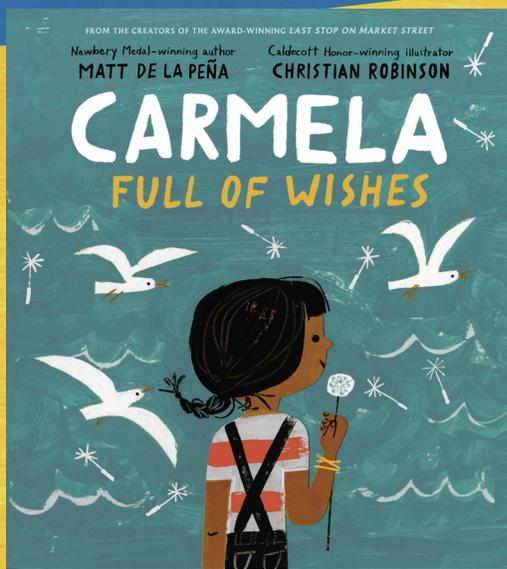
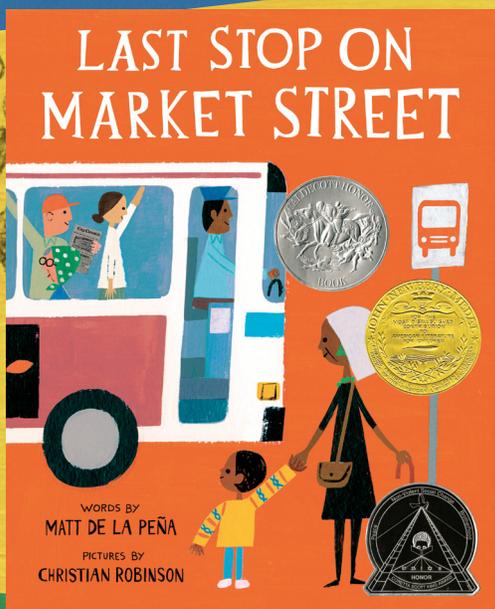


Author/Illustrator

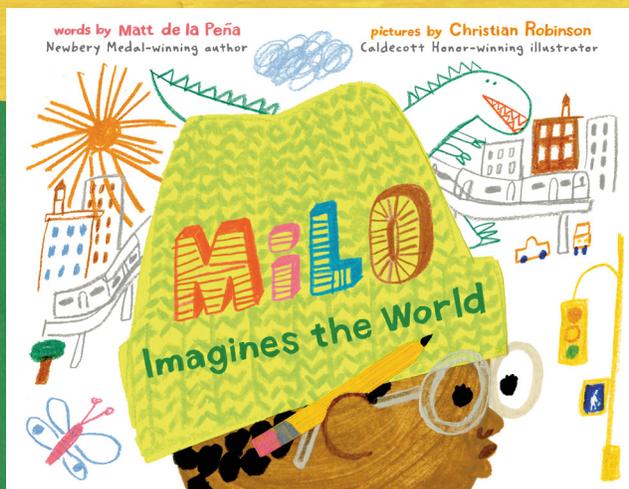
Study Guide for

Matt de la Peña and

Christian Robinson



Guides for Each Book
to Help Bring Them
into the Classroom!





Dear Educator,

We are honored that you have chosen to share *Last Stop on Market Street*, *Carmela Full of Wishes*, and *Milo Imagines the World* with your students. We also appreciate your trust as we collaborate in your classroom's exploration and development of academic reading skills, social-emotional learning, and anti-bias education.

Matt de la Peña has shared with readers the theory behind why he writes the type of stories he writes: "Kids understand so much more than we give them credit for. So I like to go there. I explore big topics" (Swain, 2020). Being in the classroom every day, you know all too well, that our young students are ready and eager to talk about what is going on in the world. For this reason, as you plan to share these "big topics" that de la Peña and Robinson's work invite young readers to explore, including implicit bias and how we can identify it in ourselves and change our views, there is some prep work required.

The first step in anti-bias teaching and learning begins with self, and educators must take this step too. As you already know, this is lifelong work. We suggest that you begin by watching Vernā Myers's TED Talk [How to Overcome Our Biases? Walk Boldly Toward Them](#) that you will find [here](#). Dr. Myers' talk clearly explains bias and the straightforward path to overcome it. It will most likely remind you of the candid way in which children approach differences, offer grace, apologize, and apply new knowledge.

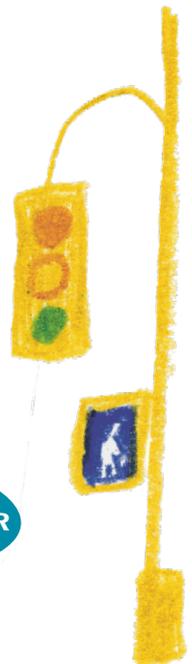
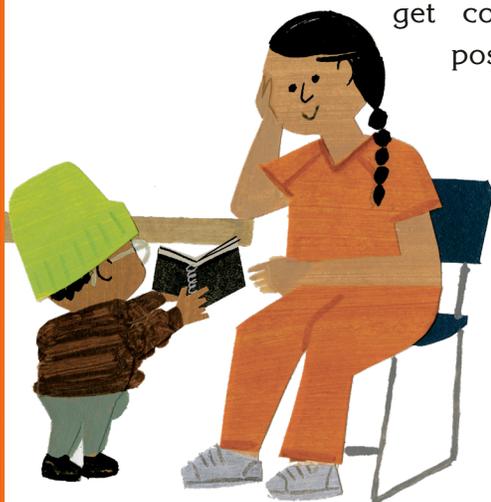
Also essential to discovering our biases at any age, is exploring our own identity. We have included an Identity Web activity under the *Establishing Framework* section, that we suggest you create for yourself first, to get comfortable with this activity and explore the possibilities, extensions, and accommodations that will elevate each of your student's experiences and learning.

Once again, we thank you for your trust and willingness to partner with us.

Onward we go!

Penguin School and Library Marketing
Department and Ro Menéndez, teacher-librarian

[CLICK HERE FOR
AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
STUDY GUIDE!](#)



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This guide was created by **Ro Menéndez**, Teacher Librarian in Texas. Ro is a bilingual educator with over 15 years of experience, who consistently advocates for young readers' rights to choose what they read and exposes her students to social justice issues and education. Ro received and MS in Ed Tech Leadership & Library Science from Texas A&M University.

Before Diving into Reading and Sharing Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson's Stories

SETTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR:

Successful Communication

It is important to offer students the vocabulary necessary to understand and express ideas in the fields of SEL and anti-bias education, and although you might have already explored the following concepts and their application, we have included them here, as a quick reference:

- **Empathy:** Trying to understand what someone feels or is going through from their personal point of view and then taking action to help.
- **Identity:** The qualities, beliefs, etc. that make a particular person or group, different from others. (Anti-Defamation League, n.d., p. 05)
- **Inclusive:** An environment where all people feel like they belong. (Anti-Defamation League, n.d., p. 06)
- **Implicit bias:** The unconscious attitudes and stereotypes and unintentional actions (positive or negative) toward members of a group merely because of their membership in that group. (Anti-Defamation League, n.d., p. 06)
- **Stereotypes:** The false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way. (Anti-Defamation League, n.d., p. 09)

Understanding Identity and Fostering Empathy

Awareness of what makes you, *you*, your identity, is the foundation for finding the common threads you, your students, and the characters in Matt de la Peña's stories and Christian Robinson's artwork, which reflect a diverse community, share. These threads will become a tapestry of a world you envision together where acceptance rather than basic tolerance is the point of reference for every interaction.

Share with students that you will be reading realistic fiction stories where the main characters are children like them.

Title a sheet of chart paper "Identity—Who Am I?". Ask students to spend a few moments thinking about what questions come to mind. To prompt their thinking, you could ask:

- **When you meet a new classmate or neighbor, what do you like to tell them about yourself?**
- **What do you like to learn about them?**

This activity offers an opportunity to begin dismantling implicit bias by asking follow up questions to some of your students' suggestions. For example, if a student suggests asking "Who is your mom and dad?" as an identity question, you could reply "I know that not every family's structure is the same because I have friends that live with their auntie. I also have friends that live with their foster family. How can we rephrase this question so it is inclusive of all families?"

If students do not come up with many questions, share that as you all create Personal Identity Webs to compare them with the characters you will meet in the stories you read together, you will add more identity questions to the chart.





Invite students to create Personal Identity Webs. Explain that they will use the questions on the chart to get them started in sharing what makes “you, you” and learning about each other in the process. Ask students to turn to an elbow or knee partner, depending on where they are located in your classroom. Once they have done this, ask them to check on their classmates to make sure that everyone has a partner, and to invite those who haven’t partnered up yet to their group. If possible, you should also be part of a group. When you have checked that everyone has a partner, model how these identity conversations will go:

This is how we will share. I will ask one of the questions from the Identity—Who Am I? Chart we created together. If you are ready to share the answer to the question, say you would like to speak first. After sharing, ask your partner, “How about you?”

If you are not ready to share the answer to the question, we will respect this. You can say, “I’m not ready to share this part of my identity yet. When I am, I’ll let you know.”

As a response to your partners’ share, you can ask follow-up questions. We should not reply with words or gestures that can be interpreted as “Weird.”

Roleplay these expectations and then begin. Ask a question, provide time for students to share with their partners. If you are not part of a group, walk

the room checking in on conversations to offer support or model respectful replies. Continue until you feel students have gotten to know each other and also understood how the answers to these questions are all part of each person’s identity. To close this activity ask students to thank their partners for sharing parts of their identity. Invite students to share what they learned they have in common with their classmates as a result of this activity.

