Overview

Background Victor Martinez’s skillful use of figurative language began long before he became a writer. His Spanish-speaking family often used images, metaphors, and similes to convey their thoughts and feelings. Martinez drew from his family’s language-rich past to write *Parrot in the Oven*. For example, the father of the protagonist calls his son a parrot in an oven to describe his naive outlook on the world.

The figurative language that characterizes Martinez’s work also stems from years of exploring his own ideas and emotions through poetry. As a fiction writer, he had to learn to focus on people and events. Yet, his ability to focus on the internal life of an adolescent, and translate that tumultuous phase of life into a story, proves to be a successful combination of his literary strengths.

Book Summary Many elements in *Parrot in the Oven* are drawn from Martinez’s personal experiences of dealing with poverty, racial discrimination, and violence. With these insights and his powerful literary talent, Martinez convincingly portrays a youth who struggles to form his identity and secure his place in the world.

About the Author

Born in Fresno in 1954, Victor Martinez grew up in the housing projects of central California. He was the fourth child in a family of twelve children. As a Mexican American, he struggled to find a sense of belonging. The son of migrant workers, Martinez worked in labor camps when he was four or five years old.

Teachers played an important role in Martinez’s life. They encouraged him to think about the opportunities that an education could create for students like him from lower income backgrounds. After high school, Martinez attended California State University, where he studied creative writing under renowned poet, Phillip Levine. Later, Martinez earned a graduate fellowship at Stanford University. Martinez then moved to San Francisco to teach poetry to high school students.
Reading the Book

There are several options for reading *Parrot in the Oven*. They include:

- **Whole Class** Assign sections of the book and discussion dates using the planner on Student Journal, page 1. After students read a section and respond to the corresponding Student Journal pages, have a class discussion. At the end of the book, the class meets for The Exchange.

- **Small Groups** Read the book’s Introduction with the group. Group members then read an agreed-upon number of pages, complete the corresponding Student Journal pages, and meet to discuss. When they finish the book, they meet again for The Exchange. Use the planner on Student Journal, page 1 to establish meeting times.

- **Independently** Students read the book on their own and then meet as a group for The Exchange. Use the planner on Student Journal, page 1 to establish the meeting time.

- **Guided Reading** Have students read Student Journal, page 2 and monitor their discussion of the What If? scenario. Read aloud the book Introduction to give students background on the book. As students read, use the Before You Move On questions to guide comprehension. Use the Look Ahead to set a focus for reading the next set of pages. At the end of each section, assign the appropriate Student Journal pages. Discuss the pages before starting the next section. Establish a date for The Exchange and record it on the planner.

Getting Started

Have students read What If? on Student Journal, page 2 and discuss the scenario. Encourage students to describe the similarities and differences between the scenario and their lives and imagine how the situation would affect them.

- Have students write their responses to the three questions below the scenario and compare answers with a partner or the group.

- Have students discuss how the situation might relate to The Exchange question and then write a brief summary of their discussion in the Student Journal.
Introduction

Parrot in the Oven

Have students read the book Introduction. Check their comprehension with the three follow-up questions on Student Journal, page 3.

The Introduction includes information about:
- Fresno, California—the setting of the story
- how the author’s experiences influenced the book
- the history of gangs in East Los Angeles

After you read the Introduction, answer these questions to check your understanding.

1. How did the author’s own experiences influence the plot of the book?
   Victor Martinez faced discrimination as a Mexican American. His experiences with poverty and racial discrimination show up in the plot of the book.

2. When the author was growing up, many Mexican American boys joined gangs. Why?
   There were limited options available. Gangs offered a sense of belonging and brotherhood.

3. How did Mexican American gangs in Los Angeles change over the years?
   In the 1920s and 1930s, they called themselves “boy gangs” and had a good reputation in the community. Later they became dangerous when they became involved in crime and drug abuse.

Introduction: Key Concepts

Have students study the first Key Concept with the help of the graphic organizer on Student Journal, page 4. After studying the example, they should create similar graphic organizers to focus their understanding of the remaining Key Concepts.

Word Web

Study the Word Web for adapt. What words does adapt make you think of? Write a sentence using the word adapt.

On a separate sheet of paper, create a similar Word Web for each of the Key Concept words. Then write a sentence for each one.
Parrot in the Oven

Pages 13–51 Answers for Before You Move On

Chapters 1–3

Page 28

1. **Narrator** Who is telling the story? How is the narrator different from Nardo?
   
