In the Time of the Butterflies

Curriculum Unit

The Center for Learning

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Julia Alvarez

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ISBN 978-1-56077-881-3

Contents

Introduction

The fine line between fiction and nonfiction blurs with this novel about the Mirabal sisters who struggled in the 1950s against the policies of the dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo in their homeland, the Dominican Republic. Two of the women were imprisoned, and three were finally assassinated by soldiers acting on Trujillo's behest; only Bélgica, known as Dedé, survived to see the dictator overthrown. Their story has made them national heroes in the Dominican Republic and the subject of artworks and poetry; the date of their deaths, November 25, has been selected by the United Nations as the date for the annual International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Author Julia Alvarez was born in New York City, but her family returned to the Dominican Republic when she was only three months old. Once there, her father became involved in an unsuccessful underground plot to overthrow Trujillo and narrowly escaped, just months before the assassination of the Mirabal sisters; the family returned to New York City. In subsequent visits to the Dominican Republic, Alvarez (herself one of four sisters) learned more about the Mirabal sisters and constructed this fictional version of the lives and deaths of "the Butterflies." She visualizes her version of their lives as falling outside both the historical reality of the biographer and the idealized version of the hagiographer.

In the novel, Alvarez has clearly differentiated among the sisters, giving each a distinctive voice and personality. Dedé is first encountered in an interview with a *gringa dominicana* ("Dominican foreigner"), a woman much like Alvarez herself. Dedé serves both as the main character of the frame story set in 1994 and as a foil to her more adventurous, more activist sisters during their lifetimes. Her older sister Patria is a deeply religious wife and mother who is drawn into the movement for personal and familial reasons. Her younger sister Minerva is the self-assured rebel whose practice of law is frustrated by Trujillo because she has rejected his advances. The youngest sister is María Teresa, or Mate, whose diaries reflect her growth from immature and flighty young girl to a woman who faces and conquers her natural timidity. Their stories intertwine, each woman speaking with her own voice and following her own path. Although the assassination of the three sisters is foreshadowed in the opening pages of the novel, the stories they tell create an almost unbearable suspense.

Although most of the events covered in the novel occurred between 1943 and 1960, the story has a very contemporary feel. Your students are coming of age in an era that has seen the sway of unscrupulous and corrupt dictatorships, the abuse and denial of fundamental human rights, the massacre of civilian populations, and even the use of torture by democratic governments. By giving sympathetic human voices to some of the victims of another dictatorship, by showing them as individuals who are willing to risk their lives to fight back in spite of their fears, Julia Alvarez helps students to understand the impact of these otherwise overwhelming forces on ordinary people. She shows clearly how ordinary people become extraordinary.

Teacher Notes

In the Time of the Butterflies is an ideal novel to use for interdisciplinary studies. Its setting in the Dominican Republic, its use of Spanish words and phrases, and its explication of Caribbean cultural norms all make it appropriate for team-teaching with a Spanish teacher. Its grappling with difficult modern issues such as communism in the Western hemisphere, government corruption, human rights issues, and the expansion of women's rights means that interdepartmental teaching with a social studies teacher would also be useful. Nevertheless, the unit is designed so that an English teacher working alone can integrate some of these other disciplines in the course of teaching the novel.

President Ronald Reagan, known as "The Great Communicator," clearly demonstrated the power of a single story whenever he made a speech. To hear about an individual heroic act or to learn about someone's exploitation of social services swayed his hearers, regardless of the accuracy of the anecdote, far more than a recitation of statistics or general information could have done. The same power of story is evident in this novel. By first becoming acquainted with the four sisters and hearing their voices, the reader gains an understanding of the harshness of the Trujillo regime and the extraordinary courage that it took to fight back against it.

This personalized view is then highly effective later in the unit in motivating students to study certain issues in a larger context. In particular, students become familiar with international law on human rights and the use of torture, and their research gives them insight into contemporary situations where these laws are relevant. By the time they do the research, they have come to understand the impact of repression on individuals and the powerful drive toward freedom.

One difficulty that students often face in reading a book with multiple perspectives is sorting out the narrators. This is especially true in a book like *The Joy Luck Club*, where the narrators share both age and gender. Alvarez does an exceptionally thorough job in distinguishing the sisters of *In the Time of the Butterflies* through their individual voices and personalities. To help keep track of these and other characters, students keep a family tree on the classroom wall, complete with personal characteristics and key information. This should be updated regularly whenever new information is presented.

Students are expected to complete for homework the following reading assignments in preparation for lessons:

Chapter 1 for Lesson 2
Chapters 2–4 for Lesson 3
Chapter 5 for Lesson 4
Chapter 6 for Lesson 5
Chapter 7 for Lesson 6
Chapter 8 for Lesson 7
Chapter 9 for Lesson 8
Chapter 10 for Lesson 9
Chapter 11 for Lesson 10
Chapter 12 for Lesson 11
Epilogue and Postscript for Lesson 12

Answers to handouts will vary unless otherwise indicated. Students may need additional paper to complete some activities.

Lesson 1
Life in the Dominican Republic

Objectives

- To introduce the novel *In the Time of the Butterflies*
- To learn about the geography and demography of the Dominican Republic today
- To preview the structure of the novel

Notes to the Teacher

Students will understand this novel better if they can put the events in context. In this lesson, students learn about the Dominican Republic's location, geography, demographics, and economy. A map of the country is provided so that students can visualize the changing settings in the novel as events occur.

For this lesson, you will need student copies of **Handouts 1** and **2**, a large world map or globe, and access to or printouts of Web pages on the Dominican Republic. Recommended sites include the following:

- The United Nations Cyber School Bus (http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/)
- BBC News: Country Profiles (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/)
- The CIA World Factbook (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/)
- The U.S. Department of State: Background Notes (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/)

Alternatively, you may give the research as a first homework assignment, with student reports on the second day of the unit.

If time permits or you have a social studies teacher to partner with, another option is to show *Destination: Dominican Republic*, a nineteen-minute film made by the Peace Corps about the Dominican Republic. It can be downloaded from the Peace Corps Web site (http://peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/videos/). Depending on the resources and time you have available, this lesson will take one to three days.

Procedure

1. Put the word *butterfly* on the chalkboard or overhead. Ask students to brainstorm very quickly any words that come to mind when they hear this word. Spend about a minute writing down their ideas. Elicit or add as necessary the ideas of beauty, fragility, brief life span, change from caterpillar to butterfly, and pollination.

2. Ask students what these terms might mean if we use them metaphorically to describe human beings (*beauty of body, mind or spirit; human weaknesses; our awareness of our own life span and mortality; ability to grow and change; sharing of ideas with each other*). Explain that students have thus created the foundation of an *analogy*, an extended comparison between two unlike things.

3. Distribute copies of the novel, and explain to the class that the code word *butterflies* was used to describe the four sisters who are the subject of the novel. Teach them the Spanish word for butterfly, which is *mariposa* (pronounced mah-ree-PO-sah). Explain that this is a code word used by members of the Dominican underground to identify sisters who worked for the revolutionaries in the 1950s. (Be sure students understand what an underground movement is.) Tell students that they are about to read and study a novel that is based on events that actually happened in the Dominican Republic.

4. Arrange students in pairs, and tell them to look at the following parts of the book. Ask them what they notice about these pages:
   a. the title page
   b. the page after the title page, including the copyright date and publisher's disclaimer
   c. the "In Memoriam" page
   d. the table of contents

5. Ask the class this question: What have you learned about the main characters in the novel so far?

   Suggested Responses:

   - *The four narrators are sisters.*
   - *Three of them died on the same day.*
   - *The fourth sister, Dedé, was still alive at the time the novel was written.*
   - *They died relatively young, at ages 36, 34, and 25.*
   - *An unidentified man apparently died with them.*
   - *The chapters of the novel deal with individual sisters at different times in their lives.*

6. Congratulate students on their detective skills, and ask them to hypothesize about the people whose names are listed on the title page. (*They all have Spanish-sounding names. Since the Mirabal sisters and Rufino de la Cruz are dead, perhaps the others died about the same time.*) Explain that the names all sound Spanish because the story is set in the Dominican Republic.

7. Distribute **Handout 1**. Point out the location of the Dominican Republic on the world map, and ask students what information they can surmise about the country from these maps. Point out the following factors:

   - the approximate size of the country, larger than Maryland but smaller than West Virginia
   - its tropical location and implications for climate
   - its neighbors: Haiti and Cuba to the west, Puerto Rico to the east
   - mountainous terrain in many places (about 80 percent of the Dominican Republic)
   - the bodies of water that surround it (Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean)

8. Ask students what other information would be helpful to have in order to understand the setting of the book (*economy, population, language, religion, history*). List these questions or topics on the board.

9. Arrange students in as many groups as you have topics. Give each group a set of printouts, and assign topics to research. Then distribute **Handout 2**, and have students collaborate to answer the questions the class has developed. After a reasonable time, ask a representative from each group to share the information gleaned from the reading, and allow time for students to take notes on **Handout 2**. If there are other questions still unanswered, ask for volunteers to do additional research on these questions. Basic findings should include the following:

   a. Geography and Climate

      The Dominican Republic shares the island of Hispaniola with its neighboring country, Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world. The area of the Dominican Republic is 18,704 square miles, about double the size of Vermont. The terrain is very mountainous and includes the highest point in the West Indies, Pico Duarte; fertile valleys lie between the mountain ranges. About 23 percent of the land can be used for agriculture. The climate is maritime tropical, and the island is at risk from hurricanes from June to October. Both drought and flooding occur with devastating effects.

   b. Population, Language, and Religion

      The population of the Dominican Republic is slightly under 10 million people. Approximately one-third of the population are 14 years old or younger. Sixteen percent of the population are white, 11 percent black, and 73 percent of mixed race. Eighty-seven percent of the population are literate, and Spanish is the official language. Many Haitians cross into the country each year seeking work, just as many Dominicans go to Puerto Rico or the U.S. mainland to find work each year. Roman Catholicism is the state religion, and 95 percent of the people are Roman Catholic, but there is tolerance for other religions.

c. Economy

For many years, the Dominican economy was primarily dependent on the export of crops like sugar, coffee, and tobacco. In recent years, trade and tourism have diversified the economy; in addition, ferronickel and gold are mined, and textile factories and cement plants have opened. Nevertheless, the Dominican Republic is one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere, receiving hundreds of millions of dollars in aid each year. Unemployment is about 16 percent, and 25 percent of the people live below the poverty line. Per capita income in 2007 was estimated by the World Bank at $2,460. There are big disparities in income as well. The wealthiest people are the descendants of Spanish settlers, and the poorest are descendents of African slaves. The richest 10 percent receive 40 percent of the national income, and the poorest half earn less that 20 percent of the total.

d. Government

The Dominican Republic is a democratic republic with its capital at Santo Domingo. The country is divided into thirty-one provinces. People can vote at age 18; married people can vote even younger, but police officers and soldiers may not vote. The government is divided into three branches, with a president, a bicameral National Congress, and a Supreme Court. There are several major political parties, including the Dominican Liberation Party, the Dominican Revolutionary Party, the National Progressive Front, and the Social Christian Reformist Party.

e. History

Approximately one million Taino people lived on the island of Santo Domingo when Columbus arrived, but they were almost completely wiped out by disease, enslavement, and war under subsequent Spanish explorers. The island was divided between France and Spain, and sugar plantations using African slaves were established. After being conquered by Haiti, the Dominican Republic gained its independence in 1844, briefly returned to the Spanish Empire in 1861, and then returned to independent status in 1865. It was occupied by the United States from 1916 to 1924. After the reign of the corrupt dictator Rafael Trujillo (from 1930 to his assassination in 1961) and an additional intervention and occupation by the United States, the country made a gradual transition to its modern democratic status.

10. Explain to students that the novel is set during the dictatorship of Trujillo, and his presence will be noticeable throughout the book, even though he is not a main character.

11. Remind students that the main storyline of the novel is set, not in the Dominican Republic of today, but in the period from 1943 to 1960. Ask them to hypothesize how life might have been different during that period (*smaller population, fewer choices of occupation, less opportunity for women, life under rules imposed by a dictator*). Note that other aspects such as climate and religion would be unchanged.

