



Family saying goodbye at train station / *Familia despidiéndose en la estación de trenes, México, 1945.*  
Photograph / *fotografía*: Hermanos Mayo, Archivo Nacional de México

# BRACEROS

An Educator's Guide



## Beyond the Bracero Program: Teaching the Intersections of Migrant Workers, Labor Rights, and Immigration

### ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was inspired by *Braceros*, a photography exhibit on view January-June 2019 in the National Hispanic and Cultural Center (NHCC) History and Literary Arts building. It was compiled by the NHCC and Latin American and Iberian Institute (LAI) at The University of New Mexico as part of a collaborative effort to reach middle and high school educators interested in bringing this topic into the classroom. The cover image is taken from the exhibit, and is reprinted here with permission.

As John Mraz, *Braceros* exhibit curator, notes, “Today, as waves of migration arrive on the coasts and borders of the world, it seems appropriate to reflect on the Mexican braceros who were recruited to fill the boots of those United States soldiers who had gone to fight fascism in the Second World War. Under the ‘Bracero Program, 1942-1968,’ Mexicans were legally contracted to work in the United States of Americas as temporary unskilled laborers.” By embedding this history into official curriculum, educators can acknowledge a formative period in US history and encourage learning about its far-reaching impact. Among other questions, students might be encouraged to inquire: *How did the arrival of Braceros lead to the formation of thriving Mexican American communities in the US? Was the Bracero experience one of exploitation or opportunity, or both? What impact did the Bracero Program have on future immigration and labor policy? Who are the modern-day “Braceros”?*

The LAI and NHCC compiled this guide so as to provide resources that can either prompt or deepen these conversations in the classroom. We used broad parameters when considering which materials to include, acknowledging that this is not a simple topic to teach. Consequently, the compiled resources address myriad points related to the Bracero Program, including the intertwined history and relationship of the United States and Mexico, the context and ongoing conditions of immigrants and particularly migrant farmworkers, and the need for social justice and social engagement around questions of labor rights and human rights.

We include brief background information on the exhibit, annotated lesson plans, and a bibliography of children’s and young adult literature about these intersecting topics. Teachers are encouraged to select the pieces most suited to their classrooms. For questions and comments, please contact [laiioutreach@unm.edu](mailto:laiioutreach@unm.edu). A digital copy of this guide is available on the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute website at <http://laii.unm.edu/info/k-12-educators/>

## ABOUT THE EXHIBIT AND THE HERMANOS MAYOS

Curated by John Mraz, *Braceros* is a traveling exhibit featuring photography taken by the Hermanos Mayo of Mexico. It was created by the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN México), Museo Nacional de los Ferrocarriles Mexicanos, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), and the Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades de BUAP. Its installation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was further supported by the Secretaría de Cultura and the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores of the Gobierno de la República de México, National Hispanic Cultural Center, and the Latin American and Iberian Institute at The University of New Mexico.

According to Mraz, “This collective of photojournalists played a pivotal role in redefining Mexico’s graphic reportage. The name ‘Mayo,’ which the five ‘brothers’ — Francisco (Paco), Faustino, Julio, Cándido, and Pablo — used is a *nombre de guerra* which reflects their commitment to the working class: the Brothers of May Day. On June 13, 1939, three of the Hermanos Mayo—Paco, Faustino, and Cándido — landed in Veracruz aboard the ship *Sinaia*. They came in a group of some 1,600 refugees from the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Establishing themselves in the New World, they quickly reconstituted their collective, Foto Hermanos Mayo. Afterward, they worked for more than forty magazines and newspapers and, perhaps more importantly, they participated in founding magazines and newspapers that reflected their commitment to democratic forces in Mexico.”

Mraz continues by noting, “Among the myriad of subjects the Mayo photographed are the *braceros*, Mexican workers who were legally contracted to labor in the United States during and after World War II. The Hermanos Mayo’s photographs of the *braceros* are important for what they show us about those migratory workers, and for what they tell us about the vision of these graphic reporters. The ‘interactive’ images of the Hermanos Mayo allow the photographed subjects to return the camera’s gaze and insist on their own existence. We see the human spirit’s tenacity in the *braceros*. If it is important to applaud the artfulness of the Mayo collective, it is also necessary to recognize the social realities that necessitated the photographs. As Julio said, ‘Photography has its creative part, but within reality.’”

