

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D.
Chicago Latina Trailblazer
Introduction

Brief

Rita D. Hernández is a Chicago educator, activist, filmmaker, and community-based scholar who worked to preserve Latino history and expand educational opportunities for Latino students. She earned a Ph.D. from Loyola University Chicago and taught in Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Cary, IL, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi. Hernández created documentaries such as *A Portrait of Eight Mexican Leaders* (1978) and *Latino Murals of Chicago* (1979), co-founded the Museum of Mexican Culture and History of Chicago, organized major educational conferences, the first Hispanic Civil Rights Conference in Chicago, and wrote *The Silent Minority: Mexican Americans in CPS, 1970–2001*. She also served as lead editor of *Chicago Latina Trailblazers: Testimonios of Political Activism*, continuing her work documenting Latina leadership and activism in Chicago.

Rita Hernández is a Chicago Latina activist, educator, and scholar who worked to document and preserve the history of Latino communities in Chicago. She supported bilingual education, created documentaries about Mexican American leaders, and helped organize community activism. Hernández also founded the Chicago Latina Trailblazers Book Project to make sure Latina leaders and their contributions were remembered and studied. This led to the creation of the non-profit Trailblazer Foundation.

The introduction explains how Chicago Latina Trailblazers fought racism, sexism, and unequal treatment while creating opportunities for Latino communities in education, politics, health care, media, advocacy, and activism. Many of the women worked to protect bilingual education, including dual-language education, support immigrant families, and help students succeed while still honoring their language and culture. The book uses *testimonios*, or personal stories, to preserve their experiences and show how their leadership changed Chicago.

The material also describes the history of Mexican and Puerto Rican communities in Chicago before, during, and after World War II. Many families came to the city for work but faced segregation, discrimination, and pressure to assimilate. In response, Latina leaders organized marches, community programs, health initiatives, and educational reforms to improve life for future generations. Informing and educating the community was accomplished through print and broadcast media, frequently in both Spanish and English.

A major theme throughout the introduction is the importance of voice, identity, and community. The editors explain that these women often had to create their own space in systems dominated by men and by racism. Their stories are meant to inspire students and future leaders to continue advocating for equity, education, and social justice.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D.
Chicago Latina Trailblazers:
Testimonios of Political Activism
(Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2024)

Summary

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D. from Loyola University Chicago, is a contemporary with the women in the book and the visionary in this project.

She has had a longstanding interest in community history, initiating documentary projects, including, "A Portrait of Eight Mexican Leaders" from South Chicago (1978) and "Latino Murals of Chicago" (1979) with artist and educator Vicente Mendoza.

She was co-curator with Lt. Col. William Luna of the Museum of Mexican Culture and History of Chicago.

She held Chicago's first Hispanic Civil Rights Conference (1994) and initiated the annual Mexican/ Chicana Educational Summits (2002-2006).

Rita planned the first graduate courses, for both the Illinois State Board of Education and the Chicago Public Schools. "Enhancing Teacher Knowledge of Mexican Culture and History" basic and advanced courses were attended by teachers, administrators, CPS students, parents, and community members.

These projects were a part of her work and struggle for social justice that facilitated interactions with the women in this book as a community-based scholar.

Her book, *The Silent Minority: Mexican Americans in CPS, 1970-2001* (Saarbrücken, Germany: Scholars Press, 2014) was a seminal book published on Mexican American educational history of Chicago.

She published, "Dr. Hector P. Garcia, 1914-1996" an encyclopedia article in *An Encyclopedia of Latino History and Culture* (New York: Sharpe Reference, 2010), one of the first encyclopedias covering Latino History and Culture previously omitted from American History and Culture.

She was: an educator in the Chicago Public Schools ISBE and an adjunct Professor at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Rita is a founding National Board member of Mexican American Heritage Association; February 2, 2026, Proclamation as Mexican American Heritage Day which commemorates February 2, 1848 as the day when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed by the US and Mexican governments.

Dr. Hernandez currently lives in South Carolina.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D.

Timeline

Area	Year(s)	Event
Early Career	1967	Spanish teacher in Chicago Public Schools.
Education & Scholarship	1967 -	BA U of IL Chgo, MA Loyola (Spanish with concentration in Comparative Lit–Span & French), Summer study at the U. of Paris, Sorbonne, MA Northeastern IL U. in Admn.
	2002	Earned a Ph.D. in Cultural & Educ. Policy Studies; Loyola University Chicago.
Documentary & Photography	1978	Wrote, produced, photographed and directed the documentary A Portrait of Eight Mexican Leaders , preserving the stories of South Chicago community leaders.
	1979	Initiated Latino Murals of Chicago with muralist and art educator Vicente Mendoza.
Museum & Public History	1970s – 1980s	Exhibited photography and multimedia presentations at museums, such as the annual Hispanic Heritage Month exhibition at the Museum of Science and Industry, galleries, such as the first Latino Art Exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art in downtown Chicago, Hyde Park Art Gallery, and myriad community centers throughout Chicago.
	1990s	Co-curator and educational historian of the Museum of Mexican Culture and History of Chicago . Bill Luna was the lead writer of the seminal work, <i>Hispanics in America's Defense</i> (1985) published by the DOD.
Educational Leadership	1994	Organized Chicago's First Hispanic Civil Rights Conference .
	2002–2006	Founded the annual Mexican/Chicana Educational Summits .
	2000s	Developed the graduate courses " Enhancing Teacher Knowledge of Mexican Culture and History " (basic and advanced) (ISBE) for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Chicago Public Schools (CPS).
Publications	2010	Published the encyclopedia article " Hector P. Garcia, 1914–1996 ."
	2014	Published The Silent Minority: Mexican Americans in CPS, 1970–2001 , seminal work on Mexican American educational history in Chicago.
Teaching & Service	Career	Served as an educator in Chicago Public Schools ISBE (1979–2004) and later as an adjunct instructor at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi.
Community Leadership	2026 – Present	Serves on the national board supporting Mexican American Heritage Day , commemorating the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed on February 2, 1848.
Today	Present	Continues supporting community history and educational initiatives through the Trailblazer Foundation NFP which she founded, while living in South Carolina

