



## Three Short Stories from Latin America

Curriculum Unit 87.01.03

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### I. RATIONALE

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The readers I have in mind for this unit are primarily third year students of Spanish as well as native speakers with a need to improve their reading skills. Each selection has a “Base Vocabulary”, which is available for the reader so that he/she can fully grasp the meaning of the reading at hand. Difficult terms and idiomatic expressions which might also present problems for the reader are listed and explained. The unit contains a series of exercises designed to check reading comprehension at the end of each story. This skill acquired, the student will increase his/her ability to use words, common expressions, and idioms in a natural manner, in the target language. It is also hoped that his/her confidence and familiarity with the language will be enhanced.

The chosen selections have the added objective of developing pleasure in reading whole stories in Spanish which will serve as an incentive to learn more about Latin American culture. I have picked three short stories by three well known authors’ “Un día de estos”, by Gabriel Garc’a Márquez, “El asesino desinteresado Bill Harrigan”, by Jorge Luis Borges, and “Nos han dado la tierra”, by Juan Rulfo.

The student can look forward to exercises that will range from vocabulary drills, brief comments based on items found in the reading, replacing words written in Spanish for an English counterpart, grouping of words in which the students signal which word does not correspond to the same idea, as well as questions based on the reading itself. If the teacher wishes to expand the preparation of his/her students on what constitutes a short story, I strongly suggest he/she refer to the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute Curriculum Units gathered under the title *Reading the Twentieth Century Short Story* , compiled in 1983. The amount of resources available in that particular compilation, together with the well annotated and prepared plans, are of great value.

### II. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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*Gabriel Garc’a Márquez* was born in Aracataca, Colombia March 6, 1928. As a novelist, Garc’a Márquez has known worldwide success because of his literary inventions. An inventor of cities, of entire families and, of time, he maintains that whatever he writes is about things that he knows and people he has seen.

Educated by Jesuits, he first thought of becoming a lawyer. Upon entering the university he realized that the streets were what attracted him. He stopped his studies. The mysteries of a large city, the enigma of the outsider who becomes the object of suspicion and hatred, the problems of possessions ingrained in socio-political dynamics were of far more interest to him than school rooms and term papers. He decided instead for a job with the newspaper *El Espectador* in Bogotá. During this time he read novels and stories by Franz Kafka, James Joyce and William Faulkner. In 1954 the newspaper assigned him to Europe, and he went to live in Rome. While there, he preferred to write articles concerning the cinema rather than daily events. He developed an interest in film direction and moved to Paris. Meanwhile in Bogotá, the newspaper closed down due to the ruthless governing of a Colombian dictator, Rojas Pinilla. García Márquez saw himself unemployed, awaiting the arrival of checks that never arrived, like in the case of a character from one of his novels, *El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. Thanks to a kind landlord, he was able to stay in France for a year without having to pay rent. Anecdotes say that the man took pity on him because he always saw García Márquez typing. He returned to Colombia and married Mercedes, who had been waiting four years for him. Together, they tried their luck in Caracas, the capital of Venezuela. From there they went to New York and then to Mexico, where Márquez could dedicate himself to the writing of films. During these years these were important activities, but not at all decisive. He was able to support his family by doing odd jobs. During this time he was preparing himself for the book that would propel him to fame and fortune. It was not until 1967 that his masterpiece, *Cien años de soledad* appeared. However, this is not to say that García Márquez had not published before then. In 1955 he published *La Hojarasca*, followed by *El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba* in 1961. In 1962 he published the novel *La mala hora*. By 1965 he was already working on *Cien años de soledad*, a story he had conceived of as a child, listening to the stories his grandmother told him, as well as the countless things his grandfather showed him. Of his grandparents, García Márquez says that they were responsible for the circumstances in which his novelistic world was formed. He says that when his grandmother died, things “got flat”. In his imagination the fantastic world of his grandparents, together with the routine of the town in which he lived, melted to form a life where there were no frontiers between the fantastic and the real. His grandma told him of the bloody civil wars of Colombia, with names of generals, regional leaders (caudillos) and presidents. Names and dates got convoluted. The child did not distinguish what was historical and what was fiction. From this world of remembrances, fantasies and unrealities, *Cien años de soledad* emerged, for which he was given the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983.

