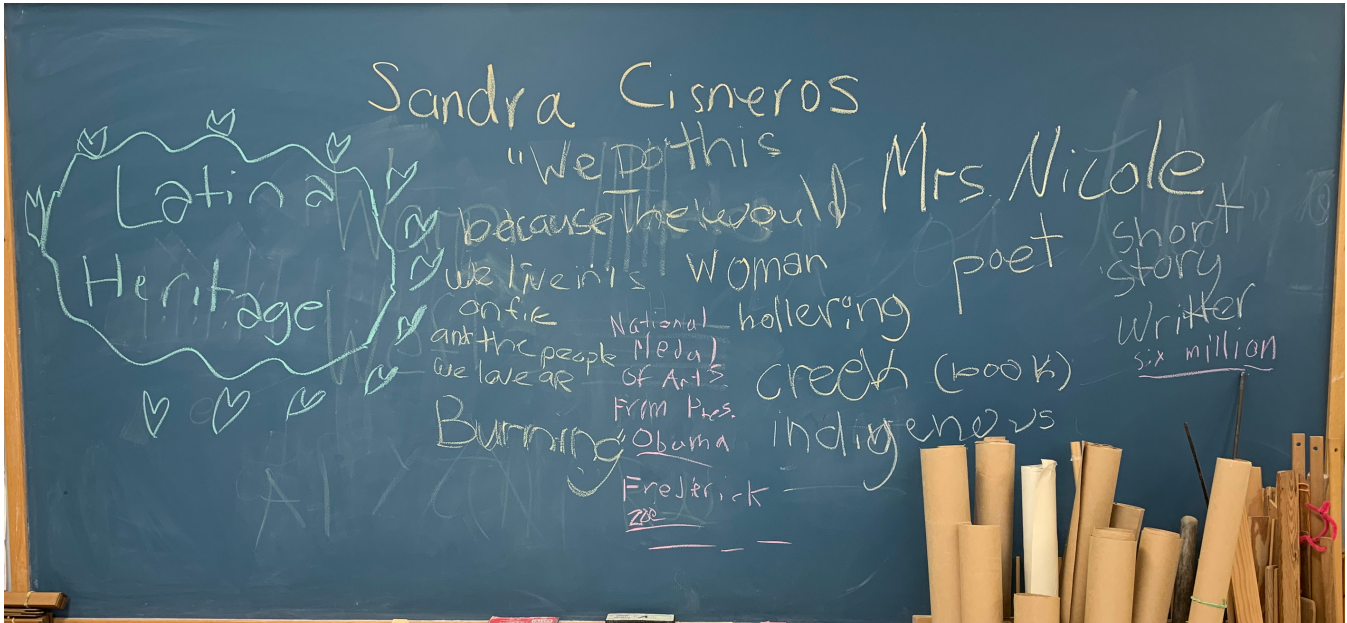


# CULTURAL ROOTS HOMESCHOOL CO-OP

*Middle Grade Book Studies Group  
The Story of The House on Mango Street*



The Middle Grades group engaged in a close reading of Sandra Cisneros' widely acclaimed book, *The House on Mango Street*.

