

Teacher's Guide

The Afterlife

Reading Level	Lexile 810
Genre/Length	Contemporary Fiction; 168 pages
Language Register	Slang, Spanish
Content Load	Teen Life, Death, Humor
Selected Awards	Skipping Stones Honor Awards ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers IRA Young Adults' Choices

This book contains mature content. Educators and parents should read the book and determine its appropriateness for use with their students.

THE EXCHANGE QUESTION

Is it scarier to face life or death?

Overview

Background The setting of *The Afterlife*, Fresno and Selma, California, is heavily populated and suffers from economic decay. Having grown up as a Mexican American in the Chicano district of Fresno, California, Gary Soto lends authenticity to his writing when dealing with such themes as adversities due to ethnicity, poverty, and destitution.

Book Summary *The Afterlife* begins with the murder of the main character by a street thug named Yellow Shoes. The remainder of the novel is narrated from Chuy's unique point of view—as a ghost. Like the litter in the streets, Chuy, the ghost, drifts through Fresno and Selma, meeting other ghosts, including a teenage girl he befriends named Crystal. Chuy is not sure what the afterlife holds for him, only that his position as a ghost is tenuous and temporary, and that he must make the most of it before it's too late. The book addresses ideas about death and the afterlife from a secular and creative viewpoint.

About the Author

Gary Soto was born on April 12, 1952, in Fresno, California, into a working-class Mexican American family. He was inspired to become a writer when he was nineteen and began to read contemporary poetry.

Soto writes for many audiences and publishes in many genres, including poetry, cultural essays, autobiographies, and memoirs. His first book for young readers, *Baseball in April and Other Stories*, won the California Library Association's Beatty Award and was named an ALA Best Book for Young Adults. In 1999, he was honored with the Human and Civil Rights Award from the American Education Association, the Literature Award from the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, and the PEN Center West Book Award for *Petty Crimes*.

Reading the Book

There are several options for reading *The Afterlife*. 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**.

Student Journal, page 1

Name: _____

Student Journal


The Afterlife

by Gary Soto

Reading Schedule

Group members: _____

The Afterlife	Student Journal	Due Date	Discussion Date
Introduction	Pages 2-4		
Chapters 1-3	Pages 5-6		
Chapters 4-5	Pages 7-8		
Chapters 6-7	Pages 9-10		
Chapters 8-10	Pages 11-12		
The Exchange			
Assessment			



Is it scarier to face life or death?

Student Journal, page 2

The Afterlife

Getting Started

What If?

You have wanted to go skydiving for a long time. You brag to everyone that you are not scared to jump out of a plane. For your birthday, your friends surprise you by taking you skydiving. Before you have a chance to think about it, you are in the plane on your way to your first jump. Everyone is excited, but now you find that you are frightened.

You are embarrassed to tell your friends that you don't want to jump. Worse yet, no one else is frightened at all. If you don't jump, you are afraid that your friends will tell everyone at school how frightened you were.

Make notes about how this would affect you.

- Would you jump out of the plane?
- Which is scarier—admitting how you feel, or jumping?
- How would you feel after you jumped? After you did not jump?

Connect to The Exchange Question Discuss how this situation could relate to The Exchange Question: **Is it scarier to face life or death?** Summarize your discussion.

Introduction

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

Student Journal, page 3

The Afterlife

Introduction

Read the Introduction on pages 7–9 in *The Afterlife*. The Introduction will help you understand key concepts in the book. Knowing them will help you discuss and write about the book.

The Introduction includes information about

- ghosts in literature
- the sixth sense
- Fresno and Selma, California—the story’s setting

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

1. What is a common characteristic of ghosts throughout literature?
Ghosts often know things that the living characters do not. So, they act as messengers and teachers to the living.

2. How is the sixth sense different from other senses? What is another name for it?
Also known as “intuition,” the sixth sense allows people to observe what they cannot see. Unlike the other senses, not everyone believes the sixth sense really exists.

3. Where does the story take place? Why did Soto choose this place for the book’s setting?
The setting is in Fresno and Selma, California. Gary Soto chose these two cities because he grew up in Fresno. Selma is a town near Fresno.

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**.

Student Journal, page 4

The Afterlife

Introduction: Key Concepts

Word Web

Study the **Word Web** for *insight*. Write a sentence using the word *insight*.