   Manny is the narrator. Manny thinks he is like his grandpa’s side of the family because Manny is a hard worker. Manny thinks his brother, Nardo, is lazy.

2. **Inference** On pages 23–24, why don’t Manny and Nardo try to run away like the others when the van arrives?
   
   Manny and Nardo are U.S. citizens and have the right to work in the field. The others crossed the border from Mexico into the United States illegally to find work.

Page 41

1. **Metaphor** Manny says his father compares his family to pennies. What does he mean?
   
   Manny’s father compares his family to pennies because he feels they are not worth as much as others. He knows they are poor and do not have as many advantages as other people.

2. **Inference** On page 35, why does Manny lie to his mother about being beaten up by Stinky?
   
   Manny does not tell his mother about Stinky because he does not want to be labeled as a coward. He would rather suffer his injuries than lose his pride.

Page 51

1. **Comparisons** Reread page 43. Compare how Manny’s parents feel about his education.
   
   Unlike Dad, Mom values education. She believes that going to a better school will give Manny better opportunities. Manny’s father thinks school is a waste of time.

2. **Character’s Motive** Reread pages 50–51. Why does Manny’s father take away his money?
   
   His father is prejudiced against white people. He feels they only pity and look down on Mexicans. He does not want their charity. He is also selfish and wants the money for himself.

Respond to Chapters 1–3

1. **Personal Response** Manny’s history teacher, Mr. Hart, generously offers to help Manny. Has anyone unexpectedly offered to help you in some way? Did you accept the offer? Why or why not?

2. **Setting** What are the conditions in the chili pepper fields? Why do you think people are willing to work in these conditions? Use the word poverty in your response.

3. **Comparisons** Compare what Manny says and thinks about the men in his life—his father, his brother, his grandfather, and Mr. Hart. Who do you think he respects the most? Why?

4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

The fields are hot and dry. There is a coat of pesticide dust and exhaust fumes on the workers’ hands. People have to work in these conditions because they are living in poverty. It is the only way for them to make money.

Respond to Chapters 1–3, continued

5. **Character** In Chapters 1–3, you are introduced to Manny and his parents. List what each of these characters does and what their actions show about them in the Character Description Chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>What the Character Does</th>
<th>What This Shows About the Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manny</td>
<td>has worked many jobs; takes care of Pedi; wants to go to a better school</td>
<td>is a hard worker; cares about his family; wants a good education to have a better life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom</td>
<td>worries about her kids; wants Manny to go to a better school; hates when Dad’s at Rico’s</td>
<td>cares about her family; wants a better life; knows her husband drinks too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dad</td>
<td>lost his job; drinks too much; refuses to go on welfare; doesn’t like white people</td>
<td>isn’t motivated; is an alcoholic; doesn’t want help from others; judges people based on their race</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who is Manny most similar to in his family? Which person might present obstacles in Manny’s life? Why?

Manny is more like his mother than his father. They each work hard and take care of the family. Like his mother, Manny sees the value of an education. Unlike his father, Manny does not judge Mr. Hart or other people based on skin color.
1. **Paraphrase** Reread page 54. A “parrot in the oven” is an ignorant person. Why does Manny’s dad call him a parrot? 
Manny’s father calls him a parrot because he thinks Manny is too trusting and innocent.

2. **Inference** How does Manny’s mother feel after her husband’s arrest? 
Even though the incident frightened her, Manny’s mother seems more relieved than angry. She is not eager to pay the bail to release her husband from jail.

**Page 83**

1. **Character’s Motive** Reread pages 69–70. Why does Manny’s mother stay with her husband? 
*Even though it might not be true, Manny’s mother believes that everything will get better. She thinks her husband will get a job and stop drinking so much.*

2. **Character** Reread pages 81–82. What does Mr. Hernandez’s reaction to Grandma’s death show about him? 
*Mr. Hernandez, Manny’s father, seems selfish because he is thinking more about how he can get money from selling grandma’s house than about her death.*

**Student Journal, page 7**

**Respond to Chapters 4–5**

1. **Personal Response** Manny’s dad calls him el perico, which means “a parrot,” because he thinks Manny is too trusting. How do your friends or family describe you? Do you agree or disagree?

