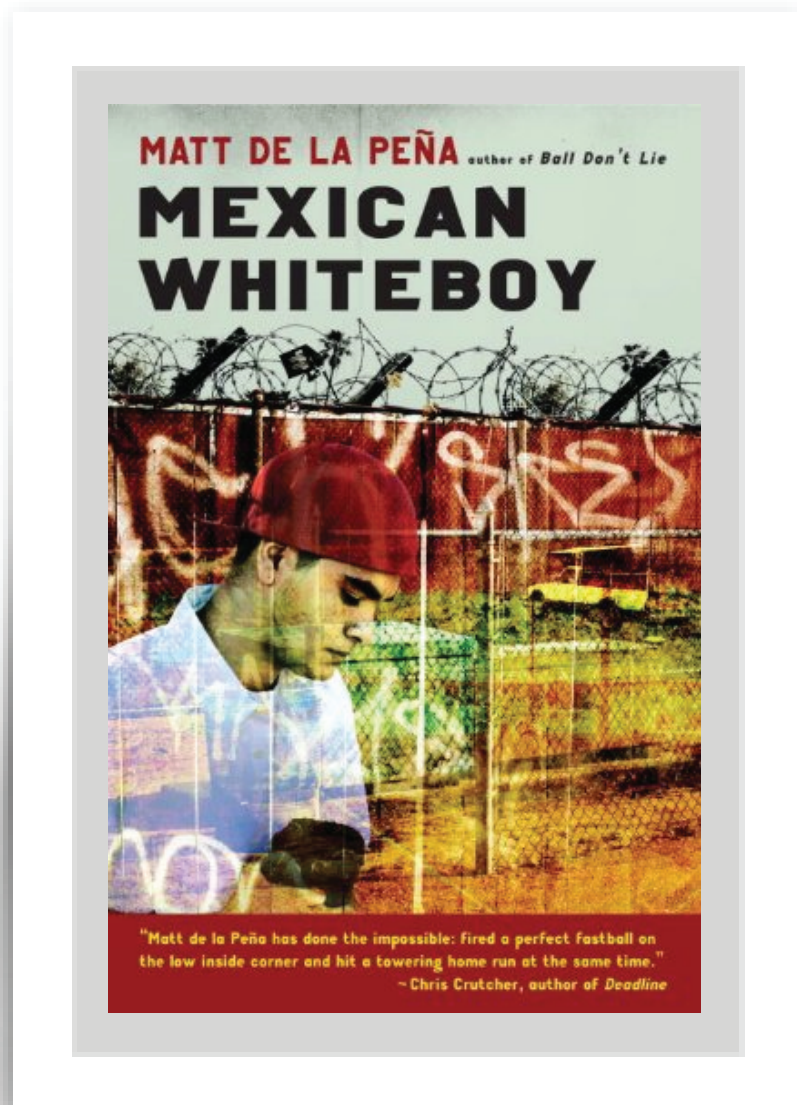


# VAMOS A LEER

*teaching latin america through literacy*



# VAMOS A LEER

## Educator's Guide

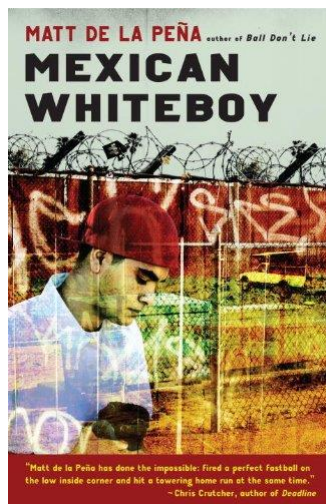
### **Mexican WhiteBoy**

Written by Matt de la Peña

Published by Ember

ISBN: 9780440239383

Age Level: 14 and up



### **BOOK SUMMARY**

Danny's tall and skinny. Even though he's not built, his arms are long enough to give his pitch a power so fierce any college scout would sign him on the spot. Ninety-five mile an hour fastball, but the boy's not even on a team. Every time he gets up on the mound he loses it.

But at his private school, they don't expect much else from him. Danny's brown. Half-Mexican brown. And growing up in San Diego that close to the border means everyone else knows exactly who he is before he even opens his mouth. Before they find out he can't speak Spanish, and before they realize his mom has blond hair and blue eyes, they've got him pegged. But it works the other way too. And Danny's convinced it's his whiteness that sent his father back to Mexico.