Key Concepts

afterlife
insight
observe
sense
transform

Word Web

```

graph TD
    A([Key Concept  
insight]) --- B([understanding])
    A --- C([intuition])
    A --- D([sensitivity])
    A --- E([wisdom])
    
```

On a separate sheet of paper, create a similar **Word Web** for each of the **Key Concepts**. Write a sentence for each one.

The Afterlife

Pages 11–55 Answers for *Before You Move On*
Chapters 1–3

PAGE 24

1. Conflict Reread pages 12–14. Describe what happens in the bathroom between Yellow Shoes and Chuy.

Chuy compliments a young man for his unique yellow shoes. The young man stabs Chuy several times for no clear reason. Chuy dies while asking Yellow Shoes why he did it.

2. Summarize Reread pages 18–19, 21–22, and 24. What does Chuy learn about being a ghost?

Chuy can float and move through solid things. He does not feel hate or fear. He is invisible to others but visible to himself. He can make people feel cold.

PAGE 39

1. Sequence Reread pages 34–35. What events lead to Chuy going to see Angel?

Chuy follows some cops on a domestic dispute call and sees an article about his killing in the paper. Angel is quoted and Chuy realizes he must go see him.

2. Inference Reread pages 36–37. What can Chuy sense about Angel’s dad that Angel cannot? Why?

Chuy understands that Angel’s dad feels horrible that Chuy was killed and that Angel is suffering. Angel is too sad to notice. He is probably used to his dad being cold and strict.

PAGE 55

1. Comparisons Compare how Yellow Shoes and Rachel react to Chuy’s presence.

Yellow Shoes is confused and fearful. He has a guilty conscience about his recent murder. Rachel, however, is sad and regretful about Chuy’s death. She is made sadder by his presence.

2. Foreshadowing On page 55, Chuy’s left foot disappears. What do you think might happen in the future?

Chuy realizes he really is dead. Eventually he will probably completely disappear.

Student Journal, page 5

The Afterlife

Respond to Chapters 1–3

1. Personal Response Chuy, the ghost, goes into the grocery store and sees shoplifters. If you were Chuy, what would you do with the power to be invisible?

2. Comparisons Compare Chuy before and after he dies. How is he different? How is he the same? Use the word *transform* in your response.

Chuy transforms into a ghost. No one can see him, but he can still make his presence known by blowing cold air. He can fly but is blown around easily. He can still feel emotions, but he can no longer cry.

3. Irony What is ironic about the way Rachel behaves when Chuy visits her after he dies?

Rachel is crying and very upset over Chuy. This is ironic because Chuy describes her as a tough girl who can beat him up.

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 6

The Afterlife

Respond to Chapters 1–3, continued

5. Setting Chuy lives and dies in a city that is full of crime and violence. In the **Details Web**, list details that Chuy observes as a ghost that show the dangers of the setting of *The Afterlife*.

Details Web



Chuy tries to figure out why Yellow Shoes stabbed him. How could the setting have contributed to the murder?

Yellow Shoes grew up in a city where violence and crime happen every day. He probably had few or no positive role models to teach him the value of human life.

Pages 56–87 **Answers for Before You Move On**
Chapters 4–5

PAGE 71

- Character’s Motive** Reread pages 58–61. Chuy visits his grandfather in the cemetery. Why?
Chuy thinks it’s time to grow up and do the right thing now that he’s dead. He confesses his first real sin to his dead grandfather.
- Inference** Reread pages 65–66. What do you think Chuy’s mom is asking Eddie to do? Why do you think so?
She is asking Eddie to find Chuy’s killer or to hurt the killer. She is angry about her son’s death and she wants revenge.

PAGE 87

- Character’s Point of View** Reread pages 78–79. Chuy is shocked that his mother wants revenge. Why?
Chuy thinks she should know better because she’s an adult and a religious woman. He also feels that it’s not fair of his mother to ask Eddie to do it.
- Mood** Reread pages 80–83. How does the mood of the story change after Chuy meets Crystal? Why?
The mood becomes lighter and less frightening now that Chuy is not alone. Chuy falls in love with Crystal at first sight and tries to impress her and make her laugh.

Student Journal, page 7

The Afterlife

Respond to Chapters 4–5

- Personal Response** Chuy visits his friends and family as a ghost. If you could visit anyone as a ghost, who would it be? Why?

