

LATINITAS

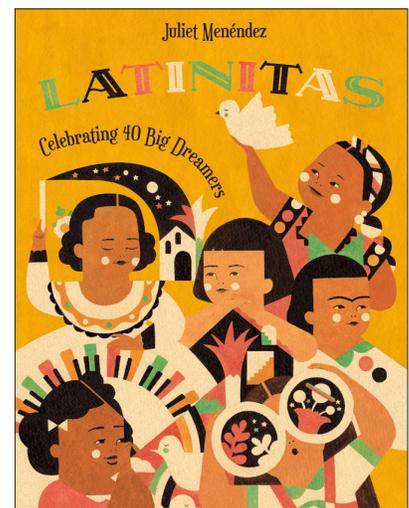
Celebrating 40 Big Dreamers

by Juliet Menéndez

Reader's Guide by Carla España and Luz Yadira Herrera

Introduction

We've created this guide to spark the readers' interest in exploring all of the lives profiled in *Latinitas*. It can be used by young readers, teachers, librarians, families, and more. We invite you to look through each Latinita's biography below and address the questions we've posed, as well as formulating your own. The extension activities provide opportunities to inspire creativity. Whenever possible, we include relevant links and texts that can be used across grades. We invite you to research, grow your understanding, and take action.



Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Mexico)

Discussion Questions

1. "Ever since she was a little girl sneaking into the cornfields to read forbidden books from her abuelo's library in Mexico, Juana Inés dreamed of going to college" (page 1). Notice how in many *Latinitas*' lives, they sometimes weren't allowed to do things that others were. What were the various obstacles Sor Juana Inés faced? How did she confront barriers?
2. What did Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz teach herself? Why do you think that was important to her?

Extension Activities

1. Select a topic you are curious about that has not been covered in your classes. Maybe it is an event from history, a current event, a person, a place, or a part of our environment. Ask your teacher or librarian for one resource they recommend on this topic. Start your journey of learning like Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz!
2. Reread this section on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and write a poem, borrowing the first few words, from the perspective of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.



*Ever since I was a little girl
sneaking into the cornfields
to read
forbidden books
in my abuelo's library in Mexico,
I dreamed.*

*I dreamed of going to college.
I dreamed of . . .*

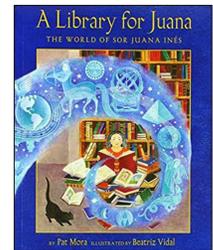
On your second read of this poem on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, borrow a line to write a poem about your dreams. Ever since I was _____, I dreamed . . .

3. Read the picture book *A Library for Juana* by Pat Mora, illustrated by Beatriz Vidal. Notice what other information you learn about Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

Juana Azurduy de Padilla (Bolivia)

Discussion Questions

1. How does Juana Azurduy de Padilla's childhood compare to that of other people you know (your own or your friends and family)?
2. How does Juana Azurduy de Padilla's struggle for Bolivian independence compare to others you've studied?
3. What are some of the reasons people have fought for a nation's independence?
4. What other information do you know about Spanish colonization and the voices of the revolution, like Juana Azurduy de Padilla?



Extension Activity

1. Research the Aymara and Quechua people in Bolivia. What languages do they speak? Where do they live? What is their daily life like now? How have they had to fight for their rights after the war of independence (that they fought with Juana Azurduy de Padilla)?

Policarpa Salavarrieta (Colombia)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Policarpa Salvarrieta use her creativity to help the cause for independence?
2. Policarpa Salvarrieta said, "I may be a woman . . . but I am brave enough to die a million deaths for the dignity of my country. Do not forget me" (page 5). Discuss your reactions to this quote.



Extension Activities

1. Create a timeline of Latinitas that used their voice, creativity, and courage to speak against injustice.
2. Where is Colombia? Where is Spain? Policarpa Salvarrieta isn't the only Latinita we read about who was bold enough to stand up to the colonizers. Use a world map to track the different places colonized by Spain, and identify the countries that the Latinitas are from by writing their names on each country.

Rosa Peña de González (Paraguay)

Discussion Questions

1. Juliet Menéndez writes that Rosa Peña de González, along with Adela and Celsa Speratti, “worked together to build up their new democracy, creating a fresh, new curriculum that encouraged all children to set their minds free” (page 7). Where have you heard the word “democracy”? What does it mean? What does setting our “minds free” look, sound, and feel like in schools?
2. Why is Rosa Peña de González considered the mother of education in Paraguay?

