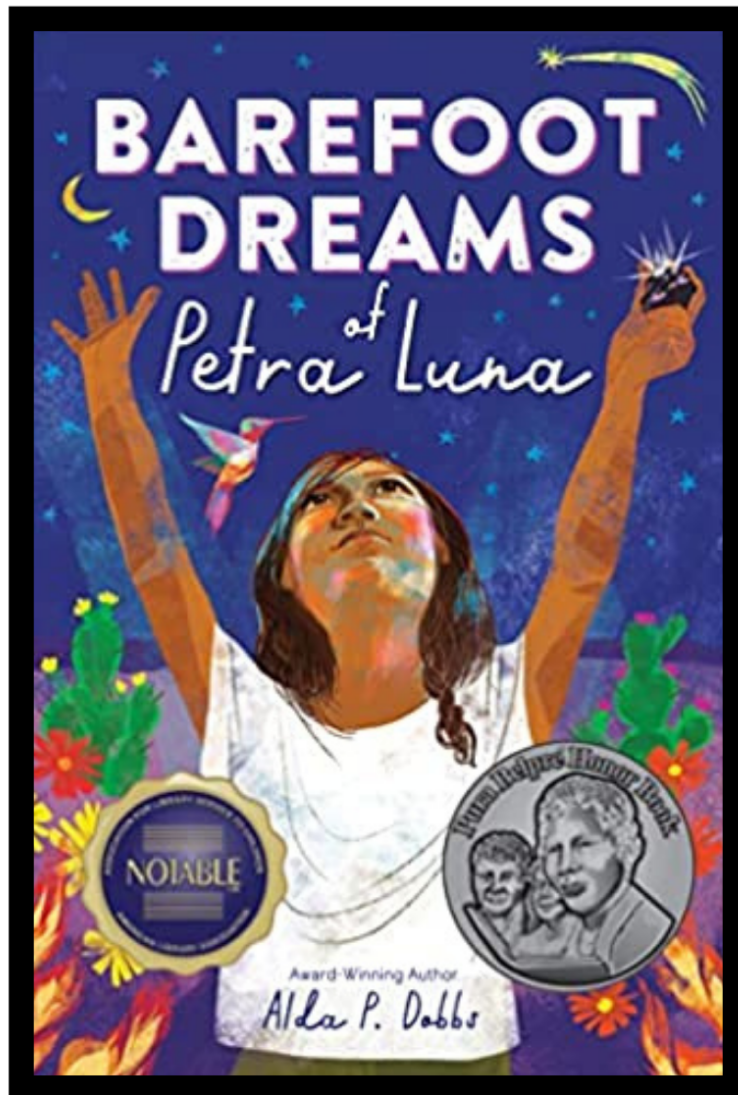


Américas Book Award

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



PRODUCED BY THE CONSORTIUM FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

PROGRAMS

WRITTEN BY KATRINA DILLON



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This educator's guide was written to support using *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* in the classroom. Produced by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) on behalf of the Américas Award, it was written in 2022 by Katrina Dillon, Director of Outreach at the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona. Research and writing support was also provided by UA graduate assistant Juanita Sandoval.

ABOUT THE AMÉRICAS AWARD

CLASP founded the Américas Award in 1993 to encourage and commend authors, illustrators and publishers who produce quality children's and young adult books that portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinx in the United States, and to provide teachers with recommendations for classroom use. CLASP offers up to two annual book awards, together with a commended list of titles. For more information concerning the Américas Award, including additional classroom resources, please visit the [CLASP website](#).

The awards are administered by CLASP and coordinated by both Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies and the University of Arizona's Center for Latin American Studies. Generous support is also provided by Florida International University, Stanford University, University of California, Los Angeles, University of Florida, University of New Mexico, University of North Carolina-Duke Consortium on Latin American Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, University of Utah, and Vanderbilt University.

ABOUT CLASP

CLASP's mission is to promote all facets of Latin American studies throughout the world. Its broad range of activities include the encouragement of research activities, funding of professional workshops, advancement of citizen outreach activities, and development of teaching aids for the classroom.



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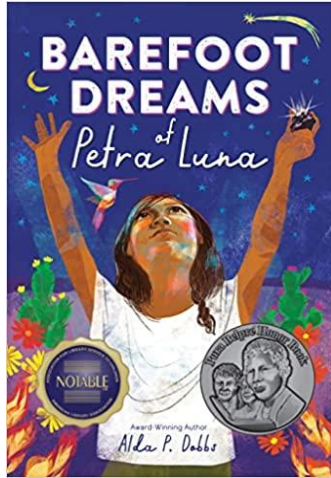


An Educator's Guide to *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* by Alda P. Dobbs

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OVERVIEW



Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna

Written by Alda P. Dobbs

Published 2021 by Sourcebooks Young Readers

ISBN: 9781728234656

GENRE

Historical Fiction

THEMES & TOPICS

Hardship, Immigration, Indigenous Peoples, Mexican Revolution, Mexico, Migration, Refugee Experience, Soldaderas (Adelitas), War, Women in Leadership

SYNOPSIS

It is 1913, and twelve-year-old Petra Luna's mama has died while the Revolution rages in Mexico. Before her Papa is dragged away by soldiers, Petra vows to him that she will care for the family she has left—her Abuelita, little sister Amelia, and baby brother Luisito—until they can be reunited. They flee north through the unforgiving desert as their town burns, searching for safe harbor in a world that offers none.

Each night when Petra closes her eyes, she holds her dreams close, especially her long-held desire to learn to read. Abuelita calls these barefoot dreams: "They're like us barefoot peasants and indios—they're not meant to go far." But Petra refuses to listen. Through battlefields and deserts, hunger and fear, Petra will stop at nothing to keep her family safe and lead them to a better life across the U.S. border—a life where her barefoot dreams could finally become reality.



READING LEVEL

Grades 4+ / Ages 8+

REVIEWS

★ “Dobbs’ wrenching debut, about family, loss, and finding the strength to carry on, illuminates the harsh realities of war, the heartbreaking disparities between the poor and the rich, and the racism faced by Petra and her family. Readers will love Petra, who is as strong as the black-coal rock she carries with her and as beautiful as the diamond hidden within it.” – starred, *Booklist*

★ “The book is compelling, with well-paced action that flows and keeps readers engaged. The lyrical writing perfectly evokes the loneliness of the desert, the companionship of fellow refugees, and the bravery of Petra. . This beautifully written and exciting story of a family fleeing during the Mexican revolution offers a new perspective in historical fiction. An excellent addition to all collections.” – starred, *School Library Journal*

AWARDS

- Pura Belpré Honor Book (2022)
- Américas Award Honor Book (2022)
- NPR Best Book of 2021
- New York Public Library Best Book of 2021
- Texas Bluebonnet Master List Selection
- American Library Association: Notable Children's Books 2022
- International Latino Book Award 2022
- Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature: Best Books of 2021
- 2022 Junior Library Guild Selection



APPLICABLE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

K-12 READING

Key Ideas and Details

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

Craft and Structure

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

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

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

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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

K-12 WRITING

Text Types and Purposes

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

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.



Research to Build and Present Knowledge

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



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ALDA P. DOBBS



Alda P. Dobbs is the author of the novel *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* (Sourcebooks, Fall 2021). Her first novel tells the journey of twelve-year-old Petra Luna and her family as they flee the horrors of the Mexican Revolution in 1913. The novel was inspired by the experiences Alda's great-grandmother endured during the Mexican Revolution and as a refugee in the United States. Alda's writings have won various awards including the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund Award, the Joan Lowry Nixon Award, and the Sustainable Arts Foundation Grant. In addition to her novel, Alda has written articles for *Highlights Children's Magazine*, *Guideposts*, and *La Prensa* newspaper. Alda was born in a small town in northern Mexico and moved to San Antonio, Texas with her parents as a young

child. After serving in the U.S. Air Force, she studied physics and worked as a civil engineer before pursuing her love of storytelling. She is as passionate about connecting children to their past, their communities, different cultures, and nature as she is about writing. Alda lives with her husband and two children outside Houston, Texas.

IN HER WORDS: THE AUTHOR'S NOTE

Excerpted from "Author's Note: The Inspiration for *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*" in *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* (p. 258-261)

"I am blessed to have grown up listening to stories of my ancestors, especially stories of my grandmother, Güela Pepa, and my great-grandmother, Güelita Juanita. Both women grew up surrounded by harsh poverty and prejudice, but always faced adversity with bold spirits and resilience.

My great-grandmother, Juanita Martínez, inspired the core of *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*. She, along with her family, escaped her burning village in 1913 during the Mexican Revolution. Unlike Petra, my great-grandmother was nine years old when she, her father, two younger siblings, and two cousins crossed the scorching desert by foot and reached the border town of Piedras Negras, Coahuila. At the border, their entry into the United States was denied along with hundreds of other refugees.