- Irony** Before visiting his grandfather’s grave Chuy says, “Now that I was dead, I had to grow up. I had to confess my first real sin.” What is ironic about his statement? Use the word *afterlife* in your response.
This statement is ironic because Chuy is only able to grow up after he is already dead. It is only during the afterlife that he can confess the sins he committed during his life. Ironically, it is too late to do anything about them.
- Paraphrase** On page 56, what does Chuy mean when he says, “Until now, I never understood what ‘good-bye, adios, see you later, alligator’ meant?”
Chuy never understood what “good-bye” meant because he always knew he would see the person again. For the first time, he really understands how final good-bye can be.
- 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 8

The Afterlife

Respond to Chapters 4–5, continued

- Making Predictions** Chuy continues to visit his friends and family. Write the events in the order they happen in the **Sequence Chain**.

Sequence Chain

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    graph TD
      1([1. visits his grandpa's grave and apologizes for things he did]) --> 2([2. visits his parents and sees they are sad])
      2 --> 3([3. visits his friends at the basketball game])
      3 --> 4([4. hears his mother ask Eddie to get revenge])
      4 --> 5([5. meets Crystal])
    
```

What is Chuy trying to accomplish by visiting his friends and family? Do you predict that he will be successful?
Chuy is trying to apologize to all the people he did bad things to before his body completely disappears. He is trying to say good-bye to all the friends he cares about. He is also trying to make sense of what is happening to him in the “afterlife.”

Pages 88–120 **Answers for *Before You Move On***
Chapters 6–7

Student Journal, page 9

PAGE 102

- 1. Character** Reread pages 96–97. Chuy saves a homeless man’s life. What does this tell you about Chuy?
He knows the man has had a rough life and feels bad for him. He feels guilty for overlooking homeless people when he was alive. Chuy is a thoughtful and caring person.
- 2. Character’s Point of View** Reread pages 98–99. How does Chuy feel when he finds out Crystal killed herself?
Chuy doesn’t understand why she killed herself. She is beautiful and had a good future. He feels like it was a waste.

PAGE 120

- 1. Comparisons** Chuy remembers that he saw Crystal when he worked at the farm. How does his first impression of her compare to what he knows about her now?
Chuy fell in love at first sight with Crystal. He thinks she is beautiful and confident. She actually is very insecure. Chuy also thinks she is white, but learns she is Mexican.
- 2. Tone** What makes this chapter both sad and funny?
The chapter is sad because of Crystal’s wasted life and lack of love and confidence. The chapter is funny because Chuy is still trying to get a girl even though he’s dead. He wants to hold her, but he has no arms.

The Afterlife

Respond to Chapters 6–7

- 1. Personal Response** In life, Crystal had big dreams for the future but was terrified of failing. Tell about a dream you have for your future. Are you afraid to fail like Crystal?

- 2. Inference** What unusual reaction does Chuy observe about Crystal when he mentions her parents? Why does she react this way? Use the word *observe* in your response.
Chuy observes that Crystal becomes upset at the mention of her parents. She probably reacts this way because she feels guilty about killing herself and hurting her parents.
- 3. Paraphrase** On page 103, Chuy’s dad says, “life is a journey that ends in the same place where you begin.” What does this mean? How does it relate to Chuy’s death?
It means that you go back to no longer being part of the living world. This is what happens to Chuy. To some people, it could mean that you go back to your creator.
- 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 10

The Afterlife

Respond to Chapters 6–7, continued

- 5. Character’s Point of View** In Chapters 6–7, Chuy travels with Crystal as she visits the important people and places in her life. Write what you know about Crystal in the **Character Description Chart** below.

Character Description Chart

Character	What the Character Does	What This Shows About the Character
Crystal	She has two boyfriends. She is a good student and athlete. She kills herself after Stanford and Harvard reject her. She avoids visiting her parents.	She is selfish. She is talented and popular. She is scared of rejection. She feels bad about killing herself.