Invite students to create their Personal Identity Webs. This can be done digitally or on paper. Model how to get started by using the medium students will use and writing your name in the center. Add the answers for two questions from the Identity—Who Am I? Chart, then add two things that aren’t addressed in the chart to encourage students to go beyond what’s scribed. Before asking them to invest their time and focus on creating their own Identity Web, assure them that their web is private, that it is not for a grade, and that they will only share what they feel ready to, with you and their classmates.

If your students are still at the prewriting stage:

- *During verbal sharing, visit with students taking anecdotal records of their responses.*
- *When creating Personal Identity Webs, ask students to draw their answers and allot time to ask them about their drawings and label them for future reference.*

Understanding Implicit Biases

PREP WORK

A digital slideshow or card set of words followed by photographs that contradict stereotypes that you have noticed while interacting with your students, and common stereotypes you know of. Here are some examples of words and photographs that contradict stereotypes:

Word	Picture
nurse	male nurse
reader	blind person reading Braille
gamer or video gamer	female gamer
basketball player	players in wheelchairs
activist	a child or teenage activist

In conversation with your students refer to the Identity Web work you all took part in and how interesting it was to learn new things about each one of them. Then share:

There are so many elements to our identity. I'm sure that as we continue to work on our Identity Webs, each of us will add more elements to our lists. Now, I'd like to ask your thoughts on a situation I've noticed happens between kids and adults. Imagine that someone upon looking at you, or maybe having a conversation with you for the very first time, focuses on only one of the elements of your identity to form an opinion of you. Would that be a fair and accurate picture of who you are as a person? Can you think about a situation where this has happened to you or someone you know?

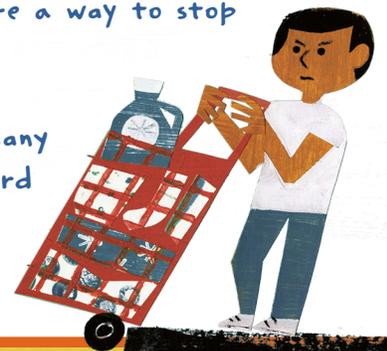
Allow for thinking time and invite students to share their thoughts. Then transition to the following activity. You could say the following:

I'd like us to do a visualization activity. I'm going to say aloud an activity or job people do. I want you to visualize someone you associate with that activity or job. Then I will show you a picture of a person engaging in that job or activity. I want you to compare your visualization to the picture. How is it similar? How is it different?

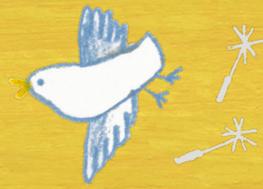
As you go through each word in the slideshow or card set, ask students to share who they visualized and what they notice about their visualization compared to the picture provided. After you've gone through all of the word/picture sets, discuss which pictures seemed to be the most surprising and why. Then explain the purpose of this visualizing activity:

Our brain has a lot to learn and process on a daily basis. To do it quickly it creates stereotypes, or labels, to put information into categories. Stereotypes can act like the person in the conversation we had earlier, taking only one element of our identity and deciding that's who we are. Now we agreed that this is unfair, so is there a way to stop our brains from depending on stereotypes?

Let's start by naming what happened in our visualization activity: many of our visualizations were stereotypes. Have you heard the word "stereotype" before?



Understanding Implicit Biases (continued...)



Give students an opportunity to think and share. If you've discussed this previously as a class, remind them of the work you did together that included this concept. Then continue:

Stereotypes are ideas or beliefs we have about a person's identity that are based on what we or others have experienced or what we've heard from people we know and trust, or the media, about this identity.

The strange thing about stereotypes is we are certain these beliefs are true even if we've never met a person, or we've only met a limited number of people, who we associate with a certain identity element. Even stranger, sometimes we can't even explain why we believe what we believe!

Offer students a personal example that will help them understand that having implicit biases is something all of us have and that working towards identifying them and making changes is what is important. You might have noticed that in school adults choose boys when they need help with a task that is perceived as requiring strength and choose girls when a task requires neatness or organizing. This is an example of implicit bias in adults that students are all too familiar with. After sharing your personal example or the one previously mentioned, reassure students that having implicit biases does not make anyone a bad person by saying something like:

Even as adults, we have implicit biases. What's important is that once we have become aware of this we examine them, are honest about the stereotypes we notice we believe in, and work on changing our thinking on a daily basis.

Let students share their thoughts. This will make them aware of their personal implicit bias and the stereotypes they unconsciously believe or have witnessed. After listening to their responses, you could bring this discussion to a closing, by offering specific prevalent everyday stereotypes we should all be aware of to proactively avoid them. You could say:

Even though we believe "I can be anything I want to be!" we don't see ourselves in roles or activities we have unconsciously decided people different from us do. Let's all try to be aware of thoughts that include beliefs like these:

- *that's for girls or that's for boys*
- *all girls or all boys are/do/can/can't*
- *older people are/do/can/can't*
- *people of this skin color or race are/do/can/can't*

What should we do when we notice we are thinking this way, or someone is expressing these stereotypes? Let's think together, what can we say, or do for ourselves and others to get better at recognizing stereotypes and changing our thinking?

Understanding Implicit

Biases (continued...)

Ask students to talk to elbow or knee partners. Visit with each group and ask clarifying questions, repeat statements that are powerful as a way of validating them and acknowledging the source, and then come back as a group to create a list of “Ways to Combat Stereotypes and Implicit Biases Created by (your class’s name to empower and visibly indicate ownership).”

As you listen and scribe, offer alternative ways of expressing ideas especially when they will be used to help others notice stereotyping and biases. For example, if a student suggests that upon listening to someone state a stereotype that they’ll say “That’s a stereotype and you’re wrong to think that.” you could suggest a gentler approach “Have you heard of stereotypes? That’s when we think

things about people without really knowing them or their circumstances.” or “Can you really say that about all the people that look like them?” Remind students that we want to be firm in our beliefs, but also express them in a way that will open our audiences’ minds to new ways of thinking.

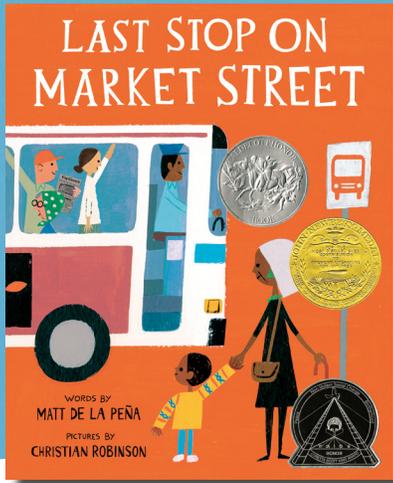
Thank students for engaging honestly in the hard work of understanding stereotypes and implicit biases. Assure them that we all have implicit biases and that what is important is trying to recognize them and change the way we think and speak about others. Let them know that this work will be part of sharing Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson’s stories and analyzing the characters they will meet as they read.



Diving into the Books!

To set the purpose for engaging with stories by this author and illustrator duo, you might share this background information about the type of stories they create together:

Author Matt de la Peña creates stories that mirror the diverse world we live in. Through his words, and the accompanying illustrations created by artist Christian Robinson, you will find some part of yourself, of your identity, mirrored and valued, as well as those of your friends, family, and community. This is intentional. Matt de la Peña, weaves into his stories his lived experiences as a “mixed-race” (de la Peña, 2016) kid, just one of the elements of his identity, and the insight he has gained from spending time with young readers while visiting schools to talk about his work and how they can be authors too. He shares with kids and adults that he writes with the hope that children in all circumstances can see themselves as “beautiful” and “valuable” (TeachingBooks, 2016).



LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET



BOOK TALK RESOURCE:

Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson book talk *Last Stop on Market Street* and share their creative process as well as communicating their respect for young readers' ability to read and think about "big topics" in this video. You may choose to share this video with your students before reading the story: [Interview with Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson](#)

SETTING INDIVIDUAL PURPOSES FOR READING—AWAKENING CURIOSITY

Display the front and back book cover as one piece of artwork. Invite students to spend time noticing the title, the author and illustrator, and the details in the artwork that will give them clues about the story. For younger students, begin by reading the title, author and illustrator's name, and the summary on the back cover, before giving them time to explore the artwork. Invite students to share their noticings and wonderings. You may also ask:

- What do you think the story's setting will be?
- Who do you think the main characters will be?
- What do you notice about the people riding the bus? (This is an opportunity to discuss diversity. Does the community seem to be diverse? Why or why not? What would make it even more diverse?)
- Have you ever ridden a bus? What do you remember about the ride?
- What might the author, Matt de la Peña, want us to visualize with the words "Last Stop" in the title? Where do you think this "Last Stop" will take the characters in the story?
- What questions do you have that you hope the story will answer?

Please serve as a scribe and record their thoughts and questions on chart paper to reference easily during the read aloud. Another possibility is asking students to write them down themselves on sticky notes and adding them to a "Wonderings" wall or paper.

SHARED PURPOSE FOR READING

After students have identified their individual purposes for reading, a behavior that is part of a reader's skill set, a common purpose for reading as a collective can now be established. You could say:

As we enjoy this story, let's take notice of how CJ and Nana see their world. Do they have a shared vision, see things in the same way? Do they see things differently? How does it compare to how you see the world?

BIG IDEAS TO EXPLORE:

- There is beauty to be found wherever we may be.
- Being kind and serving others is possible at any age.
- When meeting new people we should be aware of our implicit biases.

WORDS TO KNOW:

- public transportation
- food insecurity
- soup kitchen
- food pantry

As You Share the Story

Christian Robinson's illustrations are rich in detail and opportunities for readers to connect text with visuals to extend meaning. Spend time exploring each page and noticing the diversity of people on the street and using public transportation. Imagine where each passenger is headed or coming from.