That's why he's spending the summer with his dad's family. Only, to find himself, he may just have to face the demons he refuses to see--the demons that are right in front of his face. And open up to a friendship he never saw coming.

Set in the alleys and on the ball fields of San Diego County, *Mexican Whiteboy* is a story of friendship, acceptance, and the struggle to find your identity in a world of definitions.

**AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS:**

- An ALA-YALSA Best Book for Young Adults (Top 10 Pick)
- 2008 Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books Ribbon List
- 2009 Notable Books for a Global Society
- Texas TAYSHAS Reading list
- A Junior Library Guild Selection

## AUTHOR'S CORNER

### About Matt de la Peña :

Matt de la Peña is the author of five young adult fiction novels, a picture book, two books in Scholastic's popular Infinity Ring Series, and numerous short fiction pieces and essays in various newspapers and literary journals. He received his MFA in creative writing from San Diego State University and his BA from the University of the Pacific where he attended school on a full basketball scholarship. De la Peña currently lives in Brooklyn, NY, where he teaches creative writing



*Mexican WhiteBoy*, de la Peña's second novel, cemented his reputation as a writer to watch. It was an ALA-YALSA Best Books for Young Adults top ten pick, a 2009 Notable Book for a Global Society, a Junior Library Guild Selection and it made the 2008 Bulletin for the Center of Children's Literature Blue Ribbon List. In a [Rumpus interview](#) de la Peña says that "There are many novels that detail the immigrant experience of coming to the United States, but I was searching for a voice that tackled the issues affecting youth born and raised here, for fiction that covered the Latino family dynamics where race and class collide right within your own kin."

De la Peña is not the typical Latino author; he takes the idea of multicultural and diverse books to a new level by incorporating a variety of genres into his work, from sports-themed to apocalyptic sci-fi, all the while presenting challenges faced by bi-racial or multiracial protagonists. In 2015, Matt's second picture book, *Last Stop on Market Street*, will be released by Penguin, and his sixth YA novel, *The Hunted* (a sequel to *The Living*) will be released by Delacorte.

An important part of de la Peña's career includes sharing his experience with future potential readers and writers by conducting frequent visits to high schools and colleges throughout the country to give talks and inspire students to not be ashamed of or afraid to fall in love with literature. In an essay he wrote for [NPR](#), de la Peña discusses how, as a reluctant reader in junior high school, "I found myself writing poems in the back of class. Secret spoken-word-style poems I never shared." He says these poems reflected the confusion he felt about growing up racially-mixed. "I wasn't able to express myself the way I truly wanted to, though, until I was introduced to multicultural literature in college that led to me falling in love with books. Perhaps because of his experiences in school, de la Peña has become a strong and active supporter of [We Need Diverse Books](#), a grassroots campaign and organization created to address the lack of diverse, non-majority narratives in children's literature. In support of a We Need Diverse Books Indiegogo Fundraising Campaign, de la Peña helped create this [video](#) in which he makes a compelling case for why we need diverse books in school curriculum.

Check out [Matt de la Peña's](#) website for more information about the author.

## **USING MEXICAN WHITEBOY IN THE CLASSROOM**

This was one of those books that I didn't like the first time I read it, but I loved the second time through. In all honesty, my first impression may be due more to secondary factors influencing my experience than the book itself. Since I always read everything at least twice before writing a guide, I thought I'd listen to the audio version of the book the first time through while driving back from Tucson. The audio version does not do de la Peña's writing justice. I only made it through about 40 pages before I had to turn it off, and unfortunately I think this really tainted my opinion of the book. I waited a few weeks before starting the guide, and as I read the book a second time through, it was like an entirely different experience. I could go into more detail about why I think this is, but for the sake of time I won't. I mention it here only because I hope that if you read it once and aren't entirely sold, that you'll give it a second chance. It's a book that engages with issues that we rarely see in our classroom literature (I'll talk more about this below). It's also a book that is resoundingly well-received by students. Over and over we hear from teachers across the country who all say it's one of their students' favorite books.