For more information, see Mraz’s book on the topic, *Uprooted: Braceros in the Hermanos Mayo’s Lens* (1996, Arte Público Press)

## LESSON PLANS AND COMPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

The following materials are loosely grouped into categories to make it easier to skim and reference, but naturally overlap and intersect across these themes.

### Featured Resource

#### [Before the Bracero Program: Primary Source Timeline](#)

As part of the May 2019 professional development workshop on the topic, Dr. Brandon Morgan, Department Chair and History Instructor at Central New Mexico (CNM) Community College, presented on the historical context of nationalism, immigration, and labor practices within and between the United States and Mexico in the early twentieth century. Formative events such as the Mexican Revolution, the Great War, and the Great Depression, brought about drastic changes for both countries and in various ways set the stage for what would eventually become the largest contract labor program in our country's history.

### Primary Source Resources

#### [Library of Congress Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tools](#)

As the Library of Congress website states, "primary sources provide a window into the past – unfiltered access to the record of artistic, social, scientific and political thought and achievement during the specific period under study, produced by people who lived during that period. Bringing young people into close contact with these unique, often profoundly personal, documents and objects can give them a very real sense of what it was like to be alive during a long-past era." To support the use of primary sources in the classroom, the Library provides the following guides: Analyzing Primary Sources, Analyzing Books and Other Printed Texts, Analyzing Manuscripts, Analyzing Maps, Analyzing Motion Pictures, Analyzing Political Cartoons, Analyzing Newspapers, Analyzing Sheet Music and Song Sheets, Analyzing Oral Histories, Analyzing Sound Recordings, Analyzing Photographs and Prints.

### Bracero Program

Digital Resource: [Bracero History Archive](#)

The Bracero History Archive collects and makes available the oral histories and artifacts pertaining to the Bracero program, a guest worker initiative that spanned the years 1942-1964. Millions of Mexican agricultural workers crossed the border under the program to work in more than half of the states in America. Teaching resources include three lesson plans: "Learning from Photos," "Tracing the Route of a Bracero," and "Learning from Documents."

Digital Resource: [Voices from the Border – The Bracero Legacy](#) (University of Texas at Austin)

Voices from the Border is an on-going video oral history project of the University of Texas at El Paso's Institute of Oral History. Oral history is critical to telling the story of men who came to the United States between 1942 and 1964 to work in our agricultural fields and railroads. While government documents tell the story of the official program and the way the program was supposed to function, oral histories tell us the reality of men's day-to-day lives. Through this video series we reach out to new audiences, including community members who want to learn more about the Bracero Program history as well as educators who seek powerful videos to screen in their classrooms. These videos also reach out to a national and binational audience. After all, the Bracero Program is the patrimony of both nations.

Lesson Plan: [The Price of Labor: Contextualizing and Humanizing the Braceros](#)

This material highlights how, by “using a blend of primary and secondary accounts, as well as audio and visual content, students will vividly examine the origins and consequences of the Bracero program. They will consider how immigration and labor affect the goods they consume today and have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of these issues. The Braceros mini-unit is divided into three parts designed for high school teachers to adapt and revise as necessary in order to shorten or extend learning.”

Lesson Plan: [The Bracero Program: A Historical Investigation](#) (National Museum of American History)

Primary source-focused, inquiry-based lesson plans to encourage students to understand the historical context of the Bracero Program.

### **Farmworker Rights**

Lesson Plan: [Our Food, Their Struggle: Farmworker Organizing](#) (Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility)

This lesson consists of two readings. The first reading gives an overview of some the conditions facing farmworkers in the United States. The second reading profiles the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, an organization working to improve conditions for farmworkers today. Questions for discussion follow each reading.

Lesson Plan: [Viva la Causa Teacher's Guide](#) (Teaching Tolerance)

Based on the film, *Viva La Causa*, this 50+ page teacher's guide uses the film to explore economic injustice, farmworkers and unions, nonviolent strategies, social justice, food justice, worker exploitation, and the current immigration debate. It also offers recommended resources and aligns with standards.

Lesson Plan: [Looking at Labor](#) (Teaching Tolerance)

In this lesson, students will examine the many kinds of work that people do, and discuss why certain jobs are better paid and often more respected than others. The class will then discuss and decide if such assessments are valid.