Socialized discussions may stem from posing some of these questions:

- Do you think Nana really believes a tree is drinking through a straw? Why would she say this to CJ?
- Where did Nana get the idea to tell CJ, "we got a bus that breathes fire" from?
- As readers of multimodal texts, we read the words AND the pictures to make meaning. Read the picture on this page. How do you know Nana and CJ are boarding the right bus?
- Where might the man in the suit be going?
- What do you think the old woman is going to do with the butterflies that are in the jar?
- What might Nana be knitting?
- How did CJ know that the man with the spotted dog is blind?
- Have you ever heard someone play the guitar?
- Let's reread how Matt de la Peña describes where the music transports CJ. Let's visualize what CJ's seeing. What kind of music do you think the man with the guitar is playing that gave CJ "the feeling of magic"?
- Why do you think CJ gave his coin to the guitar-playing man?

So much has happened during the bus ride that it might be helpful to remind students to adjust their predictions by asking:

Where do you think Nana and CJ are going now that they've gotten off the bus at the last stop on Market Street?

After students have shared, if possible, read the next four pages without asking any questions allowing students to think about Nana's sage words to CJ, "Sometimes when you're surrounded by dirt, CJ, you're a better witness for what's beautiful."



Ask: *Did Matt de la Peña give us, as readers, any clues about who the "familiar faces" CJ and Nana spot in the window are?*

Once you've finished reading the last spread, discuss where Nana and CJ are and what they are doing. This discussion is an opportunity to:

- combat stereotypes associated with seeking help from organizations such as food pantries, food banks, or soup kitchens
- highlight the importance of making donations to these organizations when possible
- explore how we may find ways to help others even when it seems we might not have anything to spare

Rather than asking students where they think Nana and CJ are, or asking if anyone has visited a soup kitchen, you provide this information, to avoid making any students who have gone or are going through food insecure times feel signaled out. It will also avoid communicating that there is anything shameful in looking for ways to secure meals during difficult times.

The discussion could go something like this:

When I first read *Last Stop on Market Street*, I was puzzled. I had no idea where Nana and CJ were going until the very last pages, where I used my visual literacy skills to understand that Nana and CJ took the bus to volunteer at a soup kitchen.

A soup kitchen is a place where anyone who is having a difficult time buying groceries to make meals can enjoy a hot meal without having to pay. When someone loses their job, for example, it becomes hard to buy groceries until they can find a new job. Soup kitchens were created to help us not miss meals while we recover from a difficult situation. Can we think of any other situations, which might happen to any of us, where we could count on a soup kitchen or food pantry to help us?

Turn to the last page and allow time for readers to share any thoughts after enjoying CJ and Nana's Sunday coming full circle.

Closing This First Reading of *Last Stop on Market Street*

Revisit the *Shared Purpose for Reading* you established before starting to read the story and point out specific moments when Nana and CJ shared their views, for students to analyze. You could say:

Our shared purpose for reading required us to notice how CJ and Nana see their world. What did you notice about the way CJ and Nana saw these situations in their lives:

- Waiting for the bus under the rain
- Not having a car
- Greeting everyone when they enter the bus
- Going to the soup kitchen after church every Sunday
- Being blind
- Not having a portable music player
- The best way to listen to music
- Donating money to bus or street performers
- Visiting places that are unkempt, dirty or seem abandoned
- The people who they serve at the soup kitchen
- Being of service to others

You could assign one or two of these to a group of students, allowing them to decide on the format they'll use to express their ideas. Explain that CJ's and Nana's views or feelings should be easy to identify and should be supported by text and visual evidence. They should also add their personal views or feelings about the situations they are analyzing. Allot time to either share with the whole class or display students' products and allow time for a gallery walk and impressions sharing.

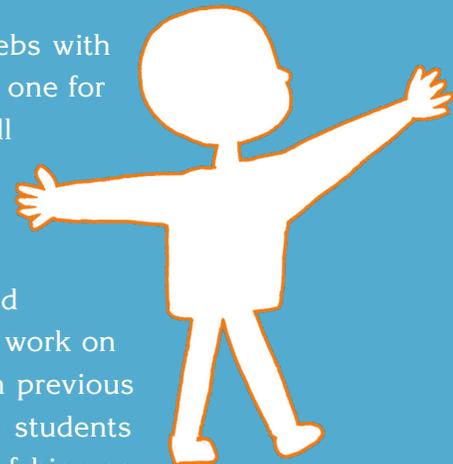
Place a copy of *Last Stop on Market Street* in the classroom library and invite students to explore the story on their own or with partners during self-selected reading time.

Extensions and Additional Learning Opportunities

CJ'S IDENTITY WEB

Come together as a class. Ask students to bring their Personal Identity Webs with them. Invite students to revisit their Personal Identity Webs and then create one for CJ. You could offer them an outline of CJ as the medium where they will create his Identity Web, in digital or paper format.

Remind students about your recent discussions on implicit bias and how we proposed thinking beyond the possible stereotypes our brains have created when thinking about ourselves and others. Then decide if you would like to work on CJ's Identity Web individually, in small groups, or as a whole group. Tie in previous reading skill explorations of internal and external character traits to help students see the link between these skills and the real world work of being free of bias as much as possible. Monitor discussions to gently point out when stereotypes are being considered for CJ's identity. For example: CJ could live with his Nana because his parent(s) can't care for him, OR his parent(s) are at work on Sundays, OR CJ always spends Sundays with Nana because his parent(s) want them to be close.



Always Beautiful Collage Art

To introduce the project, display the last page of *Last Stop on Market Street*. Explain that this page is called the Copyright Page because it contains copyright info asking for us not to copy any of the pages of the book because they belong to the author, illustrator, and publishing house. It also contains a short description of how the art of the book was made. Read the very last sentence that describes how illustrator Christian Robinson created the art for this book.

Ask students: Have you ever heard the word collage, or have you made a collage? A collage is artwork made by cutting different materials, photographs, and drawings and gluing them to a surface. Illustrator Christian Robinson, created the artwork for *Last Stop on Market Street* by creating paintings as backgrounds for each page and then creating smaller drawings that he cut out and adhered to the background. Let's meet Christian Robinson by watching this video where he leads viewers in creating a collage of a map, to get ideas for the collage we will create together. ([Making Space: Maps](#))

Once you've watched the video, you can ask if students have any questions about the process of making a collage and then:

Let's revisit the part in *Last Stop on Market Street* when Nana and CJ have a conversation about the neighborhood where the soup kitchen is located.

Reread pages 24-27, right after they exit the bus. Go back to page 25 and reread Nana's words to CJ:

"Sometimes when you're surrounded by dirt, CJ, you're a better witness for what's beautiful."

After allowing time for students to think and connect Nana's words and CJ's reaction to them, you could ask students:

What do you think Nana meant? What beauty did CJ notice in the neighborhood he had just described as "dirty"?

PREP WORK

1. You will need paper in different colors, preferably construction paper, for collage shapes.
2. Decide if you would like to make this project a class mural or individual collages. If you are making a class mural, decide on the size and pre-cut butcher paper. Place it on a table or wall where it can remain until it is finished and glue has dried.

After students have shared, continue with:

I need you to do some deep, personal thinking, okay? What I want you to consider is abstract, which means it has a lot to do with ideas and feelings. Ready? Can you think of something in our community, our school, your home, or your life that is so beautiful and precious to you that not dirt or anything else can take away its beauty?

If your students generally think better by talking it out with a partner, you might consider having them think and share this way, to find their answer. Once you feel a sufficient amount of time, thinking and talking has transpired, bring their attention back to you, and explain how their ideas will be shared through collage by saying:

Now that you have thought of something that has permanent beauty for you, I'd like you to draw it on construction paper, cut it out, and add it to (if you are making a class mural, indicate where the butcher paper is located; if it's individual collages, hand out the paper they will glue their collage pieces to). You can also use symbols and words to represent what you came up with for this project.

Allow time for students to work on this and visit with them to offer support, ask clarifying questions, and even look for drawing inspiration online, if students are unsure how to represent their idea on paper.

Once the project has been completed, consider sharing with students' families, school administrators, and others to add meaning to their creations by sharing it with a wider audience.



Connecting

Last Stop on Market Street

with the Global Community

- Invite a school or public transportation bus driver to speak to your class and share what a day in the life of a bus driver is like, as well as memorable moments on the job.
- Invite a soup kitchen or food pantry founder, manager, or volunteer to speak, write, or create a video message for your class. Ask them what motivates them to do this work, what kind of people they serve, and what memorable stories they'd like to share.



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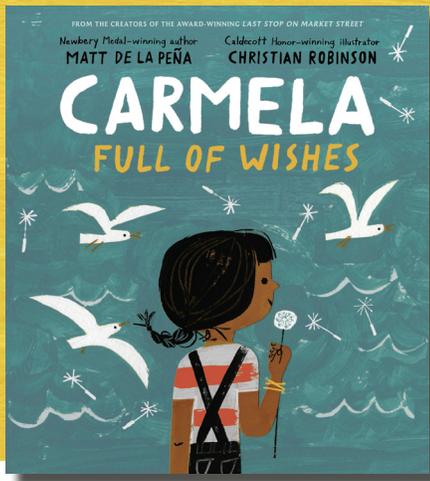
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CARMELA FULL OF WISHES



Setting the Framework for Successful Communication

It is important to offer students the vocabulary necessary to understand and express ideas in the fields of SEL and anti-bias education, and although you might have already explored the following concepts and their application, we have included them here, as a quick reference:

- **Citizen:** A person legally recognized as a subject or national of the state, and is entitled to the rights of, and protection from, the state (Re-Imagining Migration, 2019).
- **Immigrant:** Someone who leaves their native country to permanently settle in another country (Re-Imagining Migration, 2019).
- **Human Rights:** Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination (United Nations, 2020).
- **Immigrant without documentation:** A person living in a country without recognized legal documentation allowing them to reside legally within that country (Re-Imagining Migration, 2019).
- **Migrant:** A person who moves from one place to another, often to find work. Some migrants move by choice, others are displaced or forced from their homes by resource insecurity, violent conflict, war, or the effects of climate change (Re-Imagining Migration, 2019).
- **Person-first language:** Language that acknowledges an individual's humanity first, before speaking of a person's disability, citizenship status, time served in prison or any other label that is part of the individual's identity or experiences.
- **Hispanic:** A person who speaks Spanish or a person whose cultural identity and heritage is from a country where Spanish is the official language spoken.