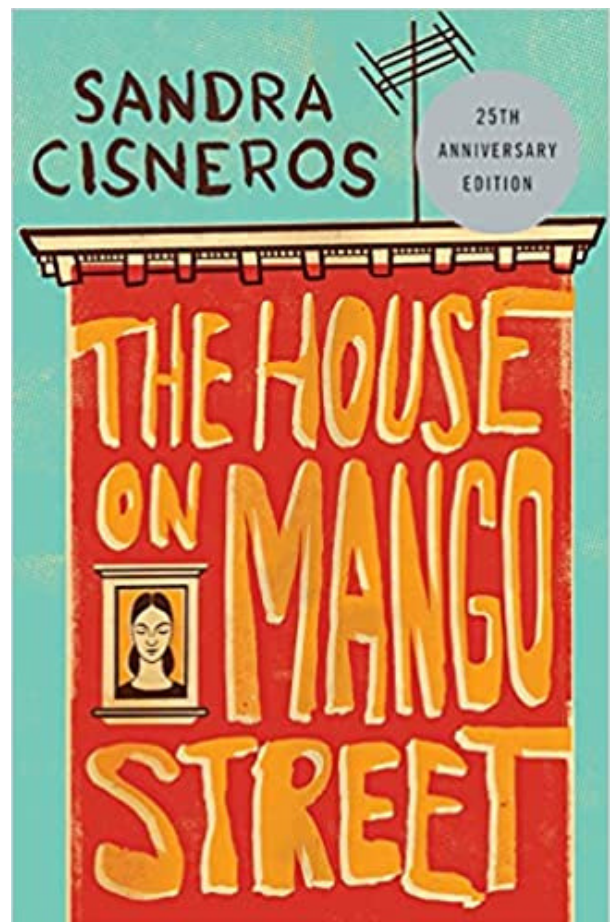
We researched about the author and wrote our own Oriki to describe ourselves. Oriki is form of "praise poetry" used by the Yoruba speakers of West Africa. It's a personal hype story, if you will, where bragging is absolutely essential.

We dug into *The House on Mango Street* and discussed the themes that resonated with us including: community, home, age, and belonging. We also discussed our favorite vignettes (chapters) and the various literary functions that Cisneros uses to make the community and the characters come alive.

Staying close to her style of writing, we decided to write our own vignettes to share a bit about our neighborhoods, communities and loved ones.

It's been a real pleasure working with your children.

*Hollee Freeman, PhD*



**VENETA: THE NICE LADY NEXT DOOR**  
BY KENNEDY

NEXT DOOR IS THE HOUSE THAT WAS HAUNTED. THE HOUSE THAT THE YOUNG ME FEARED. THIS WAS THE HOUSE WHERE THE WITCH LIVED. EVERY CHRISTMAS OUR DRONE WOULD GET STUCK ON HER ROOF, NO ONE WANTED TO GO OVER AND GET IT. NO ONE HAD BEEN IN HER HOUSE BEFORE. NO ONE KNEW WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE. AND NO ONE WANTED TO KNOCK ON WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS A WITCH'S HOUSE. BUT THE CURRENT ME NOW FINDS THERE WAS NOTHING TO FEAR. THE DAY SHE LEFT, THE SPELL SEEMED TO DISAPPEAR. AS SHE DROVE AWAY, SHE SMILED FOR THE FIRST TIME AND WAVED GOODBY. IT WAS A WAVE SO RARE I ALMOST CRIED. SO, NOW I KNOW NO WITCH LIVED THERE, JUST A NICE PERSON WITH A SMILE RARELY SHARED.



**NOTE: SOFIA WRITING IN 1ST PERSON AS ESPERANZA**

MY NEIGHBORHOOD ISN'T THE BEST NEIGHBORHOOD. IT HAS A LOT OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE THERE. I'LL START WITH MY HOME. IT'S OLD AND RAGGEDY. SOMEONE ONCE SAID, "YOU LIVE THERE?!" AS I NODDED AND POINTED TO THE THIRD FLOOR WHERE I LIVE. I GUESS SHE SAID THAT BECAUSE WE HAD WOOD BARS NAILED ON THE WINDOW (BY MY PAPA) AND PEELING PAINT.

THERE IS A LADY NAMED EDNA WHO HAS A BUILDING NEXT TO ME. I KNOW THAT SHE USED TO HAVE A BUILDING AS BIG AS A WHALE BUT HER BROTHER SOLD IT. EVEN THOUGH HER MOTHER SAID, "NO, NO, DON'T EVER SELL IT" AND NEXT THING YOU KNOW SHE CLOSED HER EYES AND HE SOLD IT. THERE IS A MAN WE CALL "JOE THE BABY-GRABBER" AND CATHY LIVES NEXT DOOR TO HIM. SHE TELLS ME TO "KEEP AWAY FROM HIM, HE'S FULL OF DANGER". CATHY IS A "QUEEN OF CATS" BECAUSE SHE HAS SO MANY OF THEM. SHE HAS BABY CATS, SKINNY CATS, BIG CATS, SICK CATS WALKING ON THE DINNER TABLE CATS, ASLEEP LIKE DONUTS CATS, AND ON TOP OF THE REFRIGERATOR CATS. OH AND THERE'S BENNY AND BIANCA WHO OWN A CORNER STORE, AND THEY'RE OKAY IF YOU DON'T LEAN ON THE CANDY COUNTER. THEY'RE ALSO TWO GIRLS (I THINK THEY'RE RAGGEDY AS RATS) THAT LIVE ACROSS THE STREET BUT YOU PROBABLY DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THEM.

IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD THERE ARE FEW BUTTERFLIES AND FLOWERS AND MOST THINGS THAT ARE BEAUTIFUL.

-ESPERANZA (ME (SOFIA) )

## GOOCHLAND

by Rayne Brooks

MY COUNTY IN THE COUNTRY IS FILLED WITH NATURE FROM THE MANY STREAMS AND CREEKS TO THE MUSHROOMS ON DEAD, DAMP TREES. THE PEOPLE ARE MAINLY NICE HERE IN GOOCHLAND. WE HAVE EVERYTHING: SUBWAY, MCDS, HARDEE'S AND DOMINOES. IF EVERYWHERE HAD ZOOMBIES EXCEPT MY COUNTY, WE COULD LIVE FOR YEARS !

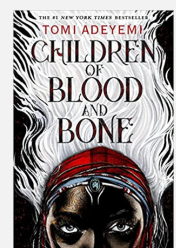
\*\*\*\*\*

## OUR NEXT BOOK !

## THE CHILDREN OF BLOOD AND BONE

TOMI ADEYEMI'S DEBUT NOVEL IS THE START OF WHAT PROMISES TO BE AN EPIC, ADDICTIVE NEW SERIES. THE CHILDREN OF BLOOD AND BONE IS INFLUENCED BY ADEYEMI'S WEST AFRICAN HERITAGE, AND IN IT SHE BENDS RELIGIOUS DEITIES (THE ORISHA) AND A DIVERSE LANDSCAPE INTO A REFRESHING NEW TAKE ON FANTASY... THE CHILDREN OF BLOOD AND BONE TAKES ON INJUSTICE, DISCRIMINATION, AND A STRUGGLE FOR CHANGE.

-- SEIRA WILSON  
FOR THE AMAZON  
BOOK REVIEW



None for Jaya! None for Jordyn!

We would always go to Rachel's house and beg for hot cheetos. She would eventually give in and get them. But she would always say None for Jaya! I felt so bad for Jaya so I snuck some to her.

Once we were painting at Rachel's house and decorating cardboard. We painted houses and cars, plants and flowers but when Jaya came, she'd say none for Jaya!

Whenever we'd go to Jordan and Lily's house and everybody got their scooters out, when Jaya tried to get hers, they'd kick and throw it and keep it away from her.

None for Jaya! None for Jaya! They all repeated it.

None for Jaya!

Jaya tried to brush it off, but she once gave in and cried.

I stood up for her.

I took Rachel's scooter. None for Rachel!

I took Jackson's phone. None for Jackson!

Josiah screamed when I threw his helmet. None for Josiah!

Jace hated me when I kicked his scooter. None for Jace!

Everybody got mad and threw my scooter away. None for Jordyn!

They sang.

Jaya hugged me. I knew you'd do anything for me.

The next day it was stuck in my head.

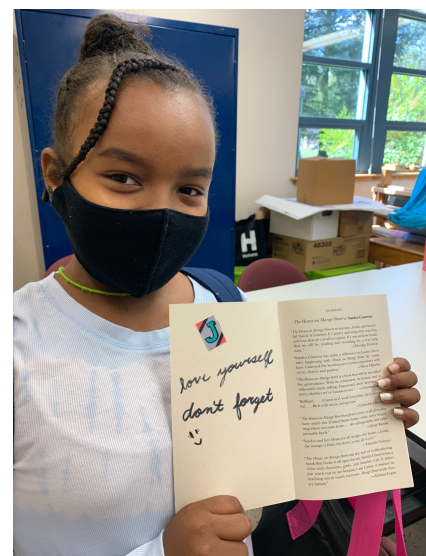
None for Jordyn!

