

Elena



California
Standards

Standards to Achieve

Reading

- Use word origins (R1.2)
- Analyze literary forms (R3.1)
- Main problem/plot conflict (R3.2)

Social Science

- Mexican migration (HSS5.8.5)

A Revolution in México



Rebel leader Pancho Villa was both cheered and feared throughout Mexico.

The year was 1910. For more than thirty years, the nation of Mexico had suffered under a cruel **dictator**, President Porfirio Díaz. He had taken land from the peasants, or *campesinos*, and given it to wealthy friends, leaving most Mexicans poor and hungry.

Finally, the people had had enough. Rebel leaders all over Mexico, including the **notorious** former **bandit**, Pancho Villa, rose up to overthrow President Díaz. It was the beginning of the Mexican Revolution, but it was far from the end.

For the next ten years, Mexico was **transformed** into a country at war. Groups of Mexicans bitterly fought one another. No one was in charge for long. Innocent people lost their homes and lives.

Tens of thousands of **frantic** citizens fled to the United States with their few possessions. Among them was the family in *Elena*, which is a true story of that dangerous time.

Many **refugees** left Mexico for California, following the same route as the one taken by Elena's family. ►

A group of revolutionaries gathers in Mexico City, Mexico in 1915. ▼





Strategy Focus

As you read, think about the characters, their problem, and how they solve it to **summarize** the events of the story.



Growing up in a wealthy family in rural Mexico, Elena insists on learning to read and do math, skills denied most girls a hundred years ago. She also wins her parents' permission to marry the man she loves — Pablo, a famous sombrero maker. But just before the Mexican Revolution, her peaceful life is disrupted. Elena's true story is told by Rosa, one of Pablo and Elena's four children.

In the year 1910, when I was about five years old, my father had to go to Guadalajara on business. He went there once or twice a year. It was nothing unusual. As he mounted his horse, my mother went out to say good-bye. "Be careful," she told him. She was worried about who he might meet on the road. We had heard talk of a revolution. There were said to be rough soldiers and armed *campesinos* about. They were dangerous men. But Father just squeezed her hand and smiled. "I will be careful," he said.

Father was joined by several villagers who were making the trip with him. They waved to us and headed off across the rugged countryside, for there were no proper roads. It was just at the end of the rainy season and the path was wet. About an hour after they left, the ground under Father's horse suddenly gave way, creating a landslide. Down they plunged into the ravine below.

The villagers raced back for help, and many men hurried off with ropes to haul my father up to safety.

They brought him to our house and laid him on the bed. The doctor came and dressed my father's wounds. As he was leaving, we asked the doctor, "Will he live?" He shrugged his shoulders. "Who can tell?" he said. "Perhaps Pablo knows."

My mother stood and watched the doctor walk away from our house. "He is right," she thought to herself. "Pablo knows." So she went into the darkened room and knelt down beside the bed. She took his big hand and gently stroked it.

"Husband," she whispered, "how is it? Do you think you will recover?"

For a long time he did not look at her and he did not answer. At last he turned his head and spoke. "No," he said. Then in a weak but steady voice he told her what he knew. He named the very day and hour in which he would die. He said there would be war and that she and the children must leave their home.

"You will always be in my heart," he said. He never spoke again.

Three days later, at the very hour he had spoken, my father died.

Mother went crazy with grief. She ran weeping into the patio, and with a big stick began to swing wildly, knocking down her beautiful flowers. Then she opened all the cages and let the birds free.

After that, my mother grew quiet. Though she went on caring for us just as before, that *chispa*, the bright spark that was always a part of her, went out. Papá's absence filled our house with emptiness. I could not really understand what had happened, because I was so young. It seemed to me that Papá had just gone to where I couldn't see him — perhaps he was in the next room. I kept expecting him to walk in our door one day and make everything good again. But he never came, of course, and in time I understood that he never would.

I remember that it was warm and beautiful at that time, the skies a brilliant cloudless blue, day after day. It was as if nature were mocking us.