At its core, this is the story of one boy's experience of coming to terms with his identity as he comes of age. I think the majority of us struggle with our identity and who we are at some point in our lives. But for some of our students the struggle can be quite painful and complex, and de la Peña's story reflects that. It is the way in which de la Peña weaves discussions of racial identity into his story that makes it such a significant text for our classrooms. Both of the main characters, Danny and Uno, struggle with their racial identity. Danny is half-white and half-Mexican, while Uno is half-Mexican and half-Black. Both young men struggle with how to accept who they are, and their struggle is made even more complex by the communities in which they live. When Danny is in San Diego, he's the Mexican who's not white enough to fit in, and in National City he's too white to be Mexican. Uno is also half-Mexican, but he, his friends, and his step-father only ever identify him as Black, which becomes even more significant as he is the only young Black man in the community. De la Peña paints a realistic portrayal of the struggles Danny and Uno face as they grapple with their own internal conflict over who they are, and the external conflict of navigating who society expects them to be. Interestingly, *Mexican WhiteBoy* was one of the books [banned by the Tucson School District because it contained critical race theory](#). Yet, it is the critical race theory that I believe makes it such an essential read for all of our students.

As Danny attempts to deal with everything going on inside and around him, he resorts to hurting himself. Throughout the book Danny copes with difficult situations by digging his nails into his arm until he breaks the skin. Self-harm has become an increasingly relevant issue for those who work with teenagers and young adults, but often it's gendered. If we find it in literature, it's typically about females who cut themselves. While studies show that the majority of young adults who use self-harm to cope are female, there are males who struggle with this as well. de la Peña 'flips the

script' by writing about a young man with exceptional athletic ability who hurts himself.

Rage, anger and violence are other themes that run throughout the book. As incredibly destructive forces in the lives of the characters, the book provides the opportunity to discuss alternative ways to deal with such powerful emotions, other than resorting to violence.

It is certainly a book for a more mature audience, such as high school readers. There are references to drugs, sex, underage drinking, strong language, and violence. Other reviews have said this book really isn't appropriate for classroom use, but I disagree. While it may not be the right choice for every classroom community, I believe that more often than not students will find it both powerful and engaging. Our students are bombarded on a daily basis with messages about race, identity, drugs, alcohol and violence. Using this book provides not only a story that they may see themselves reflected in, but also the space to make these topics part of the 'official' curriculum. It is in spaces like this that we, as educators, can hear what our students are struggling with and help them to navigate these difficult teenage years.

If you'd like to read what others have thought about the book, check out the following reviews:

- [Kirkus review](#)
- [The Misfortune of Knowing's "What It Means To Be Biracial \(A discussion of Mexican Whiteboy\)"](#)

If you're interested in hearing what the author has to say about his work, check out the following interviews, articles, and video:

- [New York Times article](#) that reports on de la Peña visiting a Tucson High School while *Mexican WhiteBoy* was being banned in congruence with an Arizona state law targeting Mexican-American studies courses.
- [NPR](#) interview with de la Peña on his newest young adult fiction book, *The Living*.
- [Rumpus](#) interview with de la Peña.
- [Schooltube](#) video of de la Peña by in which he talks about the subtle ways in which he incorporates issues of race and class into his stories.

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## **LESSON PLANS & ACTIVITIES**

The following lesson plans are comprised of guided reading questions organized by parts of the book and extended response writing prompts. These questions have been written to support the types of reading and critical thinking skills required in standardized reading comprehension tests. The following key words and skills are highlighted: analyze, infer, evaluate, describe, support, explain, summarize, compare, contrast and predict.

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In addition to the lesson plans and activities included here, check out other curricula:

- [One Teen Story Teachers Guide](#) classroom activity about *Mexican WhiteBoy* and the banning of books.
- [Random House Educators Guide](#) of de la Peña's work including discussion questions to accompany *Mexican WhiteBoy*.

Common Core Standards Addressed:

K-12

Reading

Key Ideas and Details

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

Craft and Structure

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

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

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

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

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

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and

## **Guided Reading Questions**

audience.

- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

### **Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

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

### **Danny Lands in National City | Pages 1-5**

1. After reading the first two pages, what can you infer about Danny's self-image—how he feels about himself? Think about how he reacts when he meets Sofia's friends, how he describes his body, and the things he says about his skin color. (p. 1-2)
2. What gets Danny's attention while the girls are talking about the fair? How does his body respond when he thinks about baseball? Do you have anything that matters to you as much as baseball matters to Danny? Describe it. (p. 4)
3. Why do you think Danny digs into his skin? (p. 3)
4. What is Danny's plan for the summer? (p. 5)