2. **Mood** How does Dad’s abuse affect the mood in Chapter 4? Use the word abuse in your response.
*The mood in Chapter 4 is frightening. Dad is drunk and out of control. When he gets the rifle, he says, “I’ll fix her.” There’s a lot of yelling, and Dad fires the gun at Mom. His abuse terrifies the family.*

3. **Author’s Style** Grandma’s garden symbolizes her past life filled with happiness and love. Why does the author include this?
*The author wants to contrast how things were to how they are now to show how they have declined. Back then the neighborhood was prosperous, and the family was blossoming and happy.*

4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?
*The mood in Chapter 4 is frightening. Dad is drunk and out of control. When he gets the rifle, he says, “I’ll fix her.” There’s a lot of yelling, and Dad fires the gun at Mom. His abuse terrifies the family.*

**Student Journal, page 8**

**Respond to Chapters 4–5, continued**

5. **Perspectives** In Chapters 4–5, we see what happens when Dad tries to use a rifle while he is drunk. Tell what happens first, next, and last with Dad and the rifle. Use the Sequence Chart to answer the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First: Dad gets drunk at the pool hall. Mom decides to go get Dad. Mom takes Manny with her because she knows Dad won’t hurt him. Dad gets angry, and Mom leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next: Mom writes a note to Dad and goes to Sophie’s. Dad thinks Mom is leaving him. Dad gets the rifle, goes to Sophie’s, and shoots at Mom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last: The police arrive and Dad follows Mom home. Mom hides the rifle from the police. The police find the rifle and arrest Dad for having an unregistered gun. Dad goes to jail.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you were Mom, how would you feel about Dad getting out of jail? Do you think she should have taken him back? Why or why not?
*Mom might feel nervous because he was so abusive the last time she saw him. Dad might be mad at Mom for not helping him when the police were there. Mom might feel excited because she hasn’t seen Dad for a while.*
Pages 84–123 Answers for Before You Move On

Chapters 6–7

Page 99

1. **Sequence** Reread pages 91–92. What happens after Manny plays with the gun that belongs to his father?
The gun accidentally fires. Manuel thinks he shot Pedi. Pedi is okay but very frightened. Manny is worried that someone in his family will find out.

2. **Inference** Reread pages 94–95. What does Mom think Magda is doing? How do you know?
Mom thinks Magda has a boyfriend. She is suspicious because Magda is dressed up. She tells her not to ruin her life by getting pregnant too early like she did.

Page 112

1. **Summarize** Reread page 107. Describe Lencho’s gang, the Berets.
The Berets are a gang who believe that white people are their enemy and that whites try to keep Mexican Americans from succeeding.

2. **Character** Reread pages 104–107 and 109. Why do the other boys genuinely respect Lencho?
Lencho is more confident than the others. Although he is a school bully, he also has enough charisma to recruit and train boys for the boxing team.

Page 123

1. **Mood** Manny’s school loses the match. How does the mood change throughout the fights? Why?
At first, Lencho and his team have a lot of confidence. After Albert loses, the team begins to get nervous. Chico almost doesn’t fight. After both Chico’s and Lencho’s defeat, there is total discouragement.

2. **Plot** Reread pages 122–123. What changes for Manny and Lencho after the fight?
Manny loses respect for Lencho and feels disappointed. He realizes he placed too much importance on the boxing match. Lencho gets kicked out of the Berets, and it negatively affects his self-image.
**Chapters 8–9**

**PAGE 138**

1. **Inference** Manny’s mother is not surprised they are treated badly at the hospital. Why not?  
   *She is used to being treated badly and expects it. Not only is she used to discrimination, but even her own husband is mean to her.*

2. **Character’s Motive** Reread pages 137–138. Why does Manny’s father take care of Magda instead of becoming angry?  
   *Although Manny’s father drinks too much and doesn’t always take care of his family, he does love them. He acts like a father to Magda because she is so sick and needs him.*

**PAGE 158**

1. **Assumption** Reread pages 147–149. What does Manny assume when Dorothy invites him to her party?  
   *Manny assumes that Dorothy’s invitation was sincere; Manny does not think that he was invited because Mr. Giddens wants him to spy on his daughter.*

2. **Character’s Point of View** Reread page 155. Why does Nardo tell Manny it did not matter what he did at the party?  
   *Nardo does not think that Manny made a mistake. He thinks that the other kids would have found a way to kick Manny out of the party. Nardo knows they did not want Manny there.*