None for Jordyn!

None for Jordyn!

*by Jordyn Harris*

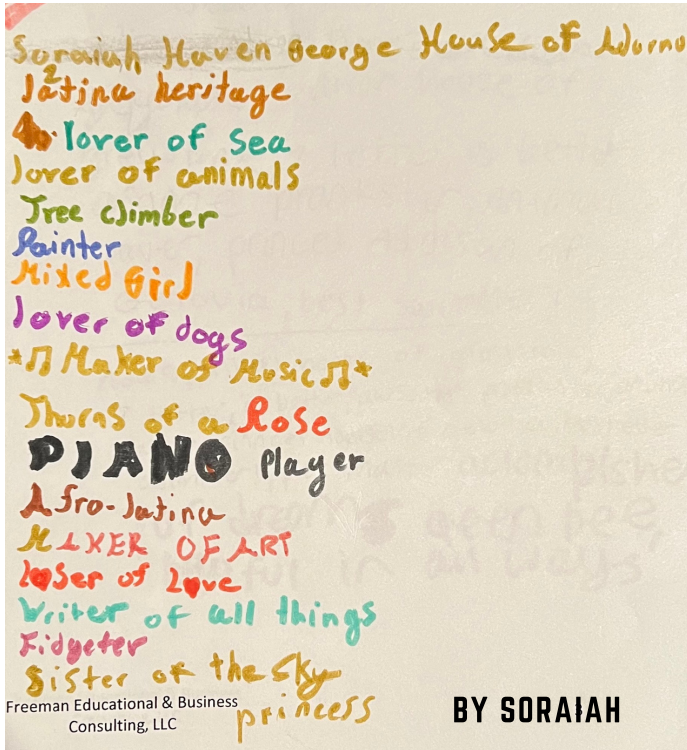
note: In *The House on Mango Street*, Sandra Cisneros does not always use conventions of print. We discussed this in the book club and we surmised that this adds to the lyrical quality of the stories. The students in the book club are writing in this style.



# ORIKI (Ori-head, Ki- to greet or praise)

AN ORIKI IS A MANTRA IN WHICH YOU PRAISE/GREET YOURSELF AND SPEAK LIFE TO YOUR DESTINY.

IT LETS PEOPLE KNOW WHO YOU WERE, WHO YOU ARE, AND WHO YOU WILL BE

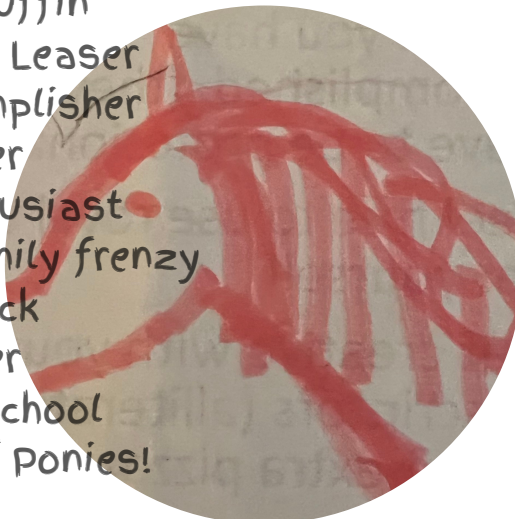


Addie Lillian House of Greystone, 7 letters is better, awesome prankster, animal saver, princess Addison of Genovia, best ever swimmer! Pet master, accomplisher of dreams, queen bee, beautiful in all ways.  
By Addie



Sofia Araceli Dorantes  
of House Ruffin  
Rider, Pony Leaser  
Goal accomplisher  
BLM Believer  
Cookie Enthusiast  
Forever family frenzy  
Lover of Luck  
Friend Finder  
Seeker of School  
Princess of Ponies!

by Sofia



Kennedy House of Wright,  
wonderfilled, hard work only never wishing to be a star, animal lover, death watcher, horror obsessed, quick with words, loves to life, lover of pranks and making people laugh. Royaly amazing at convincing Jordan to give her stuff.

by Kennedy