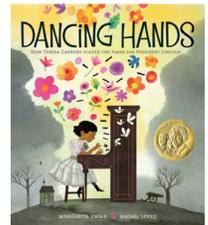
Extension Activity

1. Rosa Peña de González created a new curriculum and the very first school for girls in Paraguay. The curriculum is the materials teachers use. What new curriculum would you create for your school? What topics would it cover? Why? Share your ideas with your classmates and teacher. Find a thought partner and start this curriculum together.

Teresa Carreño (Venezuela)

Discussion Questions

1. When people tried to compare Teresa Carreño to other famous musicians, saying she was the “second Mozart,” she replied, “¡No! Soy Teresita the First!” (page 9). What does this tell you about her?
2. How did Teresa Carreño’s talents create opportunities for her to connect with people around the world?



Extension Activity

1. Read Margarita Engle’s 2019 book, [*Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played the Piano for President Lincoln*](#), illustrated by Rafael López. Compare what Engle’s book teaches you about Teresa Carreño with what you learned in *Latinitas*. Discuss how different types of texts add to our understanding of people’s lives. Select one moment illustrated by Rafael López and use it as inspiration to create your own illustration.



Zelia Nuttall (United States and Mexico)

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the work of an archaeologist important?
2. How did Zelia Nuttall's scientific discoveries help create a different narrative about Mexico's past?

Extension Activities

1. Look at the images and artifacts linked in the *Smithsonian* magazine article "[The Archaeologist Who Helped Mexico Find Glory in Its Indigenous Past](#)" to learn more about Zelia Nuttall's work.
2. Zelia Nuttall studied the ancient cultures of Mexico. Research different ancient cultures and civilizations to develop your understanding of their contributions to and impact on the present day.

Antonia Navarro (El Salvador)

Discussion Questions

1. Antonia Navarro taught herself algebra, technical drawing, and trigonometry. Are there topics that you've taught yourself or want to teach yourself? Why?
2. How did Antonia Navarro's studies make history in her country and around the world?

Extension Activities

1. Watch the National Geographic video "[Moon 101](#)," about the moon and its phases. Keep a journal to chart the phases of the moon throughout a month. Sketch what you see.
2. Watch the Science at NASA video "[The Science of the Harvest Moon](#)." Research the harvest moon in your part of the world.

Matilde Hidalgo (Ecuador)

Discussion Questions

1. What were the different ways that Matilde Hidalgo helped people get access to health care?
2. Why do you think Matilde Hidalgo became a public servant as a councilwoman in Ecuador?



Extension Activities

1. Different countries have different histories and laws that have allowed some people to vote while denying that right to others. Select another country (one connected with your family or where you live) and study its historical and present-day voting laws. Who was allowed to vote first? Why? How did others get the right to vote? Are there still obstacles to voting for different groups today? Why?
2. Research your local representatives. Who are they? What issues do they care about? How do they impact your life?

Gabriela Mistral (Chile)

Discussion Questions

1. What inspired Gabriela Mistral to write poetry?
2. Juliet Menéndez writes, “And no matter where she was, she loved to look out her window at the sky and imagine herself back home. Even through some of her most difficult times, she never stopped writing about her love for that special valley of her childhood” (page 17). What does this tell you about Gabriela? What does home mean to you?



Extension Activities

1. Read *My Name Is Gabriela: The Life of Gabriela Mistral/Me llamo Gabriela: La vida de Gabriela Mistral* by Monica Brown, illustrated by John Parra. Then read *Conoce a Gabriela Mistral* by Georgina Lázaro León, illustrated by Sara Elena Palacios. What do these books teach you about Gabriela Mistral? What else do you know now about her life?
2. Gabriela Mistral was the first Latin American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature and the fifth woman in the world to win it. Research the life of Toni Morrison, another Nobel laureate in literature. What did she write?
3. Return to your ideas on what home means to you. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you taste? What do you smell? What do you touch? Use your senses to describe what home means to you.

Juana de Ibarbourou (Uruguay)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Juana de Ibarbourou use her imagination?
2. Juliet Menéndez writes, “While World War I was weighing heavily on everyone’s hearts, Juana’s book came out and gave everyone the perfect escape” (page 19). How does poetry help us during challenging times? What poems have you read recently that helped you escape or process what is happening today?



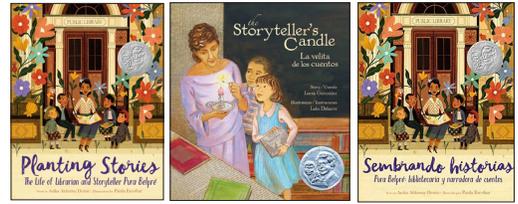
Extension Activity

1. Borrow this line: "Let's go to the _____. Take my hand . . ." Now write a poem about a place you would escape to. Try to include in your poem all the different languages that you know.

