

Maria and the Mariachi Band: A Dream Come True

Suggested Comprehension Strategies

Vocabulary:

• Paragraph 4	“vihuela”	Context Clues
• Paragraph 7	“heritage”	Dictionary Entry
• Paragraph 7	“marachi”	Context Clues
• Paragraph 8	“charro”	Context Clues
• Paragraph 11	“painted a picture”	Figurative Language
• Paragraph 14	“audition”	Context Clues, Dictionary Entry

Main Idea / Supporting Details:

- Use paragraph 13. List details about Helena and write a main idea statement.

Character Traits / Emotions / Motives:

- List character traits for Maria.
- Discuss how Maria feels about the band and about her younger sister.

Fact and Opinion:

Use the questions below to discuss opinions and facts.

- What is Helena’s opinion about college?
- What is Miguel’s opinion about the band?
- What facts did you learn about the Mexican culture?

Setting:

- Discuss how the mariachi band helped make this high school special.
- Discuss how being a member of the band affected the students.

Inferences:

Use the questions below to discuss inferences.

- Why was Helena an unselfish young lady?
- Why is Miguel a good friend and a good citizen?
- Why do the band members have little free time?
- How is Maria setting a good example for her younger sister?

Connect, Compare, Contrast Across Text(s): Within One Passage

- Using a graphic organizer compare Maria and Blanca.

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1. Excitement was in the air! Maria was a fifteen-year-old high school sophomore. She was waiting to audition before the judges. She wanted to become a member of her school's mariachi band.
2. As Maria left for the audition, her younger sister Blanca stopped her. "Good luck, Maria! Some day I want to do just what you are doing." She gave her big sister a hug.
3. Maria wanted her little sister to be proud of her. She was going to do her best as she played for the judges. As she walked, she thought about things she knew about the mariachi bands.
4. She knew that mariachi bands played folk music from Mexico. They usually had two violins, trumpets, a Spanish guitar, and two special guitars. The vihuela is a small, high-pitched guitar. The guitarron is a large bass guitar.
5. Blanca and Maria both played the violin. Maria had been playing for six years. She had practiced every day and night at home. Blanca was doing the same.
6. Blanca knew how hard her sister and the other high school students worked. The students had to spend hours practicing. The high school band played each weekend at funerals, weddings, and parties. The word "mariachi" comes from the French word for "wedding".
7. There were other reasons why Blanca and Maria wanted to play in the band. They were proud of their Mexican heritage. They both loved the Mexican folk music played by mariachi bands.
8. Their grandfather had been a Mexican charro, a cowboy. The band wore charro outfits. These outfits included a ruffled shirt and a short jacket. They also wore a bow tie and a wide belt. The musicians wore sombreros. The band shared Mexican culture in their dress and their music.
9. Maria liked the idea of serving her community. Weddings and parties were happy times. The funerals were sad times. Music helped at these special times.
10. Blanca and Maria both knew that good grades were important. They must have "B" averages. This meant they must study hard. They had to be good citizens. Homework and practicing their instruments consume many hours. They must be dedicated.

11. Maria had a friend Miguel. He encouraged her to try out for the band. He was a junior and a band member. Miguel told Maria and her younger sister that the band members painted a picture for the community. The members showed the community that they were “good teens”.
12. A cousin of Blanca and Maria was Helena. She was in college. She had played in the high school band for three years. Helena went to two practices each week. She thought that the help she was giving to the band members would help her when she started to teach. Helena would know how to talk to her students and keep their interest. She wanted to continue to practice. She wanted to help the younger band members.
13. Helena wanted her two younger cousins to go to college some day. They would need scholarships. Helena got a scholarship when she graduated from high school. The scholarship money came from donations given to the band when they played for special affairs. Every member of the band who graduated from high school and wanted to go to college got a scholarship. Blanca and Maria wanted to follow in their cousin’s footsteps.
14. Maria performed for the audition judges. She did well. Maria became a member of the band.
15. Maria was so excited as she went to her first practice as a member of the band! She knew that her cousin would be there to help her.
16. Blanca wanted to go, too. She had to stay at home. She knew her sister would tell her about it. Blanca was so proud of her older sister! Someday she would be just like her.