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Testimonios of Political Activism; Vocabulary

Vocabulary - Words that may be difficult for students. Too many words to teach in this section.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alchemy</i> • <i>Binary (gender/social context)</i> 	<i>Assimilationist</i>	<i>Autobiographical</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chronologically</i> • <i>Conferred</i> 	<i>Coalitional</i> <i>Contemporaries</i>	<i>Comprehensive</i> <i>Countercultural</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Descendance</i> • <i>Displacement</i> 	<i>Dichotomy</i> <i>Documentaries</i>	<i>Discourse</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Empowerment</i> • <i>Espoused</i> 	<i>Enduring</i> <i>Essentializing</i>	<i>Entrenched</i> <i>Ethnography</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Facilitators</i> • <i>Firsthand</i> 	<i>Familial</i> <i>Fluidity</i>	<i>Feminist</i> <i>Forge (figurative)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gatekeepers (figurative)</i> • <i>Hierarchy</i> 	<i>Guadalupana</i> <i>Holistic</i>	<i>Heteronormative</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Idealism</i> • <i>Indigenous</i> • <i>Interconnectedness</i> • <i>Intersectional</i> 	<i>Implementation</i> <i>Inequities</i> <i>Interdisciplinary</i> <i>Invoking</i>	<i>Incrementally</i> <i>Institutional</i> <i>Intergenerational</i> <i>Liberation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mantra</i> • <i>Monumentally</i> • <i>Nuanced</i> 	<i>Methodology</i> <i>Multimedia</i> <i>Oppression</i>	<i>Mobilized</i> <i>Narratives</i> <i>Organically (figurative use)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paradigm</i> • <i>Philosophical</i> • <i>Prevailing</i> 	<i>Patriarchal</i> <i>Pivotal</i> <i>Progressive</i>	<i>Perpetuated</i> <i>Praxis</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Radicalism</i> • <i>Reggio Emilia</i> • <i>Resilience</i> 	<i>Racialization</i> <i>Relocation</i> <i>Resourceful</i>	<i>Rectified</i> <i>Reminisced</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Segregated</i> • <i>Subordination</i> • <i>Systemic</i> 	<i>Sociopolitical</i> <i>Supplementary</i> <i>Testimonio</i>	<i>Stereotypic</i> <i>Synthetic</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Testimoniar</i> • <i>Tribulations</i> 	<i>Theorized</i>	<i>Trailblazer</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ubiquitous</i> • <i>Uphold</i> 	<i>Unbeknownst</i>	<i>Unprecedented</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vanguard</i> 	<i>Vetted</i>	<i>Visionary</i>

Spanish / Cultural Terms Worth Teaching

- *Ama de casa*
- *Comadres*
- *Herstory*
- *Indígena*
- *La lucha*
- *Lengua*
- *Mestizaje*
- *Pueblo*
- *Renganchista*
- *Sitio*
- *Testimonio*
- *Virgen de Guadalupe*

Vocabulary Recommendation

*A focused list of **high-value words** from the introduction would likely be:*

- *Countercultural*
- *Empowerment*
- *Hierarchy*
- *Indigenous*
- *Intergenerational*
- *Intersectional*
- *Mobilized*
- *Patriarchal*
- *Praxis*
- *Racialization*
- *Rectified*
- *Resilience*
- *Resourceful*
- *Systemic*
- *Testimonio*

These words recur throughout the book and are most useful for understanding later chapters.

Vocabulary Definitions

- **Alchemy** – A process of changing something in a remarkable or almost magical way.
- **Assimilationist** – Encouraging people to give up their own culture and adopt another.
- **Autobiographical** – Based on a person's own life.
- **Binary** – A system with only two choices or categories.

- **Chronologically** – In the order that events happened.
- **Coalitional** – Involving different groups working together for a common goal.
- **Comprehensive** – Complete; covering many details.
- **Conferred** – Officially gave or granted.
- **Contemporaries** – People who lived or worked during the same time period.
- **Countercultural** – Opposing or challenging the values of mainstream society.

- **Descendance** – Family ancestry or lineage.
- **Dichotomy** – A division into two opposite parts.
- **Discourse** – Written or spoken discussion about a topic.
- **Displacement** – Being forced to leave one's home or community.
- **Documentaries** – Nonfiction films or videos based on real events.

