



Mami's Coquí Song

La canción del coquí de Mami

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TEACHER'S GUIDE

A classroom companion for grades K-3

Bilingual literacy • Culture • Belonging

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Planning the Unit

Grades K-3 • Three 30-45 minute lessons

- 1

About the Story
Valentina remembers Mami through the song of the coquí, the care of her relatives, and the sights, sounds, and tastes of Puerto Rico.
- 2

Essential Questions
How can a sound or tradition hold a memory? What helps Valentina feel connected? How do illustrations reveal feelings?
- 3

Learning Outcomes
Retell key events; identify emotions, sensory details, and symbols; support ideas using illustrations; and respond through speech, writing, or art.
- 4

Preparation
Have the book, drawing paper, art materials, and optional authentic coquí audio available.

Facilitation Note
Mami dies in this story. Preview the text, respect student privacy, provide alternate ways to respond, and connect students with support when appropriate.

Instructional Arc
Lesson 1: Sounds of home • Lesson 2: Culture and connection • Lesson 3: Memory and hope

UNIT AT A GLANCE
A predictable three-part structure supports literacy, belonging, and thoughtful discussion.

1 NOTICE & LISTEN	Read and notice the coquí’s call, sensory details, and feelings.
2 CONNECT & INTERPRET	Trace family care, language, and the cultural details that connect Valentina to home.
3 RETELL & RESPOND	Sequence the story; use words, pictures, or bilingual responses to explain its meaning.

ACCESS & PARTICIPATION
Offer multiple ways to respond: drawing, speaking, partner talk, shared writing, or home language. Participation never requires sharing private experiences.

Lesson 1: Sounds of Home

30–45 minutes

1 Before Reading

Study the story’s opening. What clues show where Valentina is and what the coquí might mean to her?

2 During Reading

Pause when Mami describes the coquí’s song. Notice repeated sounds, sensory details, and the interplay of English and Spanish.

3 After Reading

Students draw a real or imagined sound connected to a feeling. Sentence frame: “I hear _____. It makes me feel _____.”

4 Evidence of Learning

Explain how the coquí connects Valentina to Mami or Puerto Rico using one specific illustration or story detail.

Discussion Moves

Ask: “What do you see that makes you think that?” Accept oral, drawn, or bilingual responses.

Differentiation

K–1: label a drawing. Grades 2–3: write 2–3 explanatory sentences using story evidence.

Quick Check

Listen for a sound, a feeling, and a clear connection between the coquí and home.

TEACHER IMPLEMENTATION NOTES

Suggested pacing

5 min connect • 15 min read and notice • 15 min student response • 5 min reflection

Evidence prompt

Which detail from the book helps you make that connection?

Materials

Book, paper, crayons, and optional audio of an authentic coquí call

Lesson 2: Culture and Connection

30–45 minutes

1 Before Reading

Introduce coquí, abuela, abuelo, and jíbaras. Invite multilingual observations without asking one child to represent a whole culture.

2 During Reading

Notice how Abuela, Abuelo, and Tío Javier support Valentina through stories, music, cooking, and family presence.

3 After Reading

Create a connection web: place Valentina in the center and add relatives, traditions, and places that sustain belonging.

4 Evidence of Learning

Identify two examples of family support and point to corresponding actions or illustrations.

Discussion Moves

Compare “What Valentina notices” with “How her family responds.” Ground responses in evidence.

Differentiation

K–1: illustrate one act of care. Grades 2–3: explain two ways heritage and family provide support.

Quick Check

Students name one cultural detail and explain how it contributes to the story.

TEACHER IMPLEMENTATION NOTES

Suggested pacing

5 min introduce vocabulary • 15 min read and discuss • 15 min connection web • 5 min share

Evidence prompt

Where in the story do we see a family member showing care?

Equity reminder

Welcome multiple family structures and ways of expressing culture

Lesson 3: Memory and Hope

30–45 minutes

1 Before Reading

Explain that Mami has died in the story. Offer a private, character-focused alternative to personal sharing.

2 During Reading

Trace Valentina's feelings when she hears the coquí and receives comfort from her family. What changes? What remains?

3 After Reading

Create a memory garden with images and words about a comforting person, place, sound, or imagined experience.

