

## A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan library programs as well as activities for family time, day care, or the classroom.

Meet author and Día founder Pat Mora, who has lived in Cincinnati and who makes her home in Santa Fe, and her collaborator, New York-based illustrator Raúl Colón.

Engage children in conversations about family, work, culture, hardship, and joy.

Explore fun activities that align with Ohio's Learning Standards for kindergarten through grade 3.

# Tomás and the Library Lady

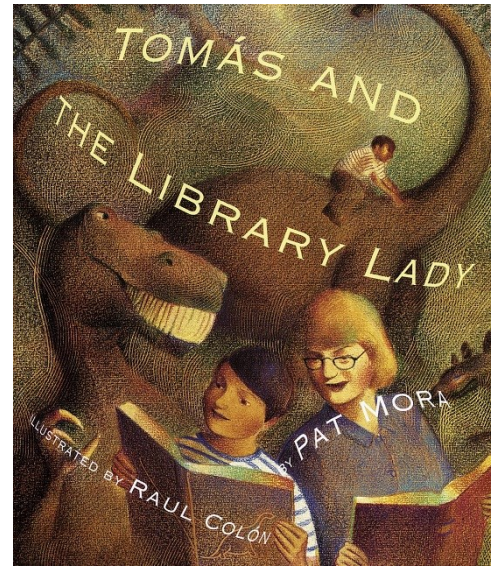
By Pat Mora (author)  
and Raúl Colón (illustrator)



## About the Book

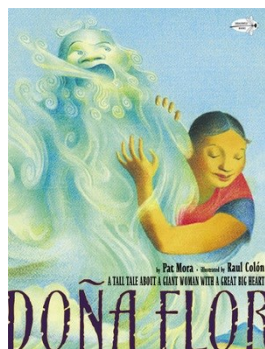
Tomás is a son of migrant workers. Every summer he and his family follow the crops north from Texas to Iowa, spending long, arduous days in the fields. At night they gather around to hear Grandfather's wonderful stories. But before long, Tomás knows all the stories by heart. "There are more stories in the library," Papa Grande tells him. The very next day, Tomás meets the library lady and a whole new world opens up for him.

Based on the true story of the Mexican-American author and educator Tomás Rivera, a child of migrant workers who went on to become the first minority Chancellor in the University of California system, this inspirational story suggests what libraries—and education—can make possible. Raúl Colón's warm, expressive paintings perfectly interweave the harsh realities of Tomás's life, the joyful imaginings he finds in books, and his special relationships with a wise grandfather and a caring librarian.



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Albert A. Knopf, 1997. ISBN 978-0-679-80401-7. Ages 3-7.  
Leveled Reading: AR Points: 0.5. ATOS Book Level 2.7. 500 Lexile.  
[www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/116977](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/116977)



Pat Mora and Raúl Colón also collaborated on the award-winning **Doña Flor: A Tall Tale About a Giant Woman with a Great Big Heart**. Doña Flor is a giant lady who lives in a tiny village. Popular with her neighbors, she lets the children use her flowers as trumpets and her leftover tortillas as rafts. Meet Doña Flor in this original tall tale.  
[www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/116974](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/116974)

The latest book written by Pat Mora and illustrated by Raúl Colón is **Bookjoy, Wordjoy**, a celebration of words and books:  
[www.leeandlow.com/books/bookjoy-wordjoy](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/bookjoy-wordjoy)



Author photo and biographical information courtesy Penguin Random House; used with permission.

## About the Author

An award-winning author of children's books, poetry, and nonfiction, Pat Mora is committed to bringing together all children with books. She often speaks at conferences, universities, and schools about creative writing, leadership, and multicultural education. She also works with national organizations on El día de los niños/El día de los libros, an April 30th celebration of childhood, books, languages, and cultures.