One day I was playing upstairs with my brother Luis. I heard the loud clop-clop of horses on the stone pavement outside — not one, but many horses. So I ran to the window to see. Looking down, I saw our street transformed into a river of sombreros. The revolution had reached our little village — it was the army of Pancho Villa riding by! With a gasp, Mother pulled me away from the window, for Pancho Villa was a notorious man. It was true that he was fighting to help free Mexico from the dictator Porfirio Díaz and that he wanted to give back to the campesinos the land that had been stolen from them. He was, in fact, on his way to becoming a genuine folk hero, the Robin Hood of Mexico. But it was also well known that he had once been a bandit and that his men were just as bad as the government soldiers. Neither army respected the law. Wherever they went, they stole from the people, killed anyone who challenged them, and left burned villages in their wake. What would happen to us?

Mother knelt down and gathered us in her arms. She understood in a flash that everything that had happened to her before had been for a reason. The books she had read, the hard numbers she had conquered, the battle she had won over her marriage — all this had made her strong. Now she had no father and no husband to help her. She had, instead, great courage and determination. Had there not always been wars? And in every country and every age, brave men and women had faced terrible dangers. She could do it, too. We saw this understanding pass across her face like a ripple of light. "Children," she said urgently, "we must find Esteban."

She knew that soldiers often took older boys and forced them into the army. My brother was sixteen.

None of us had seen him for hours. We searched the house for him, but he wasn't there. A book lay open on his bed. He had put it down and gone off somewhere. Maybe he was out in the streets among all those men. Maybe they had already taken him. At last María found him — up on the roof watching the soldiers. Boys are so foolish sometimes!



We made a hiding place for him in a kitchen cabinet, behind the big clay pots. Then Mother had another thought — the horses. They were sure to steal the horses. But maybe if they found the stable empty, they would think the horses had already been seized. They would certainly not think to look for them in the kitchen, so she brought the horses in there, too.



Before my mother could hide anything else, there was a loud knock on the door. We could hear deep voices laughing and talking outside. Mother hesitated a moment, wondering what to do. Then she sent us into the back room. We did as we were told but opened the door a crack so we could see what happened. Mother took a deep breath and opened the door.

There stood four or five soldiers, rough men who smelled of sweat and horses. The man in front was stout and wore a huge drooping mustache. *Bandoleras* crossed his chest. We had seen his face before, on a government poster. It was Pancho Villa himself!

"Señora," he said, "is this the house of Pablo, the famous maker of sombreros?" It was the last thing she expected to hear.

"It is," she said. "I am his widow."

"Then please accept my sincere condolences," said the leader of the rebel army, bowing slightly. He paused for a moment and then added almost shyly, "And the hats? The fine hats? Are there no more left?"

My mother actually smiled. "Excuse me a minute," she said. She went to a cupboard in her bedroom and returned with one of Father's beautiful silver-trimmed sombreros. "This is the last one," my mother said.

Pancho Villa was delighted. He put it on right away and actually paid her for it. Not only that, he posted a guard outside our house. As long as Villa's army was there, we were not harmed.

"Pablo was surely watching over us this day," my mother told us later. "But it may not always be so. Before your father died, he told me there would be soldiers. He told me we must leave our home. I wonder how I could have forgotten it."

"You were sad, *Mamacita*," María said.



When the *Villistas* had gone, Mother went to the plaza and opened the shop to the people of the village. She emptied the store of everything, taking down great bolts of manta and giving them to people who had nothing. We took only our money, some clothes, and food for the journey. We were leaving behind our aunts and uncles, our little house, the furniture, the pictures, the pots and pans and dishes. We said good-bye to the friends of a lifetime.

Everyone urged us not to go. "It is not proper for a woman to travel unprotected like that," they said. "It is not safe."

"The world is changing around us," Mother answered. "We must change, too."

We left the village early in the morning. When we reached the train station, we found that it was packed with frantic, pushing people. It seemed as though everyone in Mexico was trying to get on that train. Mother and María managed to make it inside. Then before Esteban got on, he handed Luis and me in through the window, along with the basket of food.