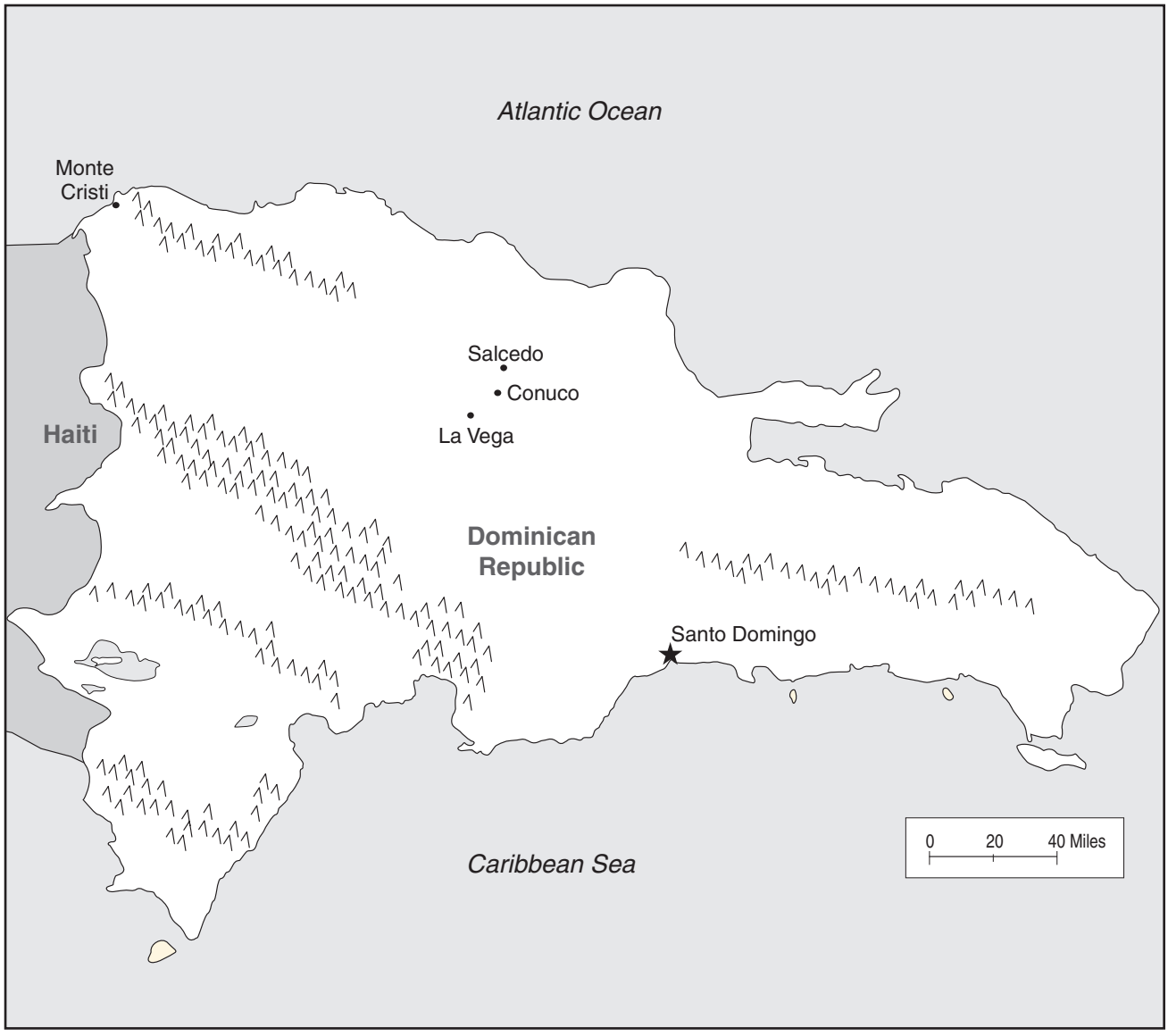
12. Assign students to read chapter 1 of *In the Time of the Butterflies* for homework. Have them take notes as they read. Direct them to use **Handout 3** for this purpose.

Name_____

Date_____

Map of the Dominican Republic

Directions: Examine the following map of the Dominican Republic.



Name_____

Date_____

The Dominican Republic Today: Establishing Basic Facts

Directions: Using print and/or Internet resources, work with your group to find out about one of the following topics. As other groups report about their research, use the rest of this handout for your notes.

1. Geography and Climate

2. Population, Language, and Religion

3. Economy

Name_____

Date_____

4. Government

5. History

6. Other topic: _____

Name_____

Date_____

Introducing the Mirabal Family

Directions: As you read chapter 1, take concise notes on members of the Mirabal family on the chart below.

Name	Characteristics
1. Mamá	
2. Papá	
3. Patria	

Name_____

Date_____

Name	Characteristics
4. Dedé	
5. Minerva	
6. Mate	

Lesson 2
The Mirabal Family

Objectives

- To understand the structure of the frame story
- To learn the names and relationships within the family
- To understand the use of foreshadowing

Notes to the Teacher

The first chapter of the novel introduces the surviving sister, Dedé, and places her at the Museo Mirabal, the family home which has been turned into a museum. In the chapter, she describes a childhood scene to an unidentified visitor from the North, clearly an alter ego for author Julia Alvarez. Dedé's memory of an evening at the home more than fifty years earlier serves to lay a foundation for subsequent events and character development. Reading carefully will produce clues to coming events.

To prepare for the lesson, photocopy **Handouts 4** and **5** for each student. Also, bring to class six large sheets of newsprint or poster paper, a dozen markers, and tape for hanging the newsprint.

Take the time in the lesson to teach students how to pronounce the names of the family correctly. This will make reading easier for them, and discussions will flow more smoothly if everyone is referring to the characters in the same way.

One long-term project begins in this lesson, a class family tree on which groups will record new information that they discover about an assigned character. A second long-term but optional project is a scrapbook assignment that will allow students to interpret the character in a creative way. You will have to provide an inexpensive scrapbook for each group to use; they should be given the scrapbooks sooner rather than later; scrapbooks should be kept in the classroom and should not be shared among groups until the end of the unit. You will also need to provide paste. Since scrapbooking is a popular contemporary hobby, you may have parents who will be happy to donate other raw materials for the books.

Procedure

1. Introduce the class to the concept of a *frame story* (*a narrative which contains other stories embedded in it; examples are* The Canterbury Tales, The Decameron, *and* Arabian Nights). Explain to students that *In the Time of the Butterflies* is a frame story which begins with an unidentified woman interviewing the surviving Mirabal sister in 1994; have them look at the table of contents once again to show how this frame is integrated into the narrative. The other stories are actually the narratives of the sisters and, woven together, they gradually reveal the plot of the novel.

2. Discuss with students the main traits of the Mirabal family members that they found in their reading of chapter 1. As they discuss, make sure that they learn the correct pronunciations. Note that in Spanish, words ending in consonants are stressed on the last syllable; words ending in vowels are stressed on the syllable before the last. These pronunciation rules change only if there is an accent mark. "Mirabal" is pronounced "mee-rah-BAHL."

   Family names are pronounced as follows:

   - Papá (pah-PAH)
   - Mamá (mah-MAH)
   - Patria (PAH-tree-ah)
   - Dedé (deh-DAY)
   - Minerva (min-ER-va)
   - María Teresa (mah-REE-ah teh-RAY-sah), often abbreviated as Mate (MAH-tay)

   Students should note the following characteristics:

   - Papá likes to joke and is playful with children; he wanted a son; he drinks, perhaps to excess; he is generous to neighbors and gives away items from his store.
   - Mamá has stopped sleeping with her husband; she is very religious, frowns on fortune-telling; she opposes women having "male" occupations, such as being a lawyer.

- Patria believes that religion is very important.
- Dedé's whole life has been haunted by the fact that she survived her sisters; she questions why; she is troubled by nerves; she makes an effort to appear open and cheerful; she relies on good memories to avoid depression; her father considers her the "hard shoe" of the family; she criticizes him for his generosity.
- Minerva is always concerned with wrongs and rights; she is beautiful and intelligent; she is able to use irony ("confessing" comment); she is persistent and likes to argue; she wants to be a lawyer, wants to have a say in running the country; she defends women's rights.
- María Teresa is pretty and much younger than her sisters; she adores Minerva and wants to support and imitate her; she gets hurt feelings easily.

3. Introduce students to the concept of *foreshadowing* (*giving hints in the text about future events*). Ask them to find examples in Dedé's imagined happy moment which hint at the future (*Papá pretending to shoot at them, his statement that Dedé would "bury us all," the sense of spies in the dark overhearing their words, their words becoming a "winding sheet" which will lead to their bodies being "dumped in a ditch," the fact that only Dedé's future is foretold*).

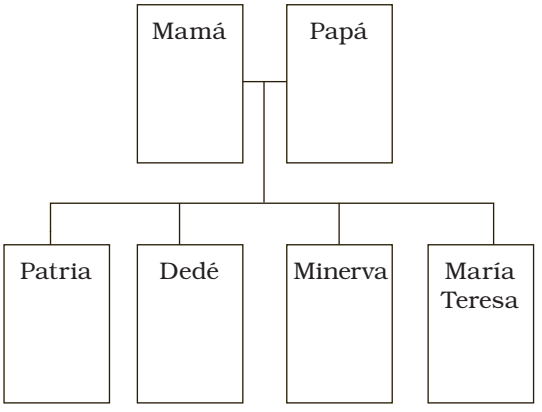
4. Direct students to **Handout 3** from Lesson 1, and have them use the "In Memoriam" page to fill in the date of birth for each of the daughters. This will help students to track the age of each character at different parts of the novel. Instruct them to keep this handout in their notebooks.

5. Divide the class into four committees to become experts on each of the daughters as they read. Explain that they will learn about each daughter from the chapters about the others; they should not just rely on the narratives labeled with their character's name. They should start a notebook page for that character to record additional information they acquire as they read.

6. Create a family tree for the classroom. Explain that because there are many family members in this story, you are going to create a classroom family tree. Put up two large sheets of paper, labeled "Mamá" and "Papá." Using markers, briefly summarize the information the class has presented about these characters in the discussion so far. Post the papers side by side on the wall about a foot apart, as high up as you can comfortably reach.

7. Give each group a large sheet of poster paper or newsprint and several markers. Have groups summarize the known information for their characters. Then post summaries in order by age in a row underneath the Mamá and Papá pages. Using yarn or paper strips, join the Mamá and Papá pages with a horizontal line, explaining that a solid horizontal line on a family tree usually shows a married couple.

8. Use yarn or paper strips to connect the daughters to their parents. Explain that a vertical line on a family tree is used to show descent. The following diagram depicts the finished arrangement.



9. If you choose to use the optional scrapbook activity, tell students that at the end of the unit, students will be expected to present a scrapbook for the character on whom they are focusing. Distribute **Handout 4**, and review it with students.

10. Distribute **Handout 5** to help students in their reading. Explain that there are some Spanish words in the text that are not listed but that the most important ones for understanding are defined in this

handout. Tell students that they will not be tested on these words; the handout is only an aid to help in case they cannot figure out the meaning of a word from its context.

11. Direct students to read the rest of the first section of the novel and to write a journal entry of at least one page that asks a question about the subject of friendship and then answers it. Stress the importance of asking a question to narrow the topic to a manageable subtopic and provide focus. Also emphasize that specific examples can enliven a piece of writing and serve to illustrate a point.

Name_____

Date_____

Making a Scrapbook

Directions: Put together a scrapbook for your assigned character. Highlight her life from childhood through adulthood. Work with your group to brainstorm objects that might be included. Then assemble the objects, using photographs, artwork, clip art, stickers, and your computer skills. Secure photos and memorabilia neatly to the pages, and journal important information to preserve. Examine the following list of questions as you build your scrapbook. Sign the last page of the scrapbook with the names of all group members who contributed to it. Prepare to present your finished product to the class at the end of the study of the novel.

1. Is the content varied?
2. Does the content truly reflect the life of the character?
3. Does the content represent multiple stages of the character's life?
4. Does the content reflect the personality of the character?
5. Is the content neatly arranged?

Name_____

Date_____

Spanish-English Glossary

Directions: As you read, you will probably find yourself guessing the meaning of the Spanish words from their context. In case you are confused or you would like to see how accurate your guesses are, here is a specialized dictionary of many of the Spanish words used in the novel.

Acción Clero-Cultural—literally, "Clerical-Cultural Action"

Adiós con el corazón—goodbye from my heart

¡Ay, Dios santo!—Oh, good God!

azabaches—trinkets or amulets; in this context, small objects used to ward off evil

barrios—districts or neighborhoods; frequently, poor areas or slums

la bendición—the blessing

bodega—grocery store

bohíos—huts, shacks

brujo—a witch (male)

Bueno, oficial—That's good, officer.

calmante—sedative or tranquilizer

campesinos—peasants

capitaleño—someone from the capital city, Santo Domingo

caramba—interjection roughly equivalent to "Good grief!"

cédula—literally, "form" or "certificate"; in this case, an identity card

chao—same pronunciation and meaning as the English word *chow*

cibaeña—girl or woman from the region of the Cibao Valley in the north of the Dominican Republic

Compañeros y compañeras—companions (male and female)

crítica—critique, evaluation

¡Cuba libre!—Free Cuba!

desgraciado—wretch

dulce de leche—sweet sauce made by slowly cooking milk and sugar together; used to flavor cakes, cookies, and other desserts

El Foro Público—The Public Forum

fundillos—bottom

galería—porch

gato—cat

gavilleros—gunmen

gringa dominicana—a North American woman of Dominican heritage

guardia—police officer or guard

guayabera—loose shirt, often embroidered and having pockets and pleats

llorona—a weeping woman

M'ijo—affectionate contraction of *mi hijo*, my son

mariposa—butterfly

mujer—woman

Name_____

Date_____

mujerones—big women

novio—boyfriend or fiancé

pastelito—little cake

patrimonio—inheritance

pega palo—a very strong traditional drink made from steeping herbs, spices, and leaves in liquor and then adding wine, rum, and honey; believed to be an aphrodisiac

peseta—small coin

plátano—banana or plantain

pobrecita—poor little one (feminine)

pollo a la criolla—Creole-style chicken

promesa—promise

Qué cosa, Jefe—loosely, "What a shame, boss." (*Jefe* was used by Trujillo in the same sense that Hitler used *Fuehrer*. Literally, it means "leader" or "boss.")