Márquez is interesting because from his first novels, elements appeared which were to recur in later works, such as a “lonely town, cut off from the rest of civilization, and bitter political feuds that deaths and marriages cannot heal.”<sup>1</sup> Again and again in García Márquez’s stories, “a lonely proud individual asserts a sense of dignity despite a society in which brutality and corruption triumph.”<sup>2</sup> Distortion of reality and precise detail around the impossible are permanent qualities in Márquez’s work, His novels “remind us that in a continent conquered by men who had absorbed the novels of chivalry and were haunted by tales of *El Dorado*, a continent in which nature has a most invariably triumphed over man, the marvelous must have a place in literature.”<sup>3</sup>

*Jorge Luis Borges* was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina August 24, 1899 and died in Switzerland in 1986. He is known as a writer of strong imagination. An avid reader, this portent of Latin American letters has talked about the faith he had in life, the love he felt for his country and ancestors, the wisdom which lies in our own personal God, his determination to defend his ideas and principles without compromise, and about what is commonly considered or talked of as “reality”. For his countrymen, he was not always an Argentine to the bone. For his admirers, a universal Argentine. Borges was always fascinated with mirrors and labyrinths. His stories are reflections of ideas and facts which are multiplied in the reader’s imagination until they acquire the

fragility of the dreamlike, becoming confused with reality.

Borges was born in a comfortable household. His father was a lawyer, a linguist, and even wrote a novel. The family moved to Europe in order for Borges and his sister to receive their education. Borges has said many times that he learned to read in English before he did in Spanish, due to the availability of English magazines around his home. It was in English that he read his first novels, including the *Quijote*. He developed his style studying English as well as American literature. As a young man he formed part of a group known as Ultraists, i.e. beyond "isms".

Borges' character could perhaps be summed up with the following adjectives: daring, yet timid; a tireless chatter, nostalgic, ironic, a political reactionary; a sociable, yet private man. Between 1920 and 1930, Borges worked with great intensity. He read and studied the relations of China and India. He also read many philosophers, specially those of idealistic thought and absorbed the ideas of Nietzsche. In his stories, Borges experiments with a subjective conception of time and with the idea that history can be considered as an eternal repetition of facts and begins within which limited and scarce possibilities can co-exist. In 1938, Borges suffered a septicemia or injury to his head, and spent several days in the hospital. While resting, he wrote various fantastic stories. He suggested that this incident (the injury to the head) changed the literary orientation of his work. He then published a series of strange stories and essays, which are not quite adventures or mysteries, but in them intrigue, facts, death, and duels of clues abound. From this point on, Borges became the master of intellectual games, strange plots, and unexpected endings. He resembles a narrator of police stories with a tint of philosophy and theology. In a sentence, "poetic meditation on illusion and reality, on dream and consciousness, were to become obsessive preoccupations." <sup>4</sup> When he published *Historia Universal de la Infamia*, from which our selection is taken, he referred to it as "the irresponsible game of a timid man who did not have the drive to write stories and distracted himself by falsifying and apostasising the tales of others." <sup>5</sup> In this collection the main characters are evil men and women of somewhat obscure historical importance revived in Borges' imagination.

One of Borges' constant themes is that of a man caught in a trap he has created himself. The fiction can take the form of historical investigation, literary criticism, description of an imaginary planet, a detective story or of an imaginary controversy. The core of these stories is "fortified" by footnotes and quotations which give the reader a probability of the fantastic mixed with descriptions of facts, which seem possible but weird at the same time. "Borges's metaphysics reflect the madness that is there in reality." <sup>6</sup> His tales are intertwined and quasi-revealed in a series of bibliographical references which hint at meanings that keep the reader guessing. The insinuations and many mysteries linked to contradictions of time and to characters caught in the trap of time and inner processes, perplexes and entertains the reader. It is required that the reader be an active one, looking for clues, willing to embark in a tunnel of his own, to either come out of it in triumph, or "defeated", but stimulated by the exotic universe Borges presents.

