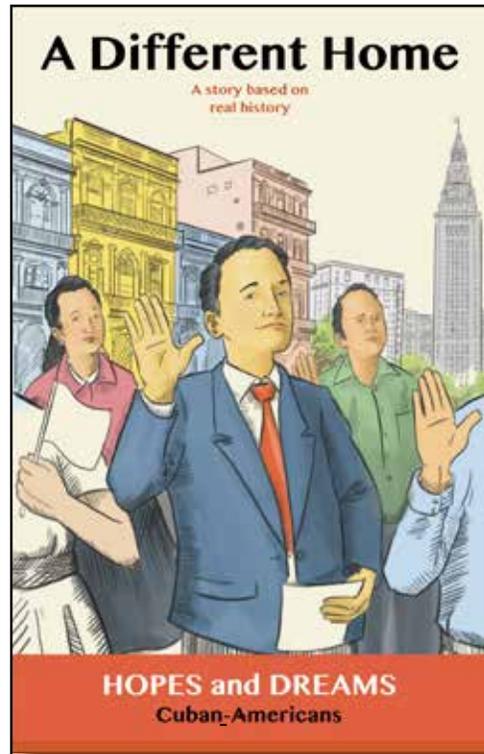


Teacher support materials to use with



Brief Plot Summary

Discussion Questions

Historical Drawings and Photos for Discussion

Detailed Plot Summary

Historical Background

What Did You Read? – Form

Book Report – Form

Word Play Activity

Fill in the Blanks Review Activity

Answer Key

Brief Plot Summary

A Different Home. In 1962, Mario Lopez flies from Cuba to Miami, Florida. The Communists, led by Fidel Castro have taken over Mario's parents' sugar business. His parents want him to go the United States where he will have a better life. He finds work in a grocery store, but he wants a better job. The Cuban refugee center in Miami finds a better job for him in a bank in Ohio. Reluctantly he goes to Ohio where he continues to worry about his parents and his own identity. However, he does well at the bank and decides to become an American citizen, still wondering about his roots -- Is he American or Cuban? At the bank he meets an American woman and they fall in love and marry. Finally they find an apartment after they encounter prejudiced landlords who do not want to rent to a foreigner. They have two daughters and Mario wins an election to a seat on the school board. After many years the Cuban government allows people to leave. Mario hires a boat to bring his parents to Miami. From there they go to Ohio to meet Mario's family. Mario's parents want him and his family to come to Miami, but Mario realizes that Cleveland, Ohio, is different, but it is home.

Think about it

A Different Home

Discussion Questions

Chapter 1

Leaving Home (page 1)

1. Have you ever been on an airplane? How did you feel when you saw the ground below?
2. Why do Mario's parents want him to live in the United States?
3. Do you think the people on the airplane will ever go back to Cuba? Why or why not?
4. What does the last sentence in this chapter tell you about the future?

Chapter 2

Miami, Florida (page 7)

1. Why do you think Mario was not allowed to touch money at the grocery store?
2. What would you do if you had a job that was not right for you?
3. Why did Mario not want to go to the Cuban Refugee Center at first?
What changed his mind?
4. What is a refugee?

Chapter 3

Leaving Miami (page 12)

1. What kind of job would you be best at?
2. If you were Mario would you take the job in Ohio?
3. Does Mario seem worried? Why? What do you worry about?
4. What does it mean when Mario says, "I must do what I must do"?

Chapter 4

Welcome to Ohio (page 19)

1. Why does a church in Ohio sponsor refugees?
2. Why did Mario pay back the \$50? Did he have to pay back the money?
3. Mario holds out hope that either he can go home or his parents can leave Cuba.
What are your feelings about holding out hope?
4. What does it mean to "get on with life"?

Chapter 5

A New Chance (page 25)

1. What does "home is where the heart is" mean?
2. How hard is it to become a U.S. citizen?
3. What is a "good American"?
4. What is a green card?

Chapter 6

Becoming an American (page 32)

1. What does it mean to be a citizen of a country?
2. What are rights and responsibilities of citizenship?
3. Have you ever been saying one thing while you're thinking something else?
4. Is it possible to forget your first home?