As a child, I sat mesmerized, listening to my great-grandmother recount the moment she and her family learned that the Federales were on their way to attack the town. "Los Federales were evil," she'd say. "We knew they'd slaughter us." According to her, hundreds of people flocked to the international bridge and pleaded to the American soldiers to open the gates. The situation worsened when the rush of mounted Federales approached



An Educator's Guide to *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* by Alda P. Dobbs

the town's small hills. My great-grandmother, despite the many decades having passed since that event, always recalled the fright in her father's eyes. "Then suddenly," my great-grandmother would say with nostalgic surprise, "the gates swung open." As she spoke, the joy and relief she'd experienced that day always came to life, making me feel as if I too had run across that bridge. At the end, she'd always remind us of her immense gratitude to the United States for having given her refuge.

I had always wondered about the validity of my great-grandmother's story. I wondered if some of the details had been stretched to give her story an edge. Had that many people, really all at once, rushed to the bridge? Had my great-grandmother and her family been that close to death? While contemplating writing a children's article about it, I embarked on a research journey to find out the facts. Not having an exact date, I searched through books on the Mexican Revolution and US-Mexican migration but found nothing. I began sorting through four major Texas newspapers beginning with the year 1910. After months of research, I found an article that described my great-grandmother's story. The event occurred in the early afternoon of October 6, 1913, and it wasn't hundreds of people who'd tried to flee across like she'd stated, it was thousands. Over six thousand to be exact. Everything else—the desperation, the pleading, and the rage of the Federales—was exactly as she'd recounted."



CLASSROOM RELEVANCE AND APPLICATIONS

Set during the Mexican Revolution and inspired by true events, *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* tells the story of Petra Luna and her family as they flee North attempting to evade the Federales.

Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna provides a timely and empowering refugee narrative for the classroom. As the refugee crises at the U.S. Southern borders continue on, this book takes us back more than a hundred years, drawing us into the tale of the Luna family as they fight to survive the violence and destruction of the revolution, ultimately finding refuge in the U.S.

There aren't many middle grade or young adult books about the Mexican Revolution. Dobbs' work helps to fill this gap by providing a humanizing narrative that reveals the realities of living through a revolution. I've always found the Mexican Revolution to be a fascinating period to study. Images of revolutionary icons like Emiliano Zapata, Pancho Villa, and Las Soldaderas continue to be popular today, though I wonder if they would approve of how their imagery is used. While revolutions often bring about important change, we tend to romanticize them, avoiding the harsh realities of the lived experience. Through *Petra Luna*, Dobbs gives us a narrative that allows younger readers to engage with a more realistic version of this historical period in an age appropriate way.

While this novel can be used in upper elementary or even high school, *Petra Luna* is the perfect protagonist for middle school readers. Dobbs doesn't shy away from the hard topics. Through 12-year-old Petra, the reader experiences the classism and racism of Mexico in 1913. Through characters like Abuelita and Marietta, Dobbs interrogates the traditional gender norms of the period as she conveys Petra's struggle to decide who she is going to be and how she is going to lead her family to safety.

As educators, we know the power of culturally relevant literature such as *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*. Through this novel, our students will experience a protagonist who is brave and independent. She claims her autonomy in a powerful way. Through Petra, Dobbs demonstrates how a novel can decenter the notions of "official knowledge" often perpetuated in our classrooms. Petra continually grounds herself in her family's history and stories. Throughout Petra's journey, Dobbs highlights what Ladson-Billings refers to as cultural referents. While Abuelita may not be progressive in her beliefs around gender roles, she empowers Petra in different ways through cultural knowledge of the Nahuatl and curanderismo. Whether it provides a window, mirror, or door for our students, *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* will empower its readers intellectually, socially and emotionally. It is an excellent addition to any classroom or library.



LESSON PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

In addition to this guide, there are a number of other high-quality resources available to support educators in using *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*. These have been linked below.

- [Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna: Educator's Guide](#) from [Sourcebooks Young Readers](#)
- [Guía del Educador](#) from [Sourcebooks Young Readers](#)
- [Educational and Cultural Resources](#) curated by Alda P. Dobbs (including a Spotify playlist!!)

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before reading the book with students, you may want to introduce some of the important topics, activate any prior knowledge, and generate interest and anticipation through the following activities and/or discussion questions. We suggest setting discussion guidelines before doing any other activities. Next, we provide a number of different ways to introduce the Mexican Revolution to students. While some background knowledge of this historical event is necessary for understanding the novel, the depth of this line of inquiry and amount of time spent building this background knowledge is entirely up to the individual educator. We do not expect educators to complete all of the introductory activities, but to choose the ones best suited to the needs of their students.

ACTIVITY 1: DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna takes place in 1913 during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). It engages with a number of serious themes surrounding the topic of revolution, political violence, social inequities, and (im)migration. Educators must consider the backgrounds and experiences of the students they work with when preparing to use such a novel. These topics can be highly charged and elicit strong emotional responses from students, especially if they or their families have experienced them first-hand. Before introducing the book to students, educators must think through how to ensure a safe environment for each of their students to engage with the topics that this book will touch on.

Discussion guidelines should be set before beginning the novel. For example, of great importance is the language that is used to discuss the topic of immigration. Degrading terms such as “alien,” “illegal,” “deplorable,” and “deportable” are commonly used, but are inappropriate in a space that is meant to be safe for all students. For more on this, consider reading the following articles, some of which may be useful resources for classroom discussion. These guidelines can be created collaboratively after a responsibly guided whole class discussion or can be provided by the educator.

- [Discussing Sensitive Topics in the Classroom](#) from Facing History and Ourselves.
- [Difficult Dialogues](#) from the Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University
- [Embracing Discomfort in YA Literature](#) by Ashley Hope Pérez



- Teaching Tolerance: [An Educator's Guide to the Immigration Debate](#) and other [lesson plans on immigration](#)
- National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE): [Talking Immigration in the Classroom and other lesson plans](#)
- [Teaching About War](#) from [Educators 4 Social Change](#)

ACTIVITY 2: REVIEW OF GENRE

While reviewing the book's historical fiction genre with students, be sure to clarify that the book is inspired by true incidents. In the back matter of the book (p. 258-261), Dobbs discusses how both her own family history and her archival research provided the inspiration for the novel. Students can continue to reflect on the significance of the genre for the text by noting which aspects of the book appear to be non-fictional or fictional as they read.

Through both the back matter and her [website](#), author Alda P. Dobbs offers excellent resources to support the use of the book in the classroom, particularly as it relates to the historical research in writing such a novel.

ACTIVITY 3: OBSERVATION CHARTS

The Mexican Revolution is an essential part of the setting of this novel. While an in-depth understanding of the revolution isn't necessary, students will need to have some background knowledge of this event. Observation charts are one way to introduce the historical event and activate any prior knowledge students may have.

Preparation:

Find images through an internet search or digital archive that represent the Mexican Revolution. Choosing a variety of images that depict numerous events and perspectives is suggested. Below, we've included a list of digital resources to find these images.

- [Getty Images: Mexican Revolution](#)
- [Wheelan Collection of Mexican Revolution Photographs](#)
- [A Slideshow of Images from the Mexican Revolution](#)

Print one copy of each image. Glue each image to the top of a large piece of butcher paper or poster board to create the observation charts. Write the following questions somewhere in the educational space where they can be viewed by all students: "What do you see?" "What do you think is happening?" "How does this image make you feel?" This activity can also be adapted to be entirely digital using programs like Google Slides or JamBoard.



Process:

Explain to the students that they are going to be working in small groups. Each group will rotate around the room to view and discuss each image. One person will be the note-taker at each table. When looking at an image, students will spend at least one minute silently reflecting on what they are viewing and the questions “What do you see?” “What do you think is happening?” and “How does this image make you feel?” Then, students will discuss their thoughts in the small group. The note-taker will record their reflections and answers to the questions on the observation chart. Sticky notes can also be used to record the group’s thoughts. Explain to students that they will have a set amount of time at each image. When time is up, the teacher will give a signal and each group will move to the next image. This can also be done without the role of note-taker where each student writes their own thoughts down. This version works best with sticky notes.

Divide students into small groups. Place an image and marker at various tables or stations in the classroom. Direct each group to the table or station where they will begin. Begin the activity. Continue rotating groups through the images until each group has seen each image.

Hang up all of the observation charts with comments. As a whole group, discuss each image, giving students time to share and respond to what they posted. Keep the charts posted throughout the reading and discussion of *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*. Allow students to revisit them, and discuss them as they think more about what the images represent.

ACTIVITY 4: THINK, PAIR, SHARE: WHAT IS REVOLUTION?

This activity allows you both assess where students are in their thinking about the topic of revolution and access prior knowledge on the topic.

