

## Don Quixote: Lesson Plans for Language Arts for Multilingual Learners



This lesson plan, created by *Rhode Island Latino Arts* (RILA) is based on Miguel de Cervante's classic novel, *Don Quixote*.

Accompanying videos will coincide with scenes from *Don Quixote* and will guide teachers and students to create their own "adaptation" of the classic novel.

The lesson plan may fulfill two or more of these learning standards: foreign language, reading, creative writing, and the arts – drawing, design, performance, video creation.

**Target audience:** Multilingual learners ages 13-16 or grades 6-8

- These lesson plans are ideal for schools during distance learning

**Our target audience:** Students statewide, with prioritized programming and support to the children of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

### THEMES



**The Impossible Dream** – Young people, especially English-language learners and recent immigrants, often dream about their lives back in their native country vs their lives in their new home, “America.” Is it an impossible dream that has come true? Or is it still something they continue to seek?

**Immigration** – For English-language learners in the United States, Cervantes and Don Quixote have become symbols of their immigrant identity. Both the author and the character personified the spirit of adventure, courage, and heroic values that are characteristic of many immigrants. ELL students can reflect on their lives in their native countries and their new lives in “America,” and reflect how their ordinary errant lives may be transformed into knightly adventures through the power of Don Quixote's imagination.

**Class Struggle / Social Stigmas / Intersectionality** – English-Language Learners / Latino immigrants can share a common plight with the character of Don Quixote. When one immigrates to a country by themselves, leaving behind an entire family in Latin America, he/she may feel like an outsider. Additionally, as women/girls/Latinas, working class individuals, those who identify as LGBTQ+, one must learn how to reconcile all of these components of their identity into one space. The immigrant community, like the LGBTQ community, may be looking for a space where they could fully be themselves. And being an immigrant, a person of color, and gay can be viewed as forms of poverty because of systemic discrimination.

**Loneliness / Mental Health** -- As Immigrants, LGBTQ/BIPOC individuals, students may feel lonely, isolated. With the added burden of fear due to the pandemic, students may not feel they have the

culturally responsive support / mental health services they need. The story of *Don Quixote* may provide a basis for class discussion on how one may or may not respond to this issue. Students will learn to feel understanding, compassion, empathy and in lieu of the lack of institutional responsive support, can learn how they can support each other. If we look at the character of Sancho Panza, he may be the remedy we all need – one who understands and dares to dream along with you.

## MATERIALS

### What Students will Need

- Students can either type on a computer OR write on a piece of paper w/a pen or pencil.
- Attached worksheets: Resources; What Would You Do? / ¿Que Harías Tú?; Video Storyboard;
- A copy of James Baldwin's *Stories of Don Quixote* [[view online](#)]

Students will need to know background on Miguel de Cervantes and Don Quixote: What is the story about, why is it important? Read the Baldwin book and watch videos of select Don Quixote scenes.

**Recommended for Teachers:** *Don Quixote: Miguel de Cervantes*, a new translation by Edith Grossman

## ACTIVITIES

### Act It Out // Draw It Out



**Student Objectives:** *Create Your Own Quixote Adventure* -- What is something you see every day that you can transform into an adventure? What is your windmill that you can turn into a giant?" It may be important to show the students what a "play" looks like on the page, how it's structured, so for example...

**DON QUIXOTE:** *I love adventures! Come along, Sancho!*

**SANCHO:** *Shrugs, shakes his/her head*

*They walk away together.*

*The End*

**Activity:** Students will begin by drawing pictures using the "What Would You Do?" worksheet. Students could share their screens if they are typing on a computer. Teachers can give more specific instructions and suggest that each "adventure" that the children create has to include a song, a dance, at least three characters, etc. so they have more parameters.

Students will take 20-30 minutes to write/draw their stories/adventures. For the next 15-20 minutes, Students will share their stories/adventures – teachers may ask students to act them out together. If you are able to invite a visiting theater artist, include Q and A about acting/theater/adapting a novel/story into a play.