When Crystal was alive, how do you think she would have answered the question, “Is it scarier to face life or death?”

When she was alive, Crystal would have said it is scarier to face life. She killed herself because the idea of living and the possibility of failing scared her. She chose death over failure.

The Afterlife

Pages 121–160 Answers for *Before You Move On*
Chapters 8–10

Student Journal, page 11

PAGE 137

- 1. Comparisons** Reread page 123. How are Robert’s experiences as a ghost similar to his experiences as a living person?
As both a ghost and as a living homeless person, he feels invisible. Alive, people act as if he is not even there. Dead, no one can see him.
- 2. Conclusions** Reread page 137. What does Eddie give to Chuy’s mom? Why?
Eddie returns the gun to Chuy’s mom. He realizes that killing someone else won’t bring Chuy back.

PAGE 147

- 1. Paraphrase** On page 139, Chuy says he’s going to keep his word to Crystal because it’s the only thing he has left. What does he mean?
Chuy wants to keep his promise to Crystal. Since his body is disappearing, his word is all he has left to offer.
- 2. Inference** Chuy’s dream is to see a Raiders’ game, but he doesn’t get to see the whole game. Why doesn’t this bother him?
Chuy leaves when the fans are at their happiest. This is how he wants to remember his experience.

PAGE 160

- 1. Conclusions** Reread pages 150–151. Why does Robert stay in the body of Yellow Shoes?
He wants to change Yellow Shoes. He hopes to make him a better person. He does this because he cares about Chuy.
- 2. Inference** Reread pages 154 and 160. How do you think Chuy feels about his life and about going to the afterlife?
His life was too short but he did volunteer, save someone, and treat his parents with respect. He also is able to experience love with Crystal. He is content going to the afterlife, knowing that he got a part of his dream.

The Afterlife

Respond to Chapters 8–10

- 1. Personal Response** Robert Montgomery tries to influence Yellow Shoes to be a better person. Do you think it is possible to change another person? Why or why not?

- 2. Inference** Chuy uses his powers to make Eddie aware of his “sixth sense.” What insight does Eddie gain about revenge as a result? Use the words *insight* and *sense* in your response.
Eddie’s sixth sense makes him rethink his plan for revenge. He has the insight that shooting someone else would not be a good way to honor Chuy. It would not bring Chuy back to life.
- 3. Author’s Purpose** Why do you think the author never tells the reader what happens to ghosts after they disappear?
The author doesn’t want to persuade readers to agree with his own beliefs about life after death. By doing this, he invites readers to draw their own conclusions.

What If?

- 4. Connect** Look at your notes on *Student Journal, page 2*. Think about what might happen if you had to choose between the risk of death and failure in life. Compare this to *The Afterlife*. Was death or life scarier for Chuy? For Crystal?

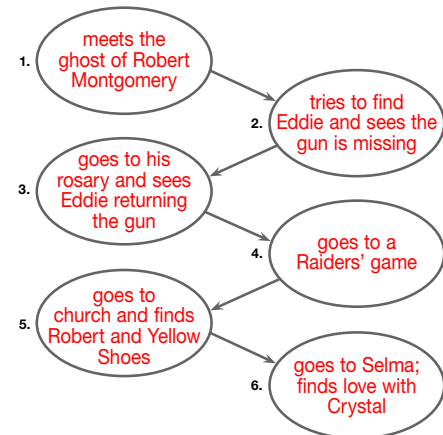
Student Journal, page 12

The Afterlife

Respond to Chapters 8–10, continued

- 5. Confirm Predictions** Chuy tries to do a few last things before disappearing. Write the events in the **Chain**.

Sequence Chain



Review the prediction you made on page 8. Was your prediction correct? Are you surprised by the story’s ending? Why or why not?

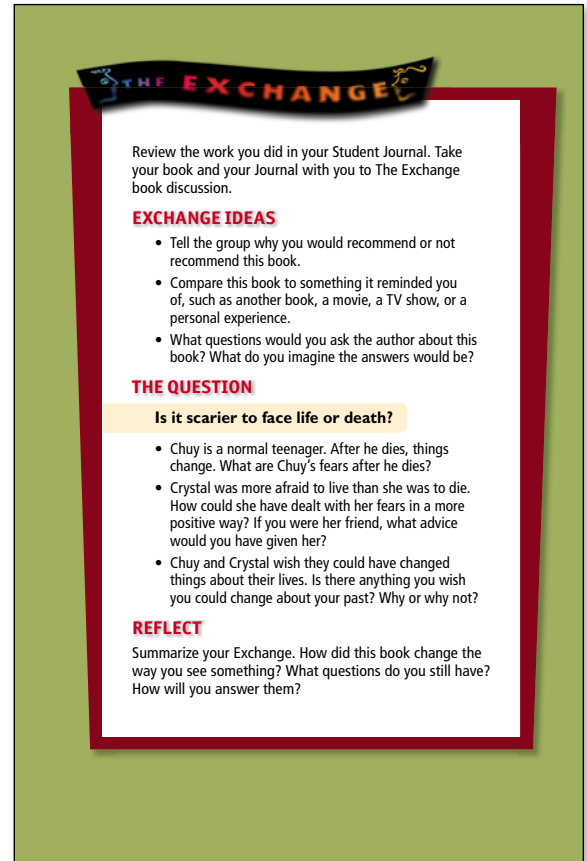
Exchange Discussion

THE QUESTION

Is it scarier to face life or death?

- **Chuy is a normal teenager. After he dies, things change. What are Chuy’s fears after he dies?**
After Chuy dies, he is scared of disappearing and of the unknown afterlife. He is scared that there will be revenge against his murderer.
- **Crystal was more afraid to live than she was to die. How could she have dealt with her fears in a more positive way? If you were her friend, what advice would you have given her?**
- **Chuy and Crystal wish they could have changed things about their lives. Is there anything you wish you could change about your past? Why or why not?**

The Afterlife, inside back cover



Evaluate the Discussion

Use the reproducible master from page 9 of this **Teacher’s Guide** to evaluate **The Exchange** discussion. The form may also be used by students for group assessment.

Discussion Rubric

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

Evaluate the Discussion

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

Notes:

Assessment

