I Pledge Allegiance

by
Pat Mora & Libby Martinez

illustrated by
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Classroom Activities

We all know the Pledge of Allegiance, but what does it really mean?

No one understands the true meaning more than Libby and her great-aunt Lobo. Lobo just passed her citizenship test and is preparing to say the Pledge of Allegiance at a special ceremony, while Libby is preparing to lead her class in the Pledge. As they practice together, Libby learns about Lobo's journey from Mexico and her connection to the United States. When they stand together in front of the judge and place their hands over their hearts, they beam with pride as they recite the words that they now know and love.

Pre-Reading Activity

Ask students to take turns reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in front of the class. Then ask each student to answer these questions:

- What kinds of feelings and emotions did you feel as you said those words?
- What does the Pledge of Allegiance mean to you?
- How does it feel to place your hand over your heart?
- What does it mean to make a promise?

Drawing out these emotions and asking students to connect to the meaning and message of the Pledge will help them engage in the lessons that follow.

Common Core Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.6 Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

Classroom Connections

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY TREE—Discuss the concept of a family tree with your students. Then have them to go home and ask an adult about the members of their family and where they were born. Cut out leaf shapes from paper in various colors and assign one color to each student. On each leaf, students can write the name of a family member, their country of birth, when they came to the United States, and their relationship. Create a large tree trunk on a wall in the classroom and have students add their leaves to the family tree. When complete, spend time discussing and sharing all of the countries represented on the tree. You can keep track of the countries represented by using a bar graph or tally chart.

Common Core Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

CITIZENSHIP QUALITIES—Explain the concept of citizenship and engage students in a discussion about what it means to be a good citizen—in the classroom, at home, and in their community. Guide students towards the following qualities of citizenship:

- Volunteer to help those in need
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Follow the rules and laws
- Respect others
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Protect the environment

Create a special box in your classroom called "CIA" (Citizens in Action). Keep small slips of paper and a pencil next to the box. Throughout the week, encourage students to be on the lookout in the classroom for citizens in action—things that a classmate does that demonstrates qualities of a good citizen. When they see something, they should write it on a slip of paper, fold it, and place it inside the CIA box.

At the end of the week, gather the class in a circle, open the box, and read the slips of paper aloud. They will be amazed at how many good citizens there are in the classroom!

Common Core Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT—Why is it important to practice? What kinds of things require practice? Begin a discussion with these questions and ask students to share things that they have had to practice. Each student should share one thing that they have to practice in order to get better—sports, musical instruments, speaking a different language, etc. Ask them to spend the evening practicing a skill and have them come into class the next day to share it with the class. Ask students to make an "I practice . . . (skill)" poster that shows how often they practice, with whom they practice, and how they think practicing has helped them get better. Hang the posters around the room so that everyone can see how practice makes perfect!

Common Core Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

WORDS WITH MEANING—There are many important and meaningful words contained within the Pledge of Allegiance. Write each of these words on the board:

- *Indivisible*
- *Liberty*
- *Justice*
- *Pledge*

Discuss the meaning of each of these words with your students. Then break the class into small groups and assign one word to each group. Ask students to act out a story that illustrates their word. They can use props, draw pictures, or make costumes. For older students, keep each group's word a secret and have the rest of the class guess the word based on the story they act out.

Common Core Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area.

LIKE A BLANKET—In the book, Lobo says that the American flag "wrapped itself around me to protect me" like a blanket and made her feel safe and warm. Allow your students to get this same feeling by constructing an American flag blanket. Use large pieces of red, white, and blue felt to create a floor-size American flag. When complete, gather the class together in a tight group and wrap the blanket around everyone. While inside the blanket, ask students to write about how it feels to be wrapped in the American flag.