BOOK TALK RESOURCE:

Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson book talk *Carmela Full of Wishes* and share their creative process as well as addressing one of the story's themes: undocumented workers and the effect that deportation has on their children, humanizing the stories students might have heard at home or read about online. You may choose to share this video with your students before reading the story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vIPY-NKDSI>

BIG Ideas to Explore

- Wishes are often goals we find hard to achieve.
- Every single person, without exceptions, has human rights that cannot be taken away.
- Siblings may not get along, but love and look out for each other.



WORDS TO KNOW:

- Manure
- Harvest
- Greenhouse
- Weed
- Locksmith
- Papel Picado (Perforated Paper)
- Housekeeper

Setting Individual Purposes for Reading—Awakening Curiosity

Display the front and back book cover as one piece of artwork. Invite students to spend time noticing the title, the author and illustrator, and the details in the artwork that will give them clues about the story. For younger students, begin by reading the title and the author's and illustrator's names, before giving them time to explore the artwork.

Invite students to share their noticings and wonderings. You may also ask:

- Do you know the name of the flower Carmela is holding in her hand?
- Have you ever blown on a dandelion? What happened?
- There's a belief based on folklore that if you think of a wish before blowing on a dandelion, it will come true. Have you heard of this before? Have you ever wished on a dandelion?
- Where do you think Carmela lives?
- Why is she full of wishes? What do you think some of her wishes are?

Please serve as a scribe and record their thoughts and questions on chart paper to reference easily during the read-aloud. Another possibility is asking students to write them down themselves on sticky notes and adding them to a “Wonderings” wall or paper.



Shared Purpose for Reading



After students have identified their individual purposes for reading, a behavior that is part of a reader's skillset, a common purpose for reading as a collective can now be established. You could say:

As we share this story, let's pay close attention to Carmela's wishes, to learn about her identity, what's important to her, and what she wonders and worries about.

AS YOU SHARE THE STORY

Illustrator, Christian Robinson, begins to tell Carmela's story on the end papers, before readers have reached the title page. Ask students:

Spend some time looking at the workers in the field that illustrator Christian Robinson, has created for the end papers. What do you notice?

Allow time for observation and sharing. Students may notice that they:

- are all wearing hats
- seem to be mostly men
- don't have any tools
- are brown skinned
- are wearing long pants and most are wearing long sleeves
- have wagons or boxes
- seem to be farming short plants because they are bent over or kneeling



Ask probing questions to encourage students to make inferences from some of their observations. Then add:

These people are migrant workers. (Share the definition above.) Throughout our nation's history, many people have migrated from other countries to the US to work on farms in California and other states. Farmers need help working the land, especially during harvest season.

Why do you think the illustrator decided to place artwork of migrant workers in such a prominent place as the endpapers?

As a transition from this discussion and to begin reading you might say: Let's see how this piece of the story, which we've come across even before we get to the title page, fits into Carmela's story.



As You Continue to Share the Story



Pose some of these questions as you read to encourage students' to make inferences based on their background knowledge, context and visual clues:

- What is the illustrator highlighting once again in the first two pages of the story?
- Notice Carmela's expression and how she didn't want to think about "manure. Not today." What might be different about this day for Carmela?
- How can we tell that this (Carmela's birthday pancakes scene) is a flashback?
- Do you think Carmela made a wish anyway?
- Look at the cart Carmela's brother is pulling. Where are they headed?
- Why might Carmela's brother not want her company?
- I'm starting to see why Matt de la Peña titled the story *Carmela Full of Wishes*. Have you ever experienced a day with more than one opportunity to make a wish?
- If Carmela didn't need to make a wish before blowing out her birthday candles, do you think she will make a wish now?
- Have you ever visited the laundromat or done the laundry at home? What can you share about this process?
- Why would Carmela's brother find the jingle of her bracelets so annoying when she had just gotten them that day as a birthday gift?
- We know Carmela is now old enough to go into town with her brother without an adult. Using this information, what could they be doing at the locksmith shop?



Take time to explore Carmela's second and third wish ideas closely.

To discuss Carmela's second wish idea you could ask:

I think Carmela's mom is a housekeeper in a hotel. What type of tasks do you think a housekeeper does?

(Allow students to think and share. Address any stereotypes that may come up by asking questions such as the ones discussed during the *Understanding Implicit Bias* lesson in this guide.)

Some follow up questions could be:

- A housekeeper's work at a hotel is not limited to keeping rooms clean and making beds. How do you think a housekeeper's work benefits guests personally?
- Why would Carmela wish for her mom to sleep in one of the fancy beds she makes daily for "fancy guests"?

As You Continue to Share the Story



To discuss Carmela's third wish idea, start with establishing what a person who is an immigrant is and how any of us could decide to become an immigrant. You could start by sharing:

I think Carmela's father is an immigrant. Have you heard this word before? Did you know that any one of us could decide to become an immigrant? Let's imagine we have just graduated college. For the summer we go on a trip to another country. Which country would you like us to visit as a celebration for getting our college degree? (Allow students to give suggestions and choose one for this example.)

So we are on our trip and love everything about this country! The people are so friendly! The food is delicious! Maybe we visit museums and fall in love with the art they exhibit. We could really see ourselves living, working, and having a home in this new country. So we apply for a job and we get it! We decide to try living in this country we think is amazing. We have decided to become immigrants in this country and start the process of filing all the papers, or documents, they require to authorize us to live there.

So, an immigrant is a person that decides to permanently move to another country, a country they weren't born in.

Sometimes a person has to become an immigrant because in their country they can't find work to make a living, pay rent, or buy food. Other times people have to make this decision because their country is dangerous, it might be at war, and it is not safe to continue living there. Although they love their country, their lives are in danger.

When a person finds themselves in these difficult or dangerous circumstances, they can't wait to have all the paperwork the new country they are moving to requires. This could be what has happened to Carmela's dad and now he is back in his home country working on getting all the

papers he needs to submit so he can get back to Carmela, her brother, and her mom.

What might Carmela be feeling when she comes up with this idea for a wish?

This question allows for students to practice empathy. After listening to their responses, share the definition of empathy and repeat the ideas shared by students that demonstrated empathy.

Continue reading the story without any stops, unless students have questions or want to share noticings, until the end. Allow students to share their thoughts on the ending, then explore the siblings' relationship. You could ask:

If you recall, Carmela didn't have to make a birthday wish because turning a year older had granted her what she most wanted. Do you remember what that was? (If students can't remember, go back to the pages where Carmela is celebrating her birthday.) What does that tell you about how Carmela feels about her brother?

After students have shared, probe further by asking: Yet at every chance she got to annoy him with the sound of her bracelets, she did. What was that about?

Carmela's brother isn't exactly thrilled about having her "tag along" while he takes care of chores in town; he even makes her wait outside while he visits his friend. How do we know that he does truly love and care for Carmela?

Why do you think Carmela took her bracelets off after making her wish?

If you have siblings, can you share if you feel Carmela and her brother's relationship is realistic? Why or why not?



Closing This First Reading of *Carmela Full of Wishes*

CULTURAL APPRECIATION - THE HISTORY OF PAPEL PICADO

Illustrator Christian Robinson, incorporated into Carmela's story elements of her and author Matt de la Peña's, Mexican cultural heritage and traditions through the use of *papel picado* to illustrate Carmela's ideas for wishes. *Papel picado* may be easily recognized by your students as part of Mexican culture. Some students might associate it with two Mexican holidays that have become popular in the United States—Cinco de Mayo and Day of the Dead. To begin a conversation that leads to appreciation for cultural differences and respect for different traditions, you could invite students to revisit the three *papel picado* images in the story and ask them what similarities and differences they notice among them. You can also survey students to assess if they've seen this type of art before and what they know and associate it with. After assessing, you could explore the meaning of the word Hispanic and how it includes many countries, not just Mexico, by saying:

Although we know that Carmela is Hispanic, there are many countries that identify this way because their official spoken language is Spanish.

You could create a visual representation of the relationship between the words Hispanic and Spanish by writing them on chart paper this way:

HISPANIC SPANISH

We have worked on exploring our own identities and the identities of the main characters in Matt de la Peña's stories. I hope we have a better understanding of the importance of respecting

all the parts of someone's identity. What clues have de la Peña and Robinson given us to infer which country Carmela and her family's Hispanic heritage possibly comes from beside *papel picado*?

To refresh students' memories, you could take a picture walk of the story. This should help them notice that there is a *papel picado* banner decorating Carmela's kitchen because they are celebrating an important event—her birthday. Some students might notice these food illustrations that are part of Mexican cuisine: the *pan dulce*, sweet bread, decorating the *panadería's* (the bakery's) sign, and the cart selling *elote*, corn on the cob dipped in mayonnaise and sprinkled with chile powder. If students do not make the connection with the author's cultural background, you could remind them, since the author has shared this information in the suggested videos in this guide.

