



## **Expanding Fifth Grade Ethnic Awareness (Latino and Native American) through Literature**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 95.04.08

by Jean E. Sutherland

This unit attempts to examine the life of a Latina teenage girl and that of a Native American girl of about ten or eleven. The books involved are *Juanita Fights the School Board* by Gloria Velasquez and *A Brown Bird Singing* by Frances Wosmek. Through the reading of these novels, appropriate discussion, and related lessons, pupils should gain a more accurate and relevant picture of Latino and Native American participation in the history of the United States. Although the primary characters in each novel are quite different, each should provide ample opportunity for pupils to see and discuss the similarities and differences in the forces influencing each girl, her family, and her friends. The stories will be read orally by the teacher and, where practical, individually by pupils. Related historical research will involve reporting, related readings, personal investigations and guest speakers.

Also included in this unit are references to the life of Cassie Logan, a character in *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. Suggestions are made for including Cassie, an African American, in various discussions and activities.

Though the unit is aimed at fifth graders, it could be modified to fit most middle school classrooms.

(Recommended for Reading, Social Studies and Language Arts, grades 5-7)

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