- **Empowerment** – Giving people the confidence, ability, or authority to act.
- **Enduring** – Lasting for a long time.
- **Entrenched** – Firmly established and difficult to change.
- **Espoused** – Publicly supported or believed in.
- **Essentializing** – Treating all members of a group as if they are the same.
- **Ethnography** – The study of people's cultures and daily lives.

- **Facilitators** – People who help make something happen more easily.
- **Familial** – Related to family.
- **Feminist** – Supporting equal rights and opportunities for women.
- **Firsthand** – Gained through direct experience.
- **Fluidity** – The ability to change or adapt easily.
- **Forge (figurative)** – To create or build something, such as a relationship or path.

- **Gatekeepers** – People who control access to opportunities or information.
- **Guadalupana** – Related to the Virgin of Guadalupe.

- **Heteronormative** – Based on the belief that heterosexuality is the normal or expected way.
- **Hierarchy** – A system in which people or groups are ranked by authority or importance.
- **Holistic** – Looking at the whole rather than just individual parts.

- **Idealism** – Belief that positive change is possible through high principles.
- **Implementation** – The act of putting a plan into action.
- **Incrementally** – Gradually, in small steps.
- **Indigenous** – Native to a particular place or descended from its earliest peoples.
- **Inequities** – Unfair differences or inequalities.
- **Institutional** – Connected with an organization or established system.
- **Interconnectedness** – The state of being closely linked.

- **Interdisciplinary** – Combining more than one subject or field of study.
 - **Intergenerational** – Involving more than one generation.
 - **Intersectional** – Recognizing that different forms of identity and discrimination overlap.
 - **Invoking** – Calling upon or referring to.
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- **Liberation** – Freedom from oppression or control.
 - **Mantra** – A phrase or idea repeated often as guidance or motivation.
 - **Methodology** – The system or methods used to do research or complete a task.
 - **Mobilized** – Organized people to take action.
 - **Monumentally** – Extremely; to a very great degree.
 - **Multimedia** – Using several forms of communication, such as text, images, audio, or video.
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- **Narratives** – Stories or accounts of events.
 - **Nuanced** – Showing subtle or detailed differences.
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- **Oppression** – Unfair or cruel treatment by those in power.
 - **Organically (figurative)** – Naturally, without being forced or planned.
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- **Paradigm** – A model or pattern for understanding something.
 - **Patriarchal** – Relating to a society where men hold most power and authority.
 - **Perpetuated** – Caused something to continue.
 - **Philosophical** – Related to ideas about knowledge, values, or life.
 - **Pivotal** – Very important; central to success or change.
 - **Praxis** – Putting ideas or beliefs into action.
 - **Prevailing** – Most common or widely accepted.
 - **Progressive** – Supporting social or political improvement and reform.
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- **Radicalism** – Support for major or far-reaching changes.
 - **Racialization** – Treating people differently based on perceived race.
 - **Rectified** – Corrected or fixed.
 - **Reggio Emilia** – An educational approach that encourages learning through exploration and creativity.
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- **Relocation** – Moving to a new place.
 - **Reminisced** – Thought or talked about past experiences.
 - **Resilience** – The ability to recover from difficulties.
 - **Resourceful** – Good at solving problems with available resources.
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- **Segregated** – Kept separate because of race or another characteristic.
 - **Sociopolitical** – Related to both society and politics.
 - **Stereotypic** – Based on oversimplified or unfair ideas about a group.
 - **Subordination** – The state of having less power or authority.
 - **Supplementary** – Added to support or complete something else.
 - **Synthetic** – Combining ideas or information from different sources.
 - **Systemic** – Existing throughout an entire system.
 - **Testimonio** – First-person account, connects personal experience to broader social or political issues.

- **Testimoniar** – To tell one's personal story as an act of witness or advocacy.
- **Theorized** – Developed or explained through ideas or theories.
- **Trailblazer** – A person who is the first to achieve something and opens the way for others.
- **Tribulations** – Great difficulties or hardships.
- **Ubiquitous** – Found everywhere; very common.
- **Unbeknownst** – Without someone's knowledge.
- **Unprecedented** – Never done or known before.
- **Uphold** – To support or maintain.
- **Vanguard** – The leading group in a movement or new development.
- **Vetted** – Carefully reviewed or checked.
- **Visionary** – A person with creative ideas about the future.

Spanish / Cultural Terms

- **Ama de casa** – Homemaker or housewife.
- **Comadres** – Close female friends, often with a family-like bond.
- **Herstory** – History told from the perspective of women.
- **Indígena** – Indigenous or Native person.
- **La lucha** – "The struggle"; working toward justice or change.
- **Lengua** – Language, voice, or way of expressing oneself.
- **Mestizaje** – A cultural and ancestral mixture, especially of Indigenous and European heritage.
- **Pueblo** – Town or village.
- **Renganchista** – A person who recruits or connects workers with jobs.
- **Sitio** – Place, space, or location.
- **Testimonio** – A personal narrative used to bear witness to social or political experiences.
- **Virgen de Guadalupe** – A revered Catholic image of the Virgin Mary and an important cultural and religious symbol in Mexico.