Chapter 7

Kathy from Ohio *(page 35)*

1. Why was Kathy not sure if she liked Mario?
2. Have you ever liked or disliked someone before you got to know them?
3. Why can understanding a person help you like them?

Chapter 8

Apartment Hunt *(page 40)*

1. Why was it difficult for Mario and Kathy to find an apartment?
2. Have you ever felt “different”? How do you deal with that feeling?
3. What are your “roots”? How do you keep in touch with them?

Chapter 9

Putting Down Roots *(page 44)*

1. How is Mario putting down his roots in Cleveland?
2. Why is it important for everyone to exercise their right to vote?
3. What makes a house feel like a home?

Chapter 10

Trip to Cuba *(page 50)*

1. Do you think it was a good idea for Mario to visit Cuba?
2. Why did everything in Cuba look the same as it always did?
3. Why did “something” about Cuba not feel like home to Mario?

Chapter 11

Big Plans *(page 55)*

1. Why do you think Mario’s parents finally decide to leave Cuba?
2. What are ways to raise money these days?
3. Do you think Mario’s plan will work? What

Chapter 12

Boat to Miami *(page 59)*

1. Where do you feel most “at home”?
2. Why and how has Mario changed?
3. Mario’s parents are “almost 20 years late.” What does that mean?

Chapter 13

A Different Home *(page 64)*

1. What does “home” mean to you?
2. Where do you think Mario’s parents will spend their “golden years?”
3. Is it possible for a person to truly make a new home?
4. Why is Cleveland a “different” home?

A Different Home

Historical Drawings and Photos for Discussion





Note: This Cuba-Florida maps is available on-line from Wikipedia Commons, which is a great source for copyright free, public domain illustrations and information on the Cuba to Miami migration and related topics.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cuba-Florida_map.jpg



On 29 December 29, 1962, President and Mrs. Kennedy greet members of the Cuban Invasion Brigade in the Orange Bowl Stadium, Miami, Florida. Photograph by Cecil Stoughton, White House, in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston. The photo is in the public domain.

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston is a good source for photographs and information about the early days of U.S. relations with Castro's Cuba, the period when this book starts, (and for the somewhat later Bay of Pigs fiasco and Cuban Missile Crisis). <https://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/The-Bay-of-Pigs.aspx>.



Refugees arriving in Miami in the Mariel Boatlift beginning in 1980.

Approximately 10,000 Marielitos left Cuba for south Florida and were welcomed in refugee centers like this one. Many stayed in Florida, but others migrated to Puerto Rico and to many cities in the U.S.

These photos and many others along with detailed articles on all the history covered in this novel are available on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mariel_boatlift

Other rich sources of information and illustration are <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/castro-announces-mariel-boatlift>

and <http://adst.org/2015/04/a-flood-of-cuban-migrants-the-mariel-boatlift-april-october-1980/>





From another excellent source of photos and history: Freedom Tower in Miami; Refugees arriving by plane; a family at El Refugio, the Miami refugee center; and a charity giving out free used clothing.

<http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/refugee-center.htm>



1960 street scene in Cleveland with Lowe's Park Theater – Cinematreasures.org – shows no signs in Spanish, no sign of Latin culture. Photos of Miami are different.



Cleveland blizzard of 1978 (40 inches of snow) – historic photos of Cleveland – Searching for “Cleveland blizzard 1978” brings up hundreds of photos taken by people trapped in the snow that fell from Illinois to New England. It was particularly deep near the Great Lakes in places like Cleveland. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake-effect_snow. One of many sources for this history is http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/12/revisiting_the_blizzard_of_78.html

Some additional research leads from the author:

<http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/refugee-center.htm>

A collection of photos that would be useful for H&D. However, they are low resolution and no sources are given.