¡Qué placer!—What a pleasure!

quinceañera—a girl's fifteenth birthday, often celebrated with a party as elaborate as a wedding

ratoncito—mouse

sancocho—a traditional soup or stew, made with an assortment of meats and vegetables

Si Dios quiere—God willing

sin verguenzas—literally, "without shame"; men without consciences

Sor—Sister; title of respect for a nun

trujillista—a supporter of Trujillo

tutumpotes—Dominican term for people of high social class; perhaps derived from "totem pole"

Vanidades—Vanities (title of a popular women's magazine)

Virgencita—literally, little virgin; affectionate name for Mary, mother of Jesus

¡Viva Trujillo!—Long live Trujillo!

Yanquis—citizens of the United States

Lesson 3
Reason, Faith, and Doubt

Objectives

- To describe the basic personality traits of each of the main characters
- To learn additional background information about Rafael Leonides Trujillo
- To understand the concept of *voice*
- To recognize how the author uses symbols and allusion

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson, which will take several days to complete, covers the remaining chapters in the first section of the novel, focusing in turn on the girlhood and adolescence of Minerva, María Teresa, and Patria. It provides an opportunity for students to do additional research so that they can learn more about the threat that Trujillo (pronounced troo-HE-yo) represented to individuals and families that he disliked. Students learn about the key concept of voice in literature.

The book mentions a number of Roman Catholic customs with which students may not be familiar. A *novena*, for example, is a series of prayers said on nine consecutive days. *Matins* is an early morning prayer service.

You will need photocopies of **Handouts 6, 7,** and **8.** You will also need to make copies of the research assignment cards on the Teacher Resource Page on page 20. (You may wish to mount these on index cards to make them less easy to lose.) Make a few more than you have students in the class, so that everyone will have a choice. Assist students in selecting keywords to use for online research, and help them to evaluate the sources they find online. Stress that print resources are also important; you may wish to require that at least one print resource be used for each student's research.

The end of the lesson calls for you to read a passage from the Bible to the class. This is permissible in a literature class in public school under the First Amendment, since you are not preaching to the class but using the passage to illuminate a literary text. If you have any concerns about this, read *Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public Schools* by Charles C. Haynes and Oliver Thomas (First Amendment Center, 2002). It can be downloaded from the Web site of the Freedom Forum (http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=3979).

For further reading: The former poet laureate Rita Dove has written a powerful poem about the Parsley Massacre which can be found, along with her commentary on learning about the massacre, in *Introspections: Contemporary American Poets on One of Their Own Poems,* edited by Robert Pack and Jay Parini (Middlebury College Press, 1997). The Haitian-American author Edwidge Danticat has written about the same topic in her novel, *The Farming of Bones* (Soho Press, 1998).

Procedure

1. Ask students to tell you some of the questions that they considered as they wrote about friendship in their journals. Put several of the questions on the board, and then hold a general class discussion about how students would answer them.

2. Explain that the first part of today's lesson will center mainly on two friends that influence Minerva's life. Distribute **Handout 6**, and have partners respond to the questions.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *She is rebellious and strongly desires freedom; she is willing to inflict pain on those who disagree.*

   2 *Sinita is a charity student at the school, lonely, motherless, and poor. She looks grim but eagerly accepts Minerva's button and friendship.*

   3. *Trujillo became head of the armed forces by betraying a friend, staged a coup against the president and seized power for himself, and regularly assassinated his enemies, including Sinita's uncles, father, and brother. Minerva reacts with shock, since she has never questioned Trujillo, whose picture hangs at home next to the one of Christ. The next morning, she has her first menstrual period, which, along with the revelations,*

symbolizes the end of the innocence of childhood.

4. *Lina is the perfect student, beautiful, talented, and virtuous. After catching Trujillo's eye at a game, she is seduced by his attentions, thinks she is in love with him, and becomes his mistress.*

5. *The play, which disguises its theme of liberty by using an ancient setting, reaches a crisis when Sinita aims a bow at Trujillo. The bow is crushed by Trujillo's son, and Sinita is roughly treated by him. Trujillo, meanwhile, is distracted by Minerva's chanting of "¡Viva Trujillo!" Sinita has made an enemy, and Minerva may be implicated.*

3. Read aloud the last paragraph of chapter 2, with the image of the moths hitting the windshield. Ask students the following questions:

   - Why does the author close the chapter with this image?
   - What does the image suggest?

   (*Answers will vary but should include the blindness of the people, easy victims, and mourning.*)

4. Remind students that the secret that Sinita first shares with Minerva in their time at the convent school is about Trujillo. Explain that it is hard to understand the way the Mirabal sisters, Minerva in particular, feel about Trujillo without knowing more about the history of his thirty-year rule. Tell students that their next assignment is to find out more about the life and actions of this man. Using the Teacher Resource Page, have each student select a card with a question written on it. Direct students to use print sources and/or the Internet to answer the question.

5. Arrange students in groups based on the questions that they researched. Ask each group to answer the question while other students take notes on main ideas.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *Trujillo came from a humble background and left school at sixteen to become a telegraph operator; he joined the police force at a time when it was collaborating with occupying U.S. forces and rose through ranks to head of police. When the United States pulled its troops out in 1924, he was left in charge of the National Guard.*

   2. *Trujillo made a deal to keep the police neutral when a revolution removed the former president; when he ran for president himself, the army intimidated election officials and all the other candidates; he won with 95 percent of the vote through intimidation and fraud.*

   3. *Trujillo's secret police, the SIM, terrorized, tortured, and killed many opponents; others were deported.*

   4. *Trujillo and his family benefited from state monopolies of major industries; they manipulated prices and inventories to maximize their profits; they demanded bribes. They banked a fortune in overseas accounts.*

   5. *Trujillo leaned toward fascism, with its focus on strong leaders like Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. However, he coexisted with communism until the Cold War; he outlawed the Communist Party in 1947.*

   6. *Trujillo reduced foreign debt and expanded the economy; he helped the middle class; he improved roads, ports, airports, and public buildings, and he built schools and reduced illiteracy.*

   7. *In 1937, Trujillo massacred approximately twenty thousand unarmed Haitians in the border areas and Cibao. He wanted to punish Haiti for executing some of his spies in that country. This event was called Parsley Massacre because mispronunciation of the Spanish word for* parsley *(*perejil*) identified Creole-speaking Haitians.*

   8. *The United States saw Trujillo as stable and anticommunist; U.S. bankers and investors did business in the Dominican Republic. After Trujillo's failed attempt to assassinate President Romulo Betancourt of Venezuela infuriated world opinion, the Eisenhower administration came to see him as a potential cause of a Cuban-style revolution. The United States*

downgraded its embassy to consulate and began to look at ways to remove Trujillo from power.

9. *The assassination of Trujillo was carried out by a group of conservative Dominicans, many from the upper class, many of whom had suffered personally from Trujillo's actions. CIA agents allegedly provided the guns used to assassinate him.*

10. *Ramfis Trujillo, Rafael's son, seized power, arrested the assassins and their families, and tortured and killed them. He then fled the country when the United States sent in a fleet of ships. After four military coups and a civil war, the United States once again occupied the country in 1965.*

6. Ask students to imagine that they are teenagers living in the Dominican Republic under Trujillo's rule. Give them about fifteen minutes to write a diary entry about a day when they finally understood the impact of his government. When time is up, ask a few students to share their entries.

7. Point out that chapter 3 is written in the form of diary entries by the youngest Mirabal sister. Direct students to imagine that they are historians and have unearthed a diary from the nineteenth century in a library archive. Ask students to identify the advantages and disadvantages of learning about events from someone's diary. (*Advantages include the following: The diarist may have firsthand experience of an event or even have been a participant in it; the diarist sees events in the context of his or her own time. Disadvantages include the following: The diarist may have limited knowledge, may be prejudiced, may lie, or may simply be uninformed or even obtuse.*) Tell students to keep these points in mind as they read and discuss the diary chapters.

8. Distribute **Handout 7**, and have students answer questions 3–6.

Suggested Responses:

3. *Mate is superficial in her view of religion. For First Communion, she is much more interested in her new shoes than in the religious aspects. For her role in the festival of Santa Lucia, she focuses on how she will look to the school.*

4. *Minerva is sneaking out of the convent school to attend secret meetings at the home of a Trujillo opponent. Although Mate admires Trujillo, she is willing to lie to protect her beloved sister.*

5. *Hilda is a rather tough girl whom Minerva met at Don Horacio's. She is cynical and agnostic, and so, although they initially pitied her orphan status, the nuns ask her to leave the school. When the police are looking for her, she comes back to Inmaculada.*

6. *When Trujillo is pursuing Lina, the nuns are at first frightened, but they eventually accept gifts for the school from Trujillo and despite their misgivings they continue to allow her to see him. They give Lina her diploma in absentia, and Sor Milagros weeps over it. When Hilda comes to them for help, even though they do not approve of her behavior, they give her nun's clothing and hide her from the police. They realize that they cannot remain neutral and still live up to their beliefs.*

9. When you are sure that students understand how this diary advances the main storyline, have students return to the first two questions on **Handout 7**. List their responses on the board (*Mate's childish preoccupations, her imagining the book as a secret friend, her sketches, her simplistic view of religion, and comparing the garden to a magic kingdom*).

10. Ask students the following question: What kind of a person does Mate seem to be as a child? (*She is intelligent, interested in clothes and boys, somewhat vain about her appearance, sometimes judgmental, loving toward family and pets, and still unable to understand abstract concepts like freedom.*)

11. Explain that all these qualities make up her personality. When personality expresses itself in writing, we use the literary term *voice* to describe it. Explain that sometimes voice can be seen more clearly when one

selection is compared to another. Ask the class to compare the way Mate writes with the voice of Minerva in chapter 2. *(Minerva is more adult, more cynical, passionate and rebellious, even though she at first admires Trujillo as Mate does.*) Ask the class to find examples from chapter 2 to support these answers.

12. Distribute **Handout 8**, and have students answer the questions.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Patria is very religious. She plays at being a nun when she is little, attends Mass devoutly, and fasts during Lent. The nuns at Inmaculada single her out as exceptionally prayerful and devout, and they ask her to pray for a vocation (calling to the sisterhood).*

2. *Patria is also sensuous and drawn to physical passion. When she meets and falls in love with Pedrito, she knows that she will marry instead of become a nun.*

3. *She meets him when she is performing a religious ritual, washing the feet of strangers, a Roman Catholic custom on the Thursday before Easter. It is appropriate because, while washing the feet is a religious act, it is also a physical one. Both her conflicting drives are thus resolved in one person.*

4. *Answers will vary but should emphasize the cultural differences between the novel's place and time setting and our own societal norms.*

5. *She is angry with God because her third child is stillborn. She begins to understand the suffering in the world around her, and one night she even symbolically equates God with Trujillo. She regains control when she realizes that she has to help Pedrito out of his despair, and she decides to continue behaving like a model Catholic wife and mother for his sake and for her other loved ones. She begins to regain her faith during a pilgrimage with her mother, when she understands that God is in the humble people all around her.*

13. Put students into four groups, one for each sister. Take the family tree sheets down from the wall, and give them to their respective groups with markers. Ask students to add information that they have learned from the last three chapters. Ask the Patria group to make another set of papers to indicate Pedrito, Nelson, Noris, and, if you think the class would be comfortable with this, the deceased child. Meanwhile, ask students to figure out the meaning of two symbols that appear in the chapter: the pearl of great price and the flame trees.

14. Have groups summarize their findings, and remount their papers on the wall. Pedrito and Patria's children should form a third row, under their parents.