To create awareness that *papel picado* is not a popular party decoration, but an artform that is rooted in Mexico's history, you could share this video that gives a short overview of its history:

[Catalina Delgado-Trunk The History and Tradition of Papel Picado](#)

After viewing the video, have a socialized discussion about the use of *papel picado* as a decoration because it is pretty and colorful vs. a meaningful part of Mexican culture and identity. Should it be made and used without thinking about its historical and cultural significance? What important elements of Carmela's life were depicted using *papel picado* in the story? This is a beginning conversation that will encourage students to consider now, and in the future, if it is respectful and appropriate to use elements of a culture other than one's own without digging deeper into its significance.



Carmela's Identity Web



Come together as a class. Ask students to bring their Personal Identity Webs with them. Invite students to revisit their Personal Identity Webs and then create one for Carmela. If they have found a connection with Carmela's identity that they hadn't considered when creating their own Identity Web, encourage them to add that element they just identified to their web. You could offer them an outline of Carmela as the medium where they will create her Identity Web, in digital or paper format.

Once again remind students about your recent discussions on implicit bias and how we proposed thinking beyond the possible stereotypes our brains have created when thinking about ourselves and others. Then decide if you would like to work on Carmela's Identity Web individually, in small, or whole group. Tie in previous reading skill explorations of internal and external character traits to help students see the link between these skills and the real world work of being free of bias as much as possible.



Monitor discussions to gently point out when stereotypes are being considered for Carmela's Identity and encourage the use of person-first language. For example: if a student suggests that Carmela's father is an illegal immigrant or an undocumented immigrant, gently suggest that we put the person first, immigrant, and the status of his citizenship after, without documents. Students will begin to understand that we should speak in terms of humanity first and labels after as you continue to practice this type of language.

Ask students to keep the Identity Web they've created for Carmela with the one they created for CJ for later comparison between characters.

Place a copy of *Carmela Full of Wishes* in the classroom library and invite students to explore the story on their own or with partners during self-selected reading time.



Extensions and Additional Learning Opportunities

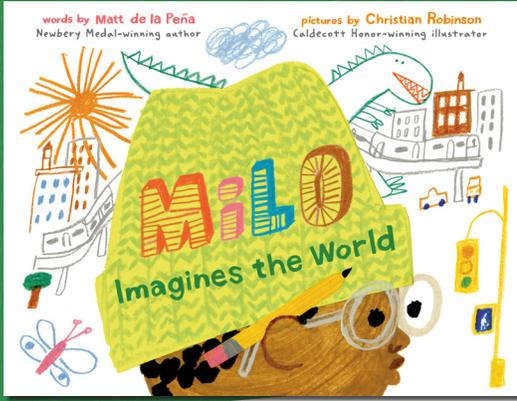
- Invite students to learn more about migrant workers by researching—
 - Dolores Huertas, American Labor Activist
 - César Chávez, American Labor Activist
 - The Braceros Program (for upper elementary students)
- For a directed research activity on the origins of people's belief in the magical powers of dandelions, consider sharing with your students Wonderopolis's Wonder of the Day #1716 *Why Do People Wish on Dandelions?* which you can find here: <https://wonderopolis.org/wonder/why-do-people-wish-on-dandelions#:~:text=Dandelions%20grow%20so%20successfully%20because,the%20seeds%20into%20the%20air.>
- For a brief research activity, consider asking students to investigate the life cycle of a dandelion and search for a time-lapse video of the cycle.

References

Re-Imagining Migration. (2019, October 31). "Understanding Migration: A Basic Glossary." In *Re-Imagining Migration*. <https://reimaginingmigration.org/understanding-migration-a-basic-glossary/>

United Nations. (2020, July 1). "Human Rights." <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/human-rights/>





Milo

Imagines the World



SETTING INDIVIDUAL PURPOSES FOR READING—AWAKENING CURIOSITY

Display the front and back book cover as one piece of artwork. Invite students to spend time noticing the title, the author and illustrator, and the details in the artwork that will give them clues about the story. For younger students, begin by reading the title, author and illustrator's name, before giving them time to explore the artwork.

Invite students to share their noticings and wonderings, then read the first two sentences of the front inside flap of the book jacket. You may suggest they adjust their thinking after sharing, then ask:

Have you ever been somewhere, without much to do, and like Milo, started people-watching, observing them closely to try to figure out what their story is?

After students have thought about the question and shared, you might ask:

- Who might the girl facing Milo on the front cover be?
- Do you think the drawings on the front cover are Milo's? Why?

Show students the endpapers and title page, then ask:

- What does Christian Robinson, the story's illustrator, seem to want us to know about Milo before we even start to read?
- They are taking the stairs to a subway station—where do you think they are headed?

BIG IDEAS TO EXPLORE:

- It takes more than a first impression to really know a person.
- Being aware of our implicit biases helps us create a better world.
- We should always think about ourselves and others by what we all share, our humanity, first.

WORDS TO KNOW:

- Tepid
- Soothing
- Affirmations
- Correctional facility

Please serve as a scribe and record their thoughts and questions on chart paper to reference easily during the read aloud. Another possibility is asking students to write them down themselves on sticky notes and adding them to a “Wonderings” wall or paper.



SETTING—WHAT IS IT LIKE TO RIDE THE SUBWAY?

If your school is located in a city that does not have a subway system, consider sharing the first three minutes of this video: *New York City Subway - Sounds and People*. This video was taken at the 14th Street–Union Square Subway Station and will give students a feel for what Milo is experiencing and the sights and sounds the author describes in the opening of the story. You can find it here: https://youtu.be/LBLs5eN2v_w



Shared Purpose for Reading

After students have identified their individual purposes for reading, a behavior that is part of a reader's skill set, a common purpose for reading as a collective can now be established. You could say:

As we join Milo on this long subway ride, let's focus on the stories Milo imagines for the people he meets. Is Milo aware of what stereotypes are and how they are created by implicit bias?

As You Share the Story

Author Matt de la Peña has described *Milo Imagines the World* as a poem. Share this with your students to put them in the right listening mode: do they hear alliterations or onomatopoeias? Is the author using imagery to engage one or more of the reader's five senses?

Pose some of these questions as you read to encourage students' to make inferences based on their background knowledge, context and visual clues:

- What does the author seem to want us to immediately notice about Milo?
- "The wedding-dressed woman...has a face made out of light"; what do you think Milo sees in the woman to describe her this way? What things are "made out of light" that would also describe what Milo sees in her?
- What new information do we learn about Milo's subway ride?
- The author lets us know how Milo feels by describing him as a "shook-up soda." What happens when you have a soda and shake it before

opening it? What does this tell us about how Milo feels?

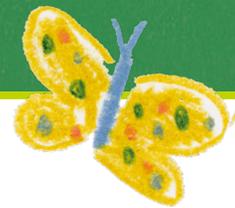
- If we were to represent Milo's feelings like a sandwich, what two emotions would be the bread holding all the feelings together?
- Does Milo want to go where he's headed?

As Milo begins creating stories for the people he observes and drawing them in his sketchbook, ask questions to elicit thinking based on your work on stereotypes and implicit biases. If students don't recognize that Milo is not imagining an empathetic or compassionate situation, that is okay. Milo's character development will help them in the end.

As you encounter each of Milo's first impressions and his imaginings in the drawings that follow, lead a discussion that will help students identify possible biases that are affecting Milo's perceptions. You could ask:

- What do you think of Milo's interpretation of this passenger's life?
- Based on the text and the illustrations, what do you think led Milo to this interpretation?

As You Continue to Share the Story



As you continue to share the story, some other questions to ask could be:

- Where do you think the boy in the suit is headed? Why isn't his dad dressed in a suit too?
- Could Milo and the boy be headed to the same place? Why?
- Have you ever been to a wedding where they play "Here Comes the Bride"? (Here is a short video of a violinist and a cellist playing this song: <https://youtu.be/EcmXZvoMUAA>.)
- Do you remember how Milo's sister is feeling? Could that be the reason why she snapped at him?
- Why does Milo feel nervous when he and the boy in the suit lock eyes?
- Did the crew of breakers put on a good show? How do we know? Does this remind you of another story we read?
- Is Milo practicing empathy when he asks himself "What do people imagine about his face?" Why?
- Why do you think Milo's mom reads him a story over the phone? How does it make Milo feel?

If possible, once Milo, his sister, and the boy in the suit reach their stop, read without interruption until the end.

We suggest that rather than asking students what Milo, his sister, the boy in the suit and his dad's destination was, you recap this for students to avoid any comments or questions that may negatively impact students who have a family member who is or has been incarcerated. You could say:

I understand now why Milo and his sister had a sandwich of feelings. Do you remember they had that "shook-up soda" feeling? They felt "excitement stacked on top of worry, on top of confusion, on top of love." They were

excited to visit their mom, especially because they only got to see her once a month. They could be worried because they haven't seen her in four weeks and she is currently in a correctional facility. Do you think they might feel confused because they really want her home because they know she is a good mom? Why do you think they also felt love?

If students ask why Milo's mom is in a correctional facility, you could say:

We know that when we do not obey a rule in school or at home, we have a consequence. Adults also have consequences when they do not obey rules. Milo's mom might have not obeyed a law and the consequence for the specific law she broke was spending a certain amount of time in a correctional facility.

After listening to students share their ideas, follow up with questions that will humanize Milo's mother further, and create a baseline, a starting point students have created themselves, to refer to when they think and refer to a person that is or has been incarcerated. You could ask:

Using your background knowledge and the clues the author and the illustrator give us as readers, brainstorm with a partner(s) how you can tell that Milo's mom is a good mother.

As you work with your group, remind each other that we should always speak in people-first language (see the guide for *Carmela Full of Wishes* if you'd like to revisit this term.)