Process:

1. Write the word “revolution” on a large piece of butcher paper. Hang the paper where it can be seen by the whole class.
2. Read the word out loud to the class. Ask students to think about the word.
3. What do they think of when they hear this word?
4. What pictures or images come to mind?
5. What feelings are provoked?
6. What do they associate with this word?
7. Ask students to write down their thoughts about these questions.
8. Once students have written their thoughts down, have them share at least one of their thoughts with a partner.



9. Ask for volunteers to share their thoughts with the class. As they share, write down their response on the butcher paper poster.
10. To close out the discussion, share with students the [encyclopedia entry on revolution from National Geographic](#). Look for similarities and differences between the entry and their responses. Then, watch the short 4-minute video on [Latin American Revolutions from National Geographic](#).
11. Once the class has read *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*, return to the poster. Ask students if they would add anything new to the poster now that they've read the book. How did their thoughts compare to what was presented in the novel? Has their understanding of revolution changed after reading the novel?

ACTIVITY 5: GEOGRAPHIC CONNECTIONS

Petra Luna and her family travel through a number of different environments and villages during their journey. The book begins in Las Esperanzas, a small village in Coahuila, Mexico. Dobbs writes that Las Esperanzas is both fact and fiction: "Las Esperanzas, Coahuila is both fact and fiction. In *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*, Las Esperanzas represents the many coal mining settlements in northern Mexico that were ravaged by the Mexican Revolution. In real life, Las Esperanzas was the birthplace of my grandmother. She always spoke fondly of it and with a name that translates to 'the hopes,' I was convinced to make it Petra's home." Before starting the book, locate Las Esperanzas on a map. Then, as students continue through the book, note the possible routes they may have taken as they traveled by foot and train.

1. Find Las Esperanzas, Coahuila, Mexico on a map and mark it.

Soon, Petra's family must flee Coahuila as the Federales attack. On foot, they begin to move North until they reach a small church. They stay until they are warned that the Federales are approaching. Petra's family chooses to continue to move East, rather than North toward the United States.

2. Trace one possible route they could have chosen as they flee.

Eventually, they decide the best option is to change direction and head North. They board a train that takes them to Piedras Negras, Coahuila where they cross the border into the United States.

3. Find Piedras Negras, Coahuila on the map. Trace possible routes they could have taken from Las Esperanzas to Piedras Negras.



ACTIVITY 6: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

Below are a variety of resources that may be of use as pre-reading introductory materials, during the reading of *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*, or once students have completed the novel. It is the responsibility of each educator to determine the appropriateness of each resource for their class.

Students will need to have a basic understanding of the Mexican Revolution before beginning the novel. It will be helpful for them to have some knowledge of the following: Federales, Revolucionarios, Soldaderas, Victoriano Huerta, Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, Francisco Madero, and Venustiano Carranza.

This information can be introduced in advance of reading or throughout the novel as it becomes relevant to the reading.

There are multiple ways to achieve this.

1. Using the reading materials below create a mini-lecture or presentation that provides a brief introduction to the Mexican Revolution. Include the purposes and objectives of the revolution along with information on the major leaders and participants in the revolution.
2. In addition to the mini-lecture or in place of it, provide students time to explore the reading materials listed below, taking notes on what they find to be the most significant information on the revolution.
3. View short video clips on the Mexican Revolution from Bicentario Mexico.
 - a. [The Mexican Revolution. Bicentenario México 2010](#) (English)
 - b. [Revolución mexicana. Bicentenario México 2010](#) (Spanish)
 - c. [Zapata: the love of the land. Bicentenario México 2010](#) (English)
 - d. Other videos in [English](#) or in [Spanish](#)

READINGS

- [Mexican Revolution Facts for Kids](#)
- [Perspectives on the Mexican Revolution](#)
- [Mexican Revolution | History Detectives | PBS](#)
- Timeline: [The Mexican Revolution and the United States in the Collections of the Library of Congress](#)
- [Stories of the Mexican Revolution | National Museum of American History](#)
- ¡VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN! [Background and History](#)
- ¡VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN! [Biographies](#)
- ¡VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN! [Timeline](#)

THE STORM THAT SWEEPED MEXICO



The Storm that Swept Mexico is an approximately two-hour long film about the Mexican Revolution. It is no longer available to stream in its entirety through PBS, but the DVDs can be purchased or rented through local libraries. The film may also be available on YouTube. PBS does have three separate lesson plans with excerpts from the film available on their website. These are linked below. They may be more appropriate to integrate throughout students' reading of the book or as resource materials for student research after they've completed the novel.

- Revolutionary Leaders: [OVERVIEW](#) | [PROCEDURES](#) | [FILM MODULE](#)
- Revolutionary Women: [OVERVIEW](#) | [PROCEDURES](#) | [FILM MODULE](#)
- Revolutionary Art: [OVERVIEW](#) | [PROCEDURES](#) | [FILM MODULE](#)

¡VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN!

In 2014, the Latin American & Iberian Institute at the University of New Mexico produced an interdisciplinary and multifaceted educator's guide to encourage discussing the Mexican Revolution in K-12 classrooms. Below is a complete hyperlinked [table of contents](#) for quick reference.

The complete guide is available for [downloading](#) or [previewing](#).

- Background
 - [Introduction](#)
 - [Using this Guide in the Classroom](#)
 - [Background and History](#)
 - [Biographies](#)
 - [Timeline](#)
- [Introductory Activities](#)
 - [The Mexican Revolution: Film](#)
 - [The Storm That Swept Mexico: Faces of the Mexican Revolution](#)
 - [Mexican Revolution: Photographs](#)
- [Curriculum](#)
 - [Scavenger Hunt](#)
 - [A Bada** Retelling of the Mexican Revolution](#)
 - [Convention at Aguascalientes](#)
 - [Literary Representations](#)
 - [Los de Abajo](#)
 - [Cartucho](#)
 - [Death of an Assassin](#)
 - [Primary Documents of the Revolution](#)
 - [Women of the Revolution: Soldaderas](#)
 - [Music of the Revolution: Corridos](#)



- [Additional Resources](#)
- [Appendix](#)
 - [Slideshow of Images](#)
 - [Literature: Los de Abajo \(Spanish\)](#)
 - [Literature: The Underdogs \(English\)](#)
 - [Literature: Death of an Assassin](#)
 - [Primary Documents: Plan of San Luis Potosí \(English and Spanish\)](#)
 - [Primary Documents: Plan of Ayala \(English and Spanish\)](#)
 - [Primary Documents: Plan of Guadalupe \(English and Spanish\)](#)
 - [Primary Documents: Plan of Agua Prieta \(Spanish\)](#)

RECURSOS EN ESPAÑOL

For those who teach in Spanish or whose students' primary language is Spanish, the resources below may provide age-appropriate background knowledge on the revolution.

- [Preescolar 1°, 2° y 3° ¡Hagamos un viaje por la Revolución Mexicana! ¿Qué voy a aprender? Aprendizajes sustantivos.](#) de Jalisco.gob.mx
- [Fotografías que reflejan la historia olvidada de los niños en la Revolución Mexicana](#)
- [La Revolución Mexicana, para niños. | LEGSA](#)

GUIDED READING QUESTIONS

The Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna provides an excellent opportunity for students to practice tracking topics or themes, character development, and/or use of figurative language. Included below are suggestions for how this could be done if a process is not already in place. Once students have completed the novel, they can use the information they've tracked to craft an essay (in-class, extended response writing, or formal/structured writing) on the theme, author's purpose, character development, or use of figurative language.

First, determine what you would like students to track—topic/theme, character development, or the use of figurative language. Students can track these things individually, in small groups, or this can be a modeling exercise done as a whole class if this activity requires skills that are new to students. If students will be focusing on themes in *The Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* it may be best to have them track topics as they read. You will likely need to provide a list of topics for them and let them choose which they would like to track. Once they have completed the novel, they can look at the topics they've tracked and develop a theme statement.

Second, determine how students should track this information as they read—by hand in a notebook/binder or digitally in a document or using a program like Jamboard or Google Slides. The latter may work best if this is a



whole class activity. Regardless of how students will track the information, create a template. This can be as simple as a three column table with three headings for page number, quote, and significance of quote. Be sure to explain to students how they will be applying or using this information once they have completed the novel (i.e. essay, small group discussion, whole group discussion, visual presentation, etc.).

Below are guided reading questions organized by chapter to support basic reading comprehension and literary analysis.