We were lucky to have benches to sit on. Most of the people were in boxcars or crowded in the aisles.

For five days the train chugged north. Through the open windows came soot, dust, and flies. I had worn a beautiful lacy white dress for the trip. Soon it was damp with sweat and covered with dirt.

When we reached Ciudad Juárez, we faced a new problem. What were we to do with Esteban? He was tall, almost a man. The soldiers at the border crossing would not treat him as a child. They might detain him for days, together with the rough men from the train. They might take him for the army.

"I think the answer will come to me," Mother told us. "We must be patient."

So we waited while she thought, but it was not a good place to be. The town was rough and lawless. With thousands of refugees pouring in, desperate to flee homes that were no longer safe, thieves and pickpockets roamed the streets. Hotels and shops charged ridiculous prices that people had to pay, because they had no other choice but to starve or sleep in the streets. For days we ate nothing but fruit.



Mother befriended a Chinese fruit seller who was honest and kind. One day she told him our problem. He smiled, for he knew exactly how to help us. Every day he crossed the border with his fruit wagon. We could dress Esteban in the man's clothes and straw hat. He would pretend to be the fruit seller's helper.

That afternoon we went over the bridge to El Paso together, Mother and the three of us walking along next to the fruit wagon. The cost was one penny each. At last we were safely in the United States.

We headed for California because we had a cousin, Trinidad, who lived there. We didn't have his address, though. In fact, we didn't even know what town he lived in. So we went to San Francisco, which was famous. We made our way to the *barrio*, where many people from Mexico lived. We asked everyone we met there, "Do you know our cousin Trinidad?" No one did. And besides, we didn't like it there. It was damp and cold. In Los Angeles, no one had heard of Trinidad, either. We were happier there, because the weather was warmer. But the city was too big, not like our lovely little village in Mexico. We heard about a place called Santa Ana. There were lemon and orange and walnut groves there and good schools for the children. So that is where we went and that is where we stayed. We never did find Trinidad.

By then, we had spent most of our money. So Esteban got a job picking fruit. Sometimes he was gone for weeks, living in the camps near the farms. When he came home he was sore and tired. He didn't laugh and play with me the way he had before.

Mother ran a boardinghouse, which was hard work. She did the cleaning, made the beds, mopped the floors, and scrubbed the bathtub. She washed and ironed the boarders' clothes. After all that, she went into the kitchen and cooked mountains of rice and beans and *tortillas* and *enchiladas* for them to eat. We all sat down to dinner together at a long pine table. Sometimes the boarders were very nice and became our friends. Some even came from the same part of Mexico as our family had. It made me feel like I wasn't so far from home.

María and I did what we could. We hung the laundry out on the clothesline, and we brought it back in if it rained. We helped wash the dishes and changed all the sheets once a week. And we looked after little Luis.

But Mother said that our real job was to get an education. School and homework always came first. When we were done with that, she said, we could help. I felt bad sometimes, sitting in a chair with a book in my lap while Mother was never still, always bustling about at her chores. She did it with a good spirit, though. If I said to her, "You work too hard, Mamacita," she would just shake her head and smile.

"And what is so bad about work?" she would say. "Work is how I take care of my family. Work is how I keep busy. Work is how I am useful. It is not so bad."

At school we learned to speak English and heard all about George Washington crossing the Delaware and Thomas Jefferson writing the Declaration of Independence. We wrote essays on the American Revolution and the American Civil War, and one day it dawned on me that Americans had suffered in terrible wars just as we had. And not long after that, I realized that Americans weren't "they" anymore. After all, we wore American clothes, read American books, knew American songs, and ate American candy. We had all become *real* Americans — all of us, that is, but Mamá.