Lesson Plan: [Injustice on Our Plates: Immigrant Women in the U.S. Food Industry](#) (Teaching Tolerance)

Based on issues raised in the report, *Injustice on Our Plates: Immigrant Women in the U.S. Food Industry*, Teaching Tolerance developed seven theme-based lessons. The lessons meet selected curriculum standards for language arts, economics, history, government and geography for grades 7-12. These lessons can help students better understand the impact on their lives of undocumented immigrants, like the women who share their stories in the report.

Lesson Plan: [Primary Source Set: The United Farm Workers and the Delano Grape Strike](#) (PBS Learning Media)

This collection uses primary sources to explore the United Farm Workers and the Delano Grape Strike. Digital Public Library of America Primary Source Sets are designed to help students develop their critical thinking skills and draw diverse material from libraries, archives, and museums across the United States. Each set includes an overview, ten to fifteen primary sources, links to related resources, and a teaching guide. These sets were created and reviewed by the teachers on the DPLA's Education Advisory Committee.

Lesson Plan: [Introduction to Activism: A Closer Look at Dolores Huerta](#) (National Women's History Museum)

This lesson takes a closer look at one of key activists in the women's, workers' and immigrants' rights movement in the 20th century.

Lesson Plans: [The Dolores Huerta Collection](#) (PBS Learning Media)

These four lessons, developed in support of PBS' Independent Lens program [Dolores](#), invite teachers and students to rectify the historical record by accurately situating Dolores Huerta as one of the most influential and formidable American civil rights leaders. Strategies to support ELL learners are included throughout these lessons.

## **Mexican History**

Lesson Plan: [Educator's Guide to the Mexican Revolution](#) (Latin American & Iberian Institute)

There is no question the Mexican Revolution irrevocably changed the course of Mexican history, but it also had a significant impact on the United States. More than one million Mexican refugees entered the United States attempting to escape the death and destruction wrought by the Revolution. Despite this impact, the topic of the Mexican Revolution, if taught at all, is only briefly addressed in classrooms or textbooks. As the first revolution caught on film, available resources allow students to actually see the people and events that would forever change North America.

Lesson Plans: [The Line Between Us: Teaching About the Border and Mexican Immigration](#) (Bill Bigelow, Rethinking Schools). This guide is available for purchase from Rethinking Schools.

*The Line Between Us* explores the history of U.S-Mexican relations and the roots of Mexican immigration, all in the context of the global economy. And it shows how teachers can help students understand the immigrant experience and the drama of border life.

## Civil Rights, Labor Rights, and Organizing

Lesson Plan: [Curriculum Guide to Monica Brown's \*Side by Side / Lado a Lado\*](#)

Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez were two of the most influential crusaders for workers' rights in the twentieth century. Together they voiced the plight of migrant farm workers through nonviolent demonstrations and boycotts that instigated change across a nation. Monica Brown's stirring portrait of these two leaders, *Side by Side: The Story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez/Lado a lado: La historia de Dolores Huerta y César Chávez*, will inspire and empower young readers to champion the important issues facing our society. ¡Sí, se puede! Yes, we can!

Lesson Plan: [Educator's Guide to \*Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation\*](#) (Latin American & Iberian Institute)

Almost 10 years before *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Sylvia Mendez and her parents helped end school segregation in California. An American citizen of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage who spoke and wrote perfect English, Mendez was denied enrollment to a "Whites only" school. Her parents took action by organizing the Hispanic community and filing a lawsuit in federal district court. Their success eventually brought an end to the era of segregated education in California.

Lesson Plan: [Educator's Guide to \*Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale\*](#) (Latin American and Iberian Institute)

In this allegorical picture book, a young rabbit named Pancho eagerly awaits his papa's return. Papa Rabbit traveled north two years ago to find work in the great carrot and lettuce fields to earn money for his family. When Papa does not return, Pancho sets out to find him. He packs Papa's favorite meal—mole, rice and beans, a heap of warm tortillas, and a jug of aguamiel—and heads north. He meets a coyote, who offers to help Pancho in exchange for some of Papa's food. They travel together until the food is gone and the coyote decides he is still hungry . . . for Pancho! Duncan Tonatiuh brings to light the hardship and struggles faced by thousands of families who seek to make better lives for themselves and their children by illegally crossing the border.