Vocabulary Recommendation

*A focused list of **high-value words** from the introduction.*

Vocabulary: *Countercultural, Empowerment, Hierarchy, Indigenous, Intergenerational, Intersectional, Mobilized, Patriarchal, Praxis, Racialization, Rectified, Resilience, Resourceful, Systemic, Testimonio.*

- **Countercultural** – Opposing or challenging the beliefs and values of mainstream society.
- **Empowerment** – Giving people the confidence, ability, or authority to make decisions and take action.
- **Hierarchy** – A system in which people or groups are ranked by authority or importance.
- **Indigenous** – Native to a particular region or descended from its earliest peoples.
- **Intergenerational** – Involving or connecting people from different generations.
- **Intersectional** – Recognizing that different aspects of a person's identity (such as race, gender, and class) can overlap and affect their experiences.
- **Mobilized** – Organized people or resources to take action for a cause or goal.
- **Patriarchal** – Relating to a society or system in which men hold most positions of power and authority.
- **Praxis** – Putting ideas, beliefs, or theories into practical action.
- **Racialization** – The process of treating people differently based on perceived race or ethnicity.
- **Rectified** – Corrected or made right.
- **Resilience** – The ability to recover from difficulties and keep going.
- **Resourceful** – Able to solve problems by making good use of available resources.
- **Systemic** – Existing throughout or affecting an entire system, not just one part.
- **Testimonio** – A first-person narrative that shares personal experiences while connecting them to larger social, historical, or political issues.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Testimonios of Political Activism
Potential Teaching Activities for Vocabulary

Word	Teaching Method
Empowerment	Have students identify a person/event that empowered others. Explain how.
Hierarchy	Build a simple organizational chart (school, sports team, or government) showing levels of authority.
Indigenous	Compare an Indigenous group to a later immigrant group using a Venn diagram.
Intergenerational	Interview a grandparent or older adult about a family tradition and share findings.
Intersectional	Present a short scenario and ask students to identify the different factors that shape the person's experience.
Mobilized	Examine a historical protest and identify how people were organized to take action.
Patriarchal	Compare leadership roles in two societies and discuss how power is distributed.
Praxis	Students write one belief they have and one action that puts that belief into practice.
Racialization	Analyze a historical example of unequal treatment based on race and discuss its effects.
Rectified	Give students incorrect statements and have them rectify (correct) them.
Resilience	Read a short biography and identify moments when the person overcame setbacks.
Resourceful	Present a problem-solving challenge using limited classroom materials.
Systemic	Compare an individual problem with one caused by a larger system using a T-chart.
Testimonio	Read a brief first-person account and discuss how a personal story reflects a larger social issue.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Vocabulary Definitions

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class/Hour: _____

Write the definition of each vocabulary word.

Vocabulary: Countercultural, Empowerment, Hierarchy, Indigenous, Intergenerational, Intersectional, Mobilized, Patriarchal, Praxis, Racialization, Rectified, Resilience, Resourceful, Systemic, Testimonio.

1. **Countercultural** _____

2. **Empowerment** _____

3. **Hierarchy** _____

4. **Indigenous** _____

5. **Intergenerational** _____

6. **Intersectional** _____

7. **Mobilized** _____

8. **Patriarchal** _____

9. **Praxis** _____

10. **Racialization** _____

11. **Rectified** _____

12. **Resilience** _____

13. **Resourceful** _____

14. **Systemic** _____

15. **Testimonio** _____



Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Vocabulary Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____ Class/Hour _____

Vocabulary: Empowerment • Hierarchy • Indigenous • Intergenerational • Intersectional • Mobilized
• Patriarchal • Praxis • Racialization • Rectified • Resilience • Resourceful • Systemic • Testimonio

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. *Resilience* means:

- A. Giving up after failure
- B. Recovering from difficulties
- C. Leading a large group
- D. Solving math problems

2. A *hierarchy* is:

- A. A personal journal
- B. A system of ranked authority
- C. A type of government protest
- D. A family tradition

3. Which example best shows *praxis*?

- A. Reading about leadership
- B. Memorizing vocabulary
- C. Putting beliefs into action
- D. Watching a documentary

4. A *testimonio* is:

- A. A fictional short story
 - B. A first-person account connected to a larger social issue
 - C. A newspaper advertisement
 - D. A scientific report
-

Part II – Matching

Match each word with its meaning.

_____ 5. Mobilized

_____ 6. Resourceful

_____ 7. Rectified

_____ 8. Systemic

A. Corrected or made right

B. Organized people to take action

C. Affecting an entire system

D. Good at solving problems with available resources

Part III – True or False

9. _____ Intergenerational means involving people from different generations.
10. _____ Patriarchal describes a system in which women traditionally hold most positions of authority.

Short Answer

11. Explain the difference between **empowerment** and **mobilized**. Use one complete sentence for each.

12. Choose **one** word from the list (**Indigenous**, **Intersectional**, **Racialization**, or **Resilience**) and write a sentence showing its meaning.



Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Answer Key – Vocabulary Worksheet

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. B – Recovering from difficulties
 2. B – A system of ranked authority
 3. C – Putting beliefs into action
 4. B – A first-person account connected to a larger social issue
-

Part II – Matching

5. B – Mobilized → Organized people to take action
 6. D – Resourceful → Good at solving problems with available resources
 7. A – Rectified → Corrected or made right
 8. C – Systemic → Affecting an entire system
-

Part III – True or False

9. True
 10. False
-

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

11.

