

CONFETTI GIRL

Thematic connections

- ❖ Friendship
- ❖ Family
- ❖ Grief
- ❖ Happiness

Curriculum connections

- ❖ Literature
- ❖ Math
- ❖ Art
- ❖ Social Studies

Ages 8 – 12



By Diana López

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Each chapter of *Confetti Girl* begins with a *dicho*, a short Spanish proverb. How do they set the stage for what's to follow? Why have *dichos* been such an important part of Lina's life? Why did her mother want Lina to keep a "brain account" [p. 67] of *dichos*?
2. In what ways is the Mexican-American ancestry of Lina and many of her friends and neighbors in Corpus Christi, Texas, essential to the plot? In what ways is it incidental?
3. What are *cascarones*? Why does Vanessa's recently divorced mother, Ms. Cantu, make so many of them? How do *cascarones* help her avoid her problems? How do they help her enjoy her life?
4. Even though she dies before the story opens, Lina's mother is an important character in the novel. What was she like? Discuss her relationship with her husband and her daughter.
5. Lina loves Ms. Cantu, but she hates being called *pobrecita* by her. Why? What does the word mean?
6. How does Vanessa's new relationship with Carlos strain her long friendship with Lina? What "best friend codes" does Vanessa break? How does Lina respond?
7. Lina calls herself a "facts-and-figures kind of girl" [p. 5], but is she always logical? What are some of the faulty assumptions she makes? How does she make amends?
8. "Books are your best friends," [p. 1] claims one of Mr. Flores' favorite *dichos*. Is that always true for him? How has his reading affected his relationship with Lina? How has it affected her interest in literature? Take note of the books Mr. Flores reads. What do their titles suggest about his state of mind?
9. Why does Lina avoid *Watership Down*? Why does she make up her own plot summaries? Wouldn't it have been less work to just read the book?
10. According to Lina's counselor, writers "make stuff up, and oftentimes, they make stuff up when they are trying to deal with an issue or a problem they're having." [p. 139] Do you agree? Have you ever used writing as a way to work through troubles?
11. *Confetti Girl* tackles some very tough topics, including death and divorce, yet it is never grim. How does the author maintain a light tone throughout? How does the book's title help set its mood?



ACTIVITIES

1. Make your own *cascarones*. Step-by-step instructions lead off the novel. Your class could even sell them at the next school fund-raiser, just as Lina and Vanessa do at their Halloween carnival.
2. Start each day with a *dicho*. Begin by sharing a few of your own favorite proverbs, in Spanish, or English, or any appropriate language. Ask your students to discover their own, either individually or in small groups. At the end of the unit, gather all the proverbs into a classroom booklet or post them on a web page.
3. Mathematical word problems come easily to number-loving Lina. Have her inspire your class to invent their own. Divide students into small work groups, then have each group present their problems for the whole class to solve. Some comic examples of how *not* to write word problems are on page 47, and so is Lina's more successful effort.
4. Stung by her divorce, Ms. Cantu watches a steady diet of male-bashing television. How prevalent are these programs? Ask your students to watch several hours of television primarily pitched for women. Have them take notes on how men are depicted. Back at school, lead a whole class discussion about their findings.
5. Taking words apart can be a great way of uncovering their meaning, or getting them completely wrong, as Lina discovers in Chapter 10. Present your students with some unfamiliar words with familiar roots. Ask them to come up with their own definitions.
6. "No pass, no play" is shorthand for a state law in Texas that requires student athletes to maintain passing grades, or lose their spot on the team. It's the reason Lina is cut from the soccer squad. Have your students research the laws in your state. Are there similar restrictions? If so, how effective have they been at maintaining academic standards?

about the book



Apolonia "Lina" Flores is a sock enthusiast, a volleyball player, a science lover, and a girl who is looking for answers. Even though her house is crammed full of her dad's books, she's having trouble figuring out some big questions, like why her father keeps retreating into his reading, why her best friend is changing their old rules, and, most of all, why her mother had to die last year.

Confetti Girl
By Diana López
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about the author



Diana López grew up in Corpus Christi, Texas, the setting for *Confetti Girl*. She now lives in San Antonio, where she taught in a middle school for nearly a decade and currently teaches English at St. Philip's College. This is her first novel for young readers.