For many years however, Borges searched for the chief genre that was to make him a renowned author. At first, he wrote essays which dealt with philosophical matters such as cyclical time theories, religions, the Cabbala, Gnostics, etc. In 1936 he published *Historia de la eternidad*, a group of essays dedicated to time and time philosophies. It wasn't until *Ficciones* (1944) and *El Aleph* (1949) that Borges really found the best vehicle for his ideas: the short story. "I know that the least perishable part of my literary production is the narrative, yet for many years I did not dare to write stories. I thought that the paradise of the tale was forbidden to me." <sup>7</sup>

Borges' work speaks to the modern man. His themes are varied and touch on such diverse areas as the

philosophical, the socio-political, the psychological, and the religious. He is an Argentine who breaks away from the frontiers of his country and transcends his, as well as our own, panorama. His universalism attacks the present condition of the modern day homo sapiens who is much too happy or sad contemplating himself/herself, indifferent to others, Borges asserts the philosopher and sociologist in himself but through the expression of possibilities and transformation fiction can bring forth the lack of humanity in human societies. The main orbit of concentration relies on death. Death penetrates the Rulfian world: ambiance, things, people. Death is present in all of the stories, The Italian translation aptly carries the title of *La muerte al Messico*.

Rulfo's narratives are told either in first or third person. Critics agree that he is at his best utilizing the first person. He is a master of the monologue, though he also receives high marks for his dialogues. But whatever the technique, Rulfo invariably describes the misfortunes of a large segment of humanity. The author himself has said that what he does is a transposition of the facts of his experience. Rulfo's people grow not outwardly but rather inwardly. His monologues are carried by a strong hermeticism, as one could very well imagine people under such conditions would develop. One has the sense that the characters are chewing their words avoiding their coming forth. But come out they do, reveling to us a series of atrocious procedures. In "Nos han dado la tierra", for instance, Rulfo deals with the theme of a group of men to whom the government has given a vast chunk of arid land. "Del pueblo pare acá es de ustedes", <sup>8</sup> explains the government representative to the men. The campesinos proceed to cross the "llano" a metaphor for the government's "generosity" towards its citizens. As they cross the vast arid valley, a single drop of water is witnessed by the men. The drop of water provides a brief moment of hope, but this promise quickly disappears, "dejando una plasta como la de un salivazo". <sup>9</sup> Hope turns into anguish. It is from the title that one can find the deceit and the irony.

### III. "Un día de estos", by Gabriel García Márquez.

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#### A. BASE VOCABULARY (in order of appearance in story).

1. amaneció—(past tense of amanecer)-to dawn, to get light.
2. tibio—tepid, lukewarm.
3. dentadura postiza—false teeth.
4. molde de yeso—plaster cast.
5. sin cuello—without a collar.
6. cargadores elasticos—suspenders.
7. enjunto—lean, skinny.
8. fresa—type of machine used by dentists.
9. pedaleando—pedalling.
10. destemplada—disagreeable, unpleasant.
11. puliendo—polishing.
12. cartón—cardboard box.
13. "te pega un tiro"—"he will shoot you".
14. apresurarse-to hurry, to hasten.
15. apoyada-leaning, resting, supported, propped.
16. umbral-threshold, doorsill.
17. herv'an-(imperfect tense of hervir)-to boil.

18. olor glacial-frigid smell.
19. pomos de loza-porcelain knobs.
20. cancel de tela-folding screen made of cloth.
21. talones-heels.
22. sin anestesia-without anaesthesia.
23. absceso-abscess.
24. cacerola-saucepan.
25. pinzas-tweezers, pliers.
26. escupidera-spitting place.
27. aguamanil-washstand.
28. cordal-wisdom tooth.
29. muela-back tooth.
30. gatillo-instrument for drawing teeth.
31. aferró-(past tense of aferrar)-to cling.
32. crujido-creak; clatter.
33. mandíbula-jaw.
34. lágrimas-tears.
35. jadeante-panting.
36. desabotonó-unbuttoned.
37. buscó a tientas-groped around for, felt around for.
38. bolsillo-pocket.
39. trapo-a cloth.
40. cielo raso-clear, cloudless sky.
41. desfondado-without end.
42. telara-a-spider web.
43. buches de agua de sal-mouthfuls of salt water.
44. displicente-disagreeable; cross, peevish.
45. pasar la cuenta-to send the bill.
46. "la misma vaina"-“the same thing”.