Pura Belpré (Puerto Rico)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Pura Belpré use stories to teach children about Puerto Rico?
2. How did Pura Belpré bring stories to life?



Extension Activities

1. Watch this [read aloud](#) of *Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré* by Anika Aldamuy Denise, illustrated by Paola Escobar. What new information does it have about Pura Belpré? You can also learn more by reading *The Storyteller's Candle/La velita de los cuentos* by Lucia M. Gonzalez, illustrated by Lulu Delacre.
2. Get to know your local librarian and books from your library that teach you about folktales from places that are unknown to you.
3. With your classmates, create a puppet show based on your favorite story that has been shared in your class, by your family, or at your library.

Gumercinda Páez (Panama)

Discussion Questions

1. How were plays a way for Gumercinda Páez to tell stories of people's lives?
2. Why did Gumercinda Páez decide to run for office?
3. Why did Gumercinda Páez travel all over Latin America?

Extension Activities

1. Collaborate on writing a play about something you care about that a lot of people do not understand. Perform it for your class and school community.
2. Research the issues impacting Afro-Latinx people. How are the problems similar or different across Latin America and the United States?
3. Gumercinda Páez helped draft Panama's new constitution after the political coup in 1941. What is a constitution? Who gets to write a country's constitution?



Frida Kahlo (Mexico)

Discussion Questions

1. What were some of the challenges Frida Kahlo faced?
2. How did Frida Kahlo use her imagination to face obstacles?
3. How have her paintings impacted the world?



Extension Activities

1. Research Frida Kahlo's complete works in the [Frida Kahlo Foundation](#) and [Google Arts and Culture](#). What themes do you notice in her artwork?
2. Draw a self-portrait using elements or themes from Frida Kahlo's painting style.
3. [Watch the read aloud](#) of *Viva Frida* by Yuyi Morales and read *Me, Frida, and the Secret of the Peacock Ring* by Angela Cervantes. Write and illustrate a children's book about Frida Kahlo to add to your class or school library.

Julia de Burgos (Puerto Rico)

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Julia de Burgos turn to poetry?
2. Juliet Menéndez writes, "Seeing the river of her childhood flowing in the distance, she used it as a symbol to weave her own story in with history of her country" (page 27). What are some of the important symbols of the countries with which you have connections?

Extension Activities

1. What kinds of things make you feel a connection to a place? Are there smells, tastes, places, objects, sounds that make you feel this connection? These can all be symbols that help you make connections. Go back to the symbols that you identified earlier. Use these to write a poem about important places in your life.
2. Visit the following sites to see murals by Julia:
[East Harlem, New York](#): Julia de Burgos
[East Harlem, New York—Soldaderas](#): Frida Kahlo and Julia de Burgos
[Carolina, Puerto Rico](#): Julia de Burgos
3. Create a class mural. Start by making a list of what images come to mind when you think of Julia de Burgos. Work with a partner or in small groups to create different parts of the class mural.



Chavela Vargas (Costa Rica and Mexico)

Discussion Questions

1. How was Chavela Vargas different from other girls in her town? How did she challenge gender expectations?
2. Chavela Vargas changed out of her dress and into pants and a poncho for her first big performance. Why was this so important for her?



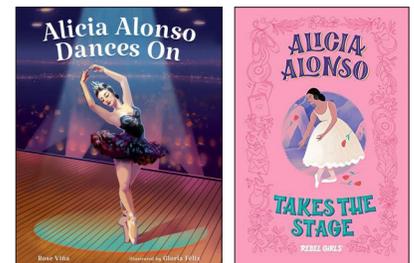
Extension Activities

1. Listen to Chavela Vargas's rendition of "La llorona." What does it make you feel? How does Chavela Vargas convey emotion in the song?
2. Watch this clip from the movie [Coco](#). How does Mamá Imelda's rendition of "La llorona" compare to Chavela Vargas' version?
3. Read the bilingual book *One of a Kind, Like Me/Único como yo* by Laurin Mayeno, illustrated by Robert Liu-Trujillo and *The Moon Within* by Aida Salazar. Discuss the ways the characters in these books challenge gender expectations.

Alicia Alonso (Cuba)

Discussion Questions

1. How did ballet impact Alicia Alonso's life?
2. How does Alicia Alonso's life teach us about dealing with a disability as a ballet dancer?