Lesson Plan: [Curriculum Guide to \*Sylvia and Aki\* by Winifred Conkling](#) (author)

Sylvia Mendez wanted to be like the other kids in her Southern California neighborhood—to attend her local elementary school, work hard, and go on to college. Aki Munemitsu was also just an ordinary girl who loved her parents and her school and life on her family's asparagus farm. The two girls never expected to know each other, but their lives intersected during a tumultuous time in American history.

Lesson Plan: [Mendez v. Westminster: Desegregating California's Schools](#) (PBS Learning Media)

In 1946, eight years before the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, Mexican Americans in Orange County, California won a class action lawsuit to dismantle the segregated school system that existed there. In this video segment, Sylvia Mendez recalls the conditions that triggered the lawsuit and her parents' involvement in the case.

### Immigration and Migrant Experiences

Lesson Plans and Other Resources: [Teaching Central America](#) (Teaching for Change)

More than four million Central Americans reside in the United States today, yet the lack of resources in most schools on Central American heritage make the rich history and literature of the region invisible. [Teaching for Change](#) has launched a campaign to encourage and support teaching about Central America. We have collected lessons, book lists, biographies of noted historical figures, and readings for free use by classroom teachers.

Lesson Plan: [More Than Migrants](#) (Teaching Tolerance)

This brief resource offers multiple ideas for engaging students in better understanding the “various aspects of migrant life.”

Lesson Plan: [Literary Curriculum Guide to Migrant/Migrante by José Manuel Mateo](#) (by teacher Andrew Schleisman)

This curriculum guide is designed to accompany the book *Migrant* by José Manuel Mateo and illustrated by Javier Martínez Pedro. *Migrant*, laid out in one long illustration resembling a codex, tells the story of a boy's journey to the United States with his family and the dangers and hardships they face crossing the border. The unit looks at the United States as a nation of immigrants, connects modern-day immigration stories with ones in the past, and examines why so many people choose to migrate despite the many hardships it entails. Students learn about symbols and art representations, participate in gallery walks and group work, and create storyboards and codices of their own families' journeys.

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

*Two White Rabbits* written by Jairo Buitrafo and illustrated by Rafael Yockteng. Groundwood Books, 2015. Grades K-3

In this moving and timely story, a young child describes what it is like to be a migrant as she and her father travel north toward the U.S. border. They travel mostly on the roof of a train known as The Beast, but the little girl doesn't know where they are going. She counts the animals by the road, the clouds in the sky, the stars. Sometimes she sees soldiers. She sleeps, dreaming that she



is always on the move, although sometimes they are forced to stop and her father has to earn more money before they can continue their journey.

*Sí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can!* written by Diana Cohn and illustrated by Francisco Delgado. Cinco Puntos Press, 2002. Grades K-3

*¡Sí, Se Puede! / Yes, We Can!* is a bilingual fictional story set against the backdrop of the successful janitors' strike in Los Angeles in 2000. It tells about Carlitos, whose mother is a janitor. Every night, he sleeps while his mother cleans in one of the skyscrapers in downtown L.A. When she comes home, she waves Carlitos off to school before she goes to sleep. One night, his mamá explains that she can't make enough money to support him and his abuelita the way they need unless she makes more money as a janitor. She and the other janitors have decided to go on strike.

*Tomás and the Library Lady* written by Pat Mora and illustrated by Raúl Colón. Alfred A. Knopf, 1997. Grades K-3

A young Texan finds refuge in his new Iowa town's library, where the librarian offers him cool comfort from hot summer days and whirlwind adventures through reading. Colon's beautiful scratchboard illustrations, in his textured, glowingly colored, rhythmic style, capture the warmth and the dreams that the boy finds in the world of books.

*Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English* written by Alma Flor Ada and illustrated by Simón Silva. Harper Collins, 1997. Grades K-3

Using the alphabet as a pattern, paintings and brief poems explore rural life in Mexico presented first in Spanish and followed by English. From A to Z, brilliant illustrations and fluid poems evoke the plants, and more and the emotional impact on the lives of farm workers.