Born in El Paso, Texas, Mora has been the Carruthers Chair, Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of New Mexico; a consultant on US-Mexico youth exchanges; an administrator and museum director at her alma mater, the University of Texas at El Paso; and has taught English at all levels. Mora has received numerous children's book awards. She has been honored as a "Literary Light for Children" by the Associates of the Boston Public Library and included in "100 Library Champions" during the Texas Library Association's Centennial. The proud mother of three grown children, Pat lived in Cincinnati for several years and now lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**The library lady looked at Tomás for a long time. She said, "Tomás, would you like to borrow two library books? I will check them out in my name."**

**Tomás walked out of the library carrying his books. He ran home, eager to show the new stories to his family.**

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## Author Resources

**Pat Mora's official website**

[www.patmora.com](http://www.patmora.com)

**Children's Day, Book Day / El día de los niños, El día de los libros (Día)**

[www.patmora.com/whats-dia](http://www.patmora.com/whats-dia)

**¡Colorín Colorado! interviews Pat Mora**

[www.colorincolorado.org/videos/meet-authors/pat-mora](http://www.colorincolorado.org/videos/meet-authors/pat-mora)

Video interviews with Pat Mora on Colorín Colorado, a project that supports educators and families of English language learners (ELLs).

**For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:**

See [www.patmora.com/invite-pat-to-speak](http://www.patmora.com/invite-pat-to-speak)

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## Talk About It!

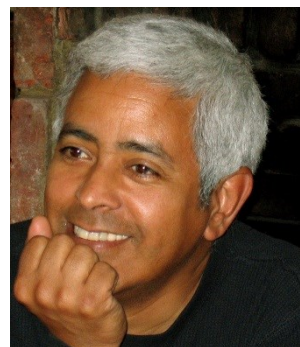
*Share these questions with children to increase comprehension and spark creativity.*

- Tomás is hot, tired, and misses his own bed. What do you miss the most when you are away from home?
- Tomás and his family are migrant workers. Give examples of his family working hard. How does Tomás help?
- Why is the library a happy place for Tomás? What do you like about your school library? Your public library? What resource do you wish your library had that would be fun or interesting? Make a list as a class or group and write a letter to your librarian.
- Papá Grande is the family storyteller. Who is your family storyteller? Share your favorite story.
- Take yourself inside your favorite book like Tomás does when the library is busy. Draw or write about what it feels like to live there.

## About the Illustrator

Raúl Colón was born in New York City, after which his parents moved to Puerto Rico, where he grew up and studied art. Colón was inspired by both art and music. He filled his composition notebooks with drawings and had no room for homework. He also read *Spider-Man* and *Sgt. Rock* comic books, along with his older sister's school books. Colón had an interest in movie and TV theme music and, as he grew older, aspired to be a rock star. To his mother's delight, he became an illustrator.

In 1978, Colón moved to Florida and began to design puppets and animate films. He has illustrated over thirty children's books, ranging from folk stories to biographies. In 2006, Colón received the Pura Belpré Medal for Illustration for **Doña Flor: A Tall Tale About a Giant Woman with a Great Big Heart**, written by Pat Mora. In 2008, he received a Pura Belpré Honor Book for Illustration award for **My Name is Gabito: The Life of Gabriel García Márquez**, written by Monica Brown. He currently resides in New York City with his family.



*Illustrator photo courtesy Penguin Random House. Illustrator biography courtesy The National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature. Used with permission.*

Biography credit: [www.nccil.org/artists/raul-colon](http://www.nccil.org/artists/raul-colon)

## Illustrator Resources

**Raúl Colón's biography from the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature**

[www.nccil.org/artists/Raúl-colon](http://www.nccil.org/artists/Raúl-colon)

**Children's Book Council interview with Raúl Colón**

[www.cbcbooks.org/2018/09/11/3-questions-with-Raúl-colon-2](http://www.cbcbooks.org/2018/09/11/3-questions-with-Raúl-colon-2)

**Tall Tales and Huge Hearts: Raúl Colón**

[www.nccil.org/exhibitions/tall-tales-and-huge-hearts-raul-colon](http://www.nccil.org/exhibitions/tall-tales-and-huge-hearts-raul-colon)

An art exhibition at the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature.