#### B. EXERCISES

1.a. complete the sentences with the appropriate word/s from the list at the end of this exercise.

1. Don Aurelio Escovar, era un dentista \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Su mirada pocas veces \_\_\_\_\_ a la situación.
3. El alcalde quer'a que le \_\_\_\_\_ una muela.
4. El dentista pul'a \_\_\_\_\_ mientras hac'a esperar al alcalde.
5. Por el dolor, el alcalde se hab'a \_\_\_\_\_ la mejilla izquierda pero no la derecha.
6. El dentista le \_\_\_\_\_ al alcalde que hab'a que hab'a que hacer la operaci6n "sin anestecia".
7. El alcalde sintió un \_\_\_\_\_ helado en los ri-ones,
8. El dentista le dijo al alcalde que all' pagaba por \_\_\_\_\_ muertos.
9. Don Aurelio le recomienda al alcalde que hiciera buches de\_\_\_\_\_.
10. Como era \_\_\_\_\_, la cuenta iba a ser pasada lo mismo al municipio que al alcalde.

informó  
dientes de oro  
correspond'a  
afeitado  
veinte  
agua de sal  
sin t'tulo  
la misma vaina  
vacío  
sacasen

2.a. Write the infinitive of the verb which corresponds to each word and translate into English.

1. madrugador
2. ordenó
3. correspond'a
4. pedaleando
5. puliendo
6. cambiado de expresión
7. acercaba
8. afirmó,
9. aferró
10. crujido
11. desabotonó
12. despidió

3.a. Choose the word/s from column B opposite in meaning to each word in column A .

- A
- \_\_\_ 1. amanecer
  - \_\_\_ 2. r'gido
  - \_\_\_ 3. trabajando
  - \_\_\_ 4. guardar
  - \_\_\_ 5. sacar
  - \_\_\_ 6. apresurarse
  - \_\_\_ 7. desesperación

- \_\_\_ 8. amargura
- \_\_\_ 9. sabotear
- \_\_\_ 10. displicente

B

- a. botar
- b. ternura
- c. anochecer
- ch. abotonar
- d. flágido
- e. poner
- f. tranquilidad
- g. descansado
- h. tomarse el tiempo
- i. desagradable

4.a. Structures: form sentences or phrases using the given words. Refer to the story for the correct structures.

- 1. dentadura/vidriera/de/postiza/la/sacó/una
- 2. muela/dice/una/el/sacas/alcalde/si/que/le
- 3. una/después/hizo/de/ocho/las/pausa
- 4. dedos/punta/la/cerró/los/gaveta/de/con
- 5. talones/boca/los/y/abrió/afirmó/la
- 6. ser/tiene/anestecia/que/sin
- 7. mirar/hizo/al/todo/alcalde/sin
- 8. trapo/el/le/un/limpio/dio/dentista
- 9. muertos/paga/teniente/nos/aqu'/veinte
- 10. la/-dijo/pasa/cuenta/me

5.a. Comment briefly on the following.

- 1. "una mirada que raras veces correspond'a a la situación."
- 2. "el dentista vio en sus ojos marchitos muchas noches de desesperación."
- 3. "sintió un vacío helado en los ri-ones."
- 4. "Aqu' nos pague veinte muertos, teniente."
- 5. "Es la misma vaina."

6.a. Answer the following questions in Spanish. Use full sentences. Create a paragraph.

