options include a poster or a PowerPoint presentation. They can share key findings from their interviews with the class.



APPROACH 4: INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

A Festa for Luana may introduce some students to Brazil and its culture. This activity gives students the chance to learn more about the country's cultural and historical context, as well as why Festa Junina is so important.

PROCESS:

1. Tell students, "We know that *A Festa for Luana* is a book about a Brazilian-American girl who deepens her connections to her Brazilian heritage. While we were introduced to Brazil by reading this book, we can learn more about it by conducting research of our own. From there, we can better understand Luana's experience."
2. Ask, "Can anyone share facts about Brazil?"
3. After a brief discussion, locate the country on a map, discuss the language that is spoken there (Portuguese), and describe the colonization of Brazil by Portugal.
4. Supplement this discussion with media such as short videos, images, or articles that describe the origins of Festa Junina and quadrilha. Some examples are linked below:
 - a. Watch: [São João: Brazil Northeast's Biggest Party](#)
 - i. Festa Junina celebrates São João (Saint John); the Festa of São João is considered the pinnacle of the party season.
 - b. Watch: [Brazil's Other Big Party \(Not Carnival!\)](#)
 - i. Note that this YouTube video is in Portuguese with English subtitles included.
 - c. Read: [June Quadrilles, a Popular Brazilian Festival Folk Dance, Officially Recognized as National Cultural Expression](#)
5. Break students into groups to research topics such as the origin of Festa Junina, how to dance the quadrilha, the roots of forró, common recipes related to the celebration, and more.
6. Each group will create a presentation with a corresponding visual (such as a poster, PowerPoint, infographic, etc.) summarizing what they have discussed and connecting it to the book.



MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

To complement and enhance teaching about *A Festa for Luana*, we've compiled the following selective multimedia resources that are available at no cost online.

INTERVIEWS WITH JOANA PASTRO

- Read [“Interview With Joana Pastro, Author of *Bisa's Carnaval*”](#)
Although this interview took place before writing *A Festa for Luana*, it is still a worthwhile interview, as it describes the author's inspiration for writing and her writing process for a different book related to Brazilian Culture: *Bisa's Carnaval*.
- Read [“The Picture Book Buzz - Interview with Joana Pastro”](#)
While this interview also was published before *A Festa for Luana* was written, it provides interesting information about Pastro's writing process, her childhood experiences, her thoughts on the publication process, and more. This interview would be of interest to students who are curious about creative writing and methods for maintaining stamina/accountability, as the author describes the immense help she received from a writing group along her journey.

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES IN PORTUGUESE

- Watch [“Como Dançar e Criar Uma Quadrilha Para As Festas Juninas”](#)
This video provides a tutorial for dancing the quadrilha during Festa Junina. While the video is in Portuguese, students can still mimic the movements and learn the dance.
- Watch [“Festas Juninas: Origem, Importância E Diferenças Ao Redor Do Brasil | Bdf Explica”](#)
This video further analyzes the roots of Festa Junina, with various illustrations and many video clips of the quadrilha dance, the typical foods, the vibrant street parties, the musical bands, and the lively atmosphere.
- Listen [“Festas Juninas: A Origem Da Celebração Pagã Que Virou Religiosa E ‘Caipira’ No Brasil”](#)
This podcast investigates the Pagan origins of Festa Junina, which were then incorporated into Catholic practices and eventually turned into Brazil's unique style of celebration.



COMPLEMENTARY LITERATURE

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Titles marked with * are Americas Award recognized titles.

Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal. Candlewick, 2018.

If you ask her, Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela has way too many names: six! How did such a small person wind up with such a large name? Alma turns to Daddy for an answer and learns of Sofia, the grandmother who loved books and flowers; Esperanza, the great-grandmother who longed to travel; José, the grandfather who was an artist; and other namesakes, too. As she hears the story of her name, Alma starts to think it might be a perfect fit after all—and realizes that she will one day have her own story to tell. In her 2019 Caldecott Honor Book, Juana Martinez-Neal opens a treasure box of discovery for children who may be curious about their own origin stories or names.

Bisa's Carnaval by Joana Pastro and illustrated by Carolina Coroa. Orchard Books, 2021.

It's time for Carnaval and Clara cannot wait to celebrate her favorite holiday with family, but especially with her great-grandmother. Even if Bisa can't attend, Clara knows the Carnaval parade will still be special. Costumed lovingly by their bisa, everyone takes to the street for the annual parade. But even among all the colors, costumes, music, and dancing, something is missing . . . or is it someone? With lush, lyrical text and bright, colorful illustrations, this book takes readers to one of the most exciting holidays of the year and reminds us that no matter who or where you are, love is always worth celebrating.

**Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales. Neal Porter Books, 2018.

Dreamers is a celebration of making your home with the things you always carry: your resilience, your dreams, your hopes and history. It's the story of finding your way in a new place, of navigating an unfamiliar world and finding the best parts of it. In dark times, it's a promise that you can make better tomorrows. This lovingly-illustrated picture book memoir looks at the myriad gifts migrantes bring with them when they leave their homes. It's a story about family. And it's a story to remind us that we are all dreamers, bringing our own strengths wherever we roam. Beautiful and powerful at any time but given particular urgency as the status of our own Dreamers becomes uncertain, this is a story that is both topical and timeless. The lyrical text is complemented by sumptuously detailed illustrations, rich in symbolism. Also included are a brief autobiographical essay about Yuyi's own experience, a list of books that inspired her (and still do), and a description of the beautiful images, textures, and mementos she used to create this book. A parallel Spanish-language edition, *Soñadores*, is also available.



Game of Freedom by Duncan Fonatiuh. Mestre Bimba and the Art of Capoeira. Harry N. Abrams, 2023.

A meia lua whooshed in the air. The strike was evaded and followed with an aú. Two young men were playing capoeira in the middle of the roda. Bimba wanted to play too. Although it is debated when and where capoeira—an art form that blends martial arts, dance, acrobatics, music, and spirituality—originated exactly, one thing is in the early 20th century, Brazil was the only country in the world where capoeira was played, and it was mainly practiced by people of African descent. In 1890, two years after Brazil officially abolished slavery, the game was outlawed. Wealthy, lighter-skinned society feared and looked down on capoeira, seeing it as a game for malandros—what people in power called the poor Black communities they disdained. But in the early 1920s in the city of Salvador, a man called Bimba advocated for capoeira, and those who practiced it, demanding they be treated with dignity and respect.

How the Night Came From the Sea: A Story from Brazil retold by Mary-Joan Gerson and illustrated by Carla Golembe. Joy Street Books, 1994.

A Brazilian story with African roots, this book tells how an ancient African sea goddess brought the gift of night to the land of daylight. This story evokes the beauty, rather than the terror, of the night, and is also about finding peace and hope in a new land.

**Lucas and the Capoeira Circle* by Joana Pastro and illustrated by Douglas Lopes. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2024.

A young boy who loves the Brazilian martial art of capoeira drums up his courage for a moving-up ceremony in this vibrant and inspiring book about never losing one's inner spirit. *Tchik. Tchik. Tchik-Tchik-BOOM!* Lucas loves capoeira, the Brazilian martial art that combines music, dance, and acrobatics. He's been practicing his moves all week for his batizado—his moving-up ceremony—where he'll get his capoeira nickname. But today, Lucas has...the nerves! Scared he'll lose his ginga—his courage and rhythm—in the capoeira circle, Lucas plays his trusty tamborim for comfort. Then he remembers his Papi's powerful words: your ginga lives inside of you. With a little help from his community, Lucas discovers that his courage is never too far away.

**My Papi Has a Motorcycle* by Isabel Quintero and illustrated by Zeke Peña. Kokila, 2019.

When Daisy Ramona zooms around her neighborhood with her papi on his motorcycle, she sees the people and places she's always known. She also sees a community that is rapidly changing around her. But as the sun sets purple-blue-gold behind Daisy Ramona and her papi, she knows that the love she feels will always be there.



**Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2013.

Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote opens with festive scenes of the Rabbit family preparing for Papá Rabbit's homecoming. Musicians, family and friends gather to welcome home Papá who had traveled north to work in the carrot and lettuce fields, years before. Plates of mole, rice and beans are prepared in anticipation of his arrival and the house is strung with papel picado. When Papá Rabbit doesn't arrive, his son Pancho decides to sneak away in the dark of the night to find him. The reader follows the young rabbit as he travels north with the aid of a sneaky coyote by train, by river, by tunnel, and by desert.

Tonatiuh bravely presents the controversial issue of illegal immigration through the lens of a children's fable. Inspired by 14th century Mixtec codices and traditional folklore, the author / illustrator presents the sometimes startling realities of many modern day immigrants in a form which can be appreciated by both young and old alike. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resources: [Educator's Guide for Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of CLASP.

**Saudade* by Ana Crespo and illustrated by André Ceolin. Neal Porter Books, 2024.

Saudade is a Portuguese and Galician word with no perfect translation to English; it's a strong, melancholy longing for something you once had. Hiking in the hills, a little girl and her Brazilian immigrant mother contemplate what makes them feel *saudade*. A cool salty breeze miles from the ocean; the smell of Mamãe's perfume; memories of playing with cousins under trees or waterfalls, riding waves with grandparents who are now stuck in the square of a video call. Though deeply woven through Brazilian music and literature, *saudade* is a familiar companion to us all. Readers who live far from loved ones or have adopted new homes will especially connect with this exploration of nostalgia and yearning. An endnote offers author Ana Crespo's personal story of *saudade* as a Brazilian immigrant, and a glossary covers other Portuguese words the mother and daughter use. Andre Ceolin's vivid illustrations, twining with daydreamy wisps of haze, set the perfect mood for this bittersweet, profoundly human story.

The Best Tailor in Pinbauê by Eymard Toledo. Triangle Square, 2017.