Common Core Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.5 With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

Guide prepared by Jamie Simon, an educational consultant in the Washington, DC area, who has been involved in education for 12 years as both a teacher and an administrator.
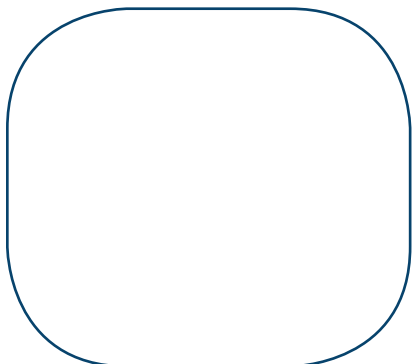
Illustration © 2014 by Patrice Barton

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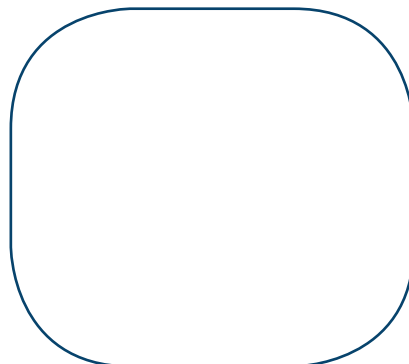
Name: _____

Let's Speak Spanish

Under each word, draw a picture that represents it. Then find the Spanish word that matches it in the center column and draw a line to connect them.
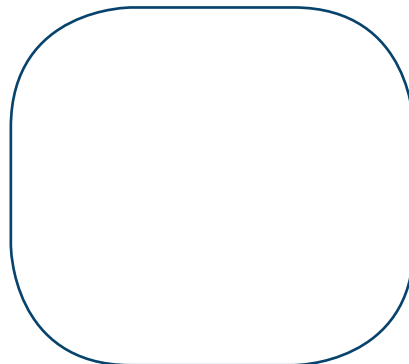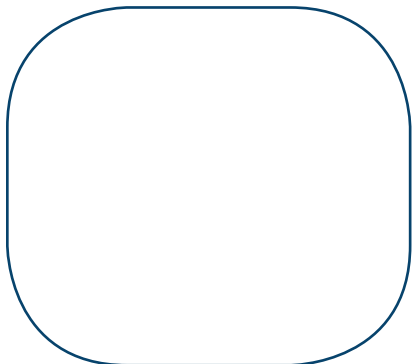
a Mexican food

kitten

el lobo

el lobito

la enchilada

la gatita

family

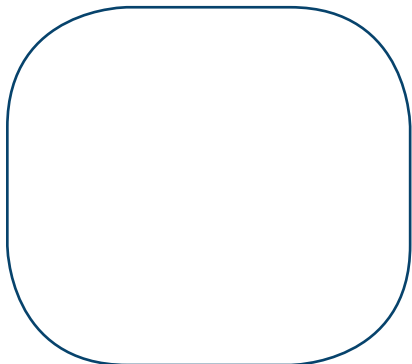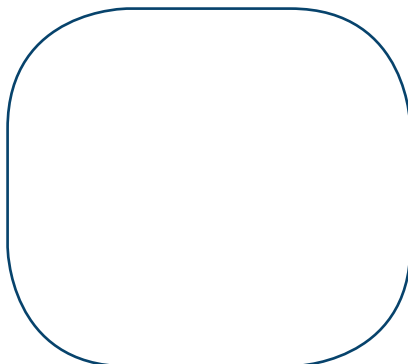my darling
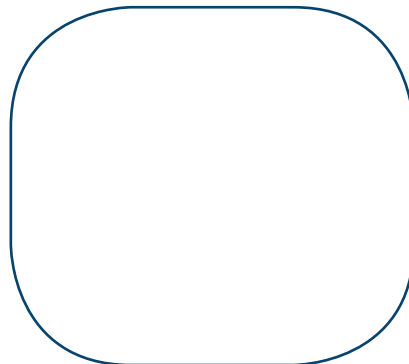
la familia

el cuento

mi querida

story

wolf

little wolf

RandomHouse.com/kids RHTeachersLibrarians.com

RANDOM HOUSE
CHILDREN'S BOOKS
Alfred A. Knopf

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Pledge…I…Allegiance

The words to the Pledge of Allegiance are all mixed up. Cut out the words and phrases and glue them back together in the correct order. When you think you have it right, read it aloud to the class and have them check your work!

one nation under God,

of the United States of America,

with liberty

and to the republic

to the flag

and justice for all.

indivisible,

for which it stands,

I pledge allegiance

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.