*Side by Side: The Story of Dolores Huerta and César Chávez* written by Monica Brown and illustrated by Joe Cepeda. HarperCollins, 2010. Grades K-3

Many years ago in California, an energetic young Girl Scout named Dolores worked to raise money for soldiers fighting in World War II. A thoughtful young boy named César worked in the fields to help his family put food on the table. As young adults, these two extraordinary individuals would meet and spend the rest of their lives working tirelessly on behalf of migrant workers and children through nonviolent struggle — side by side.

*La mariposa* written by Francisco Jiménez and illustrated by Simón Silva. Diane Pub Co, 1998. Grades K-3

Young Francisco is excited to go to school. His excitement gives way to shame and frustration, however, as he realizes that he doesn't fit in and he can't understand what is happening around him in English. The story explores Francisco's isolation and his daydreams about a caterpillar in

a jar in his classroom. This story is an excerpt from *The Circuit* and is based on the experiences of the author as the child of migrant farmworkers. Both English and Spanish versions available.

*The Christmas Gift* written by Francisco Jiménez and illustrated by Claire B. Cotts. HMH Books, 2000. Grades K-3

With honesty and rare grace, award-winning author Francisco Jiménez shares his most poignant Christmas memory in this remarkable book. Illustrated with paintings full of strength and warmth, written in spare bilingual text, this simple story celebrates the true spirit of Christmas, and illuminates how children do indeed draw strength from the bonds of their families.

*La Frontera: El viaje con papá / My Journey with Papa* written by Deborah Mills and illustrated by Claudia Navarro. Barefoot Books, 2018. Grades K-3

Join a young boy and his father on a daring journey from Mexico to Texas to find a new life. They'll need all the resilience and courage they can muster to safely cross the border -- la frontera -- and to make a home for themselves in a new land.

*Amelia's Road* written by Linda Jacobs Altman and illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. Lee & Low Books Inc, 2000. Grades K - 3

Amelia Luisa Martinez hates los caminos (the roads) which take her family to fields where they labor all day and to bleak cabins that are shelters, not homes; they take Amelia to schools where no one even knows her name. The Martinez family are migrant workers who follow the harvest to make their living. But Amelia yearns for permanence, for a real house, "white and tidy, with blue shutters at the windows and a fine old shade tree growing in the yard." One day, she stumbles upon a different kind of road, a narrow footpath that leads to a grand old tree - the most permanent thing Amelia has ever seen. Inspired by its solid, enduring presence, Amelia puts down roots in a very special way. Colorful, realistic, and inspiring, *Amelia's Road* speaks to children who have had to move as it illuminates the lives of migrant workers and the Latino experience in America.

*Ghosts for Breakfast* written by Stanley Terasaki and illustrated by Shelly Sinjo. Lee & Low Books, 2002. Grades K - 3

A Japanese-American agricultural community in the 1920s is the setting for an excursion into tongue-in-cheek adventure. When rumors swirl that a field is haunted by "dozens of ghosts, dancing in the moonlight," a curious farmer and his son set out to investigate.

*Dolores Huerta: A Hero to Migrant Workers* written by Sarah Warren and illustrated by Robert Casilla. Two Lions, 2012. Grades 1-3

This is the story of Dolores Huerta and the extraordinary battle she waged to ensure fair and safe work places for migrant workers. The powerful text, paired with Robert Casilla's vibrant

watercolor-and-pastel illustrations, brings Dolores's amazing journey to life. A timeline, additional reading, articles, websites, and resources for teachers are included.

*Calling the Doves / El canto de las palomas* written by Juan Felipe Herrera and illustrated by Elly Simmons. Children's Book Press, 2001. Grades 1-4

Calling the Doves is poet Juan Felipe Herrera's story of his migrant farmworker childhood. In delightful and lyrical language, he recreates the joy of eating breakfast under the open sky, listening to Mexican songs in the little trailer house his father built, and celebrating with other families at a fiesta in the mountains. He remembers his mother singing songs and reciting poetry, and his father telling stories and calling the doves.

*Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh. Harry N. Abrams, 2014. Grades 1-4

In this allegorical picture book, a young rabbit named Pancho eagerly awaits his papa's return. Papa Rabbit traveled north two years ago to find work in the great carrot and lettuce fields to earn money for his family. When Papa does not return, Pancho sets out to find him. He packs Papa's favorite meal—mole, rice and beans, a heap of warm tortillas, and a jug of aguamiel—and heads north. He meets a coyote, who offers to help Pancho in exchange for some of Papa's food. They travel together until the food is gone and the coyote decides he is still hungry . . . for Pancho!

*Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* written by Duncan Tonatiuh and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh. Harry N. Abrams, 2014. Grades 1-4

Almost 10 years before Brown vs. Board of Education, Sylvia Mendez and her parents helped end school segregation in California. An American citizen of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage who spoke and wrote perfect English, Mendez was denied enrollment to a "Whites only" school. Her parents took action by organizing the Hispanic community and filing a lawsuit in federal district court. Their success eventually brought an end to the era of segregated education in California.

*First Day in Grapes* written by L. King Pérez and illustrated by Robert Casilla. Lee & Low Books, 2002. Grades 2-3

Chico has had lots of first days, like the first day of artichokes and the first day of onions. Today will be his first day in grapes as his family arrives in a new place to harvest a new crop. Despite some trouble from some bullies, Chico has a good first day — and he may even be at this school long enough to participate in the math contest! Through Chico's eyes, students will have a new appreciation for what it's like for migrant kids or other kids who move a lot and who always know they have a new first day just around the corner.

*Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories* written and illustrated by S. Beth Atkin. Little, Brown Books, 2000. Grades 2-4

This moving collection of photos, poems, and essays offers an intimate look at the challenges and hopes of the children of migrant farmworkers. From the details of what it's like to picking strawberries to the difficulty of moving frequently, *Voices* does exactly what the author intended — it gives a voice to an often overlooked group of children and families, and puts their strength and dreams into words in a way that students will be able to relate to. Most content is appropriate for grades 4 and up, but some is more appropriate for high school students.

*Joelito's Big Decision / La gran decisión de Joelito* written and illustrated by Ann Berlak. Hard Ball Press, 2015. Grades 2-4

Every Friday evening 9 year old Joelito goes with his family to MacMann's for a juicy burger. But this Friday is different. This time, Joelito's best friend Brandon is standing in a crowd outside the fast food restaurant protesting the low pay his parents earn there. Will Joelito cross the picket line for a tasty burger?

*César Chávez: The Struggle for Justice / César Chávez: La lucha por la justicia* written by Richard Griswold del Castillo and illustrated by Anthony Accardo. Arte Público Press, 2015. Grades 2-4

His image and his cry of "Uvas no!" have appeared on television news programs, bumper stickers, and in various other places in our popular consciousness. His struggle lives on as an inspiration for activists and nonviolent protestors, and his supporters seek to educate people about his ideals and his non-violent protests.

*Mama's Nightingale* written by Edwidge Danticat and illustrated by Leslie Staub. Dial Books, 2015. Grades 2-5

After Saya's mother is sent to an immigration detention center, Saya finds comfort in listening to her mother's warm greeting on their answering machine. To ease the distance between them while she's in jail, Mama begins sending Saya bedtime stories inspired by Haitian folklore on cassette tape. Moved by her mother's tales and her father's attempts to reunite their family, Saya writes a story of her own—one that just might bring her mother home for good.

*Graciela: A Mexican-American Child Tells Her Story* written by Joe Molnar and illustrated by Joe Mohnar. Franklin Watts, 1972. Grades 2-5

Graciela is the first of three "photo-and-tape" books by Joe Molnar, an elementary-school teacher who later decided to devote himself to photojournalism. Inspired by the civil rights movement, he created a series of books that told the lives of minority children in their own words. With portable tape recorder and camera, he traveled the country, meeting with families, shooting photos and listening to what the children had to say about their own lives.

*Migrant* written by Jose Manuel Mateo and illustrated by Javier Martínez Pedro. Harry N. Abrams, 2014. Grades 3-5

A Mexican boy tells of his journey to the U.S. with his family. They must face many dangers to cross the border, only to experience the uncertainty felt by all illegal immigrants. The narrative is accompanied by one long, beautifully vivid illustration reminiscent of pre-Hispanic codices, packaged as an accordion-style foldout frieze.