3. **Paraphrase** What does Manny mean when he says on page 181, “. . . I saw the reflection of a ridiculous boy, a clumsy boy. It was me, looking at myself, except that it wasn’t me, but someone ghostly and strange.”  
   *Manny means that the person he is seeing in his reflection is not the person he is or wants to be. He recognizes that he does not fit into the group of people he is with.*

4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

---

**Student Journal, page 11**

**Respond to Chapters 8–9**

1. **Personal Response** Manny feels both nervous and excited about going to Dorothy’s party. Has there ever been a time when you felt both nervous and excited about something you were going to do?

2. **Inference** Dad decides to get a job after Magda’s illness, even though he always refused to get one before. Why do you think he decides to change? Use the word adapt in your response.

3. **Paraphrase** What does Manny mean when he says on page 181, “. . . I saw the reflection of a ridiculous boy, a clumsy boy. It was me, looking at myself, except that it wasn’t me, but someone ghostly and strange.”

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**Student Journal, page 12**

**Respond to Chapters 8–9** (continued)

5. **Parallelism** In Chapters 8–9, Manny goes to the hospital and to a party. Write about how people treat Manny. Use the T Chart to answer the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stared at by workers</td>
<td>stared at by other kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looked down upon</td>
<td>accused of trying to get too close to a girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not given immediate attention</td>
<td>while dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>told that his kind of people</td>
<td>dragged out by a group of boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never take responsibility</td>
<td>called a weird duck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>called neurotic</td>
<td>told he’s not welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consoled by another Mexican patient in waiting room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What parallels do you see between one or more of the characters in this section?  
*The receptionist acts like Dorothy and Red-Hair at the party. They all look down upon Manny simply because he is poor and Mexican. He is not made to feel welcome in either place. Both Manny’s family and Manny are called names.*
Parrot in the Oven

Answers for Before You Move On

Chapters 10–11

Page 167

1. Cause and Effect  Manny joins a gang. How is this supposed to get him a girl?
The reward for gang initiation is the opportunity to kiss a girl.

2. Character  Reread page 165. What is Manny scared of?
What does this show about him?
Manny is worried that his friends will realize he is scared and he will lose their respect. He thinks that lacking respect from others is the worst thing that can happen.

Page 183

1. Inference  Reread page 171. Why does Manny’s mother let him go out even though she does not believe him?
Manny’s mother understands that he cannot or will not tell her everything. But she thinks he is a good boy and trusts that he will do the right thing.

2. Theme  What does Manny realize when he finds out who Eddie is? How is this connected to the theme of Education?
Manny realizes he does not want to become like Eddie, a person who hurts innocent people. He decides to learn how to become a better man.

Respond to Chapters 10–11, continued

5. Character’s Point of View  Manny finally discovers where he belongs after he quits the Callaway Projects gang. Describe the important events that cause him to quit the gang. Use the Chart to answer the question.

Goal and Outcome Chart

Goal

Manny wants to gain respect and find a place where he belongs.

Events

Eddie robs a woman.
Manny learns Eddie is Magda’s boyfriend.
The cops chase Manny.
A newspaper man helps him.
The cops think he is innocent.
He is ashamed.

How do Manny’s beliefs change after he realizes he does not want to be part of the gang?
Manny realizes that joining a gang will not make people respect him or earn him loyal friends. He does not respect Eddie because he treats people horribly. Manny wants people to respect him because of the good things he does.
Parrot in the Oven

Exchange Discussion

THE QUESTION

What is the best way to get respect?

- How does Manny try to get respect from his peers? Is he successful? Tell why or why not.
  Manny becomes an equipment manager for the boxing team at school. Joining the boxing team gives him some positive recognition at school, but it ends when Lencho loses. He later joins a gang, but when he realizes its members hurt innocent people, he decides he does not want to be part of it. He finally decides he wants to earn respect by being a good person.

- Manny tries to gain respect in different ways. What are some ways students at your school try to gain respect? Are some ways more successful than others?

- While Manny likes school, he also gets an education outside of school. He learns about making decisions for himself. How do you educate yourself outside of school?

Evaluate the Discussion

Use the reproducible master from page 10 of this Teacher’s Guide to evaluate The Exchange discussion. The form may also be used by students for group assessment.

