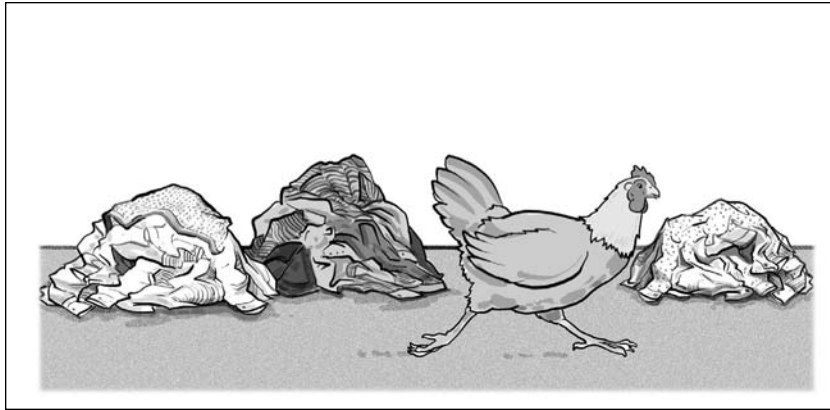


PART 1

All of Us Have Good Stories

1 Veronica Finds Her Story



abc Vocabulary Preview

afraid grade look forward to parents repeat toys

Before We Read

1. Talk about the picture. What do you see? What is happening? What do you think will happen next?
2. Talk about the title of the chapter. What do you think Veronica wrote about?
3. Do you remember something that happened when you first went to school? How did you feel?

Scanning

Read Veronica's letter fast. Answer the question.

What happened to the chicken? _____

Talk about your answer with a classmate.

Veronica's Letter to Her Class

Read the letter.

Dear Students,

I am Veronica Lopez, your teacher. I hope you are all going to enjoy this class. We are going to read, write, talk, and learn together. You already know a lot of English, but you want to learn more. You told me you want to write better, and you told me you want to read better. So that's what we are going to do. We will read each other's journals and write to each other.

First please tell me a story about something interesting in your life. Here is my story.

I was born in El Salvador. My parents brought me to the United States when I was five years old. When I started school, I didn't know any English. I didn't understand one word. I was afraid to talk, and I was afraid of the teacher. I had no friends. I had to repeat the first grade two times. My second time in the first grade, I made one good friend. Her name was Amelia. She spoke English and Spanish because her dad was Mexican and her mom was U.S.-American. Amelia spoke Spanish with her dad and English with her mom. Amelia helped me. I started speaking and learning English, and soon I was less afraid of school.

Sometimes I went to Amelia's house to play. Amelia's house had two floors. It was always clean, and there was a lot of nice furniture. There was a big garden behind the house. The grass looked like a beautiful clean carpet. Amelia had her own room, with many books and toys. Her mom was very pretty and had beautiful blond hair. She baked cookies and made delicious dinners. She was like the moms in storybooks.

At my house, things were very different. My dad didn't always have a job. My mom washed clothes for other people. In our house, there were always big piles of dirty clothes. My dad sometimes brought home a live chicken for dinner. After my mother cut off the chicken's head, the chicken ran around without a head. My mother plucked the feathers off the chicken. Sometimes I helped her. Then we had chicken dinner. I didn't invite friends to my house because I didn't want them to see the dirty clothes and chicken feathers.

I thought, "Amelia's life is right! My life is wrong." But then something changed for me. In the fifth grade, Mrs. Bledowski was my teacher. She said, "I want you to write about your life, Veronica. Your life is your story, and you have a good story here! Tell it."

Now you know some of my stories. I look forward to reading yours!

Your teacher,
Veronica

? What Happened?

Mark the sentences (T) true or (F) false.

- F 1. Veronica is from Mexico.
- 2. Veronica spoke English when she started school.
- 3. Amelia was Veronica's teacher.
- 4. Veronica lived in a big beautiful house.
- 5. Veronica felt bad about her house.
- 6. Veronica's mother didn't work.

Rewrite the false sentences and make them true. Write them in your notebook.



Think about It

Answer the questions with your group.

1. Why do you think Veronica was afraid of her first grade teacher?
2. Why did Veronica feel her life was "wrong"?
3. Veronica wrote that something changed when she was in the fifth grade. What did she mean?
4. Why did Veronica think that Amelia's life was right and her own life was not right?
5. Highlight or underline a sentence you like in Veronica's letter. Tell why you like this sentence.

↔ My Experiences

Discuss the questions with a partner.

1. Are any of Veronica's experiences similar to any of your experiences?
2. Have you ever felt bad about yourself or about someone in your family?
3. What were your first experiences at school in the United States?



Choose one of the questions, and write about it in your journal.

Vocabulary—Working with Words

Categories

Read the words in the box. Then put the words that go together into groups. You can put a word in more than one group.

enjoy	write	journals	school	English	room	read	chicken
clean	feathers	improve	Spanish	house	better	talk	teacher

Examples

things: school, chicken, feathers

places: school, house

words that start with S: school, Spanish

words about school: teacher, journals, English, write

Share your word groups with the class. Who had the most interesting groups? Take a class vote.

Vocabulary—Making the Words My Own

Finish the Sentence

Read the sentences about Veronica with a partner. Look at the underlined words. Find the words in Veronica's letter. Highlight or underline the words in the letter. Then use the words to write about yourself or someone you know.

1. Veronica's parents brought her to the United States when she was five years old.

My parents _____.

2. Veronica wrote, "Soon I was less afraid of school."

I am afraid of _____.

3. Veronica repeated the first grade two times.

I repeated _____.

4. Veronica wrote, “My second time in the first grade, I made one good friend.”

In the first grade, I _____.

5. Amelia had her own room, with many books and toys.

My favorite toy was _____.

6. Veronica wrote, “I look forward to reading your stories.”

I look forward to _____.