15. Review with the class the meaning of *symbolism*. Ask students to explain the symbol of the flame tree and its meaning. (*The flame tree is red, the traditional color of love and passion; its blossoms also suggest fertility and passion.*)

16. Point out to the class the passage in which Patria is getting ready for Easter Mass. What does she wear? (*She wears a "glorious yellow" dress and a "flamboyant blossom" in her hair.*) The word *flamboyant* has two meanings: it refers to a type of rather unrestrained behavior, and it is also another name for the flame tree, the Royal Poinciana. Point out to the class that careful rereading, looking for ideas beyond the basic plot, can yield interesting meaning in a rich text.

17. Ask students to comment on the "pearl of great price." They will probably suggest the idea of something valuable and very expensive; the symbol takes on different meanings in the chapter. In the first paragraph of the chapter, it refers to religious faith. When she miscarries, the phrase refers to the child she has been carrying, the loss of which costs her that same faith. Explain that a symbol can have several related meanings.

18. Explain that some symbols have particular meaning because of where they come from and how they have been used

before. Tell students that the phrase "pearl of great price" is taken from the Bible. Julia Alvarez is drawing upon the Bible as a source of symbols as so many Western writers have, hoping the reader will know the passage and thus understand this particular symbol better. Read *Matthew 13:45–56*, which begins as follows: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (KJV).

Ask students what more they now understand about the idea of a "pearl of great price." Mention that when a story is used in this manner, it is called an *allusion*. Define the term *allusion* as a reference to a famous person, place, or work of literature; point out the difference between *allusion* and *illusion* so that students will not be confused.

19. If you are doing the scrapbook project, remind the groups about it. Give them a little time to discuss some items that could be included, based on this section of the book. For example, they could include a program from the play that Minerva presented before Trujillo or another sketch by María Teresa like the ones in her diary.

20. Assign students to read chapter 5 and to make a list of the differences between Lío and Jaimito.

Research Assignment Cards

1. What do we know about Trujillo's early life in the years before he became dictator?	2. How did Trujillo come to power?
3. How did Trujillo suppress dissent?	4. Why was the Trujillo regime accused of corruption?
5. What was Trujillo's position on communism?	6. Did Trujillo do anything good for the Dominican Republic during his rule?
7. What was the Parsley Massacre? Why did it occur?	8. Why did the United States support Trujillo for a time? Why did it decide to withdraw support?
9. How did Trujillo die? Who was responsible?	10. Who followed Trujillo in office? How successful were the next administrations?

Name_____

Date_____

Three Sisters, Three Voices—Minerva

Directions: Answer the following questions after you have read chapter 2.

1. What do you learn about Minerva from her anecdote about the rabbit at the beginning of the chapter?

2. Who is Sinita? What kind of person is she?

3. What information about Trujillo does Sinita share with Minerva? What is Minerva's reaction?

4. What kind of person is Lina? What is her relationship to Trujillo?

5. What happens at the play for Trujillo? What are the implications for the future?

Name_____

Date_____

Three Sisters, Three Voices—María Teresa

Directions: Answer the following questions after you have read chapter 3.

1. How old is Mate when she writes these entries?

2. If the dates were not supplied for you, how could you tell that the diarist is a young girl? (Give at least three clues to her age.)

3. What is Mate's attitude toward religion at this time of her life?

4. How is Minerva getting more deeply involved in politics? How does Mate help her?

5. Who is Hilda? Why are the police seeking her?

6. Compare the way that the nuns respond in the stories of Lina and Hilda. How do you account for this change?

Name_____

Date_____

Three Sisters, Three Voices—Patria

Directions: Answer the following questions after you have read chapter 4.

1. How religious is Patria as a girl? Provide evidence for your answer.

2. Why doesn't Patria pursue her idea of becoming a nun?

3. How does she meet Pedrito? Given the theme of her struggles between flesh and spirit, why is this appropriate?

4. What is your reaction to Patria's decision to marry and have children at such a young age?

5. Why does Patria lose her faith? How does she regain it?

Lesson 4
Principles and Compromises

Objectives

- To understand the concept of compromise in characters' lives and in students' own lives
- To compare and contrast Jaimito and Lío
- To define the literary term *foil* and give an example

Notes to the Teacher

As the Mirabals, particularly Minerva, grow older and become more politically involved, the author introduces some male characters as potential love interests for them. Chapter 5, ostensibly about Dedé, focuses on two men. One is Jaimito, the boy that Dedé has known from infancy, who is destined by their families to become her husband. The second is Virgilio Morales, known as Lío, to whom Dedé is attracted, but who seems to feel an attraction to Minerva, who shares his political beliefs. During the lesson, students develop an understanding of the differences between the two men.

For procedure 9, you may need to explain that Fela is a household servant who told fortunes when the daughters were all alive. She makes a living conducting séances. Minou, who is introduced in this chapter, is Minerva's grown-up daughter, who, in real life, became a member of the Chamber of Deputies in the Dominican Republic.

Consider asking a social studies teacher to lecture the class about communism in the 1940s and 1950s so that students understand the appeal that communism had to countries with poor or oppressed populations like the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

Procedure

1. Ask students for a definition of the term *compromise* (*a settlement of differences by mutual concessions*). Ask whether anyone can give a definition of a compromise from a history class (*the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, the Treaty of Versailles, the agreement between Hitler and Chamberlain*). Ask whether compromises are a good or bad idea. Allow a few minutes for discussion.
2. Explain that sometimes, when we have two conflicting goals or desires, we have to compromise within ourselves. Ask students to free-write for five minutes about a time in their lives when they had to compromise, either within themselves or with someone else. Put the following questions on the board to guide them:
   - What was the conflict?
   - How was it settled? What were the terms of the compromise?
   - How satisfactory were the results?
   - How do you feel about the experience?
3. Allow students some time to share their writings. Then read aloud the paragraph near the end of chapter 5 that begins, "Jaimito tried convincing Dedé. . . ." Ask students the following questions:
   - What compromise is he talking about? (*He means that Lío would have to compromise his principles to effect social change.*)
   - What does compromise mean to Dedé? (*She settles for marrying Jaimito when she really admires Lío.*)
4. Distribute **Handout 9**. Give students a few minutes to complete the chart; instruct students to use their notes.

   Suggested Responses:

   Jaimito

   1. *limited education in local school*
   2. *farmer*
   3. *not enthusiastic about Trujillo; wants to avoid trouble for himself and for the Mirabal family*
   4. *loves Dedé; wants to protect the family*
   5. *cynical about degree of Lío's dedication to the movement; makes crude remark about Lío and Minerva when under the influence of alcohol; almost fights Lío, yet refuses to betray Lío to authorities*
   7. *feels affection for Jaimito; feels comfortable with him, although not passionate; worries about his drinking*

Lío

1. *has a medical degree from Venezuela*
2. *faculty member in medical school of the National University*
3. *communist who wishes to overthrow Trujillo and establish a more just government; willing to take risks but seeks asylum when necessary*
4. *in a romantic relationship with Minerva; asks her to join him in exile*
5. *angry at Jaimito's comments, at first refuses to shake hands; then compliments Jaimito a little and is able to compromise so that he and Jaimito can date Minerva and Dedé*
7. *strongly attracted to Lío but afraid of his intensity and his involvement in movement*

5. Hold a discussion about the two men. Spend time elaborating on Lío's political beliefs so that students understand what communism meant in the 1940s and 1950s. Ask students why communism would be appealing to a young doctor in Trujillo's administration. (*It often appealed to political idealists.*) Remind students that Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, bringing communism to Cuba.

6. Introduce the literary term *foil*. (*A foil is a character who serves as a contrast to another character, usually to highlight the personality of the other character.*) Ask the following questions:

   - In what ways are Jaimito and Lío foils to each other?
   - Are Minerva and Dedé also foils to each other?

   Encourage students to suggest areas of comparison and contrast.

7. Ask students to identify the motives Dedé gives for burning Lío's letter to Minerva. (*It is too risky to go to the embassy; she could be put in prison. Besides, she does not love him.*) Ask whether these motives seem to be her real motives. (*Probably these are rationalizations; perhaps her real motives are that she is in love with Lío, she is jealous of Minerva, and she does not want her sister to be with him.*) Ask the following questions:

   - How many students like the character of Dedé? (*probably very few*)
   - How is the author manipulating the story so that the reader feels this way about the character?
   - In the frame story, the memories of all the sisters are filtered through Dedé's eyes. Is she a reliable or an unreliable narrator?

8. Ask the class to decide whether Dedé and Lío would have worked out well as a couple. Conduct a discussion of why or why not and whether Dedé is right in choosing Jaimito.

9. Reread the section near the beginning of chapter 5, from "Now, Minou stops by at Fela's . . ." to "Tell him I said hello too." Ask the class this question: Now that you have read the whole chapter, how does this section take on additional meaning for you? (*Dedé still has feelings for Lío, which she tries to cover up.*) Stress the value of rereading when time permits.

10. Direct students to read chapter 6 and to write a journal entry about a time when they were jealous of someone. Ask them to include how they behaved and how the situation was resolved.

Name_____

Date_____

Jaimito and Lío: A Study in Contrast

Directions: Use the chart to compare and contrast Jaimito and Lío.

Criteria	Jaimito	Lío
1. Education		
2. Occupation		
3. Political beliefs/ Attitude toward Trujillo		
4. Feelings about the Mirabal sisters		

Name_____

Date_____

Criteria	Jaimito	Lío
5. Attitude toward each other		
6. Probable future		
7. Dedé's feelings about him		
8. Minerva's feelings about him		

Lesson 5
Trujillo at Close Range

Objectives

- To understand that characters in a well-written novel have complex emotional responses that the reader must infer
- To review the uneven balance of power between Trujillo and citizens like the Mirabal family
- To understand how the author creates suspense
- To consider some of the symbols that Julia Alvarez uses

Notes to the Teacher

At the beginning of the lesson, when you ask students to share their journal entries from homework, it is best not to make it mandatory. Some entries may be too personal to share with the class as a whole.

Some astute readers may suggest that Papá's feelings for Minerva are not entirely appropriate: his suggestion that she sit in his lap, his interference with her relationship with Lío, and his substituting her for Mamá when he attends parties. Minerva, however, seems oblivious to this, and it is not a primary emphasis in the novel. It does suggest that Papá is not fully aware of his own motives.

Although it is not listed as one of the symbols to be considered by students, the car wreck seems to be an appropriate image for this chapter, as Minerva's strong will drives her into a disastrous confrontation with Trujillo's equally adamant drive for power and domination. The personal and the political truly intermingle in this chapter.

Procedure

1. Ask for student volunteers to share their writings on compromise. Encourage discussion about how compromise seems to be part of daily life for most of us. Then ask students to think about Minerva. There are two areas of her life—her relationship with her father and her relationship with Trujillo—in which she is asked to compromise.
2. Remind the class that all novels involve conflict, whether between individuals, between societies, or within the self. Ask students why Minerva is in conflict with her father. (*She has discovered his other family.*) Conduct a discussion on what emotions Minerva must feel when she realizes the truth of the situation. Try to elicit the following responses:
   - shock at her recognition of the truth
   - anger at his betrayal of her mother
   - fear of potential embarrassment of the family in the neighborhood
   - jealousy over her father's affections
   - grim satisfaction that he has not yet fathered a son in this family either

   Point out that human beings have very complex emotions, and one of the reader's tasks is to understand that complexity.
3. Ask the class how Minerva shows her feelings. (*She crashes her truck into her father's car.*) Then ask whether her sisters would have behaved in the same way.
4. Ask the following questions:
   - What is another reason she is angry with her father? (*He hid Lío's letters from her.*)
   - Why did he do this? (*He was afraid for her safety; he may even have been jealous.*)
   - Does she ever compromise with him? (*Yes, she undertakes to support her father's other family while he is in prison; she even states an intention to educate the children, whom she refers to as her sisters.*)
5. Suggest that since Minerva has accepted them as members of the family, the class should too. Have students make family tree entries for the mother (Carmen María), the oldest daughter (Margarita), and the three younger daughters. Although not much information is given about them, you can have students figure out their approximate dates of birth from the information given in the chapter: The affair began about ten years ago, when the

oldest girls went off to school and when María Teresa was about four; Carmen's daughters are about three years apart.

6. Remind students that the chapter covers another conflict, Minerva's relationship with Trujillo. Distribute **Handout 10**. Ask them to review what they know about the dice in Trujillo's office. (*They are probably made from human bone, allegedly stolen from Columbus's tomb; they are loaded so that he can win at every throw; they were given to him by Mamá's uncle, a notorious cheat and an old friend of Trujillo.*) Put students in groups to complete the handout.

   Suggested Responses:

   Minerva's advantages—*her sharp mind, her courage, her commitment to the movement against Trujillo, her resentment over his treatment of her friends Lina and Sinita*

   Trujillo's advantages—*his lack of scruples, his prior successes in seducing young women, his authority over the army, his frightening reputation*

7. Ask students to define *suspense* (*anxiety aroused by not knowing how events will turn out*). Ask them to describe times in their lives when they have felt suspense. Then ask them about films they have seen recently. How does a filmmaker create a feeling of suspense?