Parrot in the Oven, inside back cover

Evaluate the Discussion

EXCHANGE IDEAS
- Tell the group why you would recommend or not recommend this book.
- Compare this book to something it reminded you of, such as another book, a movie, or a personal experience.
- What questions would you ask the author about the book? What do you imagine the answers would be?

THE QUESTION

What is the best way to get respect?

- How does Manny try to get respect from his peers? Is he successful? Tell why or why not.
- Manny tries to gain respect in different ways. What are some ways students at your school try to gain respect? Are some ways more successful than others?
- While Manny likes school, he also gets an education outside of school. He learns about making decisions for himself. How do you educate yourself outside of school?

REFLECT

Summarize your Exchange. How did this book change the way you see something? What questions do you still have? How will you answer them?
# Evaluate the Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Everyone participated.</td>
<td>□ Most people participated.</td>
<td>□ Only a few people participated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Everyone spoke clearly.</td>
<td>□ Most people spoke clearly.</td>
<td>□ Some people did not speak clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Everyone listened carefully.</td>
<td>□ Most people listened carefully.</td>
<td>□ Some people did not listen carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ We stayed on the topic throughout the discussion.</td>
<td>□ We stayed on the topic most of the time.</td>
<td>□ We did not stay on the topic all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ We responded to each other’s thoughts and ideas often.</td>
<td>□ We commented on each other’s thoughts and ideas sometimes.</td>
<td>□ We did not make many comments on each other’s thoughts and ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Most people used examples from the book to support their points.</td>
<td>□ Many people used examples from the book to support their points.</td>
<td>□ Only a few people used examples from the book to support their points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Most people gave detailed answers using their experiences and even other texts.</td>
<td>□ Many people gave detailed answers using their experiences.</td>
<td>□ Only a few people gave detailed answers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

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________________________________________________________________________
Assess students’ understanding of *Parrot in the Oven* by administering the multiple-choice test and essay questions.

**(Teacher’s Guide, pages 12–14)**

How you administer the Assessment depends on your objective. You may choose to use the test as:

- **an open-book test** to allow students to continue practicing reading strategies and/or become familiar with a typical standardized test format
- **a closed-book test** to check students’ comprehension of the book and their abilities in various reading skills
- **a take-home test** to allow students to practice reading strategies as well as test-taking skills

Suggested point values are as follows:

- **Assessment Part I:** 5 points per question for a total of 50 points
- **Assessment Part II:** 40 points possible (see Scoring Guide, page 15)

### Assessment Part I

**Parrot in the Oven**

**Name:**

**Assessment I:**

1. Which of these best summarizes this book?

   a. Manny is a fourteen-year-old boy growing up in the projects. His father works to relocate the family to a better neighborhood. Manny joins a gang. This event leads Manny to realize that belonging to a group does not guarantee respect. He thinks being tough or popular is the only way to be respected. Manny joins a gang to make friends, instead.
   
   b. Manny loves to play baseball in the summer. He convinces his brother to earn money with him by picking chilies. Manny has enough money to buy a baseball glove. But his boss is interested in baseball. Instead, he becomes interested in girls and joins a gang so that he can lose a get. But he realizes gang life is not for him.
   
   c. Manny enjoys the fact that he has something to do and can be around other kids his age. But he realizes gang life is not for him. He joins a gang to make friends, instead.
   
2. Which of these statements reflects Manny’s change of attitude at the end of the book?

   a. He earns respect by joining a gang.
   
   b. He is disrespectful in the end.
   
   c. He thinks education is worthless and commits crimes instead of learning.
   
   d. He values his family and respects others.

3. Manny’s father is unemployed and spends his money on alcohol. His mother, who works at a job such as stirring honey, keeps him
   
   a. busy
   
   b. lonely
   
   c. at home
   
   d. drinking

4. Manny compares his hands to those of the man in the field. Why does the author use the metaphor “Hair was wings in a blur of wind, mine stirred a pot of warm honey”?

   a. To show that the other man enjoys his work, while Manny is bored.
   
   b. To emphasize how much faster the other man works compared to Manny.
   
   c. To emphasize how much faster Manny works compared to the other man.
   
   d. To show that Manny would be skilled at a job such as stirring honey.