Decide how you would like for students to share their ideas for this activity. You could also use this template:

5 THINGS ABOUT MILO'S MOM THAT ARE GREAT!

Books Reflect Our Experiences - We Are Not Alone

Ask students to describe how they feel about Christian Robinson and the art he's created in the picture books you've read illustrated by him. Remind them of the videos you have watched where you've heard Robinson talk about his inspiration, his ideas, and his advice to young creators. Share with them that you will be watching another video segment, one where he speaks about creating *Milo Imagines the World* in a few minutes.

Before watching the video, revisit the spread where Milo and the boy in the suit lock eyes in the subway. This will serve as an introduction to explore how when we are going through a difficult life event, we believe we are the only ones that are experiencing this and keep it all bottled up inside. You could say:

I keep wondering why Milo felt like "the walls were closing in around" him when his eyes met the boy in the suit's eyes. At this point in the story, he doesn't know that the boy is also visiting his mom in prison. Do you think that maybe he was afraid that somehow the boy in the suit would figure out his destination? Why would this make Milo anxious?

Let's watch Christian Robinson in this video, where he shares that Milo's story is his story, and gives us clues to why Milo might have felt this way.

Watch the segment of *Conversation and Studio Tour with Christian Robinson* (which you can find

here: <https://vimeo.com/468645530>) from the 4:33 mark to the 10:28 mark.

After watching, have a discussion where students reflect on if learning about Christian Robinson's mom's incarceration and that he was raised by his grandmother changes what they thought about him and his art. You could say:

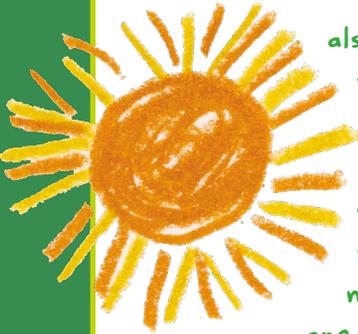
A few minutes ago we shared how we felt about Christian and his work. Has this changed after watching this video where Christian shared something deeply personal with all of us? (Address any misconceptions or stereotypes using as a guide Robinson and de la Peña's hope for this story "We just wanted to tell a story that gave young people space to process that experience but also allowed other people to be involved in the conversation, to just build more empathy and more understanding.")

Remind students that you also watched the video clip to understand Milo's anxiousness better. Ask students if Robinson shares anything that illuminates what Milo might have been feeling when he locked eyes with the boy in the suit. To bring this discussion to a close you could say:

Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson wrote *Milo Imagines the World* for all of us. For those of us who have a parent or loved one who is incarcerated, Milo's story lets us know that we are not alone, that Milo and Christian, and many more young people, have



Books Reflect Our Experiences— We Are Not Alone (continued...)



also lived this experience. For those of us who have friends, classmates, neighbors who are going through this life experience, Milo and Christian's story shows us that there is more to a person than just one element of their identity and we should embrace all elements not just the ones we share. Have you noticed how your own Identity Web has expanded as you learn about the characters in de la Peña and Robinson's stories?

Although we might want to keep certain life events to ourselves, like Christian mentioned, what can we do for ourselves and others, so we don't feel lonely or embarrassed in each other's presence?

Allow students to brainstorm with partners what they could do and then come together as a group to share. This is not an easily solved situation for children, or adults, and it might be an action plan you revisit repeatedly during the year to reflect upon and improve. However, creating, sharing, and repeating affirmations can help us all improve our self-esteem and value ourselves and others more. If students are experiencing difficulty coming up with suggestions for this activity, you could present positive affirmations by saying:

Have you heard of affirmations? Affirmations are statements that help us change how we feel, what we believe about ourselves or our abilities, and they can improve our mood and resilience. We could create affirmations and have them

in our classroom for when we need them. For example, Milo might appreciate an affirmation that states "You are loved by many." What other affirmations can we think of that will help us and others?

Serve as a scribe for students' affirmations. Brainstorm with students how they would like to create their affirmations. Some options to consider: 8 ½" x 11" posters decorated using available art supplies, a digital book of affirmations using the free version of Book Creator (www.bookcreator.com), or postcard size affirmations decorated using magazine cuttings like Robinson does (you could ask your school librarian or local library for magazine discards). Once your class has created these affirmations, consider making copies and placing them in a basket labeled "Take What You Need" for students to use. You could even schedule a 5 minute Affirmation Break once or twice a week.



Closing This First Reading of

Milo Imagines the World



Revisit the *Shared Purpose for Reading* you established before starting to read, making sure to ask students to focus on Milo's imaginings based on first impressions he created solely from people-watching. You could say:

Our shared purpose for reading required us to focus on the stories Milo imagines for the people he meets and decide if Milo is aware of what stereotypes are and how they are created by implicit bias. I want us to focus on the first drawing he makes of:

- the whiskered man
- the boy in the suit
- the wedding-dressed woman
- the crew of break-dancers

Turn to a partner and before you begin, make sure to look around to check everyone has a partner to talk to, then you may begin your discussion.

Walk the room and listen in on students' discussions. Offer support if students seem to need clarification on identifying stereotypes or implicit biases. After students have discussed with partners, bring their attention back and ask students what they concluded. You could continue the discussion by saying:

I really like Milo; I think he would fit in with our class. He reminded me of many of you: observant, creative, kind, loving, and real. Matt de la Peña gave us a book friend that reflects all of our realities, including how sometimes we automatically select stereotypes, which we learned are false ideas that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way, as our first response when we meet someone.

Milo didn't notice that he was imagining stories based on stereotypes until he used empathy and thought about how others might be making up stories about him, too, just by looking at him. Do you think that was the lightbulb moment that made him aware?

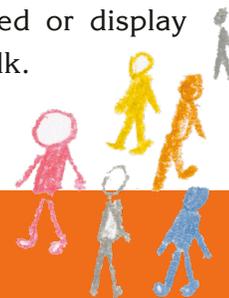
After listening to students' ideas, invite students to work in groups and create one more story for one of the passengers, that is free of stereotypes and biases, just like Milo did when he reimagined the world. Decide if you would like students to share with the class once they are finished or display them and allow time for a gallery walk.

Milo's Identity Web



Come together as a class. Once again, ask students to bring their Personal Identity Web with them. Invite students to revisit their Personal Identity Web and notice if the list of elements they used to describe themselves is longer now than when they first created their web. Also ask them to look for parts of their identity they share with CJ and with Carmela. Then offer them an outline of Milo as the medium where they will create his Identity Web in digital or paper format.

Place a copy of *Milo Imagines the World* in the classroom library and invite students to explore the story on their own or with partners during self-selected reading time.





Extensions and Additional Learning Opportunities



EVENT PLANNER

Plan a party for Milo’s mom. Think about what you’ve learned about Milo, his sister and their mother. Revisit the book if you need to. Then create a schedule of activities to suggest to Milo for a Welcome Home Party for his mom. What will they eat? Where will they have the party? What special things can Milo do to celebrate his mom?

IMAGINING THE SUBWAY RIDE

Imagery is a description that engages one or more of your body’s senses and your heart, to help you “see” the story. Author Matt de la Peña used a poetic tool called imagery, to transport readers to the subway station and take us along on Milo’s subway ride. Can you find descriptions and match them to the sense it awakens? Which sense does the author appeal to the most?

Students can make a sketch of each sense and then gather examples from the story that help them better understand what is happening and what the characters are feeling.



Author and Illustrator Study Guide

Launching into an author and illustrator study is a journey that will deepen students' understanding of the

storytellers' process of communicating meaning in their respective mediums. It is like having a mentor author and a mentor illustrator guide your students so they too can become engaging storytellers now, and in the future.

For this journey to be constructive, students will get to know Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson through interviews, videos, news articles, and websites to connect their lived experiences with the stories they tell.

Another benefit of this study is the opportunity for students to continue developing their reading skills by critically thinking across texts. As they revisit de la Peña and Robinson's stories, they will experience the relationship that reading books by the same creators offers and will be inspired to create these same bonds with other authors and illustrators, enriching and widening the genres, writing styles, and visual literacy elements they expose themselves to.

★ LET'S BEGIN! ★



Prep Work

Print and place a photo of Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson in a prominent location:



Photo © Heather Waraksa

Matt de la Peña

is the Newbery Medal-winning author of *Last Stop on Market Street*. He is also the author of the award-winning picture books *Carmela Full of Wishes*, *Love*, *Milo Imagines the World*, and *A Nation's Hope: The Story of Boxing Legend Joe Louis*, and seven critically acclaimed young adult novels. Matt teaches creative writing and visits schools and colleges throughout the country.

You can visit Matt at mattdelapena.com

🐦 @mattdelapena | 📷 mattdelapena



Photo © John Kwiatkowski

Christian Robinson

received a Caldecott Honor and a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor for his art in *Last Stop on Market Street*. He is the author and illustrator of the picture books *Another* and *You Matter*, and he has illustrated many more, including *Carmela Full of Wishes*, *Milo Imagines the World*, the *Gaston and Friends* series, *School's First Day of School*, and *The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade*.

You can visit Christian at theartoffun.com

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Prep Work (Continued...)

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR IDENTITY WEBS

Watch (or rewatch) the following video:

[Interview with Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson - Why the Creators of *Last Stop on Market Street* Believe Kids Need to See Themselves in Books by Traci Swain](#)

To establish a purpose for watching, you could say:

Now that we have read all three books created by de la Peña and Robinson, they are going to be our creative mentors. We want to learn about what inspires them, where they find the subject matter for their stories, how they create and collaborate, and anything else that will help us identify the seeds of their work so we can plant our own as we do the work of writing and illustrating stories. Please take notes, but don't worry if you can't write all of the ideas you find interesting down, I will post this video for you to watch whenever you need to.