This 1962 “Resettlement Re-cap” document might be worth reprinting:

<http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/exile/cuban-resettlement.pdf>

Miami Herald – photos about Freedom Flights but they look useful and are hi-res.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/fidel-castro-en/article1921750.html>

Library of Congress

Group of Cuban refugees gather in a Manhattan Hotel room in front of television as President Kennedy announces a “quarantine” of their home island during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001696176/>

Surprisingly little in the LOC collection. Try searching “Cuban refugee”

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?q=Cuban%20refugee>

Wikimedia Commons

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cuban_refugees_finally_about_to_fly_from_Guantanamo_to_asylum_in_the_USA_in_September_1996.jpg

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Two_boats_during_Mariel_Boatlift_\(7164184055\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Two_boats_during_Mariel_Boatlift_(7164184055).jpg)

Miami 2012: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:404_Building_-_Miami.jpg

Cuban parade in NJ: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:6.6.10CubanParadeUCByLuigiNovi5.jpg>

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carnival_Liberty_Cuban_Refugees.JPG

A Different Home

Detailed Plot Summary

At the beginning of *A Different Home* in 1960, Mario Perez, 23, is flying from Cuba to Miami. He explains to a boy on the plane that the new Cuban government has taken over his family's sugar-exporting business. His parents have stayed in Cuba to run the government-owned business, but they feel Mario will be better off in the United States. Perhaps Mama and Papa will come later, but Mario hopes instead to return to Cuba when the situation there improves. He watches sadly as the island of Cuba shrinks to a dot in the sea.

Though Miami is run-down, the warm weather and presence of other Cubans suits exiles like Mario. Mario stays in a temporary Cuban house where he meets Domingo Ruiz. Domingo suggests they go to the Cuban Refugee Center for financial and employment assistance, but Mario declares that he will find his own job.

He goes to work as a stock boy in a grocery store. At night he studies to improve his English. The job is not challenging compared to the work he did at his family's business. So he agrees to go to the Center for help. There he is told about a bank position in Ohio, working with Spanish-speaking customers. Reluctantly, he leaves Miami to go north. He is given \$50 to help with his expenses.

A church in Ohio sets up an apartment for Mario. Though he likes his job the Ohio winter makes him wish he could fly back to Cuba. But he realizes the situation in Cuba is worsening. He hears the United States is conducting an airlift out of Cuba. He begs his parent to leave but he does not receive their answer.

Another Cuban, Luis Otero, comes to work at the bank. Mario discusses with Luis the idea of putting his parents on a list the United States is compiling of Cubans wanting to leave. Luis advises this might be dangerous for them and Mario should just get on with his own life. The next day he sends \$50 to the Cuban Refugee Center as thanks for their help.

A few years later, Mama and Papa are still in Cuba. Luis suggests that he and Mario should become citizens so they can travel outside the United States. Mario has avoided this idea until now and he agrees to apply for citizenship.

The two men attend preparation classes, submit the forms, and pass the test. Then they stand up in court and become citizens together. As Mario recites the pledge of allegiance, he wonders if he can still be Cuban in his blood and heart.

Mario meets Kathy when she comes to work at the bank. Though she has never known a Cuban, Kathy likes Mario and invites him to dinner at her parent's house. Her mother's comment about Mario being "Spanish" makes him feel strange, but after he tells stories about his background, Kathy's mother begins to warm up to him.

The next summer, Mario and Kathy get married. Luis Otero is the best man. But when they try to rent an apartment they run into prejudiced landlords. Mario is angered, and Kathy tries to explain that people are afraid of people who seem different. Although Mario no longer wants to return to Cuba, he still wishes his parents could come to the United States, and he could find a way to keep in touch with his roots.

Kathy and Mario settle down in Cleveland and have two daughters, Barbara and Brenda. Mario becomes head of Latin American business at the bank. He and Kathy are active in the children's schooling. A retiring school board member convinces Mario to run for the seat. After campaigning, Mario wins the election. He is thrilled to vote for himself.

After a victory party, Brenda is unhappy because her friends think Mario "speaks funny." Mario explains why he has an accent. As he walks down stairs he looks around the house. He realizes it doesn't look like Cuba and that he still misses his roots.

When travel to Cuba opens up, Mario goes on a group tour. He goes to see Mama and Papa whose lifestyle is much poorer than it once was. He tries to convince them to come to the United States and retire. Papa says they will contact him if that becomes possible. Mario realizes that Cuba has changed; it no longer feels like home.