Citlalin Popoca | Pages 3 - 5

1. What is the citlalin popoca? What are the different beliefs around what it foretells? (p. 3-4)
2. What do you think the author is foreshadowing in the last paragraph of this chapter? Make a prediction. (p. 5)

La Promesa | 9 - 13

1. What does the reader learn about Petra's family in the first pages of this chapter? (p. 9-11)
2. Research the mesquite tree. What does it represent or symbolize? Think about its significance in relation to how the previous chapter ended. What juxtaposition is the author creating here? Explain your answer. (p. 9-11)
3. What does Petra do to earn money for her family? Why does she have to do this? (p. 12)
4. What does Petra promise her father? (p. 12)
5. What happens to Petra's father? (p. 12)
6. Who are the Federales? Who and what do they represent in the Mexican Revolution?

Las Esperanzas | Pages 14 - 22

1. How has the village changed since the revolution? The Mexican Revolution eventually brought positive changes to the country, but there was a cost. What impact did the revolution have on the daily lives of people in Mexico? How does it impact the people in Petra's village? (p. 14-16)
2. How does Dobbs demonstrate the classism and racism that exists within the village? (p. 15-20)
3. Who are the monsters that Petra refers to at the end of the chapter? Without giving much background information, Dobbs conveys how the reader should feel about the Federales. What does she do to communicate this? (p. 21-22)

Los Federales | 23 - 36

1. Compare the Federales with the Revolucionarios. Characterize and explain what we learn about each group through Petra. (p. 23-32)
2. How is the hacienda system a form of slavery? (p. 32)
3. How is the young boy different from the older Federales who first come to Petra's home? Why do you think he warns Petra and her family? What can we infer about his loyalty or allegiance to the Federales? (p. 32-35)



El Desierto | Pages 37 - 50

1. Describe the desert where Petra and her family are walking. How is this environment affecting them? (p. 37-43)
2. Why is it significant that there are no birds in sight? (p. 39)
3. What does Abuelita ask Petra to gather and why? (p. 40)
4. At a young age, Amelia has developed specific coping mechanisms for dealing with the trauma she's experienced. How does she cope? (p. 41)
5. Dobbs continues to paint a very specific picture of who the Federales are. What do Petra and Amelia run across in the desert? What does this tell the reader about the Federales? (p. 43-44)
6. Why does Abuelita believe that everything in the desert has thorns? How does Abuelita describe Amelia's connection to the desert? (p. 45)
7. Figurative Language: Dobbs uses thorns symbolically. What do they symbolize? What is their significance for Petra and Amelia? (p. 47-48)
8. Make a prediction: How will Petra and her family escape the desert?

El Amparo | Pages 51 - 58

1. What wakes Petra up in the morning and why does this make her hopeful? (p. 51-52)
2. How does Petra describe the coyote? (p. 53)
3. Is Dobbs using the coyote as an omen or to foreshadow something? Is it positive or negative? Why? Explain your thinking. (p. 53)
4. After Petra sees the coyote, what does she find? Who do they encounter there? (p. 55)
5. What does Petra smell when she is in the church? (p. 57)

Pan Pobre | Pages 59 – 66

1. Why is the bread called pan pobre? (p. 59)
2. What memories are triggered for Petra by the smell of the pan pobre? (p.59-60)
3. Make a connection: Is there a special food or scent that brings back specific memories for you? What is it? What does it remind you of?
4. Who is the man in the newspaper photograph that Petra's father showed her? What does Mama understand about the woman included in the photo? Ultimately, what happens to this man? (p. 61)
5. Review/Research: Who are the men that the people in the church are talking about: Porfirio Diaz, Francisco Madero, Pancho Villa, Venustiano Carranza, and Emiliano Zapata? If you don't know who they are, take a few minutes to do some quick research. Be sure to understand if they are associated with the Federales or the Revolucionarios.
6. What special gift did Petra's father give her on her birthday? Make an inference: Why does her father choose to give her this? What does it symbolize? (p. 65)
7. Describe the little girl who startles Petra while she is lost in thought. Why is this description important? (p. 66)



El Intercambio | Pages 67 - 78

1. How does Petra describe the difference between how girls with light and brown skin are treated? How does Dobbs use this as a way to reveal racism? (p. 67)
2. Who is the girl who speaks to Petra? Where is she from? Why is she at the church? (p. 68-70)
3. What does Adeline teach Petra how to do? (p. 71)
4. Why does Petra describe her day with Adeline as a “sweet siesta”? What does this mean? (p. 72)
5. What is Abuelita's reaction when Petra tells her that Adeline taught her to write her name? (p. 70-71)
6. Based on what Abuelita says, what are ‘barefoot dreams’? Does Abuelita mean this as a compliment or a criticism? (p. 76-77)
7. According to Abuelita, why are barefoot dreams dangerous? How does Petra feel about these types of dreams? (p. 76-77)

El Escape | Pages 79 - 87

1. Why is Adeline worried when she is talking to Petra? (p. 79-81)
2. What happened to Adeline's older sister? (p. 81)
3. Why does Petra refuse Adeline's invitation to go North with her and her mother? (p. 84-85)
4. The book takes place in 1910, but Petra's family's experience has relevant connections to contemporary immigrant experiences. What are the similarities? (p. 86-87)

El Tigre Suelto | Pages 88 - 96

1. Where does the priest tell the refugees to go? How far away is this by foot? (p. 90)
2. In Petra's memory with her father, which Mexican leader was executed? What does Papá predict will happen after his death? (p. 93)
3. As the chapter closes, what decision do Petra and Abuelita make ? (p. 95-96)

El Equilibrio | Pages 97 – 111

1. Describe the conditions on the road where Petra and her family are walking. (p. 97-99)
2. Why does Amelia have to stop walking and what does Petra have to do to help her? (p. 101-103)
3. Petra reaches her breaking point in this chapter. What triggers it? Who helps her overcome her rage and panic? What does Petra think about that helps her to re-center? What is the significance of this? What point is Dobbs making here? (p. 105-108)
4. What are papálotl? Why are they important? (p. 109-101)
5. What advice does Abuelita give Petra about listening to nature? (p. 110-11)

El Soldado | Pages 112 - 127

1. What clue in nature helps Petra and Abuelita find the correct path? Abuelita smells something that helps her know which way to go. Petra eventually smells it as well. What is it? Why is it a miracle? (p. 112-116)
2. What happens to Luisito? What does Abuelita believe that Luisito needs? Does Petra agree? (p. 116-118)



3. What happened to the town's curanderas? (p. 118)
4. How does Dobbs use Petra's search for a doctor to demonstrate the classism and racism that existed in Mexico at this time? (p. 118-121)
5. What does Petra do to get the money for the doctor's visit? How does this make her feel? What metaphor does Dobbs use to describe how Petra feels? (p. 124)
6. Who ends up helping Petra and what does she offer to do? (p. 125-127)
7. Describe Marietta, the soldadera who helps Petra. What does she look like? (p. 125-126)
8. Review/Research: Who are the Revolucionarias or the Soldaderas? If you don't know who they are, take a few minutes to do some quick research. (p. 126-127)

El Campo Militar | Pages 128 - 148

1. How do people in the camp react to Marietta? How do they treat her? (p. 128-129)
2. Describe the camp. What is it like? What have they converted into a makeshift hospital? (p. 129-130)
3. Contrast the camp doctor's interactions with Petra and Luisito with that of the town's doctor. How are they different? Why do you think the two doctors' approaches and attitudes are so different? (p. 130-131)
4. Who is Pancho Villa? What is he known for? (p. 137-138)
5. What is Marietta's reaction when Petra says she and her family want to travel to the United States? (p. 137-138)
6. What happened to Marietta's father and how did she become a soldadera? (p. 139-142)
7. Marietta uses a handful of desert dust to create a metaphor. What is the metaphor? What is she saying about the economic system in Mexico? (p. 142)
8. What kind of future does Marietta envision for Mexico? (p. 143)
9. Why does Marietta believe that Petra is a good leader? Do you agree? What do you think makes a person a good leader? (p. 145)
10. What deal does Marietta propose for Petra? How does Petra feel about this deal? (p. 144-148)

Las Cabras | Pages 149 - 160

1. How does Luz describe what soldaderas do? Why does Petra ask Luz this question in front of Abuelita? (p. 151-153)
2. What is Abuelita's reaction when Petra says she wants to be a soldadera? How does she view women's roles in society? (p. 156-158)
3. Why does Abuelita switch to speaking Nahuatl? How was she treated for having Nahuatl as her first language? (p. 157)
4. What is Petra's reaction to Abuelita? How are their options and viewpoints different? (p. 158-160)
5. What is Petra's final decision? Make a prediction: Do you think Petra will be able to be a soldadera? (p. 160)



El Águila | Pages 161 – 173

1. Describe the scene at the train station and on the train. What are the various groups of people doing? (p. 161-165)
2. What is the hacienda system? (p. 167-168)
3. What story does Abuelita tell Petra about her Papa? (p. 166-169)
4. How are Petra and her Papa similar? (p. 170)
5. How does Petra feel about Mexico and fighting for her country? (p. 173)
6. Make a prediction: What will happen to Petra and the people on the train after she hears a loud bang and sees the fire? (p. 173)