- 1. Además de ser dentista "sin título", ¿qué era Don Escovar?
- 2. Describe su fisionom'a y carácter
- 3. ¿Qué hac'a Don Aurelio cuando llegó su ni-o?
- 4. ¿Que quer'a el alcalde?
- 5. ¿Por qué estuvo de acuerdo Don Aurelio en hacer la operación? Crees tú que por el revolver que tra'a el alcaldé?
- 6. ¿Qué hizo el alcalde cuando supo que la extirpación tendr'ía que ser "sin anestecia"?
- 7. ¿Qué posible significado tienen pare t' estas palabras:? "Aquí nos paga veinte muertos, teniente."
- 8. ¿Cómo estaba el alcalde luego de la operación?
- 9. ¿Por qué, si es alcalde, le da al dentista un saludo militar?
- 10. ¿Qué tipo de satisfacción obtuvo el dentista?

## IV. “El asesino desinteresado Bill Harrigan”, by Jorge Luis Borges.

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### A. BASE VOCABULARY (in order of appearance in story).

1. desinteresado-desprendido, apartado del interés. disinterested, impartial.
2. Ilustre-illustrious, noble.
3. fundamento-foundation, groundwork.
4. vertiginosa-(adj.) transient disturbance of the judgement.
5. meseta-elevated and flat terrain of great extension.
6. pelado-(adj.) plucked, bare, hairless.
7. pistoletazos-pistol shot, the shot of a wound.
8. aturden-to perturb, to confuse.
9. emisor-one who emits.
10. veteadado-striped, veined, streaky.
11. reluciente-relucent, lucent, light, clear.
12. conventillo-(dim.) convent.
13. deb’a-owed.
14. Irlandés-native of Ireland.
15. catinga-(americanismo)-del Guaran’ *Cati* , olor fuerte y desagradable propio de algunas plantas y animales// olor que las personas, especialmente los negros, exhalan.
16. vientre-belly.
17. mota-(american’smo) pelo crespo, especialmente el de los negros. kinky hair.
18. primado-most prominent.
19. pecas-freckles.
20. crencha-the parting of the hair in two equal parts.
21. esmirriado-thin, tired, consumed.
22. chúcaro-concave.
23. soez-mean, vile, worthless.
24. pandilla-gang.
25. cloaca-sewer, a conduct for dirty water.
26. niebla-fog, mist, haze,damp.
27. fétido-fetid, stinking.
28. desmorrnanaban-destroying little by little.
29. cascotazo-hit on the head.
30. restituan-returning to the place of departure.
31. encanecido-(adj.) gray haired.
32. envenedador-(adj.) poisoning.
33. buhardilla-small garret.
34. jorobada-(adj.)crooked, hunchback.
35. volcaba, -upsetting, overturning, dumping.
36. transeúnte-passer-by.
37. balde-buckett.
38. ahogaba-to suffocate, smother.
39. en seguida-(idiom)right away, at once.
40. pululaban-to swarm.



41. arrebatan-to snatch, to carry away.
42. saqueaban-to sack, plunder, pillage, loot.
43. aprendizaje-apprenticeship.
44. desde-aba-to scorn, disdain.
45. presentimiento-presentiment, premonition.
46. alcen el trapo-(idiom).
47. ponientes-sunsets.
48. hacha-axe.
49. demoledora-(adj.) to demolish.
50. bisonte-bison, buffalo.
51. despejado-clear, cloudless.
52. desafortada-colossal, huge.
53. acompasado-rhythmic; slow;easy going; cautious.
54. pobló-populated.
55. aculebrado-(adj.) like a serpent.
56. taberna-bar, saloon.
57. todopoderoso-almighty.
58. destemplada-(adj.) unpleasant, irregular.
59. agrietan-to crack.
60. acodados-(adj.) elbow-shaped.
61. fornidos-husky, sturdy, well built, robust.
62. pendenciero-quarrelsome..
63. ostentación-ostentation, appearance.
64. impasiblemente-impassively.
65. Hay quienes hablan-(idiom) there are those who speak.
66. aguardiente-brandy, moonshine, liquor.
67. anonadan-to overwhelm, to humble.
68. cimarrona-untamed, wild.
69. laterales-lateral, at the sides.
70. hijos de perras-sons of bitches.
71. desaf'ó-challenge, dare.
72. susurran-to whisper.
73. temerosamente-in a fearful or timid way.
74. detonación-detonation, noise.
75. retumba-to resound, to rumble.
76. parapetado-sheltered, behind a parapet.
77. cordon-cord, strand, string;a military cordon, formed by a line of troops to prevent any communication.
78. intruso-intruder.
79. reanuda-resumes
80. concede-to concede, to grant.
81. apretones-(de mano), handshakes.
82. adulaciones-flatteries, compliments.
83. tiende su frazada-(phrase) spreads his blanket.
84. muchachuelo-male youth.
85. estribar-to lean, rest.