- Use *Video Storyboarding / Drawing Worksheets* with additional prompt adventures.

## Write a Movie/TV/Play Script:



**Student Objectives:** Pupils will create a modern Don Quixote character, they will dream up a story with Don Quixote and Sancho as characters, write a script and then shoot a video. For example, they can use superheroes, such as **Batman & Robin** or **C-P3O and R2D2**. Let students imagine that what the world needs now is someone who runs around saving people while dressed as a bat ... or how would two futuristic robots stand up for the rights of immigrants or organize a walk-out.

**Activity:** Students will use the *What Would You Do?* worksheet along with *Video Storyboarding* worksheet to create a story, line up each scene, and act out and shoot a video of this scenario with a modern-day team of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

Using the example character above, perhaps a student can don a hat, wear a T-shirt or hold an object that symbolizes (their favorite super hero or any hero) and explains to the class how he/she is saving the world. The rest of the class could ask questions, which the student in character has to answer.

Teacher can have a discussion on social issues that have not changed through time and introduce new vocabulary to ELL students, from poverty to the environment to immigration, the BLM movement.

Use *Storyboarding / Drawing and Video Storyboarding Worksheets* with additional prompt adventures and to map out your video-story.

## Write a Poem / Short Story

*This is for more advanced students/writers.*

**Student Objectives:** Students will learn and discuss the use of metaphoric writing. Using the story, of



*Don Quixote*, students will learn about the use of metaphors vs reality.

Engage students in a discussion of Don Quixote's fantasy world—the world of chivalry, of fortunes, of heroic conflicts, and perseverance. Discuss how one's own *dreams* can create a fantasy world.

Ask students to describe and defend some of Quixote's views or perceptions as he transforms himself into a knight-errant, such as that the windmills that to him become enemies (giant-monsters). Can they explain what is it about the windmills and what might be going on in Don Quixote's mind that causes him to truly believe that these are giant monsters?

Discuss whether students believe Don Quixote is suffering from a mental illness or whether he is simply an optimist, a dreamer. Is his imagination distorted or is it that sometimes even the sanest of people intentionally view an everyday object as something other than what it is. In the literary world, for example, poets often perceive and describe an object as something else.

**Activity:** Students will write imaginative descriptions of ordinary objects and have other students try to figure out what real-world object the writer had in mind. Students will then write a poem or short story inspired by Don Quixote, using metaphors and their own dreams of what an ideal world looks like to each student.

## ADDITIONAL THEMES

*For Advanced Students*



### Tilting with Windmills

One of the most famous scenes from the story is that of Don Quixote fighting/tilting with the windmills. Students should look up the phrase “*Tilting with Windmills*” and the word “*quixotic*.” Discuss what they mean. Can students give examples of them in today’s society?

### The Impossible Dream

Discuss with them what “ideals” are within the story. What is Don Quixote’s ideal of a woman - of chivalry - of loyalty? Do people today have ideals? What are some examples of some modern ideals?

Once you have discussed and brainstormed ideals/idealism with the students, have them [listen](#) to and [read the words](#) to the song, *Impossible Dream*. Ask them to discuss why this song moves people. What does this song say to them, personally? Is it important to dream impossible dreams? Why?

### Delusions | Mental Health

Have a discussion on delusions and the meaning of “deluded” with the students. What is Don Quixote’s first delusion? Discuss with the students why they think he has become deluded? Why is his delusion of Aldonza/Dulcinea important to the story? What about the delusion of Sancho?

### OPTIONAL: Watch a Play/Movie

Have students watch a full video movie/play production of *The Man of La Mancha*. The movies online are dated, but they will give the students a clear idea of what the story is about as well as aid in their discussions for the lesson plans. Check on RILA’s website ([www.rilatinoarts.org](http://www.rilatinoarts.org)) for excerpts of our live bilingual production of the play Don Quixote, created in 2020.