She never quite knew what she was. Part of her was still back in Mexico and part of her was with us in California. Sometimes in the evening, after the dishes were done, we all went out on the porch to sit and enjoy the cool night air. At those times, Mother liked to talk about the old days. She told us about growing up in her father's great house in the beautiful mountains of Mexico. She talked of her gentle sisters who sang so beautifully to the guitar. She remembered her own little house full of flowers and birds. But she especially loved to talk about Father — how they fell in love first and got to know each other later, how he was such an artist, making beautiful sombreros, and how he knew things it was impossible to know, yet he knew them just the same. I had been so small when Father died, I could scarcely remember him. Those stories gave him back to me.

In all those years she talked only of happy times. It was much later that we learned what had happened in our little village. Only when we were grown — strong and full of hope — did we find out that it was gone, burned to the ground by the soldiers. And when we heard about the people who had died, people we had known, then we understood what our mother had done. With her courage and daring, she had saved us all.



Meet the Author **Diane Stanley**

Diane Stanley is best known as an author and illustrator of biographies of historical figures. She was born in Abilene, Texas, and spent her childhood there, in New York City, and Southern California. Although moving was a challenge, she feels that it helped her become a writer by presenting her with new situations and keeping her from looking at things in only one way.

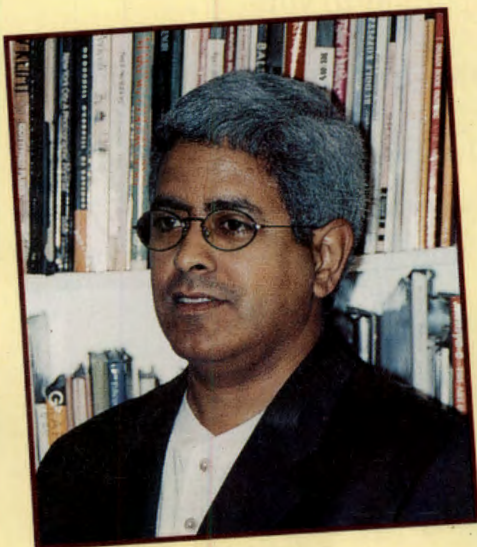
Elena, Stanley's first work of historical fiction, is based on the family story of one of her grandmother's friends during the Mexican Revolution.

Stanley's other books include: *Shaka: King of the Zulus*, *Cleopatra*, and *Leonardo Da Vinci*.



Meet the Illustrator **Raúl Colón**

Before he began illustrating children's books, Raúl Colón worked in animation, designed puppets, and created theater posters and CD covers. Part of the unique look of Colón's illustrations comes from his use of a tool called a "scratcher" to etch lines and patterns into his paintings and drawings. Colón lives in New York City with his wife and two children.



Internet



To find out more about Diane Stanley and Raúl Colón, visit Education Place.

www.eduplace.com/kids



Think About the Selection

1. Compare the way you expected the outlaw Pancho Villa to act with the way he did act in *Elena*. Why do you think he acted this way?
2. What part of the family's troubles in *Elena* would you have found most difficult? Why?
3. Rosa says that she and her brothers and sister became "real Americans" in Santa Ana. What do you think she means by that?
4. Mamá says, "The world is changing around us. We must change, too." Do you agree with her? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think Mamá believes so strongly in the importance of education? How is your education important to you?
6. What do you think Rosa learned from her experiences in *Elena*?
7. **Connecting/Comparing** All the main characters in *One Land*, *Many Trails* demonstrate courage and determination. Compare Elena's courage to that of Slow, Grace McCance, or Bob Lemmons.

Reflecting

Write a Journal Entry

Think about a scene in *Elena* in which the characters have to make an important decision. Then write a journal entry describing a time in your life when you had to make a decision of similar importance.

Tips

- Remember that keeping a journal is a way of recording events, facts, feelings, and ideas.
- Use the first-person point of view when writing a journal entry.

Social Studies

Create a Wanted Poster

Think about the descriptions of Porfirio Díaz and Pancho Villa on page 554. Use them to create a wanted poster for either Díaz or Villa. Include a picture of your choice and list the reasons why you think he should be brought to justice.

Bonus Work with a partner to find out more about Pancho Villa or Porfirio Díaz. Give an oral report to the class on what you learn.