- Empowerment: Giving people the confidence, ability, or authority to make decisions and take action.
- Mobilized: Organizing people or resources to work toward a common goal or cause.

12. *(Answers will vary. Sample responses.)*

- Indigenous: Indigenous peoples have lived in the region for thousands of years.
- Intersectional: An intersectional approach recognizes that race, gender, and class can affect a person's experiences.
- Racialization: The group experienced racialization because they were treated differently based on race.
- Resilience: She showed resilience by continuing her education after facing many challenges.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Introduction Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____ Class/Hour _____

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. Which word is explained through context as someone who helps connect workers with jobs?

- A. Patriarchal
- B. Renganchista
- C. Resourceful
- D. Activist

L.9-10.4.a

2. Which statement best expresses the central idea of the introduction?

- A. Most leaders worked alone.
- B. Latina leaders improved their communities through education, activism, and collaboration.
- C. Photography was the author's greatest achievement.
- D. Chicago offered equal opportunities to everyone.

RL.9-10.2

3. Which statement is the author's opinion?

- A. Her father lived in Chicago.
- B. The media wrongly portrayed Mexican Americans as lazy.
- C. She attended the University of Illinois Chicago.
- D. She studied photography.

RL.9.3

4. The statement, "I knew that I wanted something different in life," is an example of:

- A. Irony
- B. Foreshadowing
- C. Hyperbole
- D. Personification

RL.9.6

Part II – Matching

Match the example with the literary skill.

- _____ 5. "Blazed new trails" symbolizes creating opportunities.
 - _____ 6. Readers conclude the author's father was respected because he helped others without pay.
 - _____ 7. Comparing the father to someone entering a house through any available door.
 - _____ 8. *Education / educación*
 - A. Cognate
 - B. Metaphor
 - C. Inference
 - D. Figurative language
-

Part III – True or False

9. _____ The author's father and mother had the same type of work throughout the story.
10. _____ One humorous moment is María Cerda's "two-fer" joke about Mayor Richard J. Daley.
-

Part IV – Short Answer

11. Explain why the author's father is described as **resourceful**.
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-
-
-

12. Name **one** English-Spanish cognate from the introduction and explain why it is a cognate.
-
-
-
-



Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Introduction Worksheet - Answer Key

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **B**

Part II – Matching

5. **D** – Figurative language
6. **C** – Inference
7. **B** – Metaphor
8. **A** – Cognate

Part III – True or False

9. **False**
10. **True**

Part IV – Short Answer (Sample Answers)

11. He found ways to overcome obstacles and helped immigrants find work without expecting payment. The comparison to entering a house through any available door shows his ability to solve problems.

12. Answers will vary. Examples include:

- **education / educación**
- **community / comunidad**
- **politics / política**
- **activism / activismo**

Students should explain that cognates are words in two languages with similar spelling, meaning, or origin.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Introduction Quiz

Name _____ Date _____ Class/Hour _____

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. Based on the introduction, what does a *renganchista* do?
A. Teaches in a bilingual school
B. Connects workers with jobs
C. Runs a photography studio
D. Leads a political campaign
L.9-10.4.a

 2. Which statement best supports the idea that the author's father served his community?
A. He collected old photographs.
B. He accepted payment for every job he found.
C. He helped immigrants find work without expecting money.
D. He worked as a school principal.
RL.9-10.1

 3. The phrase "**blazed new trails**" most nearly means:
A. Traveled through forests
B. Created new opportunities for others
C. Worked on road construction
D. Explored national parks
L.9-10.5a

 4. Which event best demonstrates the author's personal philosophy?
A. Learning photography to challenge stereotypes
B. Moving to a new neighborhood
C. Playing softball as a child
D. Traveling with her father
RI.9-10.1
-

Part II – Matching

Match each example with the correct concept.

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| _____ 5. "I knew that I wanted something different in life." | |
| _____ 6. The father's service leads readers to conclude he earned respect. | |
| _____ 7. "Education / <i>educación</i> " | |
| _____ 8. María Cerda's "two-fer" remark | |
| | A. Cognate |
| | B. Mild humor |
| | C. Inference |
| | D. Foreshadowing |
-

Part III – True or False

9. _____ The introduction shows that the women often worked together across organizations and communities.
10. _____ The author argues that Mexican Americans were accurately portrayed by the media.

Part IV – Short Answer

11. What is a theme that develops throughout the introduction? Support your answer with an example.

12. Explain how the author's father demonstrates **resourcefulness**.



Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Introduction Quiz - Answer Key

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. **B**
2. **C**
3. **B**
4. **A**

Part II – Matching

5. **D** – Foreshadowing
6. **C** – Inference
7. **A** – Cognate
8. **B** – Mild humor

Part III – True or False

9. **True**
10. **False**

Part IV – Sample Answers

11. One theme is that determined leaders improve their communities through education, activism, And cooperation. The author supports this by describing Latina leaders who created new opportunities despite discrimination.
12. The author's father demonstrated resourcefulness by finding ways to help Mexican laborers secure jobs and overcome obstacles, even without receiving payment.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Introduction Worksheet B

Name _____ Date _____ Class/Hour _____

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. Which phrase from the introduction is an example of figurative language?