### **Home Run Derby: Uno's Time Has Come | Pages 6-11**

1. Where do the boys play stickball? Is it a baseball field? (p. 6)
2. What is the Home Run Derby? What are the neighborhood kids competing for? How do you win the derby? (p. 8)
3. Who comes to the derby? Is everybody there playing? (p. 9)
4. Who started the Home Run Derby? (p. 9)
5. What are the three constants of the derby? (p. 10)
6. How does Uno respond when he sees Sofia with Danny? What does this say about how Uno feels about Sofia? (p. 11)

### **The Shot Heard Round the Cul-de-Sac | Pages 12-28**

1. How do the neighborhood guys respond to Danny when Sofia introduces him? (p. 14)
2. Why is Danny so quiet? What role does language have to do with his decision to talk as little as possible? (p. 16)
3. How many pitches does Danny not swing at? Why isn't he swinging at these pitches? (p. 17-18)
4. What happens when Danny hits the third pitch? (p. 19)
5. Why does Danny decide to be a pitcher? (p. 19)
6. How does Uno respond to Danny's success at the derby? Why do you think he acts this way? (p. 20-21)



7. What happens to Manuel when Danny takes the next pitch? (p. 22)
8. What does Uno do in retaliation for Manuel's injuries? Do you think Danny was at fault? Do you think Uno is in any way responsible for what happened? (p. 23-24)
9. What does Danny think about when he's on the verge of unconsciousness? What do we learn about Danny's father here? How does Danny interpret his father's words? Do you think this is what his father really meant? What does this reveal about how Danny feels about his lighter skin? (p. 25-28)

#### **Spaghetti with Meatballs | Pages 29-39**

1. What do Uno and his father do the first Saturday of every month? (p. 29-30)
2. What's happened to Uno since the last time he saw his father? What is Uno's father trying to get Uno to realize during the conversation when he brings up prescription drugs? (p. 30-31)
3. What was Senior like when he was younger? Does it seem like he's changed? What does Uno's mother think? (p. 32)
4. What does Senior offer to Uno? What does Uno have to do as a show of good faith? (p. 36)
5. How would you describe the relationship between Senior and Loretta (Uno's Mom)? Do you think this affects Uno? (p. 36-38)

#### **Stuck in Uncle Tommy's Apartment | Pages 40-53**

1. How badly was Danny hurt when Uno punched him? (p. 40)
2. How has Danny's relationship with his mom changed since his father left? (p. 41)
3. What do you think Danny means when he says he's "whitewashed"? Think about all the things he's said about his skin color, his relationship with his mom, and how he feels in National City. (p. 41)
4. Why is Danny on the outside of Leucadia Prep's baseball facility? (p. 41-42)
5. Who do you think is the one person that Danny wants to see him play baseball? (p. 44)
6. What seems to bother Danny the most about his mom's new boyfriend? (p. 45)
7. What happened at Del Mar beach? What might this tell us about Danny's father? Who does Danny seem to judge more harshly in this event? His mother or his father? (p. 45)
8. Why does Danny feel out of place with his family in National City? (p. 46)
9. Why is something as seemingly simple as eating tortillas complicated for Danny? What does this tell us about Danny's struggles with self-identity? (p. 46-47)
10. What announcement do Randy and Wendy (Danny's mother) make to Danny and his sister? How does Julia respond? Does it appear that Danny's mother notices how upset Danny and Julia are? Explain. (p. 51-53)

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**Uno and His Peeps Talk Summer Jobs | Pages 54-57**

1. Who confronts Uno about what happened with Danny? Do you think what she says about why Uno hit Danny is true? (p. 56-57)

**Del Mar Fair | Pages 58-73**

1. Why do you think Danny digs his nails into his arm? Think about the situations he's in when he does this. What feelings is he trying to deal with? (p. 58-59)
2. How does Uncle Ray deal with the situation between Danny and Uno? How do Uncle Ray and Danny's father appear to be alike? How does Danny respond? Why do you think Danny lies? In this situation do you think that was the best thing to do? Why or why not? (p. 60-62)
3. Who is the girl that helped Danny at the derby? What has Flaca heard about her? Do you think it's true? (p. 65-66)
4. In what ways are Liberty and Danny alike? (p. 68-69)
5. Danny's letters to his father aren't always truthful? Why do you think he says the things he does? What does this reveal about how Danny would like his life to be? (p. 70-71)
6. Make an inference: What do you think Danny's dreams about the hawk family mean? (p. 73)

**Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is | Pages 74-82**

1. What do Uno's thoughts about race reveal about his own issues around his identity as a Mexican-Black male in a predominantly Mexican-American community? Do you think it's easy for Uno? (p. 77)
2. Why do you think Lolo reacts the way he does to the carney? Do you think this is an appropriate response or is he overreacting? (p. 78-79)
3. What happens when Danny throws the first ball? How does he do with the other three pitches? (p. 80-82)

**Mexican Whiteboy | Pages 83-91**

1. What does Danny think about as he pitches bucket after bucket of baseballs? (p. 84-85)
2. What does Uncle Ray tell Danny about his Dad's feelings about being Mexican? What does this have to do with why he never taught Danny to speak Spanish? (p. 87)
3. When Uncle Ray sees what Danny is doing to his arm, how does he respond? Think about what he chooses to say to Danny. (p. 87-88)
4. Why does helping his uncle write the letter actually keep Danny from getting closer to his uncle? (p. 89-90)
5. Explain what Danny means when he says "I'm a white boy among Mexicans and a Mexican among white boys" (p. 90-91).

**Call From San Francisco | Pages 92-94**

1. Why do you think Danny's mom is so excited about Randy? What kind of person do you think Randy is? Explain using details from the story. (p. 92-93)
2. What does Danny's mom think about San Francisco? Does she like

it? (p. 92-94)

**Senior Explains Poverty | Pages 95-106**

1. What does Senior believe everyone in National City is thinking about? Uno realizes there is a reason for this. What is it? (p. 97)
2. When Senior talks about the messages from the media, what is he trying to get Uno to see? (p. 98-99)
3. Does Senior realize that the \$500 goal he's set for Uno is high? Why does he ask for \$500? (p. 99)
4. What do Sofe and Uno see when they watch Danny practicing alone? What insights do Sofe and Uno have about Danny? (p. 104-105)

**Uno Interrupts Danny's Workout | Pages 107-113**

1. What's Danny's theory about the connection between mental and physical weakness? (p. 107)
2. What story does Uno share with Danny? Why do you think Uno chooses this story to share? Think about what he's just learned from Sofe about Danny's father? (p. 109-110)
3. What happens when Danny pitches a hard, fast ball to Uno? (p. 112)

**The Work-outs, the Hustles, the Drive-in Theater | Pages 114-123**

1. What's Uno's plan for making money off of Danny's pitching? (p. 114-116)
2. What does Danny think about as the girls watch the movie at the drive-in? (p. 118-120)
3. What happens when the girls try and set up Danny so he can talk with Liberty? (p. 122-123)

**Danny Overhears Sofia and Uncle Tommy | Pages 124-125**

1. What does Danny overhear Sofia and Uncle Tommy talking about? (p. 124-125)
2. Who do you think they are discussing? What context clues alluded to this? (p. 124-125)
3. Do you think Danny will be more like his father or his mother? (p. 124-125)

**Morse High Hustle | Pages 126-131**

1. What happens during the warm-up at the first hustle Uno sets up? (p. 126-127)
2. How does this time compare to Danny's tryouts at Leucadia Prep? (p. 127)
3. How does Danny pitch? (p. 129-131)
4. Do Danny and Uno win the bet? How does Uno react? What does this say about Uno's character? (p. 131-132)

**Don't Worry, They're Asleep | Pages 132-136**

1. Why can't Danny sleep? (p. 132-134)
2. What does Danny tell his father in the letter? How much of it is

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true? (p. 135-136)

### **Uno Gets Another Drunken Tongue-Lashing | Pages 137-147**

1. What is the relationship like between Ernesto and Uno? How does Ernesto use Uno's race when he's yelling at him? (p. 137-138)
2. How does Uno's mother respond to Ernesto's verbal attack on Uno? (p. 138)
3. What does Uno think about in order to deal with what happened with Ernesto and his mother? (p. 138-139)
4. Who does Uno run into at the store? How does Uno describe Danny? Does he think Danny isn't really Mexican? (p. 139-140)
5. How does Uno respond when he sees Danny digging into his arm? (p. 140)
6. Where is Uno's spot? Why does he go there? What game does Uno play? (p. 142-144)
7. What does Danny wish for when he plays the karma game? Do you think Danny's going to make it to Mexico to see his Dad? (p. 143-144)
8. What do Danny and Uno do as the train passes by? Why does Uno bring Danny to do this? (p. 146-147)