El Llanto de Tata | Pages 174 – 182

1. What metaphor does Dobbs use to describe what Petra hears as she comes back to consciousness after the train accident? (p. 174)
2. What saves Petra's life? This same object was referenced earlier in the story, think back to when Dobbs first references it. Why do you think she chose this as the object that would save Petra's life? (p. 175)
3. What happened to the train? (p. 175-177)
4. Who is Petra intent on finding and why? (p. 176)
5. What happened to Chencia in the accident? (p. 178-189)
6. Who was Abuelita's tata and what did he do? (p. 181-182)
7. By the end of this chapter, Petra is having doubts about joining the revolution. What has instigated this change? What is she worried about? (p. 182)

La Integridad | Pages 183 - 192

1. In what state does Petra find Marietta? What happened to her? (p. 183-185)
2. What does Marietta tell her to do next? What will she need to do to get there? (p. 188-189)
3. What does Marietta give to Petra before she leaves? Why is this object important and why do you think Marietta chooses to give this to Petra? Is it more than just an exchange for her shawl? Explain. (p. 189-190)
4. What advice does Marietta give Petra? (p. 189)
5. What does Marietta ask Petra to promise before she leaves? (p. 190)

La Tempestad | Pages 193 – 204

1. Who does Amelia say she is afraid of seeing? (p. 193-194)
2. Describe the bridge that Petra and her family have to cross. What is it like for them crossing this bridge? (p. 196-198)
3. Who do Petra and her family encounter on the other side of the bridge? What do they ask her? How do they know that she is telling the truth? (p. 200-201)
4. Why does the woman on the train think that Petra is a soldier? (p. 202)



5. Make a prediction: Where is the train taking Petra and her family and what will it be like for them once they arrive?

La Espera | Pages 205 – 216

1. Where does the train take Petra and her family to? What river does Petra see when they arrive? (p. 206)
2. What is the significance of the name of the town? Who does it honor now? Who did it honor before? (p. 206)
3. Describe the scene at the train station at the border. How is it different from other places Petra has been to? (p. 207-209)
4. How does Abuelita describe the United States? (p. 208-209)
5. What does Petra learn from the man sitting at the corner with an infant? (p. 210-211)
6. Why did the United States shut the border? What does this mean for Petra and her family? (p. 214)

El Encuentro | Pages 217 – 222

1. Why does Abuelita say the river is called the Rio Bravo? (p. 218)
2. What does Petra walk around searching for? What does she find? (p. 220-221)
3. Who does Petra see riding horses and how are they dressed? (p. 222)
4. Make a prediction: What will happen now that the Federales are on their way?

Una Fortuna | Pages 223 – 228

1. What does the woman who rides the horse with Petra recognize about her? Why is this important? (p. 223)
2. What message does the woman tell Petra to relay to the people in the town below? (p. 223-224)
3. Why do you think the Federales provide a warning?
4. Who does Petra think about as she holds her scarf and looks at the bridge? (p. 225)
5. Why can't Petra and her family cross the bridge, even though it is open? Why do you think the U.S. makes this change? (p. 226-227)

Alejandra | Pages 229 – 233

1. What wakes Petra up in the middle of the night? (p. 229-230)
2. Why are the Revolucionarios burning everything? (p. 230)
3. Now that the rebels are gone, how does Petra feel? How do others around her feel? (p. 230-231)
4. What is the significance of the song the old man plays on his fiddle? (p. 231-232)
5. Why is it important that even though everyone is scared, the couple begin to dance to the music? What does this represent? (p. 232).
6. Make a prediction: What is going to happen now that the last of the rebels have left? (p. 233)

Ojos de Víbora | Pages 234 – 239

1. Describe the school that Petra explores. How is it similar to or different from your own? (p. 235-236)



2. How does Petra feel when she sees the picture of General Victoriano Huerta, the President and commander of the Federales? (p. 237-238)
3. What promise does Petra make to herself as she is walking around the schoolroom? Why is this promise important to her? (p. 238)
4. What does Petra take with her from the school? (p. 239)

Huitzilopochtli | Pages 240 – 244

1. What creature does Petra see hovering around her? (p. 240)
2. Where does the hummingbird lead Petra? (p. 242)
3. What is the significance of the hummingbird in the stories about Huitzilopochtli? Why do you think Petra skips over the stories about the warriors and focuses on the stories of the women in her conversation with Amelia? (p. 243)
4. Make a prediction: What do you think Petra sees on the hill? (p. 244)

El Adiós | Pages 245 – 252

1. Who does Petra see on top of the hill and how does this make her feel? (p. 245)
2. What choice does Abuelita make as they run for the gates? What is the significance of this decision? (p. 246)
3. How does Dobbs communicate what it feels like to be in that crowd? What is the tone and/or mood of this section? (p. 245-249)
4. Who opens the gate for the people? What prompts this decision? (p. 248)

Tierra Nueva | Pages 253 – 257

1. How has the journey to cross the border changed Petra? (p. 235-255)
2. What did this journey teach Petra? (p. 255-256)
3. Make a prediction: What do you think will happen to Petra and their family now that they are in the United States?

POST-READING ACTIVITIES

EXTENDED RESPONSE WRITING PROMPTS

The following questions can be used in a variety of ways: extended response questions, in-class essays, and/or a structured paper that requires students to complete the writing process.



1. Think about Dobbs' purpose in writing *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*. We often think of the purpose of fiction in terms of entertainment. Historical fiction can certainly be entertaining, but it can also be used to persuade or inform. Moving beyond entertainment, what do you think Dobbs' purpose was in writing this novel? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. Dobbs covers a number of topics in her novel. Choose the topic that you think is the most important. Based on that topic, create a theme statement for the novel. Remember, a theme statement is not just one word (that's a topic). A theme statement is a very specific sentence. It conveys a central, unifying idea of the text. Its relevance moves beyond the novel and is applicable to life or the "real world." Someone once explained it to me in these terms: A theme statement should not sound like a hallmark card or a fortune cookie. It is a specific argument about the significance of the book that can be applied outside the context of the book alone. Write an essay using your theme statement as your thesis. Use evidence from the novel to support your answer.
3. How does Dobbs use figurative language to engage the reader in the story and create the space for empathy? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
4. What is the purpose of the extended metaphor of the little black rock? What does this help Dobbs to convey?
5. In what ways does Dobbs challenge traditional gender norms through her novel? Think about specific characters such as Petra, Abuelita, and Marietta. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

RESEARCH THE ICONS OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

In preparation for this activity, educators may want to use the "[Scavenger Hunt](#)" activity included in the ¡Viva la Revolución! Educator's Guide created by the Latin American & Iberian Institute at the University of New Mexico. This activity will introduce students to the individuals who played significant roles in the revolution.

In addition to this activity, the following resources created by PBS based on "The Storm that Swept Mexico," may also be of use.

- Revolutionary Leaders: [OVERVIEW](#) | [PROCEDURES](#) | [FILM MODULE](#)
- Revolutionary Women: [OVERVIEW](#) | [PROCEDURES](#) | [FILM MODULE](#)

Las Adelitas, Pancho Villa, and Emiliano Zapata have become icons of the revolution as their images continue to be used today in contexts far from the Mexican Revolution. Choose one of these iconic leaders of the revolution to research. Use the links below to get you started. Create a presentation, visual representation, or essay to show what you've learned about the icon you chose. Include why you think their images continue to be powerful today.

Introduction to Revolutionary Leaders



- [8 Important People of the Mexican Revolution](#)
- [Mexican Profiles and Personalities | Modern Latin America](#)

Pancho Villa

- [Pancho Villa - HISTORY](#)

Las Adelitas/Las Soldaderas

- [Five Historical Facts about Las Adelitas or Las Soldaderas | Gabriela Mendoza-Garcia Ballet Folklorico](#)
- [The History of Las Soldaderas, the Women Who Made the Mexican Revolution Possible | Teen Vogue](#)
- [La Adelita, Part 1: Feminist Fighter or Chauvinist Creation? | Strachwitz Frontera Collection](#)
- [Viewpoints on Women in the Revolution - The Mexican Revolution and the United States | Exhibitions - Library of Congress](#)

Emiliano Zapata

- [Emiliano Zapata | Biography, History, Mexican Revolution, Death, & Facts | Britannica](#)

DID THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION BRING JUSTICE?

Throughout her novel, Dobbs communicates the complexity of the Mexican Revolution. We often think of the Mexican Revolution as a success that brings to mind images of iconic leaders like the Soldaderas, Pancho Villa, and Emiliano Zapata. But the revolution came at a great cost to many Mexicans, as Petra's story demonstrates, and some may question if it really brought justice. Using the unit plan created by [C3 Teachers](#) available as a [PDF](#) or a [Word Doc](#), explore the question, "Did the Mexican Revolution bring justice?"