8. Ask students how the author creates suspense about the party in this chapter. (*Students should give details such as the handwritten note on the invitation to the party, Mamá's anxiety and especially her refusal to let María Teresa attend, the need for chaperones, the fear that leads them to rehearse excuses for being late, Jaimito's parking the car at the end of the driveway for a quick escape, Manuel de Moya's reputation for providing the dictator with young women, the invitation to the head table and Dedé's and Patria's worried looks, and Patria's signal to Minerva not to drink anything for fear of being drugged.*)

9. Ask students to explain why the tension between Trujillo and Minerva escalates at the party.

   - What is at stake for each? (*Minerva's virtue and independence, even her life is at stake; Trujillo's pride is at stake.*)
   - Why does Trujillo pursue Minerva when it is so clear that the ambassador's wife is available to him? (*Minerva is resisting his power, and he is driven to be the dominant figure in the country.*)
   - Why doesn't he have her arrested for slapping him? (*He would lose face in front of his guests.*)
   - Why does he have her brought in after that? (*the evidence of treason in the letters she has concealed in her purse*)
   - Why does he eventually let her go? (*She throws a high dice score, and he matches it.*)
   - Do you think he has given up?
   - What are your predictions about the next few years?

10. Ask students how the relationship between Mamá and Papá is changed because of the events of this chapter. (*She changes from long-suffering and neglected wife to a strong woman defending her ailing husband; she begins to rediscover the affection of their earlier relationship.*)

11. List the following objects on the board:

    - the envelope Minerva gives to Carmen
    - the loaded dice
    - the rain at the end of the chapter (You may wish to have students reread this section from "A soft rain is falling . . ." to the end of the chapter.)

12. Discuss with the class what each of these symbols might mean. (*The envelope signifies Minerva's acceptance of the other family and willingness to support them; the dice represent Trujillo's unfair power over the people of the Dominican Republic. Answers about the rain may vary. Some may see it as the helplessness of the country. "The whole spine of the country is wet." Others may view the rain as a sign that the country is getting tired of Trujillo and may*

be ripe for revolution. ". . . [E]very corner of it is wet, every river overflows its banks, every rain barrel is filled to the brim, every wall washed clean of writing no one knows how to read anyway.")

13. Direct students to read chapter 7 and to write a journal entry on this question: How do Mate's personal feelings affect her political ones?

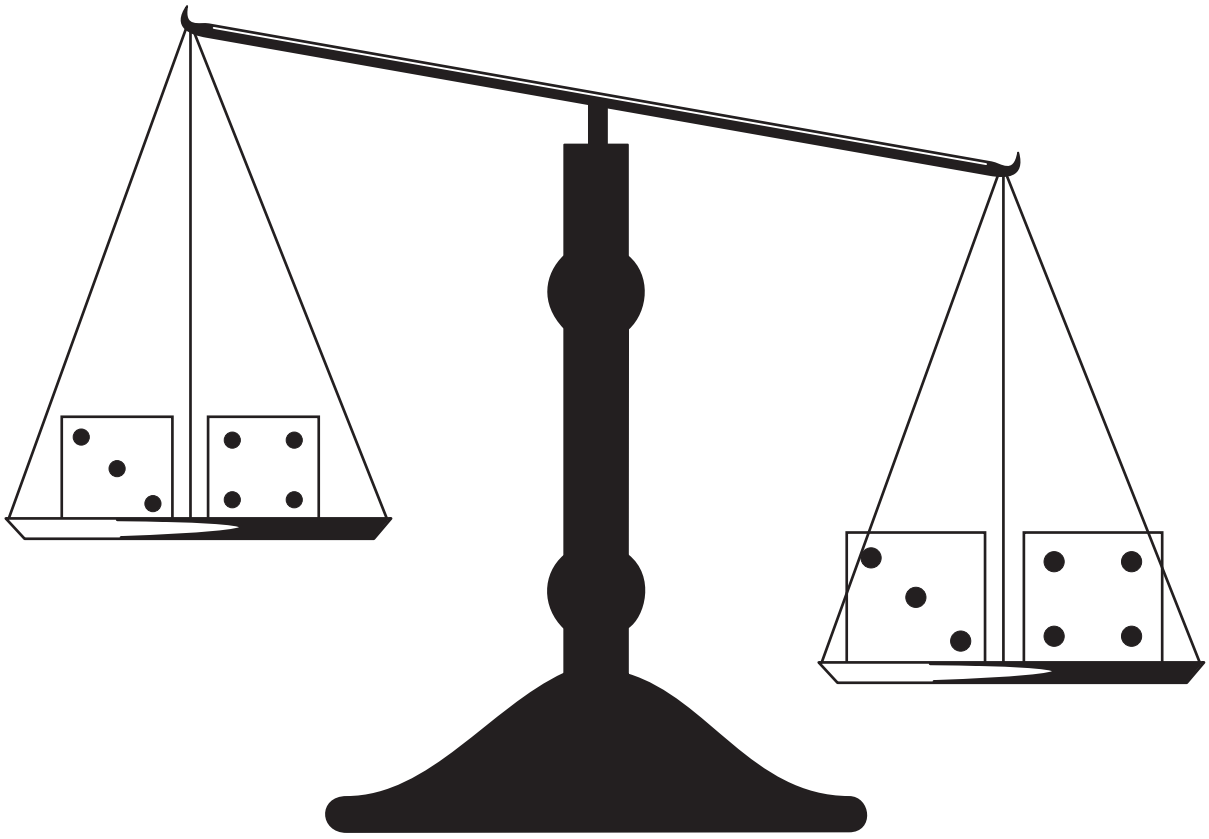
In the Time of the Butterflies
Lesson 5
Handout 10

Name_____

Date_____

Loaded Dice

Directions: In the conflict between Minerva and Trujillo in chapter 6, both sides have certain advantages, which may be physical, material, mental, psychological, or spiritual. List their advantages below. Add more lines if necessary.



Minerva's Advantages

_____

_____

_____

_____

Trujillo's Advantages

_____

_____

_____

_____

Who do you predict will win this contest of wills?

Lesson 6
Going Underground

Objectives

- To understand how the private lives of the Mirabals and the political life of the Dominican Republic intersect
- To see the effect of the Cuban Revolution of 1959 on the events of the novel
- To debate the morality of using violence for political change

Notes to the Teacher

Students will be able to understand the sisters' involvement in the revolutionary movement better if they understand it in the context of the Cuban Revolution. Cuba is directly to the west of Hispaniola, the island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Cuba had become independent of Spain in 1898 and of the United States in 1934. In 1952, a former president and military officer named Fulgencio Batista (pronounced full-HEN-see-oh ba-TEE-sta) seized power in a coup and began ruling by decree. His rule, like that of Trujillo, was marked by harshness against his political enemies and by corruption.

In 1953, Fidel Castro led an attack on a military barracks, was arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to prison. Eventually, he went into exile in Mexico, and from there he organized the "26th of July Movement." He and a group of supporters landed in Cuba in December 1956. In 1959, Batista fled, and Castro assumed power. He, in turn, executed thousands of political opponents and started an exodus of hundreds of thousands of Cubans to the U.S. mainland.

Eventually, Castro declared Cuba to be a communist country and worked closely with the Soviet Union. Several crises, including the failed Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, led to mutual distrust, and the United States no longer had diplomatic relations with Cuba, nor did it allow its citizens to travel there.

Before class, prepare two sheets of paper to hang in your room in opposite corners. Mark one "Agree" and the other "Disagree."

Procedure

1. Point out to the class that this chapter covers a long period of time during which Mate has written occasionally in her new diary. Distribute **Handout 11**, and arrange students in small groups to discuss how her life has changed. Pause to add new characters to the family tree on the wall. Also, give students a chance to add new information to the existing pages.

Suggested Responses:

1. a. *Her father has died. Her mother has tried to protect the rest of the family by writing a flattering letter to Trujillo. She has tried to help Dedé and Jaimito by moving out of her own home and giving it to them. She has given them the store to run. Dedé and Jaimito have had two boys—Jaime Enrique and Jaime Rafael. Minerva has graduated from law school, but Trujillo revenged himself on her by refusing her a license to practice law. She has married a fellow law student named Manolo Tavarez; the two have had a baby, Minou, and moved to Monte Cristi. Patria and Pedrito seem mostly unchanged.*

   b. *Mate has finished secondary school and has attended the university in the capital with Minerva. After trying law school to please Minerva, she enrolls in the School of Philosophy and Letters and eventually winds up studying architecture.*

   c. *At first, she has crushes on both her cousins, but when she realizes her aunt would be her mother-in-law, she drops them. She also likes the young lawyer who helps her with her inheritance from Papá, but not enough to be serious about him. Occasionally, she gets angry at an individual man and decides she hates all men. Finally, she falls in love with "Palomino" (Leandro Guzman Rodriguez), a courier for the revolutionary underground, and marries him.*

d. At first, she dislikes Trujillo and tries to cast a spell on him. She is shocked at his depriving Minerva of a law license.

e. In the beginning, she is hesitant to join Minerva's movement; Minerva even calls her a petit bourgeois. Mate doesn't understand how people can use violence to bring about change. When she meets Leandro, she wants to join him in the movement and sets up an apartment where gun shipments are dropped off. She even helps to build small bombs.

2. Answers will vary, but will certainly include love for family.

2. Give students background information from Notes to the Teacher so that they understand the influence of the Cuban Revolution on the Dominican Republic. Point out the geographical closeness of the two countries on a map, and stress the similarities in demographics, language, and history.

3. Post the "Agree" and "Disagree" sheets of paper in opposite corners of the classroom. Tell students that you are going to read several statements to them. If they strongly agree with a statement, have them move to the corner that says "Agree"; if they strongly disagree with the statement, have them move to the corner that says "Disagree." If they feel less strongly, have them range themselves appropriately on an imaginary line between the two points. Have them practice on a simple statement like "Chocolate is the best ice cream." Then read the following statement: "Violence is never an acceptable means of political change." Give students time to move to a position, and then allow time for them to explain why they made their choices. Be sure that you hear from at least one representative from each area of the room.

4. Read the following statements, and allow time for movement and discussion:

   - If I were a high school student in the Dominican Republic in 1959, I would have joined the revolutionary movement.
   - If I were a mother of small children in the Dominican Republic in 1959, I would have joined the revolutionary movement.
   - If I were a priest in the Dominican Republic in 1959, I would have joined the revolutionary movement.

5. Ask students whether Mate was right in joining the revolutionaries.

6. Assign students to read chapter 8 and write a journal entry answering the following question: How are Patria's political sentiments tied to personal ones?

Name_____

Date_____

Mate Grows Up

Directions: Chapter 7 covers the years from 1953 to 1958. Use the following questions to focus on Mate during this time period.

1. What changes have occurred involving . . .

   a. her family?

   b. her education?

   c. her relationship with potential suitors?

   d. her feelings about Trujillo?

   e. her involvement in the revolutionary movement?

2. What aspects of Mate's life have not changed?

Lesson 7
Conversions

Objectives

- To review the terms traditionally used to describe literary characters
- To evaluate the degree of change which occurs in Patria's character during chapter 8
- To understand why authors use juxtaposition to achieve certain effects

Notes to the Teacher

The invasion described in this chapter was not the first one aimed at defeating Trujillo. Dominican exiles flew seaplanes into the country in the so-called Luperion Invasion on June 14, 1949, but were defeated. Cuban revolutionaries joined with other Dominican exiles a decade later, again invading on June 14. The Dominican Air Force largely destroyed the invading forces on the beaches, and the few who escaped were rounded up by the military, tortured, and executed. Thus the name that Minerva gives to the new, combined movement of her secular conspiracy and the radicalized church group is doubly meaningful, but also an omen of defeat.

The shift of the position of the Catholic Church, which had been silent in the earlier years of Trujillo's reign, is notable. In 1960, a group of Catholic priests were arrested for making bombs and conspiring to overthrow the government, and three were deported. Church officials responded with a pastoral letter demanding human rights in the Dominican Republic.

Other church members moved beyond this to a theory of "liberation theology," which influenced developments in many Latin American countries from the 1960s on. This theory stressed social salvation in addition to individual salvation and the importance of Church involvement in social action to help the poor; some theologians even justified taking up arms to fight oppression as a virtuous act.

Before class, take a sheet of the kind of paper you have been using for the family tree, and label it "Rafael Trujillo." Make six signs, each with the name of one Mirabal family member—the four sisters, Mamá, and Papá. Also, have ready a sign for each of the following terms: *protagonist, antagonist, flat, well-rounded, static,* and *dynamic*.

For more advanced students, when you discuss the imagery on **Handout 12**, you may wish to share two poems that use a falcon as a symbol of spiritual matters: "The Windhover" by Gerard Manley Hopkins and "The Second Coming" by William Butler Yeats. Both can easily be found in books of English poetry and on the Internet.

