

## Sample Annotation: Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*

As students read a novel or play for the first time, they should highlight any element that might be potentially significant—such as the descriptions of characters, settings, or any detail that an author or playwright might use to establish tone or convey theme. After highlighting the text on the initial read, students should then underline, box, or asterisk the highlighted sections and add margin notes to ask questions or provide commentary.

"Lazy poems" - starts with "and" = lot. why?  
 Vignette - Photograph that gives an impression  
 ("a few brush strokes")  
 Not a full painting  
 why write a book of vignettes? Effect?

Read aloud:  
 what is your first impression of Esperanza? what is she like?  
 \* Thesis Statement  
 \* Quote to support

# The House on Mango Street

Rhythmic - string of fragments  
 Starting with "and"

We didn't always live on Mango Street. Before that we lived on Loomis on the third floor, and before that we lived on Keeler. Before Keeler it was Paulina, and before that I can't remember. But what I remember most is moving a lot. Each time it seemed there'd be one more of us. By the time we got to Mango Street we were six—Mama, Papa, Carlos, Kiki, my sister Nenny and me. American dream

The house on Mango Street is ours, and we don't have to pay rent to anybody, or share the yard with the people downstairs, or be careful not to make too much noise, and there isn't a landlord banging on the ceiling with a broom. But even so, it's not the house we'd thought we'd get.

Disappointment: should she be?

The House on Mango Street 3

why is she ashamed? What does she use of a comparison?

We had to leave the flat on Loomis quick. The water pipes broke and the landlord wouldn't fix them because the house was too old. We had to leave fast. We were using the washroom next door and carrying water over in empty milk gallons. That's why Mama and Papa looked for a house, and that's why we moved into the house on Mango Street, far away, on the other side of town.

They always told us that one day we would move into a house, a real house that would be ours for always so we wouldn't have to move each year. And our house would have running water and pipes that worked. And inside it would have real stairs, not hallway stairs, but stairs inside like the houses on T.V. And we'd have a basement and at least three washrooms so when we took a bath we wouldn't have to tell everybody. Our house would be white with trees around it, a great big yard and grass growing without a fence. This was the house Papa talked about when he held a lottery ticket and this was the house Mama dreamed up in the stories she told us before we went to bed.

But the house on Mango Street is not the way they told it at all. It's small and red with tight steps in front and windows so small you'd think they were holding their breath. Bricks are crumbling in places, and the front door is so swollen you have to push hard to get in. There is no front yard, only four little elms the city planted by the curb. Out back is a small garage for the car we don't own yet and a small yard that looks smaller between the two buildings on either side. There are stairs in our house, but they're ordinary hallway stairs, and the house has only one washroom. Everybody has to share a bedroom—Mama and Papa, Carlos and Kiki, me and Nenny.

Once when we were living on Loomis, a nun from my school passed by and saw me playing out front. The laundromat downstairs had been boarded up because it had

Crime

4 Sandra Cisneros