- A. Civil Rights Movement
- B. A picture is worth a thousand words
- C. Community activism
- D. Family traditions

L.9-10.5a

2. The author's first-person point of view mainly helps readers understand her:

- A. Interest in sports
- B. Personal experiences and cultural background
- C. Favorite books
- D. Travel experiences

RL.9-10.6

3. Which topic is most appropriate for a small-group discussion after reading the introduction?

- A. Types of cameras
- B. Immigration and bilingual education
- C. Weather in Chicago
- D. Popular music of the 1970s

SL.9-10.1a-d

4. Which statement best describes the author's career?

- A. It changed directions several times without a purpose.
- B. It followed a logical path centered on education and community service.
- C. It focused only on photography.
- D. It ended shortly after she became a teacher.

RI.9-10.3

Part II – True or False

9. _____ The author's father demonstrated community activism by helping immigrants find employment.

10. _____ The introduction suggests that personal stories have little value in understanding history.

Part III – Matching

Match each item with the correct answer.

- _____ 5. Reflective, respectful, inspirational
 - _____ 6. Education / educación
 - _____ 7. Civil Rights Movement, bilingual education, immigration
 - _____ 8. Helping immigrants find jobs without pay
- A. Cognate
 - B. Tone
 - C. Community activism
 - D. Historical backdrop

Part IV – Short Answer

11. What was the author's personal philosophy? Give one piece of evidence from the introduction.

12. Explain why the author's career followed a logical path.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Introduction Worksheet B - Answer Key

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. B
2. B
3. B
4. B

Part II – True or False

5. True
6. False

Part III – Matching

7. B – Tone
8. A – Cognate
9. D – Historical backdrop
10. C – Community activism

Part IV – Sample Answers

11. She believed education, preserving history, and community service could create social change. She supported this through teaching, photography, and documenting Latino history.

12. Her career progressed from teacher to photographer, documentary filmmaker, researcher, historian, and editor. Each step supported her goal of educating others and strengthening Latino communities.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Introduction Quiz B

Name _____ Date _____ Class/Hour _____

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. Why does the author include details about her Mexican American upbringing?

- A. To describe family vacations
- B. To show how culture influenced her values and goals
- C. To explain school schedules
- D. To compare different cities

RL.9-10.6

2. Which event best reflects the social and political climate of the 1960s–1970s?

- A. Learning photography for a hobby
- B. Supporting bilingual education and civil rights efforts
- C. Playing neighborhood sports
- D. Moving to a new house

RL.9-10.6

3. Which phrase is an example of figurative language?

- A. Community responsibility
- B. A picture is worth a thousand words
- C. Family traditions
- D. Historical background

L.9-10.5a

4. Which pair is a cognate?

- A. Family / hogar
- B. School / maestro
- C. Politics / política
- D. Leader / jefe

L.9-10.4.a

Part II – True or False

5. _____ The introduction suggests that preserving personal stories helps explain history.

6. _____ The author's career moved randomly from one job to another without a clear purpose.

Part III – Matching

Match each description with the correct term.

- _____ 7. Education, documenting history, and serving the community
 - _____ 8. First-person storytelling influenced by culture and experience
 - _____ 9. Helping immigrants find jobs without accepting payment
 - _____ 10. Reflective and inspirational
- A. Community activism
 - B. Tone
 - C. Personal philosophy
 - D. Point of view

Part IV – Short Answer

- 11.** Identify one topic from the introduction that would make a good small-group discussion.
Explain why.

- 12.** Explain how the author's career shows a commitment to her community.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT
Introduction Quiz B - Answer Key

Part I – Multiple Choice

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **C**

Part II – True or False

5. True
6. False

Part III – Matching

7. **C** – Personal philosophy
8. **D** – Point of view
9. **A** – Community activism
10. **B** – Tone

Part IV – Sample Answers

- 11.** Answers will vary.

Appropriate topics include immigration, bilingual education, civil rights, community activism, preserving personal histories, or the value of *testimonio*.

Students should explain why the topic is worth discussing.

- 12.** The author moved from teaching to photography, documentary filmmaking, research, and writing.

Each role supported her goal of educating others, preserving Latino history, and strengthening her community.

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Questions Section:

1. Find an example where context can be used as a clue to determine word meaning. (L.9-10.4.a)

The word "**renganchista**" is explained through context. The author describes her father finding jobs for newly arrived Mexican workers, then explains that a *renganchista* is the person who connects workers with employment.

2. Early on, would the important people in her personal life do the same type of work? (RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.6)

No. Her father helped Mexican laborers find jobs, her mother managed the household, and later the author chose education, photography, and community activism. Their work differed, though all emphasized helping others.

3. Are there any elements of the story that are funny? (RL.9-10.6, RI.9-10.4)

Very little. The introduction is mostly serious. One mildly humorous moment is María Cerda's joke that Mayor Richard J. Daley got a "two-fer" because David was Mexican and María was Puerto Rican.

4. Where does the text show an example of inference? (RL.9-10.1)

Readers can infer that the author's father was deeply respected because he repeatedly helped immigrants obtain work without accepting payment, viewing it as service to his community.