Procedure

1. Take down the family tree sheets for the four sisters and their parents. Ask the groups to add to their sheets any new information they have on the sisters. Designate several students to add to the Mamá and Papá sheets, as well as several to add information to the one for Trujillo.
2. Distribute **Handout 12**. Write on the board the literary terms used most frequently to describe characters in literature:
   - protagonist vs. antagonist
   - flat vs. well-rounded
   - static vs. dynamic
3. Post the signs that say "protagonist" and "antagonist" in opposite corners of the room. Review the meaning of the terms with the class, and explain to students that "protagonist" and "antagonist" are traditionally seen as a *dichotomy*, a pair of opposites. Ask students to identify the protagonist and antagonist in this book. Students will have an easy time identifying Trujillo as the antagonist and explaining why. Identifying the protagonist is more complex. They will see Minerva as an opponent of Trujillo from the beginning, much more so than her sisters; Minerva takes a stand on strong principles. Mate joins her sister, but actively only after she becomes romantically interested in Leandro. Patria joins the movement much later and only after being a near-casualty of the Air Force bombing and witnessing a shocking murder of a young soldier. Dedé has so far played it safe and cannot be said to be in opposition to Trujillo at this point.

4. Ask representatives from the groups to arrange themselves along an imaginary line with Trujillo on one end and Minerva on the other. They will probably arrange themselves in the following order: Trujillo, then a good distance away, Dedé, Mate and Patria, and Minerva. Point out to the class that this is not truly a dichotomy, but rather a *continuum* (a sequence of positions that shade gradually from one to the next). Point out that the positions of Mate and Patria would be different if this exercise had been done at the end of chapter 7, with Patria much closer to Dedé and Minerva and Mate the most extreme by far. Generalize by pointing out that characters in a well-written book grow, change, and exhibit subtle nuances, just like ordinary human beings.

5. Have student representatives of Mamá and Papá arrange themselves on the line. The place chosen is less important than the discussion that students engage in to decide.

6. Allow time for students to record information on **Handout 12.**

7. Post the signs that say "flat" and "well-rounded" in opposite corners. Ask students if this is a true dichotomy. Should it be regarded as a continuum also? Ask student representatives of the seven characters to arrange themselves in a line based on whether the character is flat or well-rounded, and then give them the chance to justify their positions with evidence from the novel. Allow time to record information.

8. Finally, post the signs that say "static" and "dynamic," and review these terms. Once more, have students arrange themselves on the imaginary line between the two points and then justify their positions using evidence from the novel. Most will see Trujillo as a static character; they may also consider Minerva to be static. The greatest change so far is in Patria, with Mate a close second. Mamá is also a character who exhibits the ability to change and grow. Allow time to complete **Handout 12.**

9. Have students replace their character sheets in the proper positions in the family tree. After they resume their places, focus on the character who seems to have changed the most, Patria. Ask the following questions:

   - What is she like prior to the retreat? (*She has recovered her faith, is a woman dedicated to family, and is still very sensual. She likes the company of other women and doing good deeds for the poor. Stricken by the death of her last child, she is surprised and delighted by an unexpected pregnancy after a hiatus of many years. She worries about the welfare of her son, Nelson, because of his interest in Minerva's conspiracy.*)
   - How do the events at the retreat change her? (*She becomes committed to the revolution, even willing to risk the safety of her family members.*)
   - Why does this happen? (*Her own pregnancy is threatened by the bombing; she witnesses the shooting of a young soldier, whom she identifies with her son.*)
   - How does she change her behavior as a result? (*She invites the conspirators into her home, helps to make bombs, and persuades Pedrito to allow guns to be buried in his fields in preparation for a new revolution.*)

10. Ask students who else has changed as a result of the failed invasion. (*Padre de Jesus has overcome his confusion about what is the right thing to do. His religious and social organization now calls itself the Accion Clero-Cultural, and it sets out to organize "a powerful national underground." Eventually, the organization joins forces with Minerva's long-standing secular group.*) Remind students about the controversy involved in using violence for a good cause. Guide discussion about whether Padre de Jesus has made the right decision. Point out that clergy in many places in Latin America began in the 1960s to see themselves as activists for change.

11. Explain to students that the author has used the setting as an additional way to symbolize and dramatize the enormous change that has come over these two characters. Point out that the analysis of the book so far has not focused on descriptive language; it has usually seemed less important to Julia Alvarez than her characters and plot. In chapter 8, the plot pauses for a vivid description of the setting. Distribute **Handout 13**, and ask students to turn to the section of the book that describes the landscape near the retreat house, beginning with "When we got to Constanza. . . ." Give students time to discuss the connotation of each image in the first part of the handout. (*The purple mountains may remind some students of "the purple mountain majesties" in the song "America the Beautiful." The "angelfeather clouds" suggest heaven, as do God's "sunshine fingers," the light streaming down. The falcon is another reference to heaven, since it flies so high. The green pastures are an allusion to* Psalm 23 *and have special meaning, since the psalm was written to suggest faith in God during a time of crisis.*)

12. Ask students to select the images in the next section which they find most powerful. With what do they associate these images?

13. Explain that an author trying to achieve a special effect often uses *juxtaposition*, placing contrasting objects next to each other. In this case, the contrast between the peaceful view from the retreat house before the bombing and the carnage afterwards parallels the dramatic change in the characters present, particularly Patria and Padre de Jesus.

14. Direct students to read chapter 9 and to write a journal entry about a time they felt afraid and either conquered their fear or gave in to it.

In the Time of the Butterflies
Lesson 7
Handout 12

Name_____

Date_____

Terminology to Discuss Characters

Directions: Define each of the following terms. Then apply the terms to characters in the novel.

Term	Definition	Application
Protagonist		
Antagonist		
Flat character		
Round character		
Static character		
Dynamic character		

Name_____

Date_____

The Retreat and the Cuban Invasion

Directions: Use the following points to examine Julia Alvarez's diction and imagery.

1. Before the invasion, Patria describes the setting of the retreat house where her group is meeting. Read the passage beginning with the phrases, "When we got to Constanza . . ." and stopping after "flower-dotted hillsides." What does each of the following images suggest to you? Why do you think Alvarez chose to include each one? What is the overall effect on Patria? on the reader?

   a. "Purple mountains reaching toward angelfeather clouds"

   b. "[A] falcon soaring in a calm blue sky"

   c. "God combing His sunshine fingers through green pastures right out of the Psalms"

2. After the invasion, the retreat house is almost totally destroyed. Again Patria describes the setting in very vivid language. Read the paragraph that begins, "The shelling happened in a flash. . . ." What is the overall effect of this passage?

Lesson 8
Fear and Courage

Objectives
- To explore the nature of courage
- To understand Dedé as a dynamic character who changes dramatically in this chapter

Notes to the Teacher
Up to this point in the novel, chapter 9, the character of Dedé has stood apart from her sisters. To one extent or the other, they are involved in revolutionary activity, while she resists involvement and seeks to be safe. They have made marriages driven by passion, whether for a beloved partner or a shared cause; she has settled for a marriage of convenience with a man she does not love wholeheartedly. The other three sisters die together on the same day; she is the lone survivor. In this chapter, Dedé comes to understand that she is really a part of the Mirabal sisters, that she cannot and will not stand apart from them any longer.

In this lesson, students explore the idea of courage, both moral and physical. They then look at Dedé's words and actions at a time of family crisis, seeing her as a dynamic character who is changed, even liberated, by the circumstances of her life.

Procedure
1. Tell students a story about yourself and a time when you showed or lacked courage, in order to model what you are going to ask students to do. Then ask for student volunteers to share the journal entries they wrote for the last assignment. After a few students have read or talked about their journal entries, write the words "Moral Courage" and "Physical Courage" on the board. Define the terms for them. (*Moral courage is courage to do the right thing, even in the face of scorn or opposition from others; physical courage is courage to act in a dangerous situation.*) Point out that sometimes, physical courage and moral courage may both be required in a situation. Ask students to decide whether the stories they have heard reflect physical or moral courage.
2. Distribute **Handout 14**. Explain that part A of the handout has quotations from famous and not-so-famous people about the nature of courage. Give students a few minutes to read through the quotations and think about their meaning.
3. Put students in pairs, and assign one quotation to each pair. Ask students to paraphrase the quotations. Then have them share their ideas with the group as a whole.
4. Ask students which of the quotations in part A could be used to describe Dedé. Ask for textual evidence to support responses.
5. Distribute **Handout 15**, and use it as a basis to discuss Dedé in chapter 9.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *Dedé hides behind Jaimito's unwillingness to have her involved, but the truth is that she is afraid.*
   2. *She has long hidden her unhappiness from herself. Jaimito is overly macho and bossy toward all the women in the family, he is incompetent at business matters, and he drinks too much. During the chapter, she feels a great sense of relief at the thought of leaving him.*
   3. *Dedé has great respect for the Church, but also, she has always relied on a man to tell her the best thing to do.*
   4. *This is another example of Dedé agreeing to do what a man thinks is best.*
   5. *Dedé is afraid of Jaimito's temper, afraid of leaving her sons without her protection and care, and particularly afraid of the brutality that the Trujillo regime has shown to anyone who opposes it.*
   6. *She begins to show more strength and determination. After she tells Jaimito that she wants a divorce, he begs for a second chance. Their lives are drawing back together again as they work on their "most passionate project to date," trying to do what they can to rescue her sisters.*

7. *She finally understands that, because she loves her sisters, she cannot escape their fate. She reflects, "She would suffer whatever they suffered. If they died, she would not want to go on living without them."*

8. *While she was not engaged at the early stages, her very practicality and common sense are what seem to be needed now. She and Jaimito will help the revolution by helping the revolutionaries. All of these changes occur because Dedé begins to be more independent and activist.*

9. *Jaimito begins to respect Dedé more as she respects herself more. He regains some of his old competitive spirit. They form a more equal partnership.*

6. Assign students to read chapter 10, to list in their journals three examples of religious imagery, and to explain the relevance of each image to the novel.

Name_____

Date_____

On Courage

Part A.

Directions: Read the following reflections about courage carefully, and highlight the ones you find most interesting.

Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing, never can bring about a reform. Those who are really in earnest must be willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation, and publicly and privately, in season and out, avow their sympathy with despised and persecuted ideas and their advocates, and bear the consequences.

—Susan B. Anthony

Courage is being afraid but going on anyhow.

—Dan Rather

Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared.

—Eddie Rickenbacker

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.

—Ambrose Redmoon

Every man has his own courage, and is betrayed because he seeks in himself the courage of other persons.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Cowards die many times before their deaths. The valiant never taste of death but once.

—William Shakespeare

God grant me the courage not to give up what I think is right, even though I think it is hopeless.

—Chester W. Nimitz

He who lives in fear will never be free.

—Horace

Heroism consists in hanging on one minute longer.

—Albert Payson Terhune

Name_____

Date_____

I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.

—Helen Keller

Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.

—Aristotle

One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest.

—Maya Angelou

Only when we are no longer afraid do we begin to live.

—Dorothy Thompson

Sometimes even to live is an act of courage.

—Seneca

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear. Except a creature be part coward it is not a compliment to say it is brave.

—Mark Twain

The only thing required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.

—attributed to Edmund Burke

There is the risk you cannot afford to take, and there is the risk you cannot afford not to take.

—Peter Drucker

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. . . . You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

Part B.

Directions: Using separate paper, write a paragraph about Dedé in relation to one or more of the quotations in part A.

Name_____

Date_____

Focus on Dedé

Directions: Use the following questions to consider the portrait of Dedé in chapter 9.

1. Why hasn't Dedé joined her sisters in the revolutionary movement before now?

2. How good is Dedé's marriage?

3. Why does Dedé rely on the priest to tell her what to do?

4. Why does she go along with Manolo's suggestion about the second honeymoon?

5. What does Dedé fear?

6. How does her attitude toward her marriage change?

7. How does her relationship with her sisters change?

8. What change do you see in her attitude toward the revolution?

9. How do Dedé's changes affect Jaimito?

Lesson 9
Sacrificial Lamb

Objectives

- To review the term *allusion* and analyze how biblical allusions are used in the Patria section
- To understand the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- To apply the principles of the Declaration to Trujillo's regime
- To apply the principles of the Declaration to contemporary events

Notes to the Teacher

In this lesson, the very religious Patria speaks in language rich with biblical allusions, helping the reader to view the revolutionary side as virtuous and the Trujillo administration as pure evil. It is especially appropriate for Patria's voice, since she has always felt religion as crucially important to her identity, even when she temporarily rejected it.