Assess students' understanding of *The Afterlife* by administering the multiple-choice test and essay questions. (**Teacher's Guide, pages 11–13**)

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 14**)

Assessment Part I

The Afterlife Name: _____

Assessment Part I

Circle the best answer.

- Chuy notices that others can sense his presence when he is near. In this sentence, what does *sense* mean?
 - inspire
 - feel
 - frighten
 - raise
- Chuy watches Eric and Jason fight. Chuy watches the Raiders from the sidelines. These are examples of when Chuy _____ the living.
 - senses
 - confronts
 - observes
 - transforms
- Which of these statements reflects Chuy's attitude at the end of the story?
 - Chuy knows his family and friends will remember him. He is ready to move on.
 - Chuy is angry because he does not have a chance to love Crystal. He will try not to disappear.
 - Chuy worries about his family and how they will live without him. He feels his life was a waste.
 - Chuy still wants revenge on Yellow Shoes. He will only move on when he knows Yellow Shoes feels bad for what he did.
- As Chuy listens to his mother talk to Eddie about getting revenge for Chuy's death, the author creates a mood of—
 - peace
 - satisfaction
 - jealousy
 - tension
- Which of these best summarizes this story?
 - Chuy is a ghost who spies on people from his past life. He uses his powers for good. He meets a girl who killed herself and together they explore the city. He finally disappears.
 - Chuy is a young man who lives in a dangerous neighborhood. He is stabbed to death in a bathroom. His mother wants revenge. He struggles to stop her before it is too late.
 - Chuy is a teen who is murdered in a nightclub bathroom for commenting on a guy's shoes. He becomes a ghost. While his ghost fades, he reflects on his life, visits loved ones, and tries to help them heal. He meets a girl and falls in love before he moves on into the afterlife.
 - Chuy and Crystal are two ghosts who meet in the afterlife and realize they knew each other when they were living. They cannot be together because they are both vanishing. Neither of them knows what is happening to them and they are scared to find out.

Assessment Part II

The Afterlife

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. Many of the characters in *The Afterlife* value life differently. Choose three characters from the story and describe how they value other people and their own lives. How do their values show in their actions?

Responses should include that people like Chuy and Eddie value their families and make the most of their lives and the time they have with friends and families. Crystal is selfish in her decision to kill herself; this action shows that she cares little for herself or her family's feelings. Yellow Shoes values life so little that he kills Chuy for no reason.

B. If you could ask Gary Soto one question about this book, what would it be? Imagine then that he asked you: What do you think happens after a person dies? How would you respond? Choose two events in the book and rewrite them using your idea of what happens after death.

Responses should make connections between the ideas in *The Afterlife* about life after death and the student's ideas.

Scoring Guide

Description of the response:	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Assessment Part I, continued

The Afterlife Name: _____

Assessment Part I, continued

Circle the best answer.

- What can the reader conclude about the sanitation worker Chuy observes on the way to the Raiders game?
 - He does not like Chuy.
 - He is affected by the news of Chuy's death.
 - He does not like Raiders games.
 - He has no connection to Chuy.
- Which of these sentences from the book is an example of a simile?
 - Angel, mi carnal, would be there, with the cement bags of guilt on his shoulders.*
 - The cuffs of her pajamas fluttered from the wavering rise of heat.*
 - His eyes rolled in their sockets.*
 - It was already late afternoon, and soon the evening would descend like a cloak.*
- Which of the sentences below is an example of a flashback?
 - She grimaced at me as if I didn't make any sense.*
 - I remember the house and a girl—Crystal?—reclining in a chair and reading a magazine as I went to hose my face after I got stung by a wasp.*
 - I had never seen Uncle Richard with flowers before, but then again I had never seen him cry before.*
 - I imagined the warm beds and the blankets rising on each snore.*
- Chapter One is important because it—
 - tells why Crystal died