4 Evidence of Learning

Retell a beginning, middle, and ending event and describe how Valentina's feelings develop.

Discussion Moves

Ask: "What does the character feel?" rather than requiring students to discuss their own losses.

Differentiation

K–1: sequence three illustrations. Grades 2–3: write a paragraph explaining change with evidence.

Quick Check

Look for accurate sequencing, emotion words, and an explanation of how support helps.

TEACHER IMPLEMENTATION NOTES

Suggested pacing

5 min set expectations • 15 min read • 15 min memory garden • 5 min reflect

Evidence prompt

What changes for Valentina, and what helps her feel supported?

Student choice

Offer a fictional or character-centered response instead of personal disclosure

My Sound, My Story

Choose a sound that brings a feeling or memory.

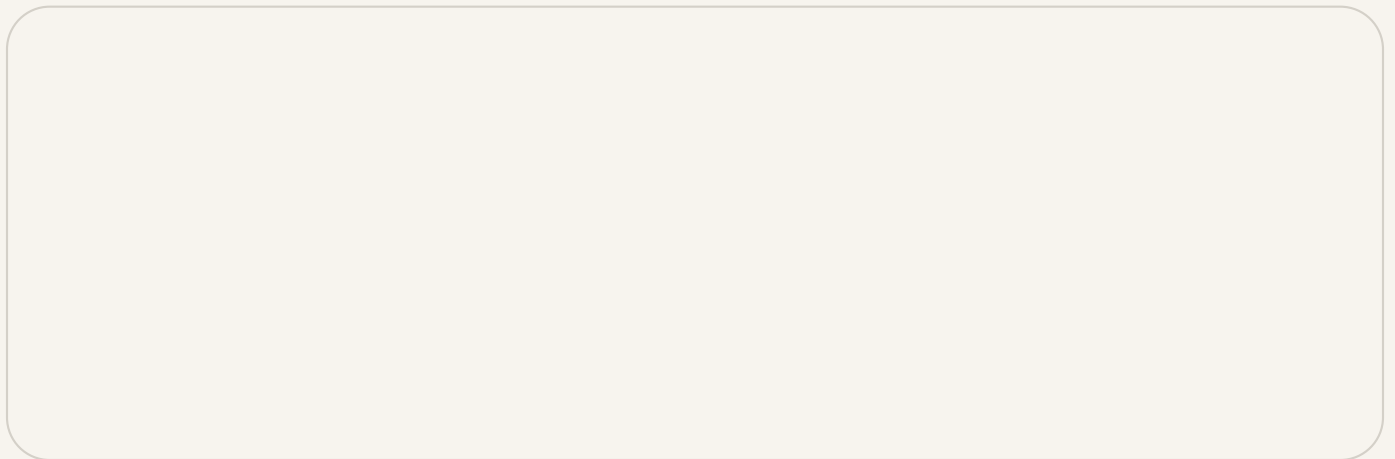
Name / Nombre: _____

I hear...

It makes me feel...

It reminds me of...

Draw your sound below.



Valentina's Journey

Show what happens and how Valentina feels.

Name / Nombre: _____

Beginning

Middle

Ending

LOOK BACK AT THE STORY

Use a word or short phrase to describe how Valentina feels at the beginning, middle, and end.

Extend the Learning

Flexible classroom and family connections

1 Bilingual Word Discovery

Illustrate coquí, mami, abuela, abuelo, and jíbaras; discuss meanings and how bilingual words enrich the book.

2 Art + Science

Listen to a real coquí call when possible. Compare the sound's natural function with its symbolic role in the story.

3 Family Connection — Optional

Invite families to share a meaningful sound, story, food, or song without requiring personal disclosure or one particular language.

4 Exit Ticket

Complete: "The coquí represents ___ because ___." or "Valentina feels supported when ___."

Assessment Lens

Can students retell the plot, explain one symbol, locate evidence, and respond respectfully to emotions?

Teaching Principle

Invite participation, not disclosure. Protect student choice and honor every family structure.

SAMPLE SUCCESS CRITERIA

A strong response names a story detail, describes its meaning, and connects it to a feeling, tradition, or relationship.

FACILITATION CHECKLIST

Before teaching: preview sensitive content. During reading: honor both languages. After reading: invite varied responses and observe who may need additional support.