### Assessment Part II

**Guidelines for Short Essay**

Have students write a short essay in response to one of the writing prompts below. Use the Scoring Guide to assist in your evaluation of their essays.

A. Tell how Manny’s views on respect and belonging change between the beginning of the story and the end of the story. Which event do you think influences Manny the most? What event or person in your life has taught you the most about respect?

Response should include that Manny has many good traits and abilities. Youth in his neighborhood are rewarded for being disruptive and not valued school. His being is often limited. Manny’s is a unique one in a unique family and other important stories; these advantages are not embraced, in spite of where he grew up.

### Scoring Guide

**Description of the response:**

- **Part 1**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - All parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is well-organized and logically connected.
- **Part 2**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - All parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is well-organized and logically connected.

**Scoring Guide**

**Part 1**

- **A**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - All parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is well-organized and logically connected.

- **B**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - All parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is well-organized and logically connected.

- **C**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - Most parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is well-organized and logically connected.

- **D**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - Few parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is not well-organized and logically connected.

**Part 2**

- **A**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - All parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is well-organized and logically connected.

- **B**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - Most parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is well-organized and logically connected.

- **C**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - Few parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is not well-organized and logically connected.

- **D**
  - A complete response includes specific and relevant text evidence.
  - Few parts of the question are clearly addressed.
  - The response is not well-organized and logically connected.

**Assessment Part I, continued**

**Parrot in the Oven**

**Name:**

**Assessment I, continued**

5. The setting of this story shows the—

   a. easy summer life in California
   
   b. benefits of a good job
   
   c. challenges of growing up in poverty
   
   d. way gang life has changed over the years

6. Manny’s father calls Manny a—

   a. smart but too trusting
   
   b. in trouble and will get caught by the police
   
   c. smart but disrespectful
   
   d. too talkative and loud

7. Which clue suggests that Manny and his family live in poverty?

   a. Their car is a tricycle-greenwich.
   
   b. Magda gets pregnant and loses the baby.
   
   c. Sometimes, Manny doesn’t have enough to eat.
   
   d. Manny’s father spends money at Rico’s Pool Hall.

8. Which sentence from the book shows how Manny feels about his family?

   a. Mom was wild about daytime movies.
   
   b. I’d never again see anything so wondrous as my two sisters (laying on the couch.
   
   c. Nardo curled his arm around the bedpost and smiled.
   
   d. In the kitchen, I heard Dad talking loud.

9. What can the reader conclude about the role of gangs in Manny’s community?

   a. Gangs are ready to help with the job such as stirring honey.
   
   b. Gangs are available to pick chilies from the field.
   
   c. Gangs are helpful to older people in the housing projects.
   
   d. Gangs give teenagers a false sense of belonging and respect.

10. At the end of the story, Manny feels his strongest connection with—

   a. his teachers, the school, and the boxing team.
   
   b. his father, his grandma, and his uncle.
   
   c. his friends Slimy, Eddie, and Mondo
   
   d. himself, his values, and his family.
Assessment Part I

Circle the best answer.

1. Which of these best summarizes this book?
   
   A Manny is a fourteen-year-old boy growing up in the projects. His father drinks too much and is abusive. Manny tries to find out who and what he wants to be. He knows that he wants to gain respect, but he is not sure how to do that. After joining two gangs, Manny discovers the way to gain respect is to respect others.
   
   B Manny is the fourteen-year-old brother of Nardo and Magda. Nardo can’t seem to hold a job for very long. Magda spends too much time with her boyfriend. Manny’s mother spends too much time cleaning the house. Manny wants to escape the troubles at home, so he joins a gang. The gang gives Manny support and respect.
   
   C Manny loves to play baseball in the summer. He convinces his brother to earn money with him by picking chilies. Manny has enough money to buy a baseball glove. But he loses interest in baseball. Instead, he becomes interested in girls and joins a gang so that he can kiss a girl. But he realizes gang life is not for him.
   
   D Manny lives in the projects. Manny’s dad can’t find a job and spends most of his days drinking. He tries to kill Manny’s mother, and he goes to jail. Manny’s older sister Magda becomes pregnant but loses the baby. Manny is kicked out of a party. He joins a gang to make friends, instead.

2. Which of these statements reflects Manny’s change of attitude at the end of the book?
   
   A He earns respect by joining a gang.
   
   B He is disrespectful to those around him.
   