The pastoral letter of the bishops announced in this chapter reflects a growing world consensus on the significance of human rights that evolved in the mid-twentieth century and puts them in a religious context. The most important document about human rights from this period is the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As students work through this document, they will note the similarities to the American Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. They will also notice modern issues such as women's rights and the surprising statement condemning slavery, which most students wrongly assume ended in 1865. (In fact, slavery is still very much an issue in many areas of the world, and even in the United States, occasional prosecutions involving slavery crop up from time to time.)

At the time the Declaration was written and approved, there were fifty-eight member states in the United Nations. Many had just suffered the ravages of World War II and had seen dreadful violations of human rights occur in that conflict. In spite of their many differences in political systems, religious beliefs, and economic variations, they were able to agree on basic principles that could be accepted by all parties, while still respecting individual cultural traditions. The document provides a framework for many national government policies today.

The Declaration was drafted by an eight-member commission under the guidance of Eleanor Roosevelt, former First Lady of the United States. It was rewritten following suggestions by other UN member states and passed unanimously in 1948. The document has been called a "Magna Carta for all humanity." Unfortunately, despite general world approval of the principles, "the devil is in the details," and in many places in the world, these rights are not yet fully realized. People still die of malnutrition, many are still unemployed and underemployed, genocides occur, and women still are denied full and equal rights in many parts of the world.

You may find students applying the principles of the document to such abuses as modern genocides in Darfur and Kosovo, the Palestinian crisis, and recent U.S. actions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo. The next lesson will take up contemporary human rights issues in more detail.

This material may take several days to work through. After you finish the novel, if you have additional time and the activity suits your class, consider the optional mock trial in the Extension Ideas section (Supplementary Materials) as an excellent way to have them expand their knowledge of the Trujillo years and international law.

Procedure

1. Ask students to tell you which religious images they found in chapter 10, and list the images on the board as students respond. When the list seems complete, ask students how each image is connected with the story. Ask them which of the images are used literally (i.e., they are actually part of the plot of the story) and which are used figuratively, in a way that goes beyond the literal meaning. Review the use of allusions from Lesson 3. Be sure that

students identify the following figurative responses:

- ". . . [M]y cross became bearable." (*allusion to cross of Christ; means she has a painful burden to bear*)
- "And on the third day he rose again." (*allusion to resurrection of Christ; after three days, she recovered her senses and began to take part in normal life again*)
- ". . . [M]y crown of thorns was woven of thoughts of my boy." (*allusion to passion of Christ; refers to her greatest suffering, inflicted by the ruler*)
- "Take me instead, I'll be your sacrificial lamb!" (*allusion to Old Testament custom of sacrificing animals to Jehovah and Christian view of Jesus as sacrifice; refers to Patria's willingness to trade her life for her son's; repeated several times in chapter as she more fully accepts the trade*)
- "I wasn't ready to enter his Kingdom" (*allusion to Christian belief in life after death and Christ's parable about "My Father's Kingdom"; means Patria is not yet ready to leave her other children, especially Raulito*)
- "We were stunned with the good news that our Gabriel had delivered unto us." (*allusion to gospel—literally "good news"—and the Angel Gabriel at the annunciation; note the archaic term "unto us"*)

Ask students how the section would be different if the religious allusions were omitted. What functions do these allusions serve? (*They reinforce the sense of good vs. evil, identifying the rebels with the Church and, by extension, Trujillo with the devil. They pave the way for the announcement of the Church's pastoral letter.*)

2. Ask students why the "good news" of the pastoral letter is so important. (*It shows that the Catholic Church, a very influential force in the overwhelmingly Roman Catholic Dominican Republic, has shifted from a position of passivity to active condemnation of some of Trujillo's activities.*) Have students explain how the government responds and why the Mirabals are so excited about the letter. *(The government has found ways to harass worshipers by spying on Masses, sending in prostitutes to disrupt services, and even dumping manure in the church; the Mirabals recognize how significant the shift is and how Catholics can now see resistance to the government as a virtuous act.*)

3. Explain that the bishops' letter reflects basic principles of human rights that were defined by the United Nations twelve years earlier. Distribute **Handout 16**, and explain the background to the document; use the information in Notes to the Teacher. Do a read-aloud of the Preamble, and make sure students understand the purpose of the document.

4. There are thirty articles in this document; assign one or two to each student, taking into account students' reading ability. Give students about five minutes to read and paraphrase. Work through the Declaration, asking students to do the following:
   - Explain what the article means.
   - Decide whether the Trujillo administration violated the article.
   - Agree or disagree that the article represents an essential human right.
   - Identify contemporary world events that seem to be violations of the articles.

   Allow ample time, and encourage student discussion.

5. Assign students to read chapter 11 and to write a journal entry answering this question: Why does Mate think she learned so much during her time in prison? What did she learn?

Name_____

Date_____

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Directions: Read the following document, and be prepared to discuss the articles.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights could not be included in the electronic edition of this resource. The document is available on the Web site of the United Nations: http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr.

Name_____

Date_____

This page intentionally left blank.

Name_____

Date_____

This page intentionally left blank.

Name_____

Date_____

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Lesson 10
Prison Life

Objectives

- To understand the continuities and changes in Mate's life during her time in prison
- To understand how economic class can sometimes affect the degree of justice one receives
- To learn about the international law on the use of torture and the organizations that monitor the enforcement of the law

Notes to the Teacher

This is often a very difficult chapter for students emotionally. One of the most sympathetic characters, the youngest sister, María Teresa, undergoes harsh prison conditions and even torture at the hands of the Trujillo regime. Other prisoners, including her husband Leandro, are abused as well. The focus of the first part of the lesson is positive—what Mate learns from her experience, particularly with respect to people who come from a social class lower than her own.

The second part of the lesson gives students the opportunity to study current international law on this subject and to look at individual cases where international law is being ignored or defied. Students also have the opportunity to learn about organizations that attempt to uphold the law by shining a spotlight on countries that permit torture and encouraging public awareness through tactics such as letter-writing campaigns. Learning about such organizations may provide opportunities for community service and involvement. Students may wish, for example, to establish an Amnesty International chapter on campus.

International law on the subject of torture is based on a number of treaties. The 1984 United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment defines *torture* as

> any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

The Convention states that neither exceptional circumstances nor orders from a superior officer may be used as a justification for torture, nor may a country send an individual to another country in which he or she is likely to be tortured. The full text of the document is available on the Web site of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Be sure to prepare the class for discussion by emphasizing the need to listen carefully to the opinions of others and to voice opinions respectfully. This is especially important if the conversation veers to U.S. actions in Iraq and Guantánamo. Teachers should encourage student discussion without attempting to dominate the discussion with their own positions, no matter how heartily felt.

Procedure

1. Arrange students in groups of four or five, and ask them to read to the group their journal entries from the previous assignment. Have a recorder from each group list all the things that Mate learns in prison. Then ask each group to prioritize its list in terms of importance. Call on each recorder in turn to provide the top two items while you write the list on the board. If an item has previously been mentioned by another group, put a check mark next to the item, and ask the recorder to move to the next item on the list. Ask the group as a whole to prioritize this combined list to decide what are the most important things she learns.
2. Discuss with the group the following questions:
   - How does Mate change in prison as a result of what she learns?

- What kind of courage does she show? When?
- Why is she sad at leaving such an awful place?

3. Distribute **Handout 17**, and conduct an open debate on the first question, evaluating Forster's statement about loyalty. Then move to the other questions on the handout, and use them as a basis for discussion of Mate's actions in prison. Ask the following questions:
   - How does she struggle between personal feelings and principles in this chapter?
   - How does she resolve this conflict?
4. Ask a student to recount Magdalena's story. Discuss the limitations that poverty has imposed on her access to justice. Ask students whether Magdalena was justified in drawing a knife in her effort to take back her child. Is she, in fact, guilty of attempted murder?
5. Be sure students understand that Mate is tortured with an electric prod in the La Cuarenta prison in order to make her husband agree to cooperate with the Trujillo regime in writing a book about the revolutionary movement. Use Notes to the Teacher to give students background information on the international law against torture. Explain that, as in the case of the international law against slavery, international laws are not always followed, and justice against those who violate international law is often hard to obtain. Tell students that there are a number of organizations that work to use public opinion to enforce the law. Distribute **Handout 18**, and give students time to research some of the cases discussed on the Web sites listed.
6. After research is finished, ask students to report on their findings. Provide adequate time for discussion.
7. Assign students to read chapter 12 and to list three ways that the author increases suspense in this chapter, even though the final outcome is known.

Name_____

Date_____

Principle and Personal Relationships

Directions: Read the information, and answer the questions that follow.

The British writer E. M. Forster (1879–1970) is best known for his masterpiece novel about British expatriates and travelers, *A Passage to India.* In 1934, he became the first president of the National Council for Civil Liberties. One of his most famous essays, "What I Believe" in *Two Cheers for Democracy*, includes this statement of his beliefs:

> Personal relations are despised today. They are regarded as bourgeois luxuries, as products of a time of fair weather which is now past, and we are urged to get rid of them, and to dedicate ourselves to some movement or cause instead. I hate the idea of causes, and if I have to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country.

1. Do you agree with Forster's statement? Why or why not?

2. Would Minerva agree with this statement? Why or why not?

3. Would María Teresa agree with this statement? Why or why not?

4. How do Mate's actions in chapter 11 align with Forster's ideals?

Name_____

Date_____

The Laws against Torture

Directions: Many international organizations are concerned with the problem of torture in the modern world. They work to shine a spotlight on governments that use torture as a way of punishing opponents and stifling dissent. Using this handout as a guide, research one of the organizations involved in such work. Then investigate a particular case, and find out reasons for the organization's involvement and action steps.

Some places to begin:

- Amnesty International USA (http://www.amnestyusa.org/)
- Amnesty International (http://www.amnesty.org/)
- Human Rights Watch (http://hrw.org/)
- Human Rights Internet (http://www.hri.ca)
- World Organization against Torture (http://www.omct.org/)
- Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (http://www.tassc.org/)

1. What is the name of the organization you are researching?

2. When and by whom was it founded?

3. What is its purpose?

4. What countries is it currently investigating? Why?

5. Select a case that is currently being investigated or a case from the past. Describe the case, using the news reporter's questions of *who, what, when, where*, *why* and *how*. What is the organization trying to accomplish in this case?

6. What are your opinions about this case? What should be done?

Lesson 11
The End of the Road

Objectives

- To understand how filmmakers and writers develop suspense
- To analyze how Julia Alvarez creates suspense in chapter 12
- To understand mood, foreshadowing, and dramatic irony

Notes to the Teacher

In this lesson, you are asked to show one or two clips from a suspense film. Select the clips carefully to maximize the techniques students will be able to observe. Alfred Hitchcock films are excellent; so is Terence Young's *Wait until Dark* with Audrey Hepburn as the blind housewife menaced by drug dealers. (Unfortunately, the Salma Hayek film *In the Time of the Butterflies* is actually less effective at building suspense and would not be a good choice for this lesson.) Depending on your school's policy, you may want to explain to your supervisor in advance why you are showing the clip(s).

This lesson is important for today's students, who are increasingly immersed in film rather than books and magazines. It will help them to understand that film is an art form that goes beyond the mere story. The same lesson is important to their study of literature, as they examine artistic decisions made by writers who are polishing a basic story to achieve certain effects on the reader.

Trujillo's not-so-veiled hint to Captain Peña and others, when he expresses the fact that the Mirabal sisters are problems for him and that he is looking for someone to solve the problem, has a well-known historical parallel. In the year 1170, Henry II, angered at opposition to his policies by the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas á Becket, reputedly asked his knights, "Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?" and, like Peña, several of them rode off to do his implied will.

Procedure

1. Review with students what is meant by the term *suspense* (*tension or anxiety while awaiting the outcome of an event, film, or book*). Point out that people often read suspense novels or go to see suspense movies because this tension is pleasurable. Ask about recent suspense films that students have seen: What did the filmmaker do to make the viewer feel this tension?
2. Distribute **Handout 19**. Show one or more clips from a classic suspense movie, and ask students to figure out how the director creates a feeling of suspense. Then conduct a discussion based on part A of the handout. Some methods students may observe are as follows:
   - close-ups or extreme close-ups that show clearly the emotion felt by a character
   - having the camera pan around the room to reveal objects that seem threatening
   - unusual camera angles such as from the ground up or from overhead
   - showing the main character from the point of view of an unseen watcher
   - use of music, heartbeat, other sound effects, or silence
   - use of light or darkness
3. Tell students that writers often wish to create suspense but do not have all the visual techniques of a filmmaker at their disposal. They rely on *mood* or *atmosphere* (*the effect created by the author's use of language, imagery, and setting*), *foreshadowing* (*giving hints in the text of what is to come; a concept introduced in the first lesson*), and *dramatic irony* (*suspense technique in which the reader understands the implication of events but the characters do not*). Put these terms on the board, and be sure that students understand their meaning.
4. Point out that Julia Alvarez announces the deaths of three Mirabal sisters and a man named Rufino de la Cruz in the opening pages of the book, so the outcome is already known. How does she still manage to create a feeling of suspense? Arrange students in small groups. Assign each group an equal number of pages from chapter 12 to review, and give students

time to complete part B of **Handout 19**. Then have a class discussion on what particular techniques Alvarez uses and how effective they are.

