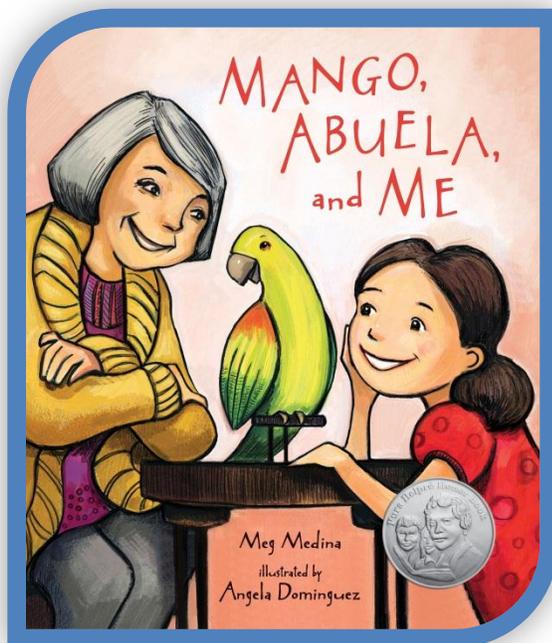




Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



Mango, Abuela, and Me

Meg Medina (Author), Angela Dominguez (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-0763669003

Publisher: Candlewick Press

Year Published: 2015

Age Range: 5–8

Book Themes

Language, Latino culture, Family, Communication

About the Book

Mia's Abuela (Grandmother) has left her sunny house with parrots and palm trees to live with Mia and her parents in the city. The night she arrives, Mia tries to share her favorite book with Abuela before they go to sleep and discovers that Abuela can't read the words inside. So while they cook, Mia helps Abuela learn English ("dough. *masa*"), and Mia learns some Spanish too, but it's still hard for Abuela to learn the words she needs to tell Mia all her stories. Then Mia sees a parrot in the pet-shop window and has the *perfecto* idea for how to help them all communicate a little better.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud or children read it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happened in the story?
- How do you think Mia and Abuela felt when they had trouble communicating with each other?
- What are some of the things they wanted to share with each other, but couldn't?
- Have you ever had trouble communicating with someone because you spoke different languages? How did this feel and what did you do about it?
- What are some of the ways Mia and Abuela teach each other English and Spanish?
- How was her daily life different when Abuela learned more English?
- In addition to Abuela learning English, why do you think that Mia felt it was important to learn Spanish?
- How does Mia and Abuela's relationship change when they can communicate more?
- What did you learn about Mia's family and their culture from the book?
- What was the message of the book?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Culture and Identity

In the book, Mia and her family are Latino, which means they are of Latino/Hispanic descent (i.e. their family descended from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central or South America), although their country of origin is not named in the book. Abuela moves to live with Mia and her parents. Ask your child how they might have known from the story that the family is Latino. As you read the book, ask about or point out those elements of culture in the book (e.g. references to food, language, names, etc.). Talk with your child about the aspects of culture(s) that are important in your family. You can describe culture as parts of daily life that are seen in food, customs, holidays, music and more that a group of people share. Explain that these aspects of culture are often handed down from one generation to the next and they are sometimes connected to the country where people's relatives originally came from, but don't have to be. Explain how you would define your family's culture(s), and identify what foods, holidays, customs, etc. are important to your family. You may also want to highlight other people in your life (your child's friends and family friends) who have similar or different cultures from your own. Stress that culture is part of who we are but not all of who we are. It's also important to underscore that those differences should not impact our ability to connect with each other across different cultures and that diversity can be and is a positive force.

2. Language Diversity

The focus of the book is the relationship between Mia and her Abuela and how they each need to learn each other's language in order to communicate. Talk with your child about people in your lives who speak languages other than English. Explain that while English is the most commonly used language in the U.S., over our country's history, immigration has impacted who lives in the U.S. and the languages spoken here. In fact, more than [350 languages are spoken](#) in U.S. homes. Share with them that a large influx of Latino people has made Spanish the second most widely spoken language within the country and that 38 million U.S. residents age 5 and older speak Spanish at home, which is 73% of Latino people. Emphasize that while people who come to the U.S. often need and want to learn English—as Abuela did—it is also helpful if others learn their language so the communication can go in both directions. If your child is interested and not fluent in more than one language, talk with them about possibly learning another language and do that together.

3. Understanding and Acceptance of Differences

As you read the book, emphasize that although there are differences between Mia and Abuela in terms of the language each speaks, they work hard to communicate with each other and there is mutual respect and love in their relationship. In the beginning of the book, Mia wishes Abuela and she could communicate better so she can share what's important to her, but she never judges Abuela. Similarly, Mia's mother reminds Mia that when Kim—who is now her best friend—moved to her school, Kim needed to learn English and the whole class helped her with that. With your child, emphasize the general point that there are all kinds of differences between people and it is important to both acknowledge those differences and at the same time, teach your child that differences make us uniquely who we are. You never want to act as though the differences don't exist (i.e. "colorblind"), but instead, teach children to accept differences, learn from them and never judge or discriminate against people because of those differences. Abuela learned English and Mia also learned Spanish—that made both of their lives better and more interesting.

Other Books You May Like

Abuela by Arthur Dorros, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/abuela.html

Dear Primo by Duncan Tonatiuh, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/dear-primo.html

How Tia Lola Came to Stay by Julia Alvarez, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/how-tia-lola-came-to-stay.html

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and other resources on Latino people and culture and diversity.

Curriculum Resources

"Dolls Are Us," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/dolls-are-us.html.

"Who Am I? Identity Poems," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lessonplans/c/who-am-i-identity-poems.html.

Websites

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-bullying.html

A listing of terms and definitions relating to bias, diversity, bullying and social justice concepts written for elementary-age children.

The Question Corner: How Can I Help Children Appreciate Diversity?

www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/How-Can-I-Help-Children-Appreciate-Diversity.pdf

From The Question Corner, A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members, this resource provides answers and tips on helping young children appreciate diversity.

Myths and Facts about Immigrants and Immigration

www.adl.org/civil-rights/immigration/c/immigration-myths-and-facts.html

Includes several myths about immigrants and immigration and the facts based on research and statistical information.

National Hispanic Heritage Month

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/educational-resources-in-spanish.html

A list of PreK-12 curriculum and other resources that help bring the themes of Hispanic Heritage Month to your classrooms.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education/c/parent-family-and-caregivers.html

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

People, Identity and Culture: Immigrants, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/people-books.html?subpeople=immigrants

People, Identity and Culture: Latino/Hispanic or Latino-American/Hispanic-American, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/people-books.html?subpeople=latinohispanic-latino-american-hispanic-american

People, Identity and Culture, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/people-identity-culture.html