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS

While *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* takes place over a hundred years ago, it has important connections and implications for the immigrant and refugee experience today. Petra Luna and her family were Mexican refugees who fled to the U.S. for safety. These connections can be explored in a variety of ways. Immigration is a complex subject, and teaching about it can be equally complicated. The context in which one is teaching is of paramount importance. Not only do we need to consider the age/grade level of the students, but also students' own personal backgrounds and family histories. As with any lesson, it's important to consider the needs of your students and plan accordingly. With this in mind, we've provided a variety of activities and resources below that can be used in conjunction with *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*.

Rethinking the Border

[*The Line Between Us: Teaching About the Border and Mexican Immigration*](#) (Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2006)

Published by Rethinking Schools, *The Line Between Us* explores the history of U.S.-Mexican relations and the roots of Mexican immigration, all in the context of the global economy. And it shows how teachers can help



students understand the immigrant experience and the drama of border life. But *The Line Between Us* is about more than Mexican immigration and border issues. It's about imaginative and creative teaching that gets students to care about the world. Using role plays, stories, poetry, improvisations, simulations and video, veteran teacher Bill Bigelow demonstrates how to combine lively teaching with critical analysis. *The Line Between Us* is a book for teachers, adult educators, community organizers and anyone who hopes to teach, and learn, about these important issues. Many of the lesson plans and resources included in this publication provide excellent ways in which to expand the immigration discussions that can begin with *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*.

The following activities from the book may be of particular interest for thinking through the contemporary connections to *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*: Section 1: "Teaching about 'Them' and 'Us,'" Section 4: "First Crossing," and Section 5: "Life on the Border"

Teaching Tolerance: Immigration Myths

In this [lesson created by Teaching Tolerance](#) students will think through 6 of the more common myths about immigration that continue to be perpetuated.

The following from the lesson plan's description explains the objective of the lesson: "A vast debate swirls around the topic of immigration to the United States. Unfortunately, the frustration many have with our immigration system has also caused some people to stereotype all immigrant populations. This lesson helps break stereotypes by getting to the source of the prejudices. But where do stereotypes come from? This is the question students will explore in the following activities. The focus here is on facing some common misconceptions about immigrants as a group. By connecting stereotypes to myths and then dispelling those myths, students will confront the lies that are the foundation of bigotry toward immigrants."

Students work in small groups rotating through six different workstations as they are encouraged to think critically about many of the common stereotypes about immigrants and immigration.

The History of Immigration to the U.S.

Numerous Social Studies and English Language Arts textbooks discuss the history of immigration to the U.S. These texts can be the beginning of a class-wide study that analyzes the historical waves of immigration up through contemporary immigration trends. It may be helpful to begin with a short video that traces the history of immigration. YouTube has numerous videos available, one example is *The Daily Conversation's* [The Immigration History of the U.S.](#) Once students have a basic understanding of this history, they can begin to compare and contrast the different periods, the push/pull factors, the political commentary and discourse, and how these different waves of immigrants were received by the larger public.



Literary Connections: First Crossing

In “First Crossing” Pam Muñoz Ryan tells the story of a young boy who crosses the U.S. Mexico along with his father using the help of a coyote. The short story was first published in the book *First Crossing: Stories About Teen Immigrants* (Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2004). It is also available in the Rethinking Schools publication *The Line Between Us: Teaching About the Border and Mexican Immigration* (Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2006).

Process:

- Read “First Crossing” either individually, in pairs, or as a whole-class read aloud.
- Compare Marcos’ experience with that of Petra and her family. Have students discuss any similarities and differences in the two stories.
- Ask students to imagine that they are Marcos. Then, have students write a journal entry about what it was like to cross the border. They should include all of the things that they observed, thought and felt during the experience.
- As an alternative, use this selection as a read aloud. Before beginning, provide each student with a piece of white paper. Ask them to fold it in half and then in half again, so that they have four squares on each side. Explain that you are going to read a story out loud to them. At different points during the reading you are going to stop. When you stop, the students are going to draw a picture of an image they’ve imagined based on what you’ve read in one of the squares. Before beginning the activity, choose up to eight stopping points. This can be a useful way to help students really engage with the story, thinking about what it would feel like to be in Marcos’ position.

Understanding Migration

Created by The University of Texas at Austin’s international outreach consortium, Hemispheres, [Understanding Migration](#) was conceived in response to numerous requests from educators and curriculum specialists concerning the presentation and discussion of issues related to human migration in the Social Studies classroom. What are the reasons that large groups of people have found themselves moving from place to place? What effects does this movement have? And most importantly, how can such a fluid and nebulous concept be presented in a classroom in an easy-to-follow manner with clear lesson objectives and outcomes? Regional case studies were chosen to address these, and other, essential questions. Where possible, primary source documents were used to present the information in each case study.



COMPLEMENTARY LITERATURE AND FILM

Below you will find an annotated bibliography of children's and young adult literature and films to complement the use of *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*. Texts with content specific to the Mexican Revolution have been noted with an *. The other books are a curated selection that share themes of immigration and/or Latin American revolutions.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

**Child of the Flower-Song People: Luz Jiménez, Daughters of the Nahua* written by Gloria Amescua and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams Books, 2021.

She was Luz Jiménez,
child of the flower-song people,
the powerful Aztec,
who called themselves Nahua—
who lost their land but who did not disappear.

As a young Nahua girl in Mexico during the early 1900s, Luz learned how to grind corn in a metate, to twist yarn with her toes, and to weave on a loom. By the fire at night, she listened to stories of her community's joys, suffering, and survival, and wove them into her heart.

But when the Mexican Revolution came to her village, Luz and her family were forced to flee and start a new life. In Mexico City, Luz became a model for painters, sculptors, and photographers such as Diego Rivera, Jean Charlot, and Tina Modotti. These artists were interested in showing the true face of Mexico and not a European version. Through her work, Luz found a way to preserve her people's culture by sharing her native language, stories, and traditions. Soon, scholars came to learn from her. (Grades 1 and up)

Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del otro lado written by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and illustrated by Consuelo Mendez. Children's Book Press, 1997.

Having crossed the Rio Grande into Texas with his mother in search of a new life, Joaquín receives help and friendship from Prietita, a brave young Mexican American girl. Though her friends' first reaction on seeing Joaquín is hostility, Prietita warns them off and befriends him, planning to take him to the herb woman for treatment for the sores he hides under long sleeves. A visit from the Border Patrol hastens the event; the herb woman hides Joaquín and his mother until the danger is past, then shows Prietita how to help her new friend. An authentic portrayal; an excellent basis for discussion of an important issue. (Grades Kindergarten and up)



**Jovita Wore Pants: The Story of a Mexican Freedom Fighter* written by Aida Salazar and illustrated by Molly Mendoza. Scholastic Press, 2023.

The remarkable true story of Jovita Valdovinos, a Mexican revolutionary who disguised herself as a man to fight for her rights! Jovita dreamed of wearing pants! She hated the big skirts Abuela made her wear. She wanted to scale the tallest mesquite tree on her rancho, ride her horse, and feel the wind curl her face into a smile! When her father and brothers joined the Cristero War to fight for religious freedom, Jovita wanted to go, too. Forbidden, she defied her father's rules - and society's - and found a clever way to become a trailblazing revolutionary, wearing pants! This remarkable true story about a little-known maverick Mexican heroine is brought vividly to life by her great-niece and Américas Award-winner Aida Salazar, and Eisner Award-honoree Molly Mendoza. (Grades 1 and up)

Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2013. ISBN 9781419705830

Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote opens with festive scenes of the Rabbit family preparing for Papá Rabbit's homecoming. Musicians, family and friends gather to welcome home Papá who had traveled north to work in the carrot and lettuce fields, years before. Plates of mole, rice and beans are prepared in anticipation of his arrival and the house is strung with papel picado. When Papá Rabbit doesn't arrive, his son Pancho decides to sneak away in the dark of the night to find him. The reader follows the young rabbit as he travels north with the aid of a sneaky coyote by train, by river, by tunnel, and by desert. Tonatiuh bravely presents the controversial issue of illegal immigration through the lens of a children's fable. Inspired by 14th century Mixtec codices and traditional folklore, the author / illustrator presents the sometimes startling realities of many modern day immigrants in a form which can be appreciated by both young and old alike. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resources: [Educator's Guide for Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of CLASP

**Viva Zapata* written by Emilie Smith & Margarita Kenefic Tejada and illustrated by Stefan Czernecki. Tradewind Books, 2009.