Suggested Responses:

- *knowing the date at the beginning of chapter 12, which ends on the sisters' date of death*
- *the rainy weather, which makes the drive through the mountains feel more dangerous*
- *the time of day, as darkness falls*
- *the unexpected presence of Peña's car*
- *Rufino's promise to Dedé: "A Dio', Doña Dedé, you think I'll let anything happen to the butterflies? They'll have to kill me first."*
- *Dedé's anxiety and sarcasm at her sisters' departure for the prison; Minerva's tender leave-taking of her; Dedé's fear of being left alone*
- *Mate's bad dream*
- *the sales clerk's warning, written at great personal risk on his business card*
- *Manolo's worries and request that they stay with friends Rudy and Pilar instead of returning at night*
- *the presence of the young soldier*
- *the trip that Dedé and Minerva take to clean out Minerva's house at Monte Cristi*
- *Tío Pepe's story about Trujillo wishing someone would resolve the "Mirabal problem" for him*
- *the young guard's puzzling information that the men are going to be moved back to their former jail in a few weeks*
- *Minerva's statement, " . . . I had this eerie feeling that we were already dead and looking longingly at the house where our children were growing up without us."*

5. Ask students to decide whether these items are examples of mood or atmosphere, foreshadowing, or dramatic irony. (Some will overlap.)
6. Read to the class the penultimate paragraph in the chapter, the one that begins, "We moved quickly now. . . ." Remind students of the first chapter of the frame story, in which Dedé talks about the happy evening she remembers. Elicit from the class that this is a repetition in brief form of the setting for that evening; the repetition evokes a sense of closure. Explain that this is an artistic decision on the part of Alvarez, and ask students if they think it is effective or irrelevant.
7. Ask the students who have been focusing on Dedé if they have noticed any change in her in this chapter (*her impulsive identification of herself as Minerva in an attempt to protect her sister*). Ask them how they explain this change in a character that was previously so reluctant to get involved. Have them compare the change in her with the change in Minerva. (*Minerva is now more timid and wants to remain home, although she still puts on a brave front.*)
8. Assign students to read the epilogue and postscript.

Name_____

Date_____

The Fear Factor: Techniques in Building Suspense

Part A.

Directions: Film directors have many visual and aural techniques that can increase suspense. Carefully observe the film clip(s) your teacher shows you, and answer the questions that follow.

1. What visual images help to build suspense?

2. What sounds contribute to the suspense?

3. Why are these images and sounds effective?

4. What else might the director have done to build suspense?

Name_____

Date_____

Part B.

Directions: What are some of the techniques that Julia Alvarez uses in chapter 12 to make the reader experience a feeling of suspense, even when the outcome is known from the beginning? List as many as you can from this chapter, and explain their impact.

Page	Event, Image, or Quotation	How Does It Build Suspense?

Lesson 12
Epilogue

Objectives

- To express personal reactions to the novel
- To ask questions to clarify understanding
- To read, explicate, and respond to some quotations from José Martí

Notes to the Teacher

To prepare for this class, place four to six sheets of newsprint at intervals around the classroom for use in a relay race. You will also need markers and, if desired, little prizes for the winning team.

The focus of the lesson is not on the Mirabals but on their inspiration, Cuban revolutionary José Martí. This writer, poet, translator, and soldier was politically active at a very young age and was exiled to Spain at the age of seventeen. After he earned his college degree, he lived in Mexico, Guatemala, and Venezuela, leaving when their governments objected to his political activities. For years, he lived in the United States but returned to Cuba in 1895 to join Cuba's war for independence from Spain. He died fighting in the war in 1895, at the age of forty-two.

For the projects suggested in **Handout 20**, you may wish to schedule individual meetings with students to discuss their work in progress. Consider assigning pairs or teams to work together. When students are finished with their projects, be sure to provide adequate time for them to present the projects to the class.

This would be an ideal interdisciplinary lesson to do in conjunction with a teacher from your Spanish department. Some of Martí's poetry is available in Spanish from print and online sources and is very easy to translate. See, for example, "Cultivo una rosa blanca" in *Versos sencillos* (*Simple Verses*). His poem "Yo soy un hombre sincero" (also in *Versos sencillos*) is the basis for the lyrics of the popular song "Guantanamera." This lesson could also be taught in conjunction with a social studies teacher of world or American history; little about the role of Cubans in the Spanish-American War is usually taught.

Procedure

1. Give students time to write a letter to Dedé or to one of the other characters. Instruct students to express in the letter how they felt as they finished the book and to ask any questions about the book that they would like to have clarified.
2. Hold a general discussion on students' feelings as they completed the book. Ask students whether they would recommend this book to a friend and why or why not.
3. Define the term *epilogue* (*a short passage added to the end of a book*). Ask the following questions:
   - What additional information did you learn about the characters from the epilogue?
   - Was adding it a good idea, or would the book have been better without it?
4. Organize students into teams of four or five. Give each team a marker, and arrange each team in a line in front of one of the pieces of newsprint posted in the room. Tell students that this is a relay race. When you say "Go," (or "Adelante" [ah-deh-LAHN-tay] if you wish to do it in Spanish), each student is to go to the newsprint and write one question from his or her letter. Then he or she should pass the marker to the next student. The team that puts up the most questions in the time you allot for this exercise will be the winner. Give some sort of small prize to the winning team.
5. After the relay race, use the questions generated by the teams to review and clarify their understanding of the text.
6. Remind students that one of the revolutionary figures mentioned throughout the book, but one that does not actually make an appearance, is José Martí, whose books inspire Minerva and whose poetry she often quotes. Use Notes to the Teacher to give students some background information about Martí. Explain that they are going to have an opportunity to judge Martí's words for themselves.

7. Distribute **Handout 20**, and read the directions aloud. Give students time to read through the quotations and select two or three that appeal to them. Have them turn to a partner and explain to the partner what each quotation means, why they chose it, and how it is related to the story of the Mirabals.

8. Direct students to follow the directions on **Handout 20** and devise a creative way to present the ideas of José Martí to the class. Set a date for students to share their projects.

Name_____

Date_____

The Writings of José Martí

Directions: Read the following translations of statements by José Martí, the father of Cuban independence and Minerva Mirabal's inspiration. Choose one of these quotations, and find an expressive way to interpret it. For example, you may write an essay or a poem, paint a picture, create a collage, design a poster, plan a skit, or compose a speech. Your goal is to convey to your class the essence of Martí's ideas and apply them to the Mirabals' struggle and/or to contemporary life.

On Liberty

- Liberty is the right which every man has to be honest and to think and speak without hypocrisy. A man who hides what he thinks or does not dare to speak what he thinks is not an honest man.
- Freedom has a high price, and it is necessary either to resign oneself to living without it or to decide to purchase it at this price.
- The enemies of the people's freedom are not so much the foreigners that oppress them but the timidity and shallowness of their own children.
- There are men who live contentedly although they live without honor. There are others who suffer as if in agony when they see men who live without honor around them. In the world, there must be a certain amount of honor, as there must be a certain amount of light. When there are many men without honor, there are always others who have within them the honor of many men. These are the ones who rebel with a terrible force against those who rob the people of their liberty, which is the same as robbing them of their honor. In these men live thousands of men, an entire people, and human dignity.
- I live for my country and for true liberty, although I know that my life will not allow me to enjoy the fruit of my labors and that my service must be done with certainty and spirit, without hope of reward.

On Government and Politics

- The government must be born from the country; the spirit of government must be that of the country; the form of government must come from the country's own constitution; the government is nothing more than the balance of the country's natural elements.
- The governing of the people is the highest level of being human, and should only be entrusted to one who loves the people and understands their nature.

On Miscellaneous Subjects

- Poverty passes away; what does not pass away is dishonesty.
- From many generations of slaves, a generation of martyrs must succeed.
- The people have nothing to fear from justice, unless they refuse to exercise it.
- I come to smother my sorrow at not being in battle in the fields of my country, in the solace of honorable work and in preparations for a vigorous combat.
- The war will be impossible while there is no war for thought and unity.
- The virtuous man should be strong in spirit and should not fear solitude nor hope that others will help him, because he will always be alone.

Source: José Martí, *Pensamientos;* translated by Eileen Mattingly and Maria Carrera.

Extension Ideas

1. Literary theory is an approach that works well with the book *In the Time of the Butterflies*. Explain to your students that most high school classes of literature study the basic elements of fiction—plot, characterization, setting, symbolism, and theme. However, there are other possible approaches and lenses through which to view a work of literature. Depending on your own familiarity with various schools of literary theory, acquaint your students with such schools as Marxist theory, feminist theory, post-colonialist theory, and Freudian theory. Then ask your students to re-examine key ideas of *In the Time of the Butterflies* through one of these lenses. This would be a good project for group work, with each group assigned to one of these theory schools, rather than assigning individuals to work alone.

2. Each of your four student groups has been following one of the sisters closely throughout the book. Have students write essays describing the voice of their character and analyzing how the author's choices of diction, imagery, syntax, and tone help to make the voices distinct.

3. Plan a talk show featuring the four sisters. Select a host, and have a group help the host to draft questions for the guests; for example, "When you look at the Dominican Republic today, do you believe that your sacrifice was worth it?" Select a representative from each of the sister groups to appear as that person. You may also wish to introduce surprise guests, such as Lío, Trujillo, and Padre de Jesus.

4. Stage a mock trial of Captain Peña by the new government that succeeds those of Trujillo and his son Ramfis. Explain the process of a trial for those who don't know how one is conducted. Appoint a judge, lawyers, witnesses, bailiff, etc. All other students may serve as jurors, or you could invite jurors from another class. When the trial concludes, ask students to discuss whether secondary figures should always be held responsible for their actions.

5. Have students research the actual Mirabal family and the Mirabal museum. After their research, have them evaluate how effectively Julia Alvarez has conveyed the story of the Mirabals.

6. Have students select quotations from each of the sisters which reflect their personalities. Then have a quiz game in which you read quotations and team members guess which characters made the statements. You can vary this by including other characters from the book as well as bonus questions.

7. Salma Hayek has produced and starred in a film based on *In the Time of the Butterflies*. There are some very significant differences from the book, including the fact that the film focuses almost totally on Minerva's viewpoint and the other sisters are very minor characters. Have students view the film and write reviews of it, or ask them to write comparison-contrast essays about the two works.

8. Support students who wish to investigate the possibility of forming a chapter of Amnesty International on the campus. The Amnesty International USA Web site (http://www.amnestyusa.org/) has information for students and a calendar of events that would be of interest. Many high school chapters have their own Web sites. Schools with a community service requirement for graduation might be interested in supporting such efforts.

Additional Resources

Dominican Republic

The Coverdell World Wise Schools office of the Peace Corps has created a series of lesson plans, a video, and other resources on the Dominican Republic. All are free and downloadable from the Peace Corps Web site.

- *Insights from the Field: Understanding Geography, Culture, and Service*
  http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/publications/insights/index.cfm
- *Destination: Dominican Republic*
  http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/videos/dominicanrepublic.wmv
- CyberVolunteer Letters: Angela (Rich) George, Dominican Republic, 2001–03
  http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/publications/cybervol/index.cfm#dr

The nonprofit organization Teaching for Change has published a curriculum called *Caribbean Connections: The Dominican Republic*. A full table of contents, excerpts, and reviews are available on the Teaching for Change Web site (http://www.teachingforchange.org).

Caribbean Authors

You may wish to explore novels and poetry by some other authors whose works draw on their Caribbean roots:

- Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua)
- V. S. Naipaul (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Derek Walcott (St. Lucia)
- Jean Rhys (Dominica)
- Caryl Phillips (St. Kitts)
- George Lamming (Barbados)
- José Martí (Cuba)
- Claude McKay (Jamaica)
- Edwidge Danticat (Haiti)
- Cristina Garcia (Cuba)
- Maryse Condé (Guadeloupe)

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Common Core English Language Arts Standards

In the Time of the Butterflies

ISBN 978-1-56077-881-3

Entire Unit

RL.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL.9-10.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.9-10.3	Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
RL.9-10.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
RL.9-10.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
RL.9-10.7	Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*).
RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
RL.11-12.2	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
RI.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.9-10.3	Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
RI.9-10.5	Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
RI.9-10.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
W.9-10.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
W.11-12.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
SL.9-10.1a	Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
SL.11-12.1a	Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
SL.11-12.1c	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

Source

Common Core State Standards (Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010)

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ISBN-13: 978-1-56077-881-3