Listening and Speaking

Role-Play a Telephone Conversation

Suppose that Mamá and the children finally locate their cousin Trinidad. With a partner, role-play the first telephone conversation between Trinidad and Mamá, Rosa, or Esteban. Include their stories and their feelings.



Tips

- Speak clearly and not too fast.
- Be careful not to interrupt while another is talking.
- Pay attention to what is being said or asked.

Internet

Take an Online Quiz

In this theme, you have read about some of the people who have shaped the United States, and about some of the journeys that helped shape their lives. See how much you learned by taking our online theme quiz at Education Place.

www.eduplace.com/kids

Listening/Speaking

Develop topic (LS2.2.c)

Summarize events/details (LS2.3.a)

Skill: How to Take Notes

As you read . . .

- Write down the **topic** or title.
- Note the most important ideas.
- Write down **key words** and phrases as headings. Use a separate note card for each heading, or leave several lines between headings on your paper.
- Write **details** about each key word or phrase beneath the heading.
- Write down the **source** of the information.

California
Standards

Standards to Achieve

Reading

- Use order to analyze text (R2.2)

Social Science

- U.S. migration to mid-1800s (HSS5.8)



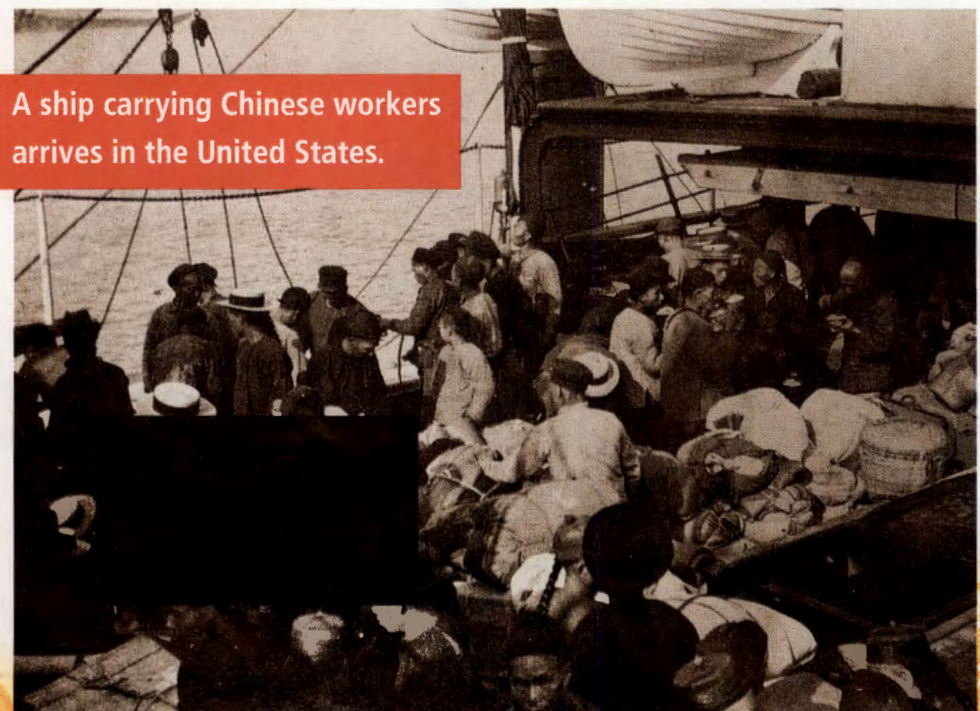
COMING TO GOLDEN MOUNTAIN

Not all of the trails to California started in the eastern United States or Mexico. Another path for emigrants began in China.

Gold! In 1848, word went out about the discovery of gold near Sutter's Mill, California. From around the world, people flocked to the territory of California — newly acquired from Mexico, but not yet a state — hoping to strike it rich.

The lure of the gold mines was especially strong in China.

During the mid-1800s, millions of Chinese were living in poverty. Chinese farmers were having trouble producing enough food to meet the needs of China's population. And from 1850 to 1864, China was wracked by a civil war that claimed over twenty million lives.