This humorous story is about a fictional incident in the childhood of the Mexican revolutionary hero, Emiliano Zapata. After Emiliano's pony is stolen, he manages to track down the bandits and recover his horse. (Grades Pre-K and up)

YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Before we were Free / Antes de ser libre by Julia Alvarez. Knopf, 2002. 192 pgs.

Anita de la Torre never questioned her freedom living in the Dominican Republic. But by her 12th birthday in 1960, most of her relatives have emigrated to the United States, her Tío Toni has



disappeared without a trace, and the government's secret police terrorize her remaining family because of their suspected opposition of el Trujillo's dictatorship. Using the strength and courage of her family, Anita must overcome her fears and fly to freedom, leaving all that she once knew behind. From renowned author Julia Alvarez comes an unforgettable story about adolescence, perseverance, and one girl's struggle to be free. (Grades 7 and up)

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to Before we were Free](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute // [Book Notes and Educator's Guide to Before we were Free](#) produced by Random House

Border Crossing: A Novel written by Maria Colleen Cruz. Piñata Books, 2003.

In this debut novel, Maria Colleen Cruz creates the vibrant voice of a girl just on the brink of understanding. With her journal at her side, this thoughtful and creative character tackles complicated issues of identity and self-empowerment. The things Ceci Alvarez does not know about her father's family send her riding rails from Los Angeles to Tijuana, Mexico in order to piece together the mysteries behind a set of her Nana's photographs. Tony, a lively young teen Ceci meets on the train, leads her from one country to the next, and challenges her to see Mexico as "green and brown. It's little villages with big farms, and lots of grass, and towns where electricity is something not everyone has. It's spicy chiles, juicy tomatoes, and light tortillas. It's music, and laughter, and pride. (Grades 5 and up)

Enrique's Journey (The Young Adult Adaptation) by Sonia Nazario. Delacorte, 2013. 288 pgs.

Based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes, one for feature writing and another for feature photography, this page-turner about the power of family is a popular text in classrooms and a touchstone for communities across the country to engage in meaningful discussions about this essential American subject. Enrique's Journey recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, often clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of thugs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers. (Grades 7 and up)

Classroom Resources: [Spanish, Middle, and High School Lesson Plans](#) developed by educators around the country and compiled by Sonia Nazario

**Evangelina Takes Flight* by Diana J. Nobel. Pinata Books, 2017. 152 pgs.

It's the summer of 1911 in northern Mexico, and soon the de Leon family learns that the rumors of soldiers in the region are true. Evangelina's father decides they must leave their home to avoid the violence. The trip north to a small town on the U.S. side of the border is filled with fear and anxiety as they worry about loved ones left behind and the uncertain future ahead. Life in Texas is



confusing, though the signs in shop windows that say "No Mexicans" and some people's reactions to them are all-too clear. At school, she encounters the same puzzling resentment. The teacher wants to give the Mexican children lessons on basic hygiene! And one girl in particular delights in taunting the foreign-born students. Why can't people understand that even though she's only starting to learn English she's just like them? This moving historical novel introduces teens to the tumultuous times of the Mexican Revolution and the experiences of immigrants, especially Mexican Americans, as they adjust to a new way of life. (Grades 9 and up)

**Las Soldaderas: Women of the Mexican Revolution* written by Elena Poniatowska. Cinco Puntos Press, 2006.

The photographs of *Las Soldaderas* and Elena Poniatowska's remarkable commentary rescue the women of the Mexican Revolution from the dust and oblivion of history. These are the Adelitas and Valentinas celebrated in famous corridos mexicanos, but whose destiny was much more profound and tragic than the idealistic words of ballads. The photographs remind Poniatowska of the trail of women warriors that begins with the Spanish conquest and continues to Mexico's violent revolution. These women are valiant, furious, loyal, maternal, and hardworking; they wear a mask that is part immaculate virgin, part mother and wife, and part savage warrior; and they are joined together in the cruel hymn of blood and death from which they built their own history of the Revolution. The photographs are culled from the vast Casasola Collection in the Fototeca Nacional of the National Institute of Anthropology and History in Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico. (Grades 9 and up)

La línea by Ann Jaramillo. Roaring Brook Press, 2006. 129 pgs.

Miguel has dreamed of joining his parents in California since the day they left him behind in Mexico six years, eleven months, and twelve days ago. On the morning of his fifteenth birthday, Miguel's wait is over. Or so he thinks. The trip north to the border—la línea—is fraught with dangers. Thieves. Border guards. And a grueling, two-day trek across the desert. It would be hard enough to survive alone. But it's almost impossible with his tagalong sister in tow. Their money gone and their hopes nearly dashed, Miguel and his sister have no choice but to hop the infamous mata gente as it races toward the border. As they cling to the roof of the speeding train, they hold onto each other, and to their dreams. But they quickly learn that you can't always count on dreams—even the ones that come true. (Grades 7 and up)

Leaving Glorytown: One Boy's Struggle Under Castro by Eduardo F. Calcines. Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2009. 240 pgs.

Eduardo F. Calcines was a child of Fidel Castro's Cuba; he was just three years old when Castro came to power in January 1959. After that, everything changed for his family and his country. When he was ten, his family applied for an exit visa to emigrate to America and he was ridiculed by his schoolmates and even his teachers for being a traitor to his country. But even worse, his father was sent to an agricultural



An Educator's Guide to *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* by Alda P. Dobbs

reform camp to do hard labor as punishment for daring to want to leave Cuba. In this absorbing memoir, by turns humorous and heartbreaking, Eduardo Calcines recounts his boyhood and chronicles the conditions that led him to wish above all else to leave behind his beloved extended family and his home for a chance at a better future. (Grades 5 and up)

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to Leaving Glorytown](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute

* *Like Water for Chocolate* written by Laura Esquivel. Doubleday, 1992.

Like Water for Chocolate is set in Northern Mexico during the Mexican Revolution, from about 1910-1920. Each chapter begins with a recipe in Tita's cookbook, which has been inherited by the story's narrator, Tita's great-niece. Before Tita's birth, she cries in the womb while her mother, Elena de la Garza, is chopping onions. Her tears send "Mama Elena" into labor, and Tita is born on the kitchen table. Two days after her birth, her father, Juan de la Garza, dies of a heart attack. Mama Elena must manage the ranch, so she leaves Tita's care to Nacha, the cook, whom Tita comes to see as her "real mother." Unlike her older sisters, Gertrudis and Rosaura, Tita develops a deep love of cooking. (Grades 10 and up)

Migrant/Migrante written by José Manuel Mateo and illustrated by Javier Martínez Pedro. Abrams, 2014.

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

Red Midnight written by Ben Mikaelson. HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. 224 pgs.

When guerrilla soldiers strike Santiago's village, they destroy everything in their path -- including his home and family. Santiago and his four-year-old sister escape, running for their lives. But the only way they can be truly safe is to leave Guatemala behind forever. So Santiago and Angelina set sail in a sea kayak their Uncle Ramos built while dreaming of his own escape. Sailing through narrow channels guarded by soldiers, shark-infested waters, and days of painful heat and raging storms, Santiago and Angelina face an almost impossible voyage hundreds of miles across the open ocean, heading for the hope of a new life in the United States. (Grades 5 and up)

* *Revolutionary Women of Texas and Mexico: Portraits of Soldaderas, Saints, and Subversives* written by Kathy Sosa, Ellen Riojas Clark, and Jennifer Speed. Maverick Books, 2020.

Much ink has been spilled over the men of the Mexican Revolution, but far less has been written about its women. Kathy Sosa, Ellen Riojas Clark, and Jennifer Speed set out to right this wrong in



Revolutionary Women of Texas and Mexico, which celebrates the women of early Texas and Mexico who refused to walk a traditional path. The anthology embraces an expansive definition of the word revolutionary by looking at female role models and subversives from the last century and who stood up for their visions and ideals and continue to stand for them today. Eighteen portraits provide readers with a glimpse into each figure's life and place in history. At the heart of the portraits are the women of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920)—like the soldaderas who shadowed the Mexican armies, tasked with caring for and treating the wounded troops. Filling in the gaps are iconic godmothers like the Virgin of Guadalupe and La Malinche, whose stories are seamlessly woven into the collective history of Texas and Mexico. Portraits of artists Frida Kahlo and Nahui Olin and activists Emma Tenayuca and Genoveva Morales take readers from postrevolutionary Mexico into the present. Each portrait includes a biography, an original pen-and-ink illustration, and a historical or literary piece by a contemporary writer who was inspired by their subject's legacy. Sandra Cisneros, Laura Esquivel, Elena Poniatowska, Carmen Tafolla, and others bring their experience to bear in their pieces, and Jennifer Speed's introduction contextualizes each woman in her cultural-historical moment. A foreword by civil rights activist Dolores Huerta and an afterword by scholar Norma Elia Cantú bookend this powerful celebration of women who revolutionized their worlds. (Grades 9 and up)