   C He thinks education is worthless and commits crimes instead of learning.
   
   D He values his family and earns respect by being himself.

3. Manny’s father is unemployed and spends his money on alcohol. His ______ keeps him from receiving welfare to feed the family.
   
   A poverty
   
   B abuse
   
   C pride
   
   D drinking

4. Manny compares his hands to those of the man in the field. Why does the author use the metaphor “His were wings in a blur of wonder, mine stirred a pot of warm honey”?
   
   A To show that the other man enjoys his work, while Manny is bored
   
   B To emphasize how much faster the other man works compared to Manny
   
   C To emphasize how much faster Manny works compared to the other man
   
   D To show that Manny would be skillful at a job such as stirring honey
5. The setting of this story shows the—
   A easy summer life in California
   B benefits of a good job
   C challenges of growing up in poverty
   D way gang life has changed over the years

6. Manny's father calls Manny a parrot in the oven because he thinks Manny is—
   A smart but too trusting
   B in trouble and will get caught by the police
   C smart but disrespectful
   D too talkative and loud

7. Which clue suggests that Manny and his family live in poverty?
   A Their car has a tricky gearshift.
   B Magda gets pregnant and loses the baby.
   C Sometimes, Manny doesn't have enough to eat.
   D Manny's father spends money at Rico's Pool Hall.

8. Which sentence from the book shows how Manny feels about his family?
   A Mom was wild about daytime movies.
   B I'd never again see anything so wondrous as my two sisters lying on the couch.
   C Nardo curled his arm around the bedpost and smiled.
   D In the kitchen, I heard Dad talking loud.

9. What can the reader conclude about the role of gangs in Manny's community?
   A Gangs are ready to help with the boxing club.
   B Gangs are available to pick chilies from the field.
   C Gangs are helpful to older people in the housing projects.
   D Gangs give teenagers a false sense of belonging and respect.

10. At the end of the story, Manny feels his strongest connection with—
    A his teachers, the school, and the boxing team
    B his father, his grandma, and his uncle
    C his friends Stinky, Eddie, and Mondo
    D himself, his values, and his family
Assessment Part II

Choose one question to answer. Write 3–4 paragraphs. Use 3 examples from the text to support your answer. Continue your essay on a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

A. Tell how Manny’s views on respect and belonging change between the beginning of the story and the end of the story. Which event do you think influences Manny the most? What event or person in your life has taught you the most about respect?

B. How do Manny’s family, friends, and community affect the choices that he makes? What advantages and disadvantages does Manny have? Compare what affects Manny’s choices in life to what affects choices in your own life.
Guidelines for Short Essay

Have students write a short essay in response to one of the writing prompts below. Use the Scoring Guide to assist in your evaluation of their essays.

A. Tell how Manny’s views on respect and belonging change between the beginning of the story and the end of the story. Which event do you think influences Manny the most? What event or person in your life has taught you the most about respect?

Responses should include how Manny thinks he needs to belong to a group to gain respect. He thinks being tough or popular is the only way to be respected. Manny joins a gang. This event leads Manny to realize that belonging to a group does not guarantee respect. He learns that the best way to gain respect is to be yourself, respect others, and make your own decisions.

B. How do Manny’s family, friends, and community affect the choices that he makes? What advantages and disadvantages does Manny have? Compare what affects Manny’s choices in life to what affects choices in your own life.

Responses should include that Manny has many good traits and abilities. Youth in his neighborhood are involved in violent activities and do not value school. His family is often troubled. Manny is resourceful and cares about family and other important values; these advantages will help him to succeed, in spite of where he grew up.

Scoring Guide

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<th>Description of the response:</th>
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| 4 | • Interpretation is accurate and thoughtful  
• Explanation is fully developed  
• Support includes specific and relevant text evidence  
• All parts of the question are clearly addressed |
| 3 | • Interpretation is adequate  
• Explanation is developed but may lack some insight  
• Support includes most specific and relevant text evidence  
• All parts of the question are addressed to some degree |
| 2 | • Interpretation is literal or limited  
• Explanation is incomplete  
• Support includes some specific and relevant text evidence  
• Only parts of the question are addressed and mostly in a limited way |
| 1 | • Interpretation is weak  
• Explanation is vague  
• Support includes few, if any, relevant details from the text  
• Only one part of the question is minimally addressed |
| 0 | Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant |