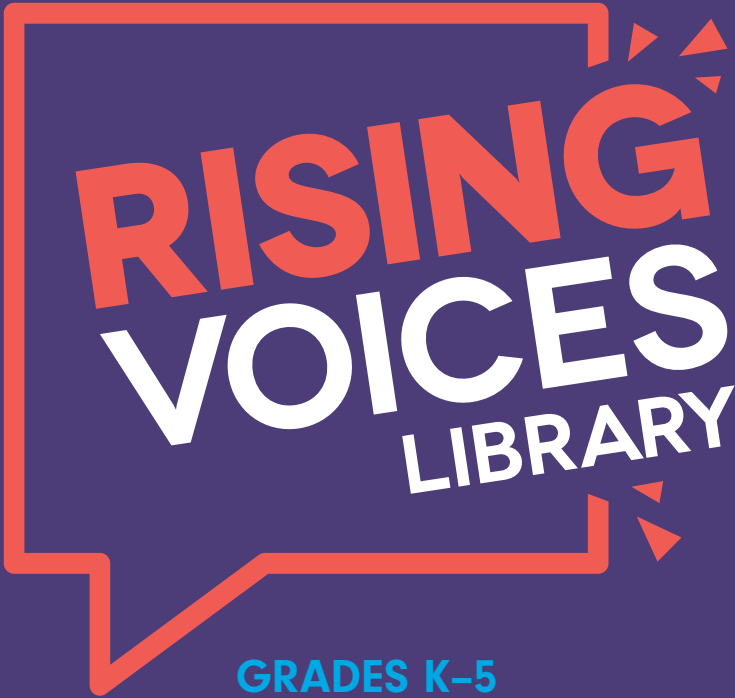




RISING VOICES LIBRARY

GRADES K-5

Elevating Latino Stories

SAMPLE TEACHER'S GUIDE



SCHOLASTIC



WELCOME TO YOUR SAMPLE TEACHER'S GUIDE!

The **Rising Voices Teacher's Guide** equips educators with the tools to successfully implement whole-class read-alouds, book clubs, and independent reading with the texts in this library. It also features prompts for conferring and connecting with families to expand and increase engagement!

The Teacher's Guide supports educators with:

- **Implementation strategies** for integrating the texts into book clubs and whole-class, small-group, and independent reading
 - **Suggestions** for how to support English learners
 - **Instructional supports** for building social-emotional awareness
 - **Engaging discussion prompts** based on Rising Voices themes
 - **Tips** for creating safe environments for difficult conversations
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The Rising Voices Sample Teacher’s Guide

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Welcome



I have been fortunate to have worked at every level in education: educational assistant, teacher, principal, central office administrator, and superintendent. My nearly three decades of experience as an educator has taught me that the success of our students happens in our classrooms and teachers must have access to the tools they need to inspire learning. Books and the discussions that educators and students have around these books are resources that can be key to the kind of success we want for all students.

The books typically found in elementary school classrooms today may already include some excellent titles, but these titles most often feature stories about White protagonists and fanciful animal characters. Our children need more. They need opportunities to expand their learning with wonderful literature that reflects the variety of cultures and experiences in our society.

By 2026, Latino children will make up 30 percent of the school-age population. All children will benefit from exploring literature that highlights Latino stories to better understand themselves and our nation.

Rising Voices: Elevating Latino Stories is a collection that provides great books that honor the varied experiences of Latino people. The Teacher's Guide, Teaching Cards, and the digital materials that accompany the books foster literacy development and social-emotional learning, as well as opportunities to build pride and respect for the Latino community. The Association of Latino Administrators & Superintendents (ALAS), is pleased to serve as a mentor for this unique and much needed collection. ALAS is committed to providing educational leadership to support the needs of all students with an emphasis on Latino youth. The mission of this collection advances our mission as well.

Dr. Francisco Durán
Board President



Access and Equity

Equity requires that we provide all children with the resources they need to reach their full potential. As educators, our goal must be to build learning environments where we have high expectations for every student. Diverse books and culturally responsive, respectful learning supports are essential in helping to achieve this goal.

Why Rising Voices?

In 1990, Rudine Sims Bishop published an essay about the importance of providing all young readers with diverse books. She used the phrase “windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors” to emphasize the need for all children to experience diverse stories through the characters and real-life people they meet in books. When children read books that serve as mirrors, they see aspects of their own experiences and cultures reflected in texts. When children read books that serve as windows, they gain insights into the world beyond their own personal experiences. All children need access to diverse books that allow them to look in and look out, making text-to-self and text-to-world connections.

Ideally, every classroom would contain a robust classroom library, filled with hundreds of books that reflect the mosaic of our society. Yet, excellent texts with accurate, dignified, and appealing portrayals of Latinos and other people of color are still largely lacking from most classroom and school libraries (Thomas, 2018; Routman, 2018). And this lack of diversity takes a toll. Messages are embedded in the textual mirrors and windows. When children do not see themselves in books—or worse, see only distorted or stereotypical reflections—they can internalize negative views about their culture and feel as if school is not a place where they matter. Positive textual images can change that, resulting in children who have higher self-esteem, better social-emotional functioning, and increased classroom engagement (Schwartz, 2019).

“It’s not just kids of color, kids from the margins who need diverse literature and media. It’s all kids who need stories about all kinds of people.”

—Ebony Elizabeth Thomas (2018)
Associate Professor, University of Pennsylvania
Literacy, Culture, and International Education

Your Rising Voices Library provides empowering and engaging books that highlight some of the most underrepresented literary protagonists: Latinos. While the focus of this library is specific, it is a tool to support all learners. Although all of the protagonists within this collection are Latinos, these books were selected due to their universal appeal to be enjoyed by all boys and girls. By fostering a classroom community that supports more positive representation and equity, all children will benefit as they build empathy, respect, and understanding.

This Rising Voices Collection

- provides 50 books per grade (25 titles, two copies of each) selected by librarians and educators after reviewing more than four hundred texts to ensure that each grade-level collection validates and celebrates the multifaceted identities of Latino children.
- celebrates the talents of many Latino authors and illustrators—because the perspectives that authors and illustrators bring to the texts they create are also important windows and mirrors.
- includes texts in which children see Latino protagonists as the stars of all kinds of stories, such as biographies of accomplished Latino men and women, contemporary realistic fiction, poetry, historical fiction, humor, fantasy, and science fiction.
- is organized around five essential literary themes (see pages 14–15) that children and teachers can use to make cross-text and cross-cultural connections within and beyond this library.
- uses five anchor texts per grade, each supported by a robust Teaching Card, to highlight each of the five themes, prompt comprehension, and scaffold higher-level thinking skills and deep discussion, as well as social and emotional learning.
- includes a Teacher's Guide to support and provide guidance for using the books in this collection, the Teaching Cards, and digital resources.
- offers Rising Voices stickers and bins that can be used to identify each book as part of this special collection.
- provides online resources to support your teaching goals with standards correlations, theme videos, family letters, graphic organizers, and other printable resources to share with children. See page 36 to find out more information about the Rising Voices digital resources.

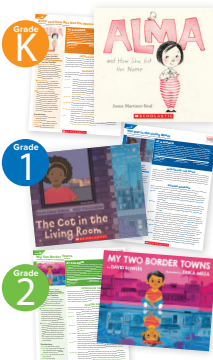


Rising Voices Themes and Anchor Texts

Rising Voices texts are organized by five culturally relevant themes. These themes provide springboards for all children to connect to concepts that resonate with their lives, experiences, and interests. The themes provide a lens for reading that guides readers to consider concepts and ideas that affirm, celebrate, and foster pride and confidence in their identities. In addition, you and your children will be able to use these themes to make connections between Rising Voices books and other texts you have been exploring in your classroom. Use Rising Voices books to help build discussion of these five essential themes within and across texts.

Connect to Texts and Expand Thinking

Anchor texts for each of the five Rising Voices themes are intended to be shared through an interactive, teacher-led read-aloud experience. Teaching Cards for each anchor text provide discussion questions and activities that bring the theme to the forefront, promoting discussion, conversation, and deep thinking. Building on anchor text instruction and discussion, you and your children can read on in the collection, continuing to make connections and deepen their exploration of each theme.

Anchor Texts	Theme	Connect to Texts	Expand Thinking
	Someone Like Me/ Memorable Characters <i>How does finding ways that people I read about are like me help me to better understand myself and others?</i>	• What problem do the people in the book face? • What makes the people in the book special? • Which friends and family members is the main character closest to? • What makes the main character feel proud?	• Do things the main character says, does, or thinks remind me of myself or someone I know? • What might the author want me to take away from this book? • Do things the main character says, does, or thinks make me feel seen, respected, and valued for who I am and the experiences I've had?
	Family, Culture, and Community <i>How do the people around me help me feel safe and enrich my life? How can I help others around me? How do the people around me help me feel like I belong?</i>	• Who are the characters in the book? • How do families or community members in the book help each other? • What do people in the book do to help their family or community? • How are the people in this book like people in my family and community? How are they different?	• What do I like most about my family? • What do I like most about my community? • How do my family and community help me? • What can I do to be helpful in my community?

Anchor Texts

Theme

Connect to Texts

Expand Thinking



Heroes and Role Models

What makes someone a hero? What can we learn from reading about people who have done important things?

- What problems do the people in the book face?
- What makes the people special?
- How do they use their skills and talents to creatively solve problems?

- Do these people seem like heroes? Why or why not?
- Might I want to be like these people in some way? Why or why not?
- What lessons might I take away from this book?



Strong and Resilient

What qualities help people succeed when they face challenges?

- What problems do the people in the book face?
- How do the people keep trying to solve problems?
- What makes the people good problem-solvers?
- How do the people show their feelings when things are hard?

- When was a time that I felt proud because I kept trying?
- What have I learned from this book about what it can take to solve a problem?



Thinking Beyond Today

How do people make their dreams come true? What can I learn from this?

- What are the dreams of the people in the book?
- How do the people try to make their dreams come true?
- What gets in their way?
- How do others help them?

- What are my dreams for the future?
- Are the dreams of the people in the book like mine?
- What might I do to make my dreams for the future come true?

Rising Voices Themes and Anchor Texts

Rising Voices texts are organized by five culturally relevant themes. These themes provide springboards for all students to connect to concepts that resonate with their lives, experiences, and interests. The themes provide a lens for reading that guides readers to consider concepts and ideas that affirm, celebrate, and foster pride and confidence in their identities. In addition, you and your students will be able to use these themes to make connections between Rising Voices books and other texts you have been exploring in your classroom. Use Rising Voices books to help build discussion of these five essential themes within and across texts.

Connect to Texts and Expand Thinking

Anchor texts for each of the five Rising Voices themes are intended to be shared through an interactive, teacher-led read-aloud experience. Teaching Cards for each anchor text provide discussion questions and activities that bring the theme to the forefront, promoting discussion, conversation, and deep thinking. Building on anchor text instruction and discussion, you and your students can read on in the collection, continuing to make connections and deepen their exploration of each theme.

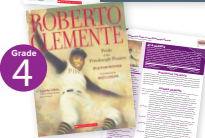
Anchor Texts	Theme	Connect to Texts	Expand Thinking
	Someone Like Me/ Memorable Characters <i>How does understanding ways that people I read about are like me or people I know help me to better understand myself and others?</i>	- What problems does the main character face? - What issues or ideas are most important to the main character? - What are the main character's talents or strengths? - Which friends and family members does the main character have strong relationships with? - What makes the main character feel proud?	- How do the main character's actions, thoughts, or words remind me of myself or someone I know? - What does the author want me to take away from this book? - What important ideas does the book inspire me to think about? - How do the main character's actions, thoughts, and words make me feel seen, respected, and valued for who I am and the experiences I've had?
	Family, Culture, and Community <i>How do the people around me help me feel safe and protected and enrich my life? How can I help others around me?</i>	- How are different family members important to the main character? - What community does the main character belong to? - In what ways do the main character's family and community support him/her when things get difficult? - What does the main character do to help his/her family or community?	- Who makes up my community? - What do I appreciate most about my family? - What do I appreciate most about my community? - How do my family and community support me when things get difficult? - How do the people around me help me feel like I belong?

Anchor Texts

Theme

Connect to Texts

Expand Thinking

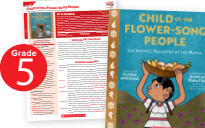


Heroes and Role Models

What qualities make someone a hero? What lessons can be learned from the courageous actions of people from the past?

- What challenges do the people in the text face?
- What are the people's greatest talents or strengths?
- How do the people use their strengths and talents to solve challenging problems?
- How do others react to the people's ideas and actions?
- Why are the stories of people's lives important for people to know about?

- Do I see the people as heroes? Why or why not?
- Do I see these people as role models, or people who I want to be like in some way? Why or why not?
- What lessons might I take away from the stories of these people's lives?
- How does learning about people's achievements inspire me?



Strong and Resilient

What qualities help people succeed when they face challenges?

- What challenges do the people in the text face?
- How do the people keep trying to solve challenging problems?
- How do others react to the people's ideas and actions?
- Why are these events and stories important for people to know about?
- How do people acknowledge and express their feelings when things are difficult?

- How are the challenges faced by people in the text like challenges I might face?
- How have I succeeded in solving problems or facing challenges?
- What can I learn from the way the people dealt with challenges?
- What might the author want me to take away from this book?



Thinking Beyond Today

What can I learn from how people I read about turn their dreams for the future into reality?

- What are the goals and dreams of the people in the text?
- What steps do the people follow to try to realize their dreams?
- What challenges get in their way?
- How do others support them or challenge them?