*That's Not Fair! Emma Tenayuca's Struggle for Justice / No es justo! La lucha de Emma Tenayuca por la justicia* written by Carmen Tafolla and Sharyll Tenayuca, and illustrated by Terry Ybáñez. Wings Press, 2008. Grades 3-5

A vivid depiction of the early injustices encountered by a young Mexican-American girl in San Antonio in the 1920's, this book tells the true story of Emma Tenayuca. Emma learns to care deeply about poverty and hunger during a time when many Mexican Americans were starving to death and working unreasonably long hours at slave wages in the city's pecan-shelling factories. Through astute perception, caring, and personal action, Emma begins to get involved, and eventually, at the age of 21, leads 12,000 workers in the first significant historical action in the Mexican-American struggle for justice. Emma Tenayuca's story serves as a model for young and old alike about courage, compassion, and the role everyone can play in making the world more fair.

*César Chávez: A Hero for Everyone* written by Gary Soto and illustrated by Lori Lohstoeter. Simon and Schuster, 2008. Grades 3-5

¡Viva la causa! ¡Viva César Chávez! Up and down the San Joaquin Valley of California, and across the country, people chanted these words. César Chávez, a migrant worker himself, was helping Mexican Americans work together for better wages, for better working conditions, for better lives.

*Rooster Joe and the Bully / El gallo Joe y el abusón* written by Xavier Garza. Piñata Books, 2016. Grades 3-6

This bilingual flip book for intermediate readers also includes Garza's black and white sketches depicting bullies, heroes and the roosters that Joe loves to draw. Award-winning author and illustrator Xavier Garza once again writes an action-packed novel that will appeal to all young teens. Inspirational figures such as César Chávez and Emma Tenayuca are referenced.

*Harvesting Hope: The Story of César Chávez* written by Kathleen Krull and illustrated by Yuyi Morales. HMH Books, 2003. Grades 3-6

As a young boy, César Chávez grew up on an 80-acre ranch in Arizona in the midst of joyous family reunions. When his family had to leave Arizona, however, to work as migrant laborers in California, their lives were turned upside down. During these excruciating days and nights, César struggled — but then found the resolve to one day help his fellow workers. Yuyi Morales brings César's childhood and early days as an organizer to life with stunning illustrations.

*Elegy on the Death of César Chávez* written by Rudolfo Anaya and illustrated by Gaspar Enríquez. Cinco Puntos Press, 2004. Grades 4-6

The heroic life of labor and civil rights activist César Chávez greatly influenced the political and creative thinking of famed Chicano novelist Rudolfo Anaya. After Chávez' death in 1992, Anaya wrote this poem eulogizing the man and his life's work. Echoing Shelley's elegy on the death of John Keats, the poem expresses the grief of la gente, but closes by calling all peoples together to continue the non-violent struggle for freedom and justice. The book—endorsed by the César Chávez Foundation—includes an essay by Anaya detailing the effect that Chávez had on his own vision and a chronology of Chávez' life. Powerful super realistic illustrations by Gaspar Enríquez bring home the significance of César Chavéz to the American cultural landscape.

*Sylvia and Aki* written by Winifred Conkling. Yearling, 2014. Grades 4-7

Young Sylvia Mendez never expected to be at the center of a landmark legal battle. Young Aki Munemitsu never expected to be sent away from her home and her life as she knew it. The two girls definitely never expected to know each other, until their lives intersected on a Southern California farm in a way that changed the country forever. Who are Sylvia and Aki? And why did their family stories matter then and still matter today? This book reveals the remarkable, never-before-told story—based on true events—of Mendez vs. Westminster School District, the California court case that desegregated schools for Latino children and set the stage for *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education* at the national level.

*The Circuit / Cajas de cartón* written by Francisco Jiménez. The University of New Mexico Press, 1997. Grades 5+

After dark in a Mexican border town, a father holds open a hole in a wire fence as his wife and two small boys crawl through. So begins life in the United States for many people every day. And so begins this collection of twelve autobiographical stories by Santa Clara University professor Francisco Jiménez, who at the age of four illegally crossed the border with his family in 1947.