A ship carrying Chinese workers arrives in the United States.

With life in China so difficult, the idea of finding a fortune in America sounded very appealing. Many Chinese were encouraged by newspaper advertisements that confidently stated, "Money is in great plenty and to spare in America." Even the popular Chinese name for California, *Gum Shan*, or "Golden Mountain," gave the impression that riches were there for the taking.

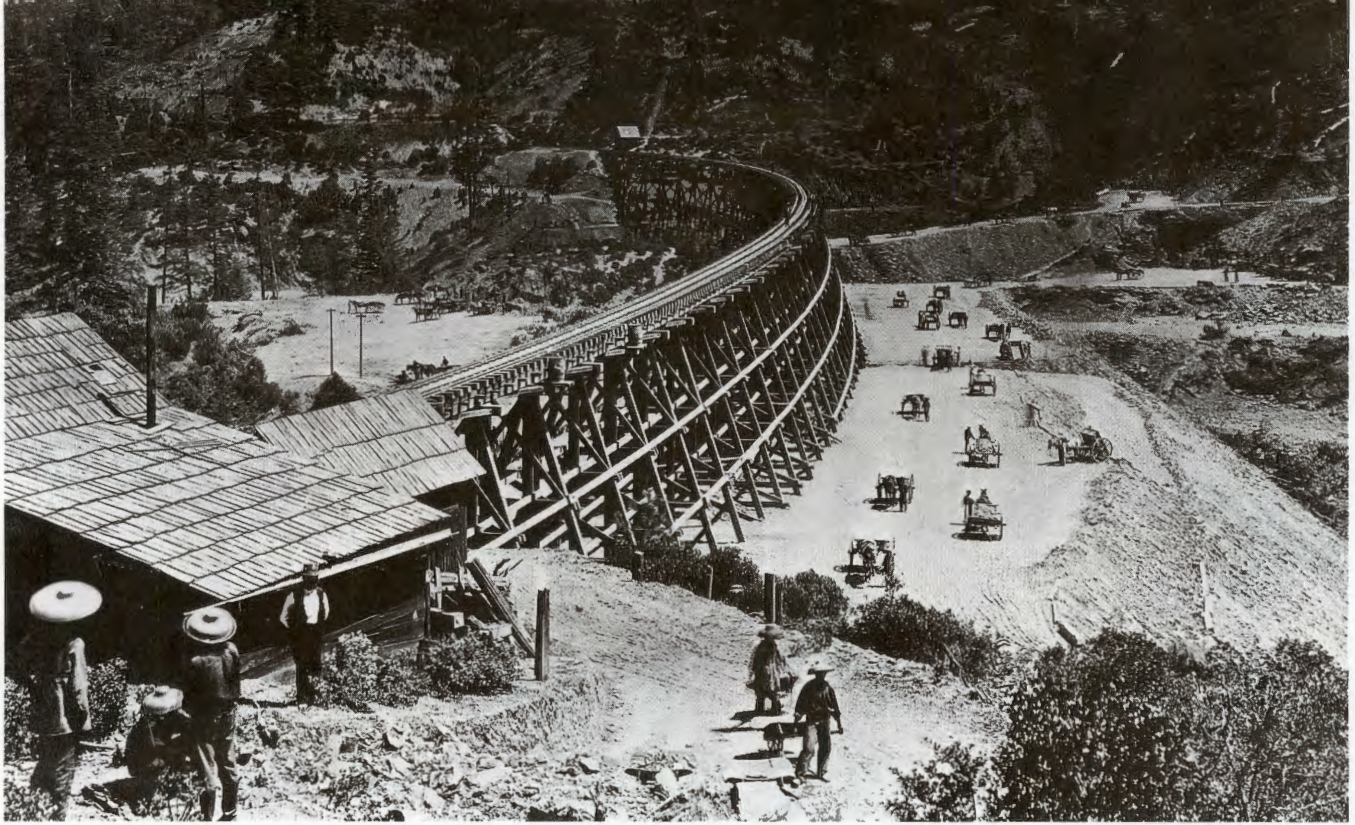
The cost of boat passage from ports such as Guangzhou to San Francisco was very high by the standards of most Chinese. Some managed to save enough to pay for the journey themselves; others borrowed from banks or wealthier family members. Later emigrants from China had the option of working to pay the cost of their tickets once they arrived in America.