Uncle Flores is the best tailor in the small river town of Pinbauê in Brazil. He used to make beautiful dresses and colorful costumes for the carnival, but nowadays he only makes gray uniforms for the factory workers. The houses are covered with dust from the factory, the river water is murky, and everything is drab. Edinho, his nephew, comes by every day after school to help cut and iron the cloth and listen to his uncle's stories. The best ones begin with "Once upon a time...." But when the factory tells Uncle Flores they don't need his uniforms anymore, Edinho comes up with an ingenious idea to get his uncle back to work and make everyone in town happier and brighter. Soon Uncle Flores's house is the most popular one in town....In *The Best Tailor in Pinbauê* a small act of beauty in the midst of



environmental degradation reminds young readers of their own agency and of the life-affirming strength of family and community.

Young Adult Literature

**Brownstone* by Samuel Teer and illustrated by Mar Julia. Versify, 2024.

Almudena has always wondered about the dad she never met. Now, with her white mother headed on a once-in-a-lifetime trip without her, she's left alone with her Guatemalan father for an entire summer. Xavier seems happy to see her, but he expects her to live in (and help fix up) his old, broken-down brownstone. And all along, she must navigate the language barrier of his rapid-fire Spanish—which she doesn't speak. As Almudena tries to adjust to this new reality, she gets to know the residents of Xavier's Latin American neighborhood. Each member of the community has their own joys and heartbreaks as well as their own strong opinions on how this young Latina should talk, dress, and behave. Some can't understand why she doesn't know where she comes from. Others think she's "not brown enough" to fit in. But time is running out for Almudena and Xavier to get to know each other, and the key to their connection may ultimately lie in bringing all these different elements together. Fixing a broken building is one thing, but turning these stubborn individuals into a found family might take more than this one summer.

Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo. Quill Tree Books, 2022.

Camino Rios lives for the summers when her father visits her in the Dominican Republic. But this time, on the day when his plane is supposed to land, Camino arrives at the airport to see crowds of crying people....In New York City, Yahaira Rios is called to the principal's office, where her mother is waiting to tell her that her father, her hero, has died in a plane crash. Separated by distance—and Papi's secrets—the two girls are forced to face a new reality in which their father is dead and their lives are forever altered. And then, when it seems like they've lost everything of their father, they learn of each other.

**Hero's Guide to Summer Vacation* by Pablo Cartaya. Kokila, 2025.

Gonzalo Alberto Sánchez García has never considered himself the hero of his own story. He's an observer, quietly snapshotting landscapes and drawing the creatures he imagines emerging from them. Forced to spend the summer with his estranged grandfather, Alberto William García—the very famous reclusive author—Gonzalo doesn't expect to learn that heroes and monsters are not only the stuff of fantasy. But that's precisely what happens when Gonzalo's CEO mother, Veronica, sends Alberto on tour to promote the final book in his fantasy series for children and Gonzalo must tag along, even though he feels no connection to his grandfather or the books. Together, they embark on a cross-country road trip from Mendocino to Miami in a classic 1968 Oldsmobile Cutlass S convertible



named Mathilde. Over the course of ten epic days on the highway, they will slay demons, real and imagined; confront old stories to write new ones; and learn what it truly means to show up for your family.

Salt and Sugar by Rebecca Carvalho. Inkyard Press, 2023.

Trust neither thin-bottomed frying pans nor Molinas. Lari Ramires has always known this to be true. In Olinda, Brazil, her family's bakery, Salt, has been at war with the Molinas' bakery across the street, Sugar, for generations. But Lari's world turns upside down when her beloved grandmother passes away. On top of that, a big supermarket chain has moved to town, forcing many of the small businesses to close. Determined to protect her home, Lari does the unthinkable—she works together with Pedro Molina to save both of their bakeries. Lari realizes she might not know Pedro as well as she thought—and she maybe even likes what she learns—but the question remains: Can a Ramires and a Molina truly trust one another?

**Speak Up, Santiago!* by Julio Anta and illustrated by Gabi Mendez. Random House Graphic, 2025.

Santi is excited to spend the summer in Hillside Valley, meeting the local kids, eating his Abuela's delicious food, exploring! There's just one problem—Santi doesn't speak Spanish that well and it feels like everyone he meets in Hillside does. There's Sol (she's a soccer player who really loves books), Willie, (the artist), Alejandro (Santi's unofficial tour guide!), and Nico (Alejandro's brother and blue belt in karate). In between all of their adventures in Hillside, Santi can't help but worry about his Spanish—what if he can't keep up?! Does that mean he's not Colombian enough? Will Santi find his confidence and his voice? Or will his worries cost him his new friendships...and the chance to play in Hillside's summer soccer tournament?!

The Deep Blue Between by Ayesha Harruna Attah. Carolrhoda Lab, 2022.

Twin sisters Hassana and Husseina have always shared their lives. But after a raid on their village in 1892, the twins are torn apart. Taken in different directions, far from their home in rural West Africa, each sister finds freedom and a new start. Hassana settles in the city of Accra, where she throws herself into working for political and social change. Husseina travels to Salvador, Brazil, where she becomes immersed in faith, worshipping spirits that bridge the motherland and the new world. Separated by an ocean, they forge new families, ward off dangers, and begin to truly know themselves. As the twins pursue their separate paths, they remain connected through their shared dreams. But will they ever manage to find each other again?