## Tie It In!

*Using this book with Ohio's Learning Standards.*

**Educators:** Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Other Learning Standards also apply. These activities using **Tomás and the Library Lady** align with Ohio's Learning Standards for Kindergarten – Grade 3.

**Librarians, parents, and others:** These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. For more information, see the Ohio Department of Education website, [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov). From the Topics dropdown menu, click on "Learning in Ohio."

**These activities are also great for library programs, family time, and playgroups.**

### English Language Arts: Key Ideas and Details / Vocabulary Acquisition

When asked her purpose for writing this story, Pat Mora said, ". . . I wanted my readers to think about the difficult life migrant workers have." Read the story aloud to your students. As you read details about Tomás's parents' difficult jobs, ask your students all the question words (i.e. *who, what, where, when, why, and how*) and encourage students to explain their responses using details from the text. As a class, write your own definition for *farm worker* and then compare it to the dictionary definition.

Determine or clarify the meaning of Spanish words and phrases from **Tomás and the Library Lady** (if the children do not understand Spanish), including numbers, greetings, and other common words, based on reading and context. Make a word wall with these and other common English and Spanish words.

*(Continued on the next page!)*

## Tie It In! (continued)

### English Language Arts: Craft & Structure

Throughout the story, Mora uses a variety of descriptive words that appeal to her readers' five senses. This activity is a fun way to get your students moving while they listen for these descriptive words! After a discussion of the five senses, enlarge pictures of an ear, eyes, a nose, a mouth, and hands and post them around the room. Direct students to listen carefully for descriptive words as you read the book. As students hear words that appeal to one (or more!) of the five senses, they should walk to the picture that represents that sense. Stop periodically to ask students to explain why they moved to that particular picture, and discuss how these details bring Tomás's experiences to life.

### English Language Arts: Integration of Knowledge & Ideas

A picture book is a story told through words and illustrations. Both add meaning to the story. As a class, take a picture book "look" through *Tomás and the Library Lady* by "reading" the visual elements only: cover, endpapers, illustrations, and back matter. Read the book aloud and discuss what information words and visuals added to the story.

With prompting and support, or in small groups, compare and contrast adventures and experiences of characters in stories that have immigration as a theme. Use *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales and *Polar Bear Island* by Lindsay Bonilla as mentor texts.

### English Language Arts: Research to Build & Present Knowledge

Organize a shared research/writing project about the school library and the public library. Brainstorm questions to ask in a group interview.

Use technology such as Google Hangouts or Skype to interview the public librarian (or the school librarian, if doing this activity at the public library!). Write about similarities and differences between the libraries. Share the group findings with another class.

### Social Studies: History and Heritage

Explore the Latino heritage reflected in Tomás's life and in students' daily lives. Develop a list of traditions, customs and celebrations.

Explore the art, music and dance of the cultures represented in the classroom or library. Invite family members to share traditions in classroom or library visits or via social media.

### Social Studies: Geography: Spatial Thinking and Skills

Use a variety of materials to engage children in creating models or maps of their school library and public library. Encourage children to describe these places and their significance.

Explore the physical and human characteristics of Ohio, the United States, and a variety of Spanish-speaking countries, modeling and encouraging the use of descriptive language to make comparisons.

### Social Studies: Historical Thinking & Skills

Share artifacts and primary resources such as family pictures, letters, newspapers, and keepsakes from relatives who immigrated to the United States. Create a display from the items shared. Invite relatives as speakers.

Read the back matter about Tomás Rivera in *Tomás and the Library Lady*. Using online resources available to students through INFOhio ([infohio.org](http://infohio.org)) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library ([ohioweblibrary.org](http://ohioweblibrary.org)), research the biography of Rivera and place dates and events in chronological order on a group timeline.

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors, illustrators, and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: [library.ohio.gov/ctro](http://library.ohio.gov/ctro).

This toolkit revised January 2019.