If your students are in the prewriting stage, you can:

- Serve as a scribe for them
- If technology is available, students can audio or video record the information they find important. It might be helpful to watch the video in segments, allowing them to record their thoughts for each.

After watching the video, ask students to create an Identity Web for the author and one for the illustrator. They should include what they learned from listening to the author and illustrator as well as physical traits they notice and want to add. When they have completed the webs, come together and share the information gathered, adding facts about the author and illustrator under their pictures and short bios. Invite students to continue to add to the display as they find new information in their research.

A Deeper Look—Further Research



To create a connection between your students and author Matt de la Peña and illustrator Christian Robinson, we have included a list of multimedia resources for further research. You could invite students to explore these on their own or with partners at an audio/visual station, or you could share as a class. You might also share segments of these resources that you find most appropriate for your students' grade level and learning styles. Encourage students to add to the author and illustrator's Identity Webs as they learn new information about them.

VIDEOS

- [KCKPL's Stories on the Bus: Matt de la Peña reads *Last Stop on Market Street*](#)
- [Christian Robinson explains the art of making pictures speak to children](#)
- [Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson on *Carmela Full of Wishes*](#)

ARTICLES

- [Stars? He's Got It Covered: Introducing Artist Christian Robinson | Up Close by Luan Toth](#)
- _____

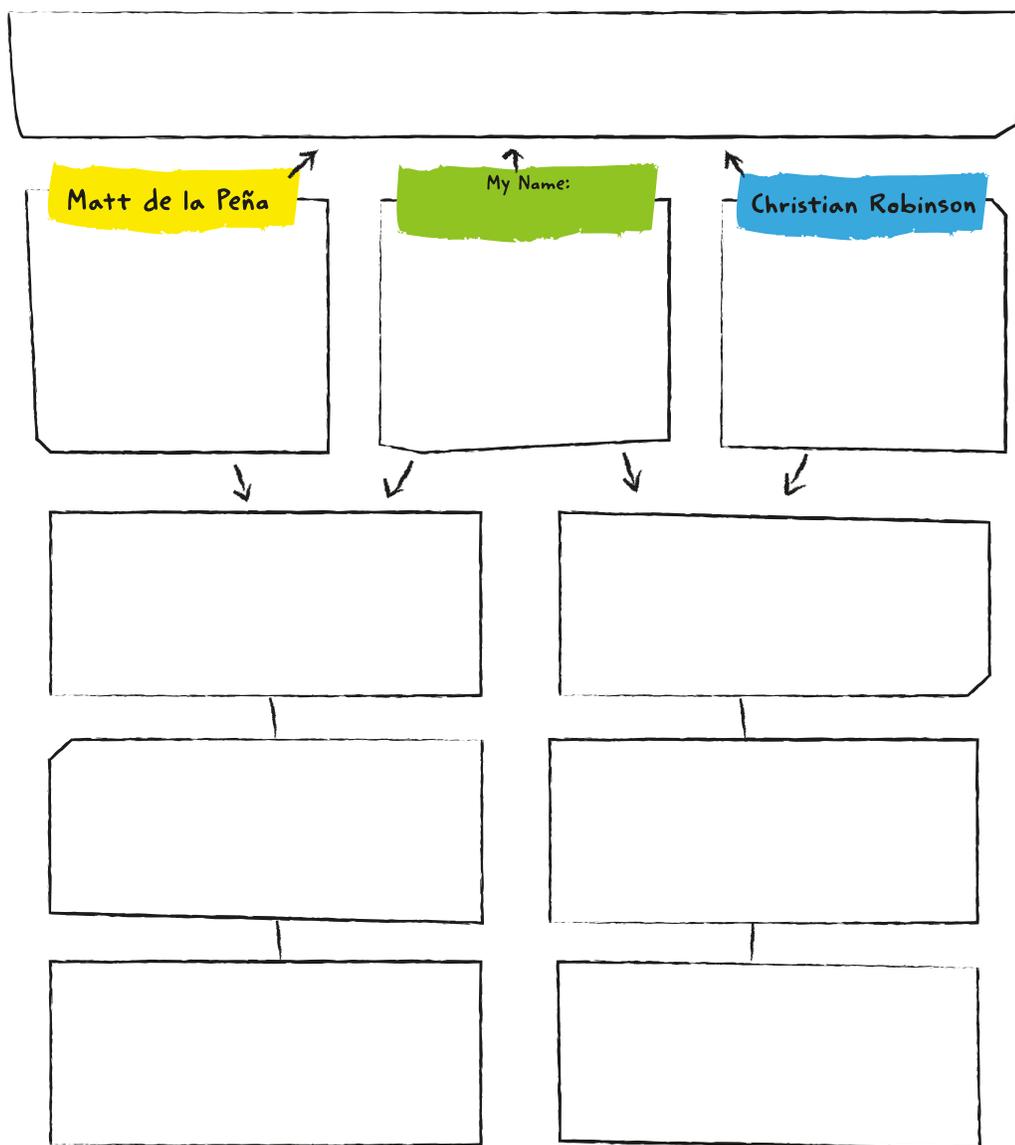
AUDIO RECORDINGS

- [Meet-the-Author Recording with Matt de la Peña *Last Stop on Market Street*](#)
- [Meet-the-Author Recording with Matt de la Peña *Carmela Full of Wishes*](#)
- [Meet-the-Author Recording with Christian Robinson *Last Stop on Market Street*](#)
- [Meet-the-Author Recording with Christian Robinson *Carmela Full of Wishes*](#)
- [On Board a City Bus, a Little Boy Finds the Route to Gratitude \(Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson\)](#)

Just Like Me

Finding Common Threads

Ask students to study their Personal Identity Webs and make personal connections with what they have learned about de la Peña and Robinson. You could give students free choice in how they represent their similarities or offer a web like this one:



Study your Identity Web and compare it to author Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson's. Share the identity elements all three of you have in common in the top box. Share the identity elements you have in common with de la Peña in the boxes on the left, and the elements you have in common with Robinson in the boxes on the right. Draw a portrait in the box under each name.

Literary Elements Analysis

As you work through the activities in the Literary Elements Analysis, remind your students that their analysis is for the purpose of understanding how this author and illustrator duo do the work of telling stories as a guide for them to do the same. Create a Storytellers' Craft Idea Chart on chart paper to record the things you notice about how de la Peña and Robinson consistently tell stories.





Characters

GROWTH CHART



Students will analyze CJ's, Carmela's, and Milo's journey in each of their stories and decide if they changed because of their lived experiences, identifying when in the story they noticed the changes. To introduce this activity have a conversation about growth, focusing on how it is more than just physical change. You could say:

How do we measure our growth? (Students most likely will answer with questions relating to physical growth.) What about growth in how smart, mature, or empathetic we are becoming? Is there a way to measure this type of growth?

Ask students to think hard on this with a partner. After students have discussed with peers, restate the question and ask students for their thoughts. To help students solidify the idea of charting personal growth, offer examples where you have witnessed students' growth in any of the areas this question references. Explain the activity:

As we, or others, notice how our behaviors and attitudes change, we can reflect and notice our personal growth. Let's practice noticing others' personal growth by thinking back to CJ, Carmela, and Milo. Did they remain the same from the beginning to the end of the story? Did they experience and reflect on their actions, an event, or a conversation? Did they act or speak differently toward the end of the story?

Consider if you would like students to think about all three main characters, CJ, Carmela and Milo, or if they should partner with a small group and work on a single character. Students can create a chart similar to this **Character's Personal Growth Chart**, or you may provide a copy of this one for them to record their thinking.

<p>Character's Name</p>	<p>At first...</p>	<p>Lived Experiences</p>	<p>In the end...</p>
	<p>Describe how the character thought and acted before you noticed the change and personal growth.</p>	<p>Describe the events and/or conversations that affected the character's thinking and actions.</p>	<p>Describe the character's personal growth and change. Which illustrations add meaning to this character's growth?</p>

To bring this activity to a closing, ask students to share their work and conclusions. Add to the *Storytellers' Craft Idea Chart* to show how the characters in each story demonstrated growth because of specific events in the story and self-reflection.





Characters (continued...)

CJ, CARMELA, MILO— WOULD THEY BECOME FRIENDS?

Ask students to study the Character Identity Webs they created for each main character in de la Peña and Robinson's stories. To lead a discussion, you could ask:

- What do they have in common?
- What differences do they have that would complement each other?
- Do you think if they met they would become friends?
- What could they learn from each other?



Brainstorm with students how they would like to share their analysis. Some possibilities might be:

- Students act out a first encounter for the three characters
- A comic strip where two of the characters are already friends and welcome the third to their neighborhood
- Older students can create a pretend group text messaging exchange with free online platforms such as <https://www.classools.net/SMS/>

For an extension to this analysis activity, students can explain which characters they would become friends with and why.

Add to the *Storytellers' Craft Idea Chart* the similarities among the characters' identities that de la Peña and Robinson create for their stories.



Settings

REALISTIC? PERSONAL? OR BOTH?



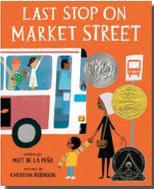
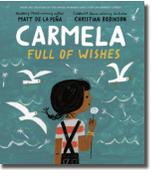
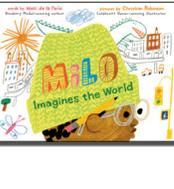
Display *Last Stop on Market Street*, *Carmela Full of Wishes*, and *Milo Imagines the World* in a place where all students can view the full covers, as you have a conversation about the setting of each story. Title a chart paper Settings, divide it in three sections, with a different book title for each. Then ask students to turn to a partner, check on their classmates to make sure each one has someone to share their thinking with, and explain what their topic of conversation will be. You could say:

We know that the setting, where the story takes place, is a literary element that influences the plot of a story. It also helps us understand the story's genre. I'd like us to analyze which setting author Matt de la Peña chose for each of the stories we read, and how illustrator Christian Robinson created illustrations to visually communicate that setting.

