



# TeachersFirst READING TREKS

## *Enrique's Journey: The True Story of a Boy Determined to Reunite with His Mother*

### Teacher Guide

#### Grade Level & Content Areas

Access Reading  
Trek Map

**Ages:** 9–12

**Grades:** 4–7

**Reading Level:** 6<sup>th</sup> grade

**Lexile Measure:** 770L

**Guided Reading Level:** U

**Developmental Reading**

**Assessment (DRA):** 50

**Content Areas:** English/language arts, reading, literature, and social studies (including the Vietnam War, immigration, the refugee experience, and cultural identity).

### Synopsis of Book

This young adult adaptation of *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario is a powerful work of nonfiction that follows the harrowing journey of a young boy from Honduras who risks everything to reunite with his mother in the United States after years of separation. Written in an age-appropriate format for middle-grade and early secondary students, the novel weaves together themes of family, resilience, immigration, and identity while grounding the story in real-world events and issues. Teachers can use this text to help students build an understanding of and empathy for the immigrant experience, make cross-curricular connections to social studies and current events, and engage in meaningful discussions about perseverance, human rights, and the challenges children face when forced to migrate.

### Standards

#### Common Core State Standards for K–5

## Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

## Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

## Common Core State Standards for 6–12

### Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

### Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

## National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme 4: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY
- Theme 6: POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE
- Theme 9: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

## National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING
- CONNECTING

## National Core Arts Standards for Music

- CREATING
- RESPONDING

## Next Generation Science Standards

- Engineering Design
- Earth and Human Activity

## Social Justice Standards

- Identity
- Diversity
- Justice
- Action

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## Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying [Reading Trek map](#) as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

## Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

### Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the whole class by displaying the [Reading Trek map](#) on an interactive whiteboard and highlighting its various layers.
2. Have students use Google My Maps ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to plot Enrique's journey from Honduras through Mexico to the United States. Add a short description, an image, and a key quote from the book at each stop. This activity helps students visualize the dangers, emotions, and resilience required for each stage of migration.
3. Have students use Witty Comics ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to create a short comic that shows a scene from Enrique's journey, such as riding atop *La Bestia* or crossing the border. The comic format helps students capture dialogue, danger, and determination in a visual, student-friendly way.
4. Students can use Book Creator ([TeachersFirst review](#)) or stationery to compose a series of letters from Enrique to his mother during different points along his journey. Each letter should reflect his emotions, setbacks, and hopes. Teachers can compile the digital letters into a class collected correspondence book to demonstrate Enrique's growth over time and across places.
5. Have students use Odyssey ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to not only trace Enrique's route, but also add interactive challenge markers along the path. At each marker, they should insert a short description of the dangers Enrique faced (such as corrupt police, hunger, or injuries on *La Bestia*). Students can also embed images, questions, or reflections to turn the map into a living, interactive resource that shows both geography and lived experience.

### Extension Activities:

1. Have students work in small groups to create short podcast episodes using Adobe Podcast ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Each group takes on the perspective of a character (Enrique, his mother, his grandmother, or a fellow migrant) and records a two- or three-minute reflection on the hopes, fears, or challenges they face along the way.
2. Students can use Canva Infographic Templates ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to create an illustrated timeline of Enrique's journey. Each entry should include a key event, a summary, and a visual that shows both the hardships Enrique faced and the turning points. Students can compare Enrique's personal milestones with historical or current events related to immigration.
3. Invite students to use Canva for Education ([TeachersFirst review](#)) or magazine cutouts to design a digital or paper collage that represents Enrique's evolving identity. Students can include symbols, images, and

- words that capture his struggles with family, belonging, and perseverance. Display each collage in a gallery walk to spark class discussion.
4. Have students create a symbolic piece of art—either a drawing, painting, or mixed-media work—that captures a central theme from Enrique’s journey (family bonds, perseverance, sacrifice, hope, etc.). For those who prefer digital design, try Google Drawings ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Display the artwork as a gallery of migration stories to encourage empathy and reflection.
  5. Students can use Kialo Ed ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to engage in a structured debate about immigration issues raised in *Enrique’s Journey*. Prompts could include “Should families risk separation to pursue economic stability?” or “What role should governments play in supporting migrants?” This encourages critical thinking, respectful dialogue, and connections between Enrique’s personal story and larger societal themes.

## Helpful Resources

### From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Building Background Knowledge with Reading Treks](#)
- [OK2Ask: No Passport Required: Cross-Curricular Learning Journeys with Google My Maps](#)

### Other Resources:

- [LitCharts Study Guide](#)
- [Enrique’s Journey Website](#)
- [TeachingBooks - Enrique’s Journey: The True Story of a Boy Determined to Reunite with His Mother](#)
- [Scribd - Enrique’s Journey resources](#)