5. Is there a theme or central idea that develops over the text? (RL.9-10.2)

Yes. The central idea is that Latina leaders transformed their communities through education, activism, and collaboration despite discrimination and barriers.

6. Give an example of word meaning in context. (L.9-10.4.d)

The word "**resourceful**" is understood through the description of the author's father finding ways to overcome obstacles, compared to entering a house through any available door or window.

7. Give an example of foreshadowing. (RL.9.6)

When the author says, "I knew that I wanted something different in life," it foreshadows her later career as an educator, activist, filmmaker, and scholar.

8. What is an example of someone giving an opinion? (RL.9.3)

The author states that media portrayals of Mexican Americans as lazy are false and insists they are hardworking people. This is a clear personal opinion supported by her experience.

9. Are there any complex interactions among the people involved? (RL.9-10.3)

Yes. The women worked within schools, politics, health care, and community organizations while cooperating across generations and ethnic groups to challenge systemic racism and inequality.

10. Are there examples of nuance, figurative language, or unique word relationships? Is there any funny incident? (RL.9-10.3, L.9-10.5)

The comparison of the author's father entering a house through any available door or window is a metaphor for overcoming barriers. The "two-fer" remark by María Cerda provides the chapter's main humorous moment.

11. Are there any words or phrases used in a unique way? Are there any cognates? (RL.9-10.4, L.9-10.5)

The phrase "**blazed new trails**" symbolizes creating opportunities rather than literally making trails. Cognates include **education/educación**, **community/comunidad**, **politics/política**, and **activism/activismo**.

12. Find one example of figurative language, word relationships, or nuance. (L.9-10.5a)

"A picture is worth a thousand words" is figurative language. It expresses that photographs can communicate

ideas more powerfully than lengthy explanations.

13. How does point of view and/or culture shape the content? (RL.9-10.6)

The first-person perspective and the author's Mexican American upbringing shape the narrative by emphasizing bilingualism, family traditions, discrimination, and community responsibility.

14. What elements lend themselves to a small-group discussion? (SL.9-10.1a-d)

Students could discuss immigration, bilingual education, gender roles, racism, community activism, and how ordinary people become leaders.

15. Are there any other relatives involved in political or community activism? (RI.9-10.1)

Yes. Her father actively helped Mexican immigrants find employment and served the community without pay, demonstrating grassroots community activism.

16. What elements lend themselves to a small-group discussion? (SL.9-10.1a-d)

Students could also discuss why preserving personal histories through **testimonio** is important and how individual stories contribute to history.

17. What is the tone or style of the story? (RI.9-10.4, RI.9-10.6)

The tone is reflective, respectful, and inspirational. The style combines memoir, historical background, and social commentary.

18. What is the main social or political backdrop of the time? (RL.9-10.6)

The backdrop includes the Civil Rights Movement, bilingual education, immigration, discrimination, women's leadership, and Latino political organizing in Chicago during the 1960s and 1970s.

19. Give an example of a cognate from the text. (RI.9-10.4, L.9-10.4.a)

Examples include **education/educación**, **community/comunidad**, **politics/política**, and **activism/activismo**. These words have similar spellings and meanings in English and Spanish.

20. Did she have a personal philosophy? How do you know? (RL.9-10.1, RI.9-10.1, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.9)

She believed education, documenting history, and community service could create social change. She consistently used teaching, photography, and scholarship to challenge stereotypes and expand opportunities for Latino communities.

21. Did her career follow a logical path? Why or why not? (RI.9-10.3, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.9)

Her career progressed logically from classroom teacher to photographer, documentary filmmaker, researcher, historian, and editor. Each step built on her goal of preserving Latino history, promoting education, and strengthening her community.

Rita D. Hernández, Ph.D., CLT

Notes from Introduction of book, *Chicago Latina Trailblazers*

1. Latinx is the current form being used today as an inclusive term beyond the gender binary. Sometimes I use Latina/o/x to cover all the terms in use. However, when referring to these women or a particular historical context, I use Latinas/os to refer to both genders, which aligns more closely with the speech patterns of the women themselves.
2. Mirelsie Velázquez, "Looking Forward, Working for Change: Puerto Rican Women and Their Quest for Educational Justice in Chicago," *Centro Journal* 28, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 128.
3. Yolanda López, interview with Cherrie Moraga and Celia Herrera Rodríguez, February 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ0SJn1OCFU>.
4. Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, "Yolanda López: Portrait of the Artist," museum presentation (exhibition dated October 2021–April 2022), <https://mcasd.org/exhibitions/yolanda-lopez-portrait-of-the-artist>.
5. Latina Feminist Group, "Papelitos Guardados: Theorizing Latinidades through Testimonio," Introduction to *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 1–24.
6. Kathryn Blackmer Reyes and Julia E. Curry Rodríguez, "'Testimonio': Origins, Terms, and Resources," *Equity and Excellence in Education* 45, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 525.
7. Karen Dávalos, "Sin Vergüenza: Chicana Feminist Theorizing," *Feminist Studies* 34, nos. 1–2 (2008): 151.
8. Latina Feminist Group, "Papelitos Guardados," 2.
9. María Cerda, interview by Lilia Fernández, Chicago, June 25, 2004.
10. Studs Terkel Radio Archive, "María Cerda and Dick Simpson Discuss Chicago: An Agenda for Change with a Focus on Education," October 8, 1974, WFMT Radio Network, <https://studsterkel.wfmt.com/explore>.
11. Some of the recently published works are Dionne Espinoza, Maylei Blackwell, and María Eugenia Coterá, *Chicana Movidas*; Andrea-Teresa Arenas and Eloisa Gomez, *Somos Latinas*; Leonard G. Ramirez, *Chicanas of 18th Street*; and Theresa Delgadillo, *Latina Lives in Milwaukee*.
12. Maylei Blackwell, *¡Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 2.
13. Maura Toro-Morn, "De Bandera a Bandera (from Flag to Flag): New Scholarship about the Puerto Rican Diaspora in Chicago," *Centro* 28, no. 2 (2016): 4–35.
14. Emma Pérez, "Sexuality and Discourse: Notes from a Chicana Survivor," in *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About*, ed. Carla Trujillo (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1991), 159–84.
15. Aída Hurtado, *Intersectional Chicana Feminisms: Sitios y Lenguas* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2020), 38.
16. Ana Castillo, *Massacre of the Dreamers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994); Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
17. Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*.
18. Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 4, 271.
19. Mirelsie Velázquez, *Puerto Rican Chicago: Schooling the City, 1940–1977* (University of Illinois Press, 2022): 1.
20. Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xiv.
21. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), 43.