 - reveals Chuy's parents' anger
 - explains how Chuy died
 - introduces Eddie
- In this story, how does Chuy's death affect his community?
 - Chuy's community comes together to grieve.
 - It takes too long for the news to travel through the community, so people forget Chuy.
 - Teen death is common in Chuy's community.
 - Community events go on and people do not stop to remember Chuy.

Assessment Part I

Circle the best answer.

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 - feel
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 - Chuy is a young man who lives in a dangerous neighborhood. He is stabbed to death in a bathroom. His mother wants revenge. He struggles to stop her before it is too late.
 - Chuy is a teen who is murdered in a nightclub bathroom for commenting on a guy's shoes. He becomes a ghost. While his ghost fades, he reflects on his life, visits loved ones, and tries to help them heal. He meets a girl and falls in love before he moves on into the afterlife.
 - Chuy and Crystal are two ghosts who meet in the afterlife and realize they knew each other when they were living. They cannot be together because they are both vanishing. Neither of them knows what is happening to them and they are scared to find out.

Assessment Part I, continued

Circle the best answer.

6. What can the reader conclude about the sanitation worker Chuy observes on the way to the Raiders game?
- A He does not like Chuy.
 - B He is affected by the news of Chuy's death.
 - C He does not like Raiders games.
 - D He has no connection to Chuy.
7. Which of these sentences from the book is an example of a simile?
- A *Angel, mi carnal, would be there, with the cement bags of guilt on his shoulders.*
 - B *The cuffs of her pajamas fluttered from the wavering rise of heat.*
 - C *His eyes rolled in their sockets.*
 - D *It was already late afternoon, and soon the evening would descend like a cloak.*
8. Which of the sentences below is an example of a flashback?
- A *She grimaced at me as if I didn't make any sense.*
 - B *I remember the house and a girl—Crystal?—reclining in a chair and reading a magazine as I went to hose my face after I got stung by a wasp.*
 - C *I had never seen Uncle Richard with flowers before, but then again I had never seen him cry before.*
 - D *I imagined the warm beds and the blankets rising on each snore.*
9. Chapter One is important because it—
- A tells why Crystal died
 - B reveals Chuy's parents' anger
 - C explains how Chuy died
 - D introduces Eddie
10. In this story, how does Chuy's death affect his community?
- A Chuy's community comes together to grieve.
 - B It takes too long for the news to travel through the community, so people forget Chuy.
 - C Teen death is common in Chuy's community.
 - D Community events go on and people do not stop to remember Chuy.

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. Many of the characters in *The Afterlife* value life differently. Choose three characters from the story and describe how they value other people and their own lives. How do their values show in their actions?

- B. If you could ask Gary Soto one question about this book, what would it be? Imagine then that he asked you: What do you think happens after a person dies? How would you respond? Choose two events in the book and rewrite them using your idea of what happens after death.

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.** Many of the characters in *The Afterlife* value life differently. Choose three characters from the story and describe how they value other people and their own lives. How do their values show in their actions?

Responses should include that people like Chuy and Eddie value their families and make the most of their lives and the time they have with friends and families. Crystal is selfish in her decision to kill herself; this action shows that she cares little for herself or her family's feelings. Yellow Shoes values life so little that he kills Chuy for no reason.

- B.** If you could ask Gary Soto one question about this book, what would it be? Imagine then that he asked you: What do you think happens after a person dies? How would you respond? Choose two events in the book and rewrite them using your idea of what happens after death.

Responses should make connections between the ideas in *The Afterlife* about life after death and the student's ideas.

Scoring Guide

	Description of the response:
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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