Extension Activities

1. Get to know more about Alicia Alonso and the [Ballet Nacional](#) de Cuba by watching [a clip from this documentary on her life](#).
2. Research how Alicia Alonso founded the Ballet Nacional de Cuba and the mission of this organization.
3. Watch this [read aloud](#) of *Firebird* by Misty Copeland and "[Misty Copeland: An Unlikely Ballerina Story](#)." Compare the different challenges Alicia Alonso and Misty Copeland faced.
4. Read the following books on Alicia Alonso's life: *Alicia Alonso Dances On* by Rose Viña, illustrated by Gloria Félix, and *Alicia Alonso Takes the Stage* by Rebel Girls, illustrated by Josefina Preumayr. What do these books teach you about Alicia Alonso's life?



Victoria Santa Cruz (Peru)

Discussion Questions

1. What does Victoria Santa Cruz's moment during recess with the new girl from the United States show us about society's ideas about skin color and Blackness?
2. How does Victoria Santa Cruz embrace and celebrate her Black identity?

Extension Activities

1. Watch Victoria Santa Cruz recite her poem "[Me gritaron negra.](#)" You can read the English translation [here](#). What emotions does Victoria Santa Cruz convey in the poem? How does the poem show us the ways that she sees her Black identity?
2. Research other poets from Latin America that talk about their Black identity. Discuss how they speak about their Blackness and their experiences.

Claribel Alegría (El Salvador and Nicaragua)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Claribel Alegría use poetry to fight against injustice in her country?
2. Claribel Alegría's papi told her, "You have the gift of words. Use them like swords" (page 35). What does this mean?
3. Claribel Alegría wrote, "Every time I name them, my dead are resurrected." Why was it important for her to write the stories of those who disappeared?

Extension Activities

1. Research the history of the civil war in El Salvador. Create a timeline of the different events and key figures.
2. Return to your initial research and ask:
 - a) Who was in power?
 - b) Who was involved in the disappearances of people?
 - c) What happened to the desaparecidos and their families?
3. [Explore](#) the different reasons why there are desaparecidos in other countries in Latin America.



Celia Cruz (Cuba)

Discussion Questions

1. Celia Cruz grew up listening closely to the sounds in her neighborhood in Cuba. What did she hear? What are the sounds that make the beats to your neighborhood?
2. Celia Cruz became the Queen of Salsa. What do you know about salsa music? If you've heard it, how does it make you move? What more do you want to know about salsa music?



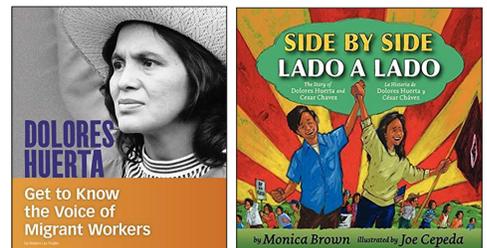
Extension Activities

1. Watch this [read aloud](#) of *My Name Is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz/Me llamo Celia: La vida de Celia Cruz* by Monica Brown, illustrated by Rafael López. What more do you learn about Celia Cruz's life? You can learn more from *Celia Cruz, Queen of Salsa* by Veronica Chambers, illustrated by Julie Maren.
2. Watch this performance: "[Fania All-Stars 'Live in Africa'—Guantanamera featuring Celia Cruz.](#)" How does Celia Cruz perform this song? What does it make you feel? How does it make you want to move?
3. [Watch](#) and sing with Celia Cruz on [Sesame Street](#). How does music help us connect with each other?

Dolores Huerta (Mexico and United States)

Discussion Questions

1. Dolores Huerta said, "If we all stand up together, we can create change" (page 39). What does this mean? How can you create change in your community?
2. Dolores Huerta joined with different groups such as the Black Panthers and the Young Lords to boycott grapes. Who were these groups? What were their calls for justice? Why did these groups join the boycott?
3. "¡Sí se puede!" was a popular chant during the fight for farmworkers' rights. Why is this important? Where else have you heard this chant?



Extension Activities

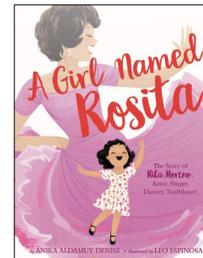
1. Read *Side by Side/Lado a lado* by Monica Brown, illustrated by Joe Cepeda, and *Dolores Huerta: Get to Know the Voice of Migrant Workers* by Robert Liu Trujillo. What else do you learn about Dolores Huerta?
2. Watch the film [Dolores](#), directed by Peter Pratt. Create a timeline of events to show how Dolores Huerta fought for the rights of farmworkers.
3. Research an issue that is important to bring justice to your community. Explore ways that you can collaborate with your community to create change.



Rita “Rosita” Moreno (Puerto Rico and United States)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Rita Moreno experience her life in Puerto Rico compared to New York?
2. How did dancing become a way toward happiness for Rita Moreno?



Extension Activities

1. Read the picture book *A Girl Named Rosita: The Story of Rita Moreno: Actor, Singer, Dancer, Trailblazer!* by Anika Aldamuy Denise, illustrated by Leo Espinosa. How does the book add to your understanding of Rita Moreno’s life?
2. Rita Moreno has won Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony awards. Research these awards to find out what they are and who selects the winners.
3. Now that you know about the awards that Rita Moreno has won watch some clips of her award-winning performances. What do you notice about her acting, singing, and dancing?
4. Consider putting together a performance with your classmates, friends, or family based on a story you love. What are the different roles that everyone can play? Who will act, sing, write the script, direct, or work on the stage production and set design? Watch a clip of Rita Moreno’s performances for more inspiration, such as [“Rita Moreno on why West Side Story was such a unique film.”](#)

Maria Auxiliadora da Silva (Brazil)

Discussion Questions

1. Maria Auxiliadora da Silva “could turn anything into art” (page 43). What are some of the ways she made art?
2. How did Maria Auxiliadora da Silva use art to talk about important social issues?

Extension Activities

1. Explore Maria Auxiliadora da Silva’s [art](#). What themes do you notice? Discuss these with your class.
2. Research Maria Auxiliadora de Silva’s art to find out how she challenged European standards.



Mercedes Sosa (Argentina)

Discussion Questions

1. How did the music of Victor Jara and Violeta Parra influence Mercedes Sosa?
2. How did Mercedes Sosa use her music to fight against injustice?
3. How do Mercedes Sosa's music and voice live on today?

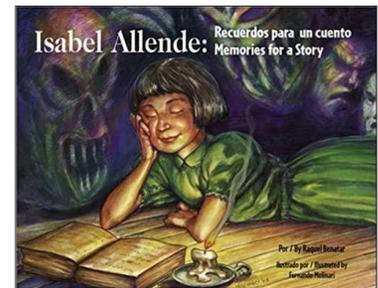
Extension Activities

1. Watch Mercedes Sosa perform the song "[Todo cambia.](#)" Talk about the feelings conveyed in this song.
2. Read the English translation of "[Todo cambia.](#)" What are some themes or patterns that you notice?
3. Watch the collaboration between Mercedes Sosa and René Pérez in the song "[Canción para un niño en la calle.](#)" What themes do the images and words reveal?
4. Other artists and the need to call attention to the rights of children, women, and those most oppressed by unjust governments across Latin America influenced Mercedes Sosa. Who are some of the artists you know who call attention to issues similar to those in Mercedes Sosa's songs? If you could write a song that called for justice, what lyrics would your song have?

Isabel Allende (Chile, Peru, and United States)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Isabel Allende use her imagination? How did it help her writing?
2. How did the political coup in Chile impact Isabel Allende's life and writing?



Extension Activities

1. Read the picture book, *Isabel Allende: Recuerdos para un cuento/Memories for a Story* by Raquel Benatar, illustrated by Fernando Molinari. How does this book add to what you know about Isabel Allende's life and writing?
2. Write a letter to someone you care about sharing one of your favorite memories with them.
3. Explore the reasons for and the key figures in the 1973 coup in Chile. Create a presentation using the medium of your choice that shows the impact on Chilean society after a military dictatorship overthrew Chile's democratically elected government.



Susana Torre (Argentina and United States)

Discussion Questions

1. What inspired Susana Torre to become an architect?
2. How did Susana Torre change the way that fire stations were built in the United States?
3. How did Susana Torre's designs make people feel a sense of belonging?

Extension Activities

1. Read this [interview](#) with Susana Torre. What else can you learn about her life and work?
2. Look around at your different learning spaces (in school, in the library, in community centers, at home). What do you love about these spaces? How do they make you feel? What would you add to these spaces to make everyone feel welcome?
3. Susana Torre put together the very first exhibit that featured all women architects. Research an architect who was part of this exhibit and create a presentation about her.

Julia Alvarez (Dominican Republic and United States)

Discussion Questions

1. In *Latinitas*, Juliet Menéndez writes that Julia Alvarez's abuelo would give her tías and tíos a side-eye when Julia talked about her dreams. Why do you think he did this?
2. How did the dictatorship in the Dominican Republic impact Julia Alvarez's life?
3. What kinds of stories does Julia Alvarez write?

Extension Activities

1. Research the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic. Discuss how this brutal regime impacted life on the island.
2. Read [the history](#) of the Mirabal sisters that Julia Alvarez wrote about in her famous novel *En el tiempo de las mariposas*. What else can you learn about the sisters' struggles against the dictatorship?



Sandra Cisneros (United States and Mexico)

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of stories has Sandra Cisneros written?
2. What was important about her famous novel *The House on Mango Street*?

Extension Activities

1. Research more information on Sandra Cisneros. Create and present a biography about her.
2. Read "[My name,](#)" an excerpt from *The House on Mango Street*. What are the protagonist's feelings about her name, Esperanza?
3. Research other books that Sandra Cisneros has written. What topics does she like to write about?

Sonia Sotomayor (Puerto Rico and United States)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Sonia Sotomayor's abuelita inspire her?
2. Explain how Sonia Sotomayor captured people's attention.
3. What is important about Sonia Sotomayor's job as a Supreme Court justice.

Extension Activities

1. Read *Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* by Sonia Sotomayor, illustrated by Rafael López. How can this book teach us to care for one another?
2. Read *Turning Pages: My Life Story* by Sonia Sotomayor, illustrated by Lulu Delacre. What else do you learn about her life? What questions do you have? Take a look at excerpts from her memoir to find some answers to your questions.
3. Sonia Sotomayor is the first Latina Supreme Court justice. Why is this important?
4. Research the nine Supreme Court justices. Create a presentation on who they are and explain their beliefs.



Rigoberta Menchú Tum (Guatemala)

Discussion Questions

1. How does Rigoberta Menchú Tum fight against injustice?
2. Why does Rigoberta Menchú Tum fight for indigenous rights in her country?
3. How did the Guatemalan government try to silence Rigoberta Menchú Tum?

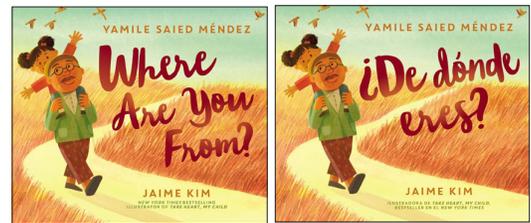
Extension Activities

1. Read the first page of Rigoberta Menchú Tum's testimony, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. Discuss what you learn from it.
2. Research the different indigenous languages and cultures of Guatemala. Choose one and create a presentation to share with your class.

Mercedes Doretti (Argentina)

Discussion Questions

1. Why did abuelas gather in Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires?
2. How did Mercedes Doretti help the abuelas of the desaparecidos?
3. How does Mercedes Doretti's work as a forensic anthropologist help people?



Extension Activities

1. Research Argentina's military dictatorship. Create a timeline of events and include key figures and other countries that supported this oppressive rule.
2. Explore the connections between Argentina's history of desaparecidos with those from other countries that you've learned about in *Latinitas*. Create a timeline mapping out the different events.
3. Read the book *¿De dónde eres?/Where Are You From* by Yamile Saied Méndez, illustrated by Jaime Kim. Notice how the author and illustrator teach us about the history of the desaparecidos.



Solange “Sonia” Pierre (Dominican Republic and Haiti)

Discussion Questions

1. When Solange Pierre was thirteen years old, she organized people from batey to batey, saying, “We need schools, hospitals, and decent pay! Y no vale if we don’t strike together” (page 61). Why do you think it was important for Solange Pierre to meet with people from different areas in the Dominican Republic?

Extension Activities

1. Solange Pierre founded El Movimiento de Mujeres Dominico-Hatiana (MUDHA). Look at the mission of this organization. How does it connect with what you know about Solange Pierre’s life?
2. Watch a clip from Solange Pierre’s talk [“Justice for All: The Case for Humanity and Fair Treatment of Haitian Immigrants in the D.R.”](#) Notice the way she explains the injustice faced by Haitians.
3. Research the issue of citizenship rights for Haitians in the Dominican Republic. Who else has called for justice besides Solange Pierre? What is the resistance to citizenship rights? What has the government done? Why?
 - a. [“The United Nations Refugee Agency Welcomes the Dominican Republic Move on Citizenship”](#)
 - b. [“What Happened When a Nation Erased Birthright Citizenship”](#)
 - c. [“The Dominican Republic Revokes Citizenship of Dominican-born Children of Unauthorized Migrants”](#)

Justa Canaviri (Bolivia)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Justa Canaviri use cooking to address important issues?
2. What were the issues that Justa Canaviri talked about on her show?

Extension Activities

1. Watch the clip, [“La chef que revoluciona la televisión boliviana.”](#) where Justa Canaviri talks about her work. What topics does she address on her cooking and politics show? Why is this important for her?
2. Research the Aymara community in Bolivia and share your findings.
3. What is your favorite meal? Who cooks it for you? Ask them how they make the meal and take notes on the process and the ingredients.
4. Share your favorite recipe with a friend. Discuss what topic you’d like to talk about while you taught someone how to make this meal, just like Justa Canaviri does on her cooking show. Practice and act out your own show. Use this opportunity to review the recipe, your teaching skills, and your ideas on an issue of social justice that is meaningful to you.



