

## Mango Street Interpretive Essay

**Directions:** Choose ONE of the thesis statements/interpretive claims listed below then, in AT LEAST THREE well-developed body paragraphs, prove that thesis! Start with an introduction including the point of departure, background, and your interpretive claim/thesis, then work on the evidence. I have listed some page references that might be useful to you. You MUST use direct quotations (lines copied exactly from the book—include page numbers!) or paraphrases (those lines put in *your own* words) from Mango Street to support your thesis—Remember, a statement *from* the text should support *every* major statement you make *about* the text and vice-versa. Please include a conclusion restating your main points and tying your argument together. **BE SURE TO CONSIDER HOW EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS RELATES TO ESPERANZA'S SENSE OF IDENTITY.** (*Note: These thesis statements are suggestions. Make whatever changes you need to fit what you want to write about! ☺*)

1. Esperanza's negative view of herself slowly changes as she begins to focus on her larger community and her place within it. Through this, Cisneros shows that knowing and accepting where we have come from is an important part of growing up and determining who we are.  
**Check pages: 3-5, 10-11, 29-30, 33-34, 46-48, 55-57, 58-61, 62-64, 86-87, 88-89, 103-105, 106-107, 108, 109-110**
2. Esperanza has a variety of female role models in her life. Many are trapped in abusive relationships, waiting for others to change their lives. Some are actively trying to change things on their own. Through these women and Esperanza's reactions to them, Cisneros' shows not only the hardships women face, but also explores their power to overcome them.  
**Check pages: 10-11, 26-27, 29, 31-32, 58-61, 67-69, 74-75, 79-80, 81-83, 84-85, 88-89, 90-91, 92-93, 101-102, 103-105, 106-107, 109-110**
3. Both Alicia and Esperanza view education and writing as a way to a better life. Through these and other characters, Cisneros suggests that education offers a kind of freedom.  
**Check pages: 31-32, 35, 60-61, 74-75, 90-91, 104-105, 106-107, 109-110**
4. The circle is an important symbol in Mango Street, representing ways that many characters are trapped in a cycle of violence and poverty as well as the ways that community can help break that cycle.  
**Check pages: 26-27, 29-30, 31-32, 58-61, 65-66, 67-69, 76-78, 79-80, 81-83, 84-85, 88-89, 90-91, 92-93, 101-102, 106-107, 109-110**