22. Velázquez, *Puerto Rican Chicago*; Isaura Pulido, Angelica Rivera, and Anne M. Avilés, eds., *Latina/o/x Education in Chicago: Roots, Resistance, and Transformation* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2022).
23. Hurtado, *Intersectional Chicana Feminisms*, 46–49.
24. Frances R. Aparicio, “Not Fully Boricuas: Puerto Rican Intralatio/as in Chicago,” *Centro Journal* 28, no. 2 (2016): 154; Felix M. Padilla, *Puerto Rican Chicago* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987).
25. Amalia Pallares and Nilda Flores-González, *iMarcha!: Latino Chicago and the Immigrant Rights Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010).
26. Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 271.
27. Carmen Teresa Whalen, “Colonialism, Citizenship, and the Making of the Puerto Rican Diaspora: An Introduction,” in *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Carmen T. Whalen and Victor Vázquez-Hernández (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 25–27; Elena Padilla, “Puerto Rican Immigrants in New York and Chicago: A Study in Comparative Assimilation” (master’s thesis, University of Chicago, 1947); Mérida M. Rúa, *Latino Urban Ethnography and the Work of Elena Padilla* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 101.
28. Richard Santillán, “Rosita the Riveter: Midwest Mexican American Women during World War II, 1941–1945,” *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies: Mexicans in the Midwest* 2 (September 1989): 115–48.
29. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, vol. 1, Population, 1910, Table 35, p. 734; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, vol. 2, Population, 1920, Table 17, p. 630; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Puerto Ricans in the Continental United States: An Uncertain Future* (Washington, DC: GPO, October 1976), 23; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Table DP-1, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics, cited in Whalen, “Colonialism,” 11.
30. Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 42.
31. Deborah E. Kanter, *Chicago Católico: Making Catholic Parishes Mexican* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2020).
32. Rúa, *Latino Urban Ethnography*. Also see Velázquez, *Puerto Rican Chicago*, 55, 82, 91–96; Hernández, “Silent Minority,” 32–33.
33. Mike Amezcua, *Making Mexican Chicago: From Postwar Settlement to the Age of Gentrification* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 217.
34. Nicholas De Genova and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, *Latino Crossings: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and the Politics of Race and Citizenship* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 27. Also stated by Justino Cordero, who moved to Chicago from Mexico in the early 1900s to work at the steel mills of South Chicago (interviews by Rita D. Hernández, tape recordings, Chicago, IL, July 8, 1994, and July 18, 1994, Loyola University Library archives, Chicago). Arturo Velasquez, who came to Chicago as a boy with his mother during the Cristero Wars (1926–1929) in Mexico, also emphasized the stark divisions of neighborhoods upon his arrival in the city. He gave a series of interviews to Rita D. Hernández, beginning in 1979 and continuing through August 21, 2008, when he gave his final interview before his death in 2009 at age 93 (interviews, tape recordings, Chicago, IL, 1979–2008, collection of Rita D. Hernández; oral history. Arturo Velasquez, Mexican businessman, sociopolitical figure, and philanthropist, had a jukebox business which spanned the entire Chicagoland area. He experienced the entire city and suburbs first-hand. Justino Cordero, a U.S. Steel Mill worker, also had first-hand knowledge of the Southeast Side of Chicago’s neighborhoods.
35. De Genova and Ramos-Zayas, *Latino Crossings*, 29–30.
36. Nicholas Jones, Rachel Marks, Roberto Ramírez, and Merarys Ríos-Vargas, “2020 Census Illuminates Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Country,” United States Census Bureau, June 2022.
37. Telephone conversation between Cha Cha Jiménez and Rita D. Hernández, as he lay ill in the hospital, 2020. Cha Cha was still very willing to talk lucidly about the early days of the formation of the Young Lords because of socioeconomic and political injustices.
38. Notable exception: the Young Lords statement on women.
39. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983): 23.
40. Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back*, 23.