Evelyn Miralles (Venezuela and United States)

Discussion Questions

1. What influenced Evelyn Miralles's interest in space?
2. Why are virtual reality programs and creating space environments important work for NASA?

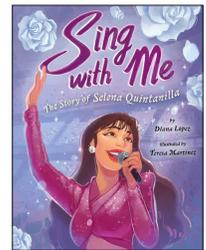
Extension Activities

1. Evelyn Miralles took a class in graphic computing, and it helped her realize what she could create. Think of a subject or topic you have studied that inspired you. What did it inspire you to create? Check with a librarian, teacher, or family member and ask for recommended resources to help you pursue your interest.
2. Watch the interview with Evelyn Miralles "[NASA Lead VR Innovator.](#)" Learn more about how virtual reality programs help astronauts prepare for space missions.

Selena Quintanilla (United States and Mexico)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Selena Quintanilla's childhood contribute to her growth as an artist?
2. How did Selena Quintanilla create her unique sound?



Extension Activities

1. Watch some of Selena Quintanilla's performances. How did she perform? How did she connect with the audience?
2. Read the books *Queen of Tejano Music: Selena* by Silvia López, illustrated by Paola Escobar and *Sing with Me: The Story of Selena Quintanilla* by Diana López, illustrated by Teresa Martínez. What more do you learn about Selena Quintanilla's life, music, and connection with her fans?

Berta Cáceres (Honduras)

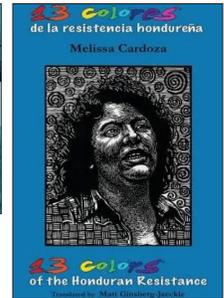
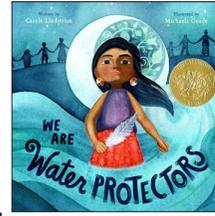
Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Berta Cáceres started a radio show?
2. Berta Cáceres said, "We are the guardians of the land and the rivers, and it is up to us to protect them for future generations" (page 69). Why is it necessary to protect the land and rivers?



Extension Activities

1. Learn more about the Lenca community in Honduras by [reading an interview](#) with Donatila Girón Calix, the leader of the Lenca Indigenous Movement of La Paz Honduras (MILPAH).
2. [Watch Berta Cáceres'](#) acceptance speech for the Goldman Environmental Prize. What did you learn about Berta Cáceres through her speech?
3. Read the picture book *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom, illustrated by Michaela Goade. How is the struggle in this book similar to the struggles of Berta Cáceres and her people?
4. Research other examples of indigenous communities around the world that have had to guard their land when they face government and military oppression. You can also read *13 colores de la resistencia hondureña/13 Colors of the Honduran Resistance* by Melissa Cardoza, translated by Matt Ginsberg-Jaeckle.



Serena Auñón (United States and Cuba)

Discussion Questions

1. What influenced Serena Auñón's interest in space?
2. How is Serena Auñón's work in space also impacting our lives on earth?

Extension Activities

1. At the University of Texas, Serena Auñón found a program that combined her interests in space and the medical field. What are your interests? Where can you study these?
2. Read Serena Auñón's biography on the [NASA website](#). What do you learn from it about her interests, preparation, and space missions?
3. Watch "[The Doctor Is In . . . Space: Astronaut Serena Auñón-Chancellor—What's New in Space.](#)" Notice what activities she engages in while on space missions and how she describes her work. During the interview, she says, "gravity is your friend down here." What does she mean by this? What were some of the challenges on her space missions?

Wanda Díaz-Merced (Puerto Rico)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Wanda Díaz-Merced's experiences inform her scientific studies?
2. Wanda Díaz-Merced said, "Science is for everyone and should belong to everyone because we are all natural explorers" (page 73). What does this mean?



Extension Activities

1. Watch Wanda Díaz-Merced's TED Talk, "[How a Blind Astronomer Found a Way to Hear the Stars.](#)" At one point, she says, "When I lost my sight, I noticed that I didn't have access to the same amount and quality of information a sighted astronomer had. It was not until we innovated with the sonification process that I regained the hope to be a productive member of the field that I had worked so hard to be part of." Why is this work important?
2. Read the interview "[How One Astronomer Hears the Universe.](#)" What questions did this interview address? What other questions do you have about Wanda Díaz-Merced's work?

Marta Viera da Silva (Brazil)

Discussion Questions

1. How did people respond to Marta Viera da Silva's interest in soccer during her childhood?
2. How would you describe Marta Viera da Silva after learning about her childhood and achievements as a professional soccer player?

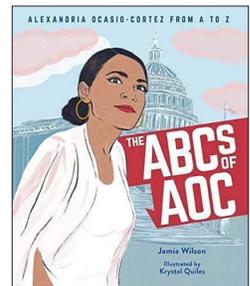
Extension Activities

1. Watch the clip "[Meet Marta, UN Women's Goodwill Ambassador for women and girls in sport.](#)" What more do you learn about her?
2. Watch the video "[Brazil's Marta Broke Down Barriers to Become One of Football's Greatest Players.](#)" What does this video teach us about her childhood and journey into professional soccer?

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (United States and Puerto Rico)

Discussion Questions

1. How did Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's family from the Bronx to the suburbs impact her life?
2. Why did Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez decide to run for Congress?
3. What are some of the issues that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez cares deeply about?



Extension Activities

1. Read *The ABCs of AOC: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez from A to Z* by Jamia Wilson, illustrated by Krystal Quiles. How do the illustrations and the text add to what you knew about Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez?
2. [Watch](#) the trailer to the documentary *Knock Down the House*. What experiences shaped Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's interests in politics? What other women do you learn about in this documentary? What do they all have in common?
3. [Watch](#) Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's speech after she won the election. What do you learn from it about her journey into politics? What are the issues she cares about and that she mentions in this speech?



Lauren Zoe Hernandez (United States and Puerto Rico)

Discussion Questions

1. What role did music have in Laurie Hernandez's childhood?
2. How has Laurie Hernandez used her talents throughout her life?



Extension Activities

1. [Watch](#) "Laurie Hernandez Debuts *Hamilton*-Inspired Routine at First Meet Since 2016 Olympics." What song did Laurie Hernandez dance to in this routine? How does she use movement and rhythm in her routine?
2. [Watch](#) "Every Laurie Hernandez medal-winning performance from Rio 2016." Notice how she uses movement and music in her routines.
3. [Watch](#) "Laurie Hernandez Talks Overcoming Abuse, Tokyo 2021 and Helping Teens" to learn about how she uses her experience to help teens through the Stronger Than You Think campaign on mental health.
4. Read the introduction from Laurie Hernandez's memoir, *I Got This: To Gold and Beyond*. What else do you learn about her life? What questions do you have? Take a look at excerpts from other parts of her memoir to find some answers to your questions. You can also read her book *She's Got This*, illustrated by Nina Mata.

Reading Across *Latinitas*

Discussion Questions

1. Compare at least two figures you learned about in *Latinitas*. Consider their childhoods, challenges, interests, and achievements.
2. Military dictatorships impacted several *Latinitas*. Identify some of the countries that were under a dictatorship and discuss how it impacted everyday people.
3. Many *Latinitas* featured in this book were the first person to do or achieve something. Identify some of them and discuss their significance.
4. Several women in *Latinitas* fought for education. Find one or two examples. Why was this important?
5. Juliet Menéndez describes many *Latinitas* who resisted traditional gender roles. Discuss one or two ways that they stood up against gender expectations.
6. Juliet Menéndez describes several *Latinitas* as being activists. What are activists? How did they fight against injustice?
7. What are the different themes throughout *Latinitas*? For example, notice how some of them lost a parent, fought for education, resisted a dictatorship, rebelled against the patriarchy, and created spaces for women where they weren't previously allowed.
8. Look at the illustrations in *Latinitas*. Notice the colors and styles, and how their lives are portrayed in the artwork.



9. Choose another Latinita from pages 80 and 81 and conduct more research. Create a biography on one of their lives.
10. Interview an inspiring person in your life. Share your favorite Latinita from this book with them. How do both of these people influence your life?

Reader's Guide Author Bios

Carla España, PhD, is a middle-grade teacher, researcher, author, and cofounder of the En Comunidad Collective. Her teaching journey began with sixth-grade bilingual students in Harlem in New York City. She is the co-author of *En Comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students* with Dr. Luz Yadira Herrera. Find her on Twitter @ProfesoraEspana.

Luz Yadira Herrera, PhD, is a teacher, researcher, author, and co-founder of the En Comunidad Collective. Dr. Herrera has over fifteen years of experience in the education of emergent bilinguals in both mainstream and bilingual settings. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Bilingual Education in the School of Education at California State University, Channel Islands.

Dr. Herrera's teaching and research are in culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, translanguaging, critical pedagogies, and bilingual education policy. She is the co-author of [*En Comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students*](#) with Dr. Carla España. Find her on Twitter @Dra_LuzYadira.