Three years after Mario's trip, the Cuban government decides to allow people to leave. Mario waits for word from Papa. His call comes at last. Mario raises money to hire a boat from Miami to pick up his parents and others in Mariel. As he waits in Miami for the boat to return, he experiences the revitalized Cuban-influenced Miami. For the first time in 20 years he feels Cuban. Being in Miami helps Mario see a part of his Cuban roots. On the third day the boat appears and Mama and Papa are on it. He flies his parents to Ohio to meet his family. It is a wonderful moment, and he realizes that Cleveland is home.

A Different Home

Historical Background

When Fidel Castro assumed power in Cuba in January, 1959, Cubans were at first free to leave. The first exiles were members of the overthrown Batista government. When the new communist government took over private businesses, farms, and ranches, many of their owners left the country. Some, though their property had been confiscated, stayed to operate their businesses in a different government-dictated form. Next to leave were professionals, merchants, skilled workers, and military people.

Over 800,000 Cubans sought refuge in the United States during the 1960s, most of them hoping that someday they would return home. In fact, some formed a para-military group and attempted to invade. But they were not successful.

The United States welcomed the first large wave of Cubans like no other previous group of exiles. A federal agency formed in 1961 spent 1.3 billion dollars to support these exiles from communism. The United States even sponsored two major airlifts to bring people out. Cubans were also allowed to bypass some immigration red tape to achieve permanent resident status. Seeing that the situation in Cuba was not going to change, many became U.S. citizens.

These middle-class Cubans were generally well-educated and skilled. They settled primarily in the Miami area, where they developed a prosperous Cuban presence, now accounting for over half of Miami's population. However, significant Cuban communities also grew in New York City, as well as in Union City, Elizabeth, and West New York, New Jersey, New Orleans and Indianapolis. Most Cubans succeeded in American society much faster than people in most other immigrant groups.

By the mid-1960s, letters and phone calls were still flowing from the United States to relatives in Cuba, but it became increasingly difficult to get both communications and people out of Cuba. Travel to and from Cuba was cut off until the late 1970s, when regulated tour groups were allowed in, but only Cubans over age 60 were allowed to visit the United States. With food rationing in effect, tourists had to stay in hotels where they took their meals, except perhaps for brief visits in the homes of relatives. They were allowed to spend money only in certain places in the vicinity of their hotels, and they were not allowed to conduct business. Travel tightened up again in the 1980s.

In 1980, a small group of Cubans took refuge at the Peruvian embassy in Havana, asking to leave the country. Surprisingly, Castro granted them permission, whereupon thousands more Cubans gathered at the embassy. The Cuban community in the United States responded by sending boats to pick up relatives and friends at Mariel harbor. But Castro tricked the United States by sending people from mental institutions and prisons along with ordinary Cubans. When the boatlift ended, 125,000 Cubans had obtained refugee status in the United States.

Relations between the two countries remained cool during the three decades after 1980, but in 2015, the United States and Cuba restored diplomatic relations. In late 2016, Fidel Castro died.

Name _____

What Did You Read?

Write the answers to these questions about *A Different Home*.

1. What country was Mario Perez' first home? _____

2. Why did Mario Perez' parents send him the United States? _____

3. What was one reason Mario did not want to move to Ohio? _____

4. What was Mario's new job at the bank? _____
5. Why did Mario send the Cuban Refugee Center \$50? _____

6. What did Luis talk Mario into doing? _____
7. Why did Mario and Kathy have a hard time finding an apartment?

8. What part of himself was Mario looking for? _____

9. What was one thing that made Mario feel Cuban? _____

10. How did Mario feel about Cuba when he visited it? _____

11. How did Mario feel about Miami after he visited it? _____

12. How did Mario bring Mama and Papa to the United States? _____

13. Where was Mario's real home? _____

Book Review

Book Title _____

Student's Name _____

The people in this book came from _____

I read this book because _____

Is this book interesting? Why or why not? _____

The best part of the story is _____

The worst part of the story is _____

My favorite person in the story is _____

because _____

The main thing I learned from this book is that _____

Too many hard words? yes no Examples: _____

Too many long sentences? yes no Examples: _____

The length of the books is: too long / too short / about right

Tell a friend to read this book? yes / no Why? _____

Name _____

Word Play: Who Said It?