### **Danny's Return to the Mound | Pages 148-155**

1. What does Uno buy that he hopes will help Danny with his pitches? (p. 149)
2. What does Uno say that helps Danny pitch the way he's capable of? (p. 151)
3. How does this hustle end? (p. 152)
4. What do the three girls call Danny? What do they base their judgment on? (p. 152-153)
5. Why does Marzel get upset? What does this say about how Marzel feels about Gia? Does he think she should make her own decisions about who she talks to, or is that for him to decide? (p. 153)
6. Who jumps in to defend Danny when Marzel threatens him? (p. 153)
7. What does Danny's letter to his father reveal about how he feels about himself when you compare his reality with what he's written? (p. 154-155)

### **Senior Reads Danny's Mind | Pages 156-163**

1. How do the next few hustles go? What is Danny's trick to pitching well? (p. 156)
2. When Uno invites Danny to lunch with Senior, what does that say about his friendship with Danny? (p. 158)
3. What does Senior do when a young man tries to break in to his house? Do you think this was the best way to handle it? What would you have done? (p. 159-160)
4. What does Senior see in Danny's eyes? What is Danny struggling with on the inside? (p. 162-163)

### **Uno's Own Vision of a Future | Pages 164-176**

1. Why is Uno trying to explain double or nothing to Danny? (p. 164-

- 165)
2. How does Carmelo respond when Danny and Uno win the first round? Does he go for the double or nothing? What happens when Danny and Uno win the second round? (p. 168-170)
  3. Why do you think Uno starts to feel uneasy about the way things are looking when JJ goes to the ATM? What might happen? (p. 169-170)
  4. What happens when Danny wins the third round? Who jumps in to save Uno and Danny? (p. 171-173)
  5. Why is Uno so mad at Danny for not running like he told him to? Why does Uno think his and Danny's paths are so different? Where does he see Danny going? Where does he see himself going? (p. 173-174)
  6. Why is this day one of the best that Uno's ever had? What has Uno finally learned? (p. 174-176)

#### **The Green Lollipop | Pages 177-189**

1. How does Uno respond when Raquel asks him about Manny? (p. 179)
2. How does the game of Truth or Dare become a means for the group to share difficult things that have impacted them in a less intimidating way? (p. 179-181)
3. The group fires a lot of questions at Danny, but they end up answering most of them before Danny can. Except for one, what one question do they wait for Danny to answer? Who saves Danny from having to answer? (p. 183)
4. What does Raquel dare Liberty and Danny to do? (p. 185)
5. What does Danny find ironic about the situation with Liberty? (p. 187)

#### **A Final Phone Call from San Francisco | Pages 190-195**

1. What is Danny's mom struggling with in San Francisco? Why isn't she happy there?
2. What does Danny's mom share about struggling with one's identity? Is it something that goes away once you're an adult? (p. 194)
3. What does Danny's mom realize through her move to San Francisco? (p. 194)
4. What does Danny learn about his Dad from Sofia? (p. 195)

#### **Uno's Big Talk with His Mom | Pages 196-198**

1. What does Uno want to tell his mom? (p. 196-197)
2. What does Uno's mom tell him before he can talk to her about his move to Oxnard? (p. 198)
3. Does Uno actually end up talking to his mom about the move? (p. 198)

#### **Along for the Ride | Pages 199-207**

1. What happens as Uncle Ray is leaving the grocery store parking lot with Danny, Tim and Rico? (p. 202-203, 205-207)
2. Is Danny's father the only person who struggles with a violent

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temper in the family? (p. 207)

3. Why is Uncle Danny so upset with Uncle Ray? What has Uncle Danny promised Danny's father, Javier? (p. 203-204)
4. Why do you think Uncle Danny means by "went in there" when he says "What he [Javier] tell us 'fore he went in there?" Does went in there sound like Danny's father is in Ensenada? (p. 203)

#### **A Last Las Palmas Practice Session | Pages 208-209**

1. What do you think is bothering Danny? (p. 208-209)
2. Where have Uno's favorite summer memories been? Why do you think this is? (p. 208-209)

#### **Here I Come | Pages 210-213**

1. What do Sofia and Uno talk about? (p. 210-211)
2. What does Sofia think she's lost that the little girl on the slide has? Do you think she's right? Do you think that once we grow up we lose the belief in our ability to succeed? (p. 212)