Sarita, Be Brave written by Ruby Tolliver. Eakin Press, 1999. 132 pgs

When political unrest in Honduras forces twelve-year-old Sara to flee with her family and make the dangerous journey north to Texas, she faces the challenges of starting a new school and a new life. (Grades 3 and up)

**Shame the Stars* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall. Tu Books, 2016. 320 pgs.

Eighteen-year-old Joaquin del Toro's future looks bright. With his older brother in the priesthood, he is set to inherit his family's Texas ranch. He's in love with Dulcena and she's in love with him. But it's 1915, and trouble has been brewing along the US-Mexico border. On one side, the Mexican Revolution is taking hold; on the other, Texas Rangers fight Tejano insurgents, and ordinary citizens are caught in the middle. As tensions grow, Joaquin is torn away from Dulcena, whose father's critical reporting on the Rangers in the local newspaper has driven a wedge between their families. Joaquin's own father insists that the Rangers are their friends, and refuses to take sides in the conflict. But when their family ranch becomes a target, Joaquin must decide how he will stand up for what's right. *Shame the Stars* is a rich reimagining of *Romeo and Juliet* set in Texas during the explosive years of Mexico's revolution. Filled with period detail, captivating romance, and political intrigue, it brings Shakespeare's classic to life in an entirely new way. (Grades 7 and up)



**The Children of the Revolución: How the Mexican Revolution Changed America* by Lionel Sosa and Neftalí García. University of Texas Press, 2013.

Between 1910 and 1929, the two decades that history defines as the Mexican Revolution, almost a million people left Mexico to escape the war's devastation. This exodus jump-started the growth of the U.S. Latino population, a group which now numbers well over 50 million. These political refugees established productive new lives in the United States. Countless numbers of their descendants, now American citizens, are highly accomplished individuals, including both community and national leaders. To capture these never-before-told stories, Lionel and Kathy Sosa, together with KLRN public television in San Antonio and Jesus Ramirez and his My Story, Inc., wrote and produced a twenty-part documentary series titled *Children of the Revolución: How the Mexican Revolution Changed America's Destiny*. In this companion volume, some of these descendants tell the stories of life in Mexico, the chaos that their families endured during the Revolution, their treacherous trek to America, and their settlement in a strange new country. In these stories, we discover the heart of the Latino soul, rich in spirit, patriotism, and a fierce commitment to the United States. Their many contributions cannot be ignored. With Professor Neftalí García providing the historic backdrop, editor Lionel Sosa offers new insights into how the Mexican Revolution changed America. (Grades 8 and up)

The Only Road written by Alexandra Diz. Simon & Schuster, 2017.

Jaime is sitting on his bed drawing when he hears a scream. Instantly, he knows: Miguel, his cousin and best friend, is dead. Everyone in Jaime's small town in Guatemala knows someone who has been killed by the Alphas, a powerful gang that's known for violence and drug trafficking. Anyone who refuses to work for them is hurt or killed—like Miguel. With Miguel gone, Jaime fears that he is next. There's only one choice: accompanied by his cousin Ángela, Jaime must flee his home to live with his older brother in New Mexico. Inspired by true events, *The Only Road* is an individual story of a boy who feels that leaving his home and risking everything is his only chance for a better life. The story is "told with heartbreaking honesty," Booklist raved, and "will bring readers face to face with the harsh realities immigrants go through in the hope of finding a better, safer life, and it will likely cause them to reflect on what it means to be human."

[Educator's Guide for The Only Road](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of CLASP

The Red Umbrella by Christina Diaz Gonzalez. Yearling | Random House, 2012. 288 pgs.

The Red Umbrella is the moving tale of a 14-year-old girl's journey from Cuba to America as part of Operation Pedro Pan—an organized exodus of more than 14,000 unaccompanied children, whose parents sent them away to escape Fidel Castro's revolution. In 1961, two years after the Communist revolution, Lucía Álvarez still leads a carefree life, dreaming of parties and her first crush. But when the soldiers come to her sleepy Cuban town, everything begins to change. Freedoms are stripped away.



Neighbors disappear. Her friends feel like strangers. And her family is being watched. As the revolution's impact becomes more oppressive, Lucía's parents make the heart-wrenching decision to send her and her little brother to the United States—on their own. Suddenly plunked down in Nebraska with well-meaning strangers, Lucía struggles to adapt to a new country, a new language, a new way of life. But what of her old life? Will she ever see her home or her parents again? And if she does, will she still be the same girl? The Red Umbrella is a moving story of country, culture, family, and the true meaning of home. (Grades 5 and up)

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to The Red Umbrella](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute

FILMS

Balseros/Cuban Rafters, 2002, directed by Carles Bosch and Josep Maria Doménech. Documentary. 120 min.

Rating: Not Rated

The story of Cuban refugees who risked their lives in homemade rafts to reach the United States, and what life is like for those who succeed.

Harvest of Empire: The Untold Story of Latinos in America, 2012, directed by Peter Getzels and Eduardo Lopez.

Documentary. 90 min. Rating: Not Rated

A powerful documentary that exposes the direct connection between the long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America and the immigration crisis we face today. From the territorial expansionist policies that decimated the young economies of Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba, to the covert operations that imposed oppressive military regimes in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador, *Harvest of Empire* provides an unflinching look at the origins of the growing Latino presence in the United States. Adapted from the landmark book written by journalist Juan Gonzalez, the film tells the story of an epic human saga that is largely unknown to the great majority of citizens in the U.S., but must become part of our national conversation about immigration.

Like Water for Chocolate, 1993, directed by Alfonso Arau. Drama. 105 minutes. Rating: Rated-R

When tradition prevents her from marrying the man she loves, a young woman discovers she has a unique talent for cooking. Set in Northern Mexico during the Mexican Revolution.

Mi Familia, 1995, directed by Gregory Nava. Drama. 128 min. Rating: Rated-R

This heartwarming story has not one, but three border crossing scenes and they make great political and social commentary. In the first, a young country boy from Mexico walks for a year from his village to Los Angeles at the turn of the 20th century. He just walks in. The border? "In those days, the border was just a line in the sand," says the narrator, underlining the often-unacknowledged close historical ties



between Mexico and the United States. Later, his pregnant wife (Jennifer Lopez) is wrongly deported in a Great Depression-era round-up where Mexicans, whether legal or not, were driven to central Mexico and dumped. This really happened, after Mexicans were (surprise!) blamed for taking jobs away from Americans. Months after giving birth, she crosses the Rio Grande with her baby boy, losing him in the waves at one point, in a heart-stopping scene. You'd have to be made of stone not to be touched.

Mojados: Through the Night, 2004, directed by Tommy Davis. Documentary. 65 min. Rating: Not Rated

Director Tommy Davis tags along with four migrants from a small village in Mexico as they leave their families and embark on a 120 mile trek across the deserts of Texas, attempting to evade the U.S. Border Patrol. They must overcome dehydration, hypothermia and come face to face with death.

Under the Same Moon, 2007, directed by Patricia Riggen. Drama. 106 min. Rating: PG-13

The debut feature from director Patricia Riggen, this drama centers on a young boy's journey across the U.S./Mexico border to be reunited with his mother. Adrian Alonso stars as Carlitos, a Mexican adolescent living with his grandmother while his mother works as a maid in the U.S., hoping someday to send for her child. But when the grandmother dies unexpectedly, Carlitos must sneak across the border and seek out his mother.

Which Way Home, 2009, directed by Rebecca Cammisa. Documentary. 90 min. Rating: Not Rated.

Which Way Home is a feature documentary film that follows unaccompanied child migrants, on their journey through Mexico, as they try to reach the United States. We follow children like Olga and Freddy, nine-year old Hondurans, who are desperately trying to reach their parents in the US.; children like Jose, a ten-year old El Salvadoran, who has been abandoned by smugglers and ends up alone in a Mexican detention center; and Kevin, a canny, streetwise fourteen-year old Honduran, whose mother hopes that he will reach the U.S. and send money back to her. These are stories of hope and courage, disappointment and sorrow. They are the children you never hear about; the invisible ones.

Classroom Resources: [An Educator's Film Guide to Which Way Home](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute

Who is Dayani Cristal?, 2013, directed by Marc Silver. Documentary. 85 min. Rating: Not Rated.

Who is Dayani Cristal is a feature documentary film that explores what happens when the body of an unidentified immigrant is found in the Arizona Desert. In an attempt to retrace his path and discover his story, director Marc Silver and Gael García Bernal embed themselves among migrant travelers on their own mission to cross the border, providing rare insight into the human stories which are so often ignored in the immigration debate.

Classroom Resources: [An Educator's Film Guide to Who is Dayni Cristal?](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute



An Educator's Guide to *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* by Alda P. Dobbs