Match the quote on the left with the person who said it.

1. Isn't that up north?" / A. said Luis.
2. "What are you good at?" _____ B. laughed Kathy.
3. "We can go to El Refugio," _____ C. Mario asked her.
4. "I don't think you'd like this apartment," _____ D. said the man.
5. "You will be all right," _____ E. said Domingo.
6. "I must go!" _____ F. said Mario.
7. "Leave Cuba now!" _____ G. Mario told the boy.
8. "We should be back in a few days," _____ H. asked Mario.
9. "What if they don't like me?" _____ I. the woman asked.
10. "Why don't you bring them to Miami?" _____ J. the landlord said.
11. "We must live our lives here," _____ K. asked Papa.
12. "I will find my own job," _____ L. he begged them.
13. "I'm too shy, but what about Mario?" _____ M. cried Mario.

Fill in the Blanks

Review Activity

A Different Home. In 1962, Mario Lopez flies from Cuba to _____, Florida. The Communists, led by Fidel Castro have taken over Mario's parents' _____ business. His parents want him to go the United States where he will have a _____ life. He finds work in a _____ store, but he wants a better job. The Cuban _____ center in Miami finds a better _____ for him in a _____ in Ohio. He is not sure that it is a good idea, but he goes to Ohio where he continues to _____ about his _____ and his own identity. However, he does well at the bank and decides to _____ an American citizen, still wondering about his _____ Is he American or Cuban? At the bank he meets an _____ woman and they fall in love and _____. Finally they find an _____ after they encounter prejudiced _____ who do not want to rent to a foreigner. They have two _____ and Mario wins an election to a seat on the school _____. After many years the _____ government allows people to leave. Mario hires a _____ to bring his parents to Miami. From there they go to Ohio to meet Mario's _____. Mario's parents want him and his family to come to _____, but Mario realizes that Cleveland, Ohio, is _____, but it is home.

Full text of the fill in the blanks review activity

A Different Home. In 1962, Mario Lopez flies from Cuba to Miami, Florida. The Communists, led by Fidel Castro have taken over Mario's parents' sugar business. His parents want him to go the United States where he will have a better life. He finds work in a grocery store, but he wants a better job. The Cuban refugee center in Miami finds a better job for him in a bank in Ohio. Reluctantly he goes to Ohio where he continues to worry about his parents and his own identity. However, he does well at the bank and decides to become an American citizen, still wondering about his roots -- Is he American or Cuban? At the bank he meets an American woman and they fall in love and marry. Finally they find an apartment after they encounter prejudiced landlords who do not want to rent to a foreigner. They have two daughters and Mario wins an election to a seat on the school board. After many years the Cuban government allows people to leave. Mario hires a boat to bring his parents to Miami. From there they go to Ohio to meet Mario's family. Mario's parents want him and his family to come to Miami, but Mario realizes that Cleveland, Ohio, is different, but it is home.

Answer Key

“What Did You Read?” questions are objective in nature; however, in some cases the answers may not be derived from the book verbatim. The answers given below are intended as guidelines to be used in conjunction with the teacher’s judgement that the question has been satisfactorily answered. The answers to the “Word Play” exercise should be exactly as given in this answer key, except where specifically noted.

What Did You Read?

1. Cuba
2. to work; because he would be better off
3. cold/ no Cubans/ far from Miami
4. to work with Spanish-speaking people
5. He was paying them back.
6. becoming a U.S. citizen
7. because of Mario’s Spanish name and accent
8. his (Cuban) roots
9. visiting Miami/ food/music
10. It looked the same, but it felt different.
11. He felt good, but it was not home.
12. by renting a boat
13. Cleveland, Ohio, with his family.

Word Play: Who Said It?

1. H 2. I 3. E 4. J 5. G 6. M 7. L 8. D 9. C 10. K 11. A 12. F 13. B

Fill in the Blanks Review

Miami, sugar, better, grocery, refugee, job, bank, worry, parents, become, roots, American, marry, apartment, landlords, daughters, board, Cuban, boat, family, Miami, different