#### **Danny and Uno at Petco Park | Pages 214-224**

1. What's it like for Danny and Uno at the Padres game? Has either of them ever been to a game before? (p. 214-216)
2. Who does Danny recognize at the game selling hot dogs? (p. 217)
3. Why has the scout been watching Danny? What did he promise Danny's father? (p. 218-219)
4. How did Danny's dad save the scout? (p. 220)
5. What does Danny learn about where his father is? Why do you think everyone hid this from Danny? (p. 220)
6. Uno treats Danny lightly through the whole game even though he knows something is wrong. Why do you think this is? What does this say about the kind of friend that Uno is? (p. 214-221)
7. When Danny gets home, how does he cope with what he's learned about his Dad? (p. 222-223)
8. Who finds Danny in the bathroom? (p. 223)
9. What does Sofia keep repeating to Danny? Do you think he believes it? (p. 224)

#### **The Last Hustle of the Summer | Pages 225-239**

1. Where does Uno take Danny for their last hustle? (p. 226)
2. Who does Uno want to challenge? Do you think this is about the money or something else? (p. 228-229)
3. What does Barker call Danny? What does he mean by the insult? (p. 230)
4. Re-read the interactions between the Leucadia Prep boys and Uno and Danny. How do the private school boys treat Uno? What does this say about them? (p. 229-239)
5. How does Danny feel as he pitches to Kyle? How has Danny changed over the summer? (p. 231-234)
6. As Danny struggles to get a 3<sup>rd</sup> out against Kyle, Uno points something out to Danny. What is it? If Kyle's the best, what does it say about Danny's pitching? (p. 235)
7. Does Danny beat Kyle? (p. 237)

8. What happens during the double or nothing round? (p. 238)
9. Why do you think Danny fights Barker? Is it about the loss or something else? (p. 238-239)
10. Who shoves the Leucadia guys off of Danny and gets him out of the fight? (p. 239)
11. Danny and Uno lost the hustle, but Danny found something else. What is it? (p. 239)

#### **Stripping Tile and Slinging Tar | Pages 240-243**

1. As Danny, Uno, Sofia and Liberty eat dinner they talk about their plans for the upcoming year. What are the four going to be doing? (p. 241-243)

#### **A New Light on the Recycling Plant | Pages 244-245**

1. What's the last trip that Uno has planned for him and Danny? (p. 245)
2. At the beginning of the summer, Danny's plan is to see his father. How do Danny's plans change? Do you think he gets to see his father? (p. 245)

### **Reflective Writing Questions**

1. Think about how Uno's and Danny's relationship begins. How does it change? While they're different in many ways, there is some sort of connection that allows them to become such close friends. What do you think this connection is? What do they have in common that allows them to relate to each other? Do you have a friend like this? Describe what makes that friendship work.
2. Danny struggles a great deal with both making sense of and accepting who he is. Describe Danny's struggle with his identity. How does he come to terms with this struggle by the end of the book? How has Danny changed?
3. What role does race play in the novel? Think about the ways in which Danny and Uno struggle with racial identity. Think about the way others use race in conversation with both Uno and Danny. How do these things complicate the issues both have in dealing with their communities and their own racial identity?
4. Anger and violence are themes throughout the book: Danny's father and uncle, Uno, Uno's father, Marzel, and Barker all get angry and deal with their anger through violent means. Why do you think de la Peña chooses to write about this theme? Do you think it's an important one that we should be discussing more? What's the best way to deal with a situation where someone is using violence to cope with their anger? Have you ever struggled with this? Do you know anyone who struggles with this?

## **ABOUT US & THIS GUIDE**

The Latin American & Iberian Institute (LAI) receives resources from the U.S. Department of Education to support K-12 teaching about Latin America. Our goal is to provide a supportive environment for teaching across grade levels and subject areas so educators can bring regional and linguistic knowledge of Latin America into their classrooms. For more information and materials that support teaching about Latin America in the classroom, visit our website at <http://laii.unm.edu/outreach>

Written by staff at the LAI, **Vamos a Leer Educator's Guides** provide an excellent way to teach about Latin America through literacy. Each guide is based upon a book featured in the Vamos a Leer book group. For more on Vamos a Leer, visit our blog at [bit.ly/vamosaleer](http://bit.ly/vamosaleer). This guide was prepared by Katrina Dillon, LAI Project Assistant and Lorraine Archibald, LAI Graduate Assistant.

To complement this guide, the LAI oversees the **Vamos a Leer blog**, which provides a space for exploring how to use literature to teach about Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the United States. In addition to promoting discussion, the blog shares relevant resources and curriculum materials. Visit the blog at the following address: <http://bit.ly/vamosaleer>.