- What are my dreams for the future?
- How are the goals and dreams of the people in the text similar to mine?
- What can I learn from the way the people in the text tried to make their dreams real?
- What steps might I take to make my dreams for the future come true?

Building Social-Emotional Awareness

Researchers have reported that children who participate in social and emotional learning programs perform about 13 percentage points higher in their grades and standardized test scores (Taylor et al., 2017). The benefits of social and emotional learning extend beyond test scores. Examining the social and emotional skills displayed in the books they read may help children connect to what they're reading, and by discussing these skills as a class they can understand how reading can relate to real-life situations. Additionally, by connecting their reading to social-emotional learning, children are scaffolded to build a positive self-image as readers, learn valuable analytic and executive function skills, and develop and build upon essential life skills that help them understand and navigate the world around them.

Core Competencies

The social-emotional skills explored in the Rising Voices Library align with the tenets found in many SEL programs, including the CASEL framework. CASEL—the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning—identifies five core competencies that should be prioritized in children's social-emotional learning, as described in the chart below (CASEL.org).

CASEL Competency	Goals and Assessment	Focus
Self-awareness	The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."	- Identifying emotions - Accurate self-perception - Recognizing strengths - Self-confidence - Self-efficacy - Demonstrating honesty and integrity - Examining prejudices and biases
Self-management	The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations—effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, demonstrating agency, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.	- Impulse control - Stress management - Self-discipline - Self-motivation - Taking initiative - Goal-setting - Organizational skills
Social awareness	The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.	- Perspective-taking - Empathy - Appreciating diversity - Respect for others
Relationship skills	The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.	- Communication - Social engagement - Relationship-building - Teamwork - Demonstrating cultural competency - Standing up for others
Responsible decision-making	The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, the demonstration and development of critical thinking skills, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.	- Identifying problems - Analyzing situations - Solving problems - Evaluating - Reflecting - Ethical responsibility

Embedded Social-Emotional Learning

The embedded social-emotional learning in Rising Voices forms a link between social-emotional learning, literary texts, and life.

Under the “Build Social-Emotional Awareness” heading in the “Extend Learning” section of every Teaching Card, the teacher is offered a suggestion to tie the reading to something children can consider about their own lives and the world around them. For example, in the Kindergarten Teaching Card for *A Song of Frutas*, the teaching prompt says: *“The girl in the story loves spending time with her grandfather in his neighborhood in Havana, Cuba. She enjoys getting to be part of the community, even though her own home is in the United States, far away from Abuelo. Why do you think it can be good to find out about and explore different places and get to know the people who live there?”* This focus on learning about and understanding other cultures targets the core competency of social awareness. Once children have had the opportunity to discuss among themselves, a few children should share their thinking with the class.

Social-emotional learning must be taught with a lens on equity. While working with diverse groups of children in the classroom, it is important to understand how culture and personal experience can have an effect on a child’s understanding of social-emotional skills. Research shows that students’ social-emotional development is significantly impacted by their view of their cultural identity (Gee et al., 2014). By reading culturally responsive texts and discussing them in context, children will be given a safe space to explore the core competencies of social-emotional learning. This practice also allows children the opportunity to apply these core competencies to their own lives inside and outside of the classroom.

“Social-emotional learning (SEL) skills can help us build communities that foster courageous conversations across difference so that our students can confront injustice, hate, and inequity.”

—Dena Simmons, EdD (2019)
Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

“Social and emotional skills matter for many areas of development, including learning, health, and general well-being. Furthermore, recent research has demonstrated that high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs produce positive outcomes for students, including reduced stress and improved behavior, attitudes, and academic performance.”

—Stephanie Jones, Katharine Brush, et al. (2017)
Harvard Graduate School of Education



The Magic of Being Seen by Sulma Arzu-Brown

I am a proud Garifuna woman born in Honduras. The Garifuna people are the descendants of the Black Caribs who were forcibly deported from the islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines after a failed attempt at genocide by the British in 1797. Garifunas currently live in Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, Nicaragua—and the United States. We are a thriving community with our own language and cultural traditions. As a Black woman born in a

Central American country, I also identify as an Afro-Latina. Spanish was frequently spoken in my home, even after my family moved to the United States, making English my third language.

Early on, I got the message of the importance of literacy. However, as a young child, I basically just read the books I was told were necessary to pass an assignment. As an adult, I now understand why a love of books was not a big part of my childhood. It was because I never saw myself! I felt invisible, even in my own community.

In college, I finally connected with people who helped me begin to find books that resonated with my own life. I majored in mass communication, which gave me the opportunity to explore