After students have had time to exchange ideas, ask questions that will require them to compare and contrast not only the stories, but also the research they've completed on the author and illustrator. You could ask:

- What genre would you say each book is, based on the story and the setting?
- Describe the setting of each book. Can you offer text and art evidence for each descriptor?
- What do all of these settings have in common?
- Let's think back to the research we did on de la Peña and Robinson. We can also take a look at the Identity Webs you created for them as well as the information we've added to their photos and bios. Is there something personal about each of these settings?

As students share their ideas, add them to the Settings chart. After the discussion, students can reflect and take personal notes about the discussion in their journals or using this think sheet:

 <p>Description (author's words and illustrator's pictures)</p>	 <p>Description (author's words and illustrator's pictures)</p>	 <p>Description (author's words and illustrator's pictures)</p>
<p>Inspiration</p>	<p>Inspiration</p>	<p>Inspiration</p>

Add to the *Storytellers' Craft Idea Chart* what your students discovered about where de la Peña and Robinson set their stories and the personal connections they have to these places. If students' did not notice that all settings have characters on the move, on a journey to a specific destination, have a discussion that will help them notice.



Writing Like Matt

The analysis students have spent time on has informed them how de la Peña and Robinson structure their stories—realistic fiction, with dynamic, diverse characters, in settings where they will spend time interacting with others and reflecting on big topics. We've also gleaned that the characters and setting have personal connections to the author and the illustrator.

Before inviting students to begin creating a story with words and pictures following the map you have created through the analysis of the stories and research on de la Peña and Robinson, let's explore some of the literary elements that de la Peña incorporates into his writing that are part of his style. We will also explore Robinson's process of creating illustrations that add meaning to the words of the story.

"Finding the Music of the Story" Internal Rhymes and Alliteration

Author Matt de la Peña compares his picture book text to a song's lyrics. He mentions *alliteration, rhythm, internal and traditional rhyme*, as devices he uses to get "the music right" in his storytelling. Your students can explore these devices, that can serve as an introduction to these concepts or, if they've already begun to explore them, an opportunity to practice identifying them and incorporating them into their own storytelling.

Replay the video used to introduce this author and illustrator study, starting at the 3:40 mark and stopping at the 6:00 mark, so students can listen to de la Peña compare picture book text to a song and to listen to him speak about the devices he uses to get "the music right" in his stories. After watching you could say:

We have invested our time and energy in analyzing Matt de la Peña's writing to learn more about his style, because as writers we are learning from authors we enjoy, to improve as writers ourselves. We have read books that are written with traditional rhyme (offer some titles of stories you've shared where the text is mostly traditional rhyme). Why do you think that de la Peña prefers internal rhyme instead of a rhyming style where most sentences end with rhyming words or have a rhyming pattern?

After students share their ideas, explain internal rhymes. You could say:

INTERNAL RHYMES are rhymes that happen in the middle of a sentence or line, like this one from *Milo Imagines the World*:

"These monthly Sunday subway rides are never ending, and as usual, Milo is a shook-up soda."

Or it can be a rhyme that happens across multiple sentences or lines, like these from *Carmela Full of Wishes*:

"She saw hundreds of tiny white spores lifting into the air, floating out toward the far-off surf."

We are going to go on an Internal Rhyme Hunt. With partners you will read one of de la Peña and Robinson's books in search of internal rhymes. Then we will come together to share our findings.

Divide students into groups and provide them with a different book to avoid repetitiveness in their work. After you've come back as a group and shared your findings, ask students to choose a favorite internal rhyme and explain why it stood out from the other rhymes found, then add them to the *Storytellers' Craft Idea Chart* for future reference.

Remind students that de la Peña also uses repetition, or alliteration, in his writing. You could explain alliteration by saying:

ALLITERATION is a literary device used by authors to add an element of musicality to their writing. Alliteration is also used to grab the reader's attention to the idea or feelings conveyed in a sentence. When you notice the same beginning sound repeatedly in a phrase or sentence, that is alliteration. Here's an example from *Carmela Full of Wishes*, try to notice the alliteration:

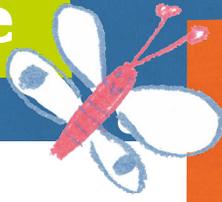
*She pulled a breath and leaned toward the fussy
white bulb,
but just before she could blow, her brother butted in.*

Alliteration- breath, bulb, but, before, blow, brother, butted

Just as you did with internal rhymes, partner students and ask them to go on an Alliteration Hunt. Alternatively, you could first present both internal rhymes and alliterations, and then ask some groups to hunt for rhymes and other groups to hunt for alliterations coming together as a whole to share their findings.

Ask students to choose a favorite alliteration and explain why it stood out from the others found, then add them to the *Storytellers' Craft Idea Chart* for future reference.

Illustrating Like Christian



Supplies Needed...

- 12-24 1.5" x 2" sticky notes for each student or pair
- Storyboard template for each student or pair
- Printer paper
- Coloring supplies (Multicultural crayons, crayons, color pencils, markers, watercolors, etc.)
- Scissors

Ask students to pay special attention to how illustrator Christian Robinson plans the illustrations for manuscripts, the stories written by other authors, as you rewatch a segment of the video used to introduce this author and illustrator study, starting at the 1:28 mark and ending at the 2:17 mark.

After watching, have a discussion of why Robinson uses "tiny" sticky notes to plan his drawings (less frustrating to start over when you make a tiny mistake) and why he has two sticky notes per manuscript page (plans art in spreads).

Revisit the art work you created for the Always Beautiful Collage Art project and discuss the process that went into creating it.

Invite students to watch [An Illustrator Explains the Art of Making Pictures Speak to Children](#) by saying:

We created a collage by watching illustrator Christian Robinson talk us through the process. Let's pay close attention to what he finds vital to include in the picture books he creates illustrations for.

After watching, you could have these discussions:

- What is important to Christian when he is telling stories through art? (A reflection of the diversity of our world, that children see themselves in the pages of books, that a feeling of being seen and valued is communicated through his art.)
- What did you notice about the way he made the art in this video? What materials and techniques did Robinson use? (Collage from painted sheets of paper, the use of a precision cutting tool, adding details with paintbrushes.)



Before venturing into writing and illustrating their own stories, invite students to create swatches of color on a sheet of paper to create a character out of cuttings from the swatches glued together, as they have seen Robinson do. Here is a sample of how students can create the swatches of color using different coloring supplies:



Putting the Pieces Together: Writing and Illustrating Our Own Stories



You have arrived at the most exciting moment in this author and illustrator study: using all you and your students have learned from mentor author, Matt de la Peña, and our mentor illustrator, Christian Robinson. Here are some considerations as you plan what approach will work best for your students:

- Will you facilitate a theme for your students to create their story, or will they choose their own?
- Will they write a follow-up to *Last Stop on Market Street*, *Carmela Full of Wishes*, or *Milo Imagines + the World*?
- Will they find inspiration in a question they hoped one of the stories would answer, that still remains unanswered?
- Will they be inspired by a detail in one of the illustrations from the books? For example, in *Last Stop on Market Street*, the illustration of the lady with the butterfly jar: how did she find and catch so many butterflies?
- Will your students use all the steps in the writing process or free-write?
- Would you like your students to experience creative collaboration by inviting them to work in pairs on both the writing and the illustrating, or would it be better to have them be responsible for either the writing or the illustrating, coming together to collaborate on the storytelling as a whole?
- Would it be possible for students to fully experience both creative processes by having each student write their own story but illustrate another's?
- Will the final storytelling be in traditional book format, or will you offer other storytelling mediums, such as green screen videos, puppet theater, reader's theater, or voice narration to accompany illustrations?
- Who will you invite to be the audience for your students' final telling of their stories?





PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER: WRITING AND ILLUSTRATING OUR OWN STORIES (CONTINUED . . .)

Once you have decided how students will collaborate, which formats they will experiment with and how the audience will access their final projects, you could introduce the project by saying:

It is now our turn to create our own stories, adding what we have learned from our mentor author, Matt de la Peña, and our mentor illustrator, Christian Robinson, into our writing and illustrating. Christian said in the last video we watched, that we can start with what is around us, and we can emulate the storytelling and art style we've been analyzing to create our own. Christian also shared that we have the control over the world we will create on paper with our words and art, and that is true for each and every one of us.

Let's go over the *Storytellers' Craft Idea Chart* where we collected the literary devices, writing and illustrating styles used, as well as what we learned about the authors. This will give structure to our own storytelling.

As you review the chart, ask students if they think they can try including at least one traditional rhyme, two internal rhymes, and three to four alliterations in their stories. Also remind students that all three books have a younger and an older character, in a setting that was familiar to the author and/or illustrator, and that diversity was vital to both author and illustrator, something you all noticed while examining the illustrations of each book. Finally, review the big topics explored in each book, to encourage students to think of a big topic they'd like to explore in their writing. Once you have agreed on what the story should include, create a chart that lists all the criteria for easy reference.

Add anything else you decided from the suggested considerations at the beginning of this section to the chart. You may also offer the following template, designed like the one Christian Robinson showed us he uses to plan out his illustrations, once students' stories are ready to be illustrated:

Please share your students' process and work with us; we would love to see the stories they create under your guidance and the mentorship of author Matt de la Peña and illustrator Christian Robinson. You can tag us on Twitter [@PenguinClass](#), on Instagram [@penguinclassroom](#), or on Facebook [@PenguinClassroom](#).

Thank you for taking your students on this journey.
Penguin Young Readers School & Library Team