The first Chinese gold-seekers arrived in California in 1848, the same year as the gold strike. By 1852, there were around 25,000 Chinese living in the state. Almost all were men. Many had left their wives and children back in China and hoped to return home one day with enough money to live in comfort.

At first the Chinese enjoyed some success in the gold fields. Most worked for Chinese or American mining companies; a few worked on their own claims. Some gained a reputation as skillful miners who could extract gold from claims



Chinese miners join in the search for gold in California.



Railroad workers (above) build a trestle to support train tracks.

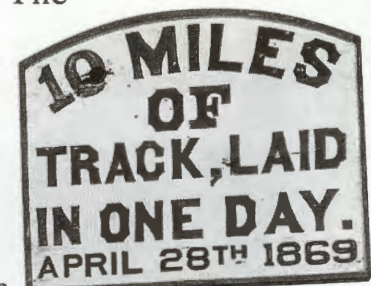
Records for track laying (below) were achieved at the cost of many lives.

that other miners had given up as worthless. One story told of a Chinese man who bought a miner's shack for \$25, and then collected \$300 worth of gold dust that the previous inhabitants had spilled on the floor.

But many American miners resented this success. They used threats and intimidation to force Chinese miners to take up other kinds of work. Some Chinese became merchants. Others took on jobs as cooks or launderers in mining camps.

Starting in 1864, many Chinese laborers began working to help complete the transcontinental railroad, connecting the east and west coasts of the United States. The work was very hard and dangerous.

Especially in the mountains, the weather could be harsh, leading to frostbite and death by exposure. In addition, the Chinese were often assigned to blasting crews, whose job it was to clear rock out of the path of the railroad. Accidental explosions were responsible for the death and injury of hundreds



of Chinese workers. No group gave so much to the building of the railroad and received so little credit at the time.

There would be more disappointments from Golden Mountain.

New federal laws made it difficult for Chinese to become American citizens. More laws banned all Chinese immigration — laws that were not lifted until 1943. In addition, the hostility that the Chinese faced in the countryside caused most to settle in “Chinatowns” in large cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Despite the difficulties of life on Golden Mountain, most Chinese-Americans stayed, many relying on their own small businesses to make a living. People helped one another as they had in China. Family or clan associations rose up to help new arrivals find homes and jobs. Through theater, art, holiday celebration, and many other traditions, the Chinese heritage continued.

And the Chinese-Americans who stayed — along with the people of many other countries who followed the Gold Rush — made the state of California culturally all the richer.

Children in San Francisco welcome the Chinese new year.



Writing an Answer to a Question

Many tests ask you to write an answer to a question about something you have read. Usually you can answer these questions with a few sentences. Here's a sample test question for *Elena*. Use the tips to help you answer this kind of test item.

Tips

- Read the directions and the question carefully.
- Think about your answer before you write.
- Look back through the selection if you need help.
- Write only as much as you need to answer the question directly.
- Check your answer if you have time.

Write your answer to this question.

- 1 In the story *Elena*, what are three examples that show how brave Rosa's mother was?

Now read one student's answer, and see how he planned it.

Rosa's mother shows how brave she is when she talks to Pancho Villa, when she moves her family from the village, and when she takes her family across the border in the fruit wagon.

This is a good answer. It gives three clear examples from the selection that show how brave Rosa's mother was.

I remember that Rosa's mother showed bravery when Pancho Villa came to her house. I need two more examples. I can look in the selection if I have to.

I remember when Rosa's mother hides the horses in the kitchen. But that shows cleverness more than bravery. Maybe there's a better example.

