

**Overview:** A DEJ is a way to closely read passages from a text, to discover what individual words and sentences reveal about characters, conflicts, themes, etc. In the future, you will be selecting your own "strong lines" and meaningful passages to comment on, but for this first effort three have been chosen for you. Each passage shows something about Esperanza, her relationship to someone else in the neighborhood, and/or her opinion about a particular social issue.

**Directions:** As you read each passage, you have five tasks: First, **identify who is speaking or narrating**. Second, explain **what the context or situation is**—that is, who is involved, where s/he is, at what time, and what is going on, etc., Third, explain **what the quotation means and how it is significant to the novel**. (In other words, why is this quote important?) Keep in mind that quotations rarely tell you why they are important, so you must use the clues given to you and really dig beneath the surface, kind of like "Author and Me" questions. Fourth, note any **stylistic devices** (similes, metaphors, personification, symbols, alliteration, etc.), and finally, what **connections** do you see between this excerpt and other vignettes in the novel? (Ideas of waiting, feeling trapped, making friends, etc.) Before you begin, compare the "weak" and "strong" examples of how to do a DEJ. I know it sounds like a lot, but you are capable!

**Quotation**

**Response**

<p>Sample: from "Marin"</p> <p><i>Marin, under the streetlight, dancing by herself, is singing the same song somewhere. I know. Is waiting for a car to stop, a star to fall, someone to change her life (27).</i></p>	<p>Speaker: Esperanza is narrating</p> <p>Situation: <b>(weak)</b> Esperanza watches Marin late at night</p> <p>Situation: <b>(strong)</b> Esperanza has been watching Marin in the evenings. Her observations help her to get to know Marin and to interpret what her actions might mean. Esperanza has a sense that Marin is waiting for change to happen to her.</p> <p>Significance: <b>(weak)</b> This means that Marin wants her life to change</p> <p>Significance: <b>(strong)</b> Esperanza understands that Marin thinks that her life will change when someone comes into her life. That someone will be a man. Marin knows she can use her physical attractiveness to get out of Mango Street, a place she doesn't like. Esperanza appears to relate to Marin because she says, "I know." Esperanza also has dreams of changing her life and getting beyond Mango Street. But while Marin is stuck, "singing the same song," I think that Esperanza would like to <i>make</i> change happen, not just wait for "someone to change her life."</p> <p>Stylistic devices: <b>(weak)</b> Cisneros uses sensory details.</p> <p>Stylistic devices: <b>(strong)</b> A falling star is something you wish upon. It symbolizes Marin's dependency on something outside herself to bring change. Cisneros also uses alliteration (ex. Same song somewhere) to establish rhythm.</p> <p>Connections: Marin is like Sally, Rafaela and Minerva, other women on Mango Street. All of them seem trapped in relationships and circumstances that they want out of, but don't know how to escape.</p>
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<p>from "A Rice Sandwich"</p> <p><i>"And then she made me stand up on a box of books and point. That one? she said, pointing to a row of ugly three-flats, the ones even the raggedy men are ashamed to go into. Yes, I nodded even though I knew that wasn't my house and started to cry. I always cry when nuns yell at me, even if they're not yelling" (45).</i></p>	<p>Speaker:</p> <p>Situation:</p> <p>Significance:</p> <p>Stylistic devices:</p> <p>Connections:</p>
<p>from "Born Bad"</p> <p><i>"She listened to every book, every poem I read her. One day I read her one of my own. I came very close. I whispered it into the pillow:</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>I want to be like the waves on the sea like the clouds in the wind, but I'm me. One day I'll jump out of my skin. I'll shake the sky like a hundred violins.</i></p> <p><i>That's nice. That's very good, she said in her tired voice. You just remember to keep writing...It will keep you free, and I said yes, but at that time I didn't know what she meant" (60-61).</i></p>	<p>Speaker:</p> <p>Situation:</p> <p>Significance:</p> <p>Stylistic devices:</p> <p>Connections:</p>
<p>From "Four Skinny Trees"</p> <p><i>"Let one forget his reason for being, they'd all droop like tulips in a glass, each one with their arms around the other. Keep, keep, keep, trees say while I sleep. They teach.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>When I am too sad and too skinny to keep keeping, when I am a tiny thing against so many bricks, then it is I look at trees. When there is nothing left to look at on this street. Four who grew despite concrete. Four who reach and do not forget to reach. Four whose only reason is to be and be" (75).</i></p>	<p>Speaker:</p> <p>Situation:</p> <p>Significance:</p> <p>Stylistic devices:</p> <p>Connections:</p>