*Breaking Through / Senderizos fronterizos* written by Francisco Jiménez. Houghton Mifflin, 2002. Grades 5+

At the age of fourteen, Francisco Jiménez, together with his older brother Roberto and his mother, are caught by la migra. Forced to leave their home in California, the entire family travels all night for twenty hours by bus, arriving at the U.S. and Mexican border in Nogales, Arizona. In the months and years that follow during the late 1950s-early 1960s, Francisco, his mother and father, and his seven brothers and sister not only struggle to keep their family together, but also face crushing poverty, long hours of labor, and blatant prejudice. How they sustain their hope, their good-heartedness, and tenacity is revealed in this moving, Pura Belpré Honor-winning sequel to *The Circuit*. Without bitterness or sentimentality, Francisco Jiménez finishes telling the story of his youth.



*Reaching Out / Más allá de mí* written by Francisco Jiménez. Houghton Mifflin, 2009. Grades 5+

From the perspective of the young adult he was then, Francisco Jiménez describes the challenges he faced in his efforts to continue his education. During his college years, the very family solidarity that allowed Francisco to survive as a child is tested. Not only must he leave his family behind when he goes to Santa Clara University, but while Francisco is there, his father abandons the family and returns to Mexico. This is the story of how Francisco coped with poverty, with his guilt over leaving his family financially strapped, with his self-doubt about succeeding academically, and with separation. Once again his telling is honest, true, and inspiring.

*Taking Hold: From Migrant Childhood to Columbia University* written by Francisco Jiménez. Houghton Mifflin, 2015. Grades 5+

In this fourth book in his award-winning memoir series, Francisco Jiménez leaves everything behind in California—a loving family, a devoted girlfriend, and the culture that shaped him—to attend Columbia University in New York City.

*Undocumented* written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh. Harry N. Abrams, 2018. Grades 6-8

*Undocumented* is the story of immigrant workers who have come to the United States without papers. Every day, these men and women join the work force and contribute positively to society. The story is told via the ancient Mixtec codex—accordion fold—format. Juan grew up in Mexico working in the fields to help provide for his family. Struggling for money, Juan crosses over into the United States and becomes an undocumented worker, living in a poor neighborhood, working hard to survive. Though he is able to get a job as a busboy at a restaurant, he is severely undercompensated—he receives less than half of the minimum wage! Risking his boss reporting him to the authorities for not having proper resident papers, Juan risks everything and stands up for himself and the rest of the community.

*Strike! The Farm Workers' Fight for Their Rights* written by Larry Dane Brimner. F. Calkin's Creek, 2014. Grades 6-8

In 1965, as the grapes in California's Coachella Valley were ready to harvest, migrant Filipino American workers—who picked and readied the crop for shipping—negotiated a wage of \$1.40 per hour, the same wage growers had agreed to pay guest workers from Mexico. But when the Filipino grape pickers moved north to Delano, in the Central Valley, and again asked for \$1.40 an hour, the growers refused. The ensuing conflict set off one of the longest and most successful strikes in American history. In *Strike!*, award-winning author Larry Dane Brimner dramatically captures that story. Brimner, a master researcher, fills this riveting account of the strike and its aftermath with the words of migrant workers, union organizers, and grape growers, as well as archival images that capture that first strike in 1965 and the ones that subsequently followed. Includes an author's note, bibliography, and source notes.

*Esperanza Rising / Esperanza renace* written by Pam Muñoz Ryan and illustrated by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Scholastic, Inc., 2002. Grades 6-8

Instead of celebrating her 13th birthday in her prosperous Mexican home as she expected, Esperanza must adjust to the murder of her father, the loss of her house and wealth, and her new life as a farm worker in California during the Great Depression. This readable coming-of-age novel is based on the life of the author's grandmother.

*César Chávez: A Photographic Essay* written by Ilan Stavans and illustrated by Ilan Stavans. Cinco Puntos Press, 2009. Grades 7+

Esteemed Latin American scholar and writer Ilan Stavans, supported by more than forty photographs from archival collections at the César E. Chávez Foundation, restores this man's humanity so that readers can understand his struggles as a labor organizer and civil rights activist for farm workers. *César Chávez: A Photographic Essay*, a 2011 Skipping Stones honor award book, discusses Chávez' growing up years and his family; his comadre Dolores Huerta, who stood with him from the beginning; his relationship with Dr. King and other activists in the broader struggles for civil rights for all people of color; and his insistence on being an activist for the rights of farm workers when so much media attention was given to the civil rights activists in the cities.