86. vagabundo-vagabond, wanderer, roamer, (adj. in text)
87. troperos-cowboys.
88. burdeles-brothels.
89. arrastraban-to drag, impel.
90. lucidez-lucidness, brilliancy, brightness.
91. squeado-to consider with disgust or dislike, to disdain.
92. punter'a-aim, n~arksmanship.
93. pormenores-details, particulars.
94. irrecuperables-irretrievable.
95. lujo-luxury.
96. coraje-anger.
97. al galope-at a gallop.
98. descerrajo-to discharge fire-arms.
99. overo-
100. encajo-to insert, put in;to give, let go.
101. trancó-to bar, to barricade, to close.
102. desarmaron-disarmed him.
103. cachivache-good-for-nothing.
104. envainaron-to sheathe.
105. espanto-fright.
106. burlas-jokes, mockery.
107. vidriera-glass window, stroe window.
108. almacén-department store, warehouse.
109. t'lbury-
110. leguas a la redonda-(idiom)
111. maquillar-to apply make-up.
112. enterraron-to bury.
113. con júbilo-(idiom) with joy, jubilation.

## B. EXERCISES

1.b. complete the sentences with the appropriate word/s from the list at the end of this exercise.

1. En la imagen de tierras de Arizona y New Mexico se encontraba \_\_\_\_ de Billy de Kid.
2. Al morir, Bill Harrigan deb'a \_\_\_\_ vidas; "sin contar mejicanos".
3. Billy the Kid nació en \_\_\_\_.
4. Se crió entre \_\_\_\_.
5. De ni-o perteneció a \_\_\_\_ "the Swamp Angels".
6. A Bill Harrigan le \_\_\_\_ asistir a los melodramas de "cowboys".
7. El \_\_\_\_ atra'a a los america-os de la época.
8. En 1873 Billy the Kid se encuentra en una \_\_\_\_ bebiendo aguardiente.
9. \_\_\_\_ a un tal El Dago.
10. De esa muerte \_\_\_\_ Billy the Kid y murió Bill Harrigan.
11. Preparaba fiestas y pagaba \_\_\_\_ a balazos.
12. \_\_\_\_ le proporcionó dos balazos.
13. Hombres \_\_\_\_ de leguas a la redonda.
14. Al cuarto d'a lo enterraron \_\_\_\_.

acudieron  
nació  
Nueva York  
la otra imagen  
El Dago  
la cuenta  
la pandilla  
ventiuna  
negros  
gustaba  
taberna  
oeste  
con júbilo  
El comisario Garret

2.b. Write the infinitive of the verb which corresponds to each word and translate into English.

1. aturden
2. reluciente
3. desmorrnaban
4. desgarrones
5. anonadan
6. desaf'o
7. adulaciones
8. envainaron
9. acudieron
10. enterraron
11. demoledora
12. presentimiento

3.b. Replace the words given in English for a Spanish counterpart.

1. pride
2. fleeing
3. large silver coins
4. with a serpent and an eagle
5. frontier man
6. anger

4.b. Provide a brief comment on the following items.

1. Resplandor de esqueleto pelado por los pájaros.
2. "sin contar mejicanos"
3. Atracción del oeste
4. Enterer con júbilo

5.b. Choose the word/s from column B opposite in meaning to each word in column A.

- \_\_\_ 1. desinteresado
- \_\_\_ 2. ilustre
- \_\_\_ 3. resplandor
- \_\_\_ 4. fatigado
- \_\_\_ 5. esmirriado
- \_\_\_ 6. soez
- \_\_\_ 7. fétido
- \_\_\_ 8. restituir
- \_\_\_ 9. intruzo
- \_\_\_ 10. muchachuelo
- \_\_\_ 11. burlas
- \_\_\_ 12. lujo
- \_\_\_ 13. espanto
- \_\_\_ 14. con júbilo

B

- a. fornido
- b. educado
- c. oscuridad
- ch. adulaciones
- d. fresco, listo
- e. hombre
- f. familiar, bienvenido
- g. interesado
- h. pobreza
- i. con pena
- j. gracia
- k. oloroso
- l. malvado, común
- m. quitar, partir

6.b. Answer the following questions in Spanish. Use full sentences. Create a paragraph.

1. ¿A qué edad muere Bill Harrigan?
2. ¿Cuál era su origen étnico?
3. ¿Por qué se marcha al oeste?

4. ¿A dónde va?
5. ¿Por qué mata a Belisario Villagrán, “el Dago”?
6. ¿En qué pueblo se encuentra con el comisario Garret?
7. ¿Qué reacción hubo en el pueblo luego de su muerte?
8. ¿Crees que es una historia fantástica?, expande.

V. “Nos hen dado la sierra”, by Juan Rulfo

A. BASE VOCABULARY (in order of appearance in story).

1. rajada-(adj.) split, cracked, broken open.
2. grietas-crevices, cracks, clefts.
3. muy allá-(idiom)-much farther, way over there.
4. ahorita (americanism) right now.
5. ese alguien-(idiom) that someone.
6. hace rato-(idiom) a while ago.
7. neintitantos-twenty some odd.
8. pu-ito a pu-ito-(idiom) handful by handful.
9. desperdigando-to separate, scatter.
10. platicar’a-to converse, to talk over, to discuss.
11. resuello-breathing, hard breathing, panting.
12. plasta-soft mass;flattned object.
13. salivazo-portion of salivaspit at once.
14. ¿Quién diablos?-(idiom) Who the devil.
15. huizaches-(americanism)tree, similar to the “acacia”.
16. trespeleques-insignificant subjects of low social class.
17. manchita-pieces of terrain distinguishable from other due to particularities.
18. zacate-(americanismo) del azteca “zacatl”, grass.
19. enroscadas-(adj.) to coil, to twist.
20. terciada (adj.) to swing over one’s shoulders.
21. “la 30”-type of pistol.
22. carabina-carabine, small machine gun.
23. son otro asunto-(idiom) are another matter.
24. tanta y tama-a tierra pare nada (sentence)-So much and such a big land for nothing.
25. tatema-del azteca tatemar, to brown, to bake.
26. Costra de tepetate (amer.idiom)-costra:scab, crust. tepetate:type of rock.
27. jeta-nog’s snout, thick, heavy lips.
28. casuarinas y paraneras-types of trees.
29. yuntas-yokes.
30. doter-to endow.
31. azadón-hoe.
32. comal-(amer.)disco de barro, en el cual se cuecen tortillas y se tuestan granos, café, ma’z, cacao.
33. r eto-a-to sprout.
34. zopilotes-turkey vulture.
35. terregal (amer.)-tierra suelta, polvareda.
36. reculando-to back up, to recoil.
37. pepenaste (amer.) del azteca’pepena’, to collect what is on the ground.
38. merqué-to buy

39. bastimento-supply, provisions.
40. derrumbadero-crag, precipice.
41. zangolotea-to jiggle, to flop around, to rattle.
42. parvadas-a large amount of something.
43. chacalacas-(amer.) del azteca-a type of loud chicken
44. retacha-(amer.)rebotar un cuerpo elástico.
45. desentumecerla-to relieve of numbness.
46. tepemezquites-especies of cactus.
47. arriendo-return, turn back.

## B. EXERCISES

1.c. Complete the sentences with the appropriate word/s from the list at the end of the exercise.

1. Después de muchas horas de caminar \_\_\_ ni semilla ni sombra.
2. Al final de la llanura seca \_\_\_.
3. A las once de la ma-ana, caminaban hombres. \_\_\_.
4. Cuando el cuento comienza quedan \_\_\_ hombres solamente.
5. Cuando cae una gota de agua, los hombres esperan que \_\_\_ más.
6. El personaje nos dice que desde que era muchacho nunca vio llover en \_\_\_.
7. \_\_\_ se esconden en la sombra de una piedra.
8. El delegado no vino a conversar, vino a traer \_\_\_.
9. Los hombres le dicen al delegado que no han dicho nada \_\_\_, sino contra el llano.
10. El gobierno quiere que los campesinos \_\_\_ semillas.
11. Esteban llevaba \_\_\_ debajo de su gavan.
12. Esteban llevaba su gallina para \_\_\_ y no para comersela.
13. Cuando llegan al pueblo se oye \_\_\_.
14. Los hombres dicen que les gusta \_\_\_.
15. La tierra que les han dado está \_\_\_.

llueva  
el polvo  
en contra del centro  
caminar  
siembren  
hay un pueblo  
una gallina  
ladrar a los perros  
las lagartijas  
los papeles  
cuidarla  
cuatro  
“allá arriba”  
el llano  
veintitantos

2.c. Write the infinitive of the verb which corresponds to each word and translate into English.

1. rajada
2. saborea
3. llueva
4. platicar'a
5. cayendo
6. ocurre
7. probado
8. resbalan
9. nacerá
10. manifiéstenlo

11. endurecido

12. dado

3.c. Structures: form sentences or phrases using the given words. Refer to the story for the correct structures.

1. dado/la/nos/tierra/han

2. todav'a/muy/está/el/allá/pueblo

3. somos/nudo/nosotros/que

4. gota/cae/agua/de/una

5. para/tama-a/tanta/y/nada/tierra

6. oír/nos/quiso/no

4.c. Choose the word/s from column B opposite in meaning to each word in column A.

A.

\_\_\_ 1. allá

\_\_\_ 2. hace rato

\_\_\_ 3. cerca

\_\_\_ 4. lluvia

\_\_\_ 5. dar

\_\_\_ 6. peligroso

\_\_\_ 7. a pie

\_\_\_ 8. tierras de riego

\_\_\_ 9. salir lejos

\_\_\_ 10. seguir adelante

a. quitar

b. lejos

c. aqu'

ch. a caballo

d. tierras áridas

e. ahorita

f. regresar

g. salir cerca

h. sequ'a

i. salvo

5.c. Provide a brief statement on the following items.

1. ni una semilla de árbol, ni una raíz de nada.

2. ¿Quién diablos har'a este llano tan grande? ¿Para qué sirve, eh?

3. A mi se me ocurre que hemos caminado más de lo que llevamos andando.

4. Es al latifundio que tienen que atacar, no al gobierno que les da la tierra.

5. No se puede contra lo que no se puede.

6.c. Answer the following questions in Spanish,.Use full sentences. Create a paragraph.

1. ¿Qué oyen los hombres después de muchas horas de caminar por el llano?

2. ¿Qué acerca el pueblo a los hombres?

3. ¿Cuántas personas hab'an comenzado el viaje?

4. ¿Quer'an hablar los hombres?

5. ¿Además de la carabina, ¿qué le quitaron a los campesinos?

6. ¿Cuál es la actitud de los peones frente al delegado del gobierno?



7. ¿En tu opinión, ¿crees que los hombres están contentos?, ¿podrán sobrevivir en esas tierras?
8. ¿Qué crees del título del cuento?

## VI. FOOTNOTES

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1. page 344.
2. IBid. pg. 344.
3. IBid. pg. 347.
4. IBid. pg. 305.
5. IBid. pg. 305.
6. IBid. pg. 306.
7. IBid. pg. 305.
8. Rulfo, Juan: *El llano en llamas* . Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica,1986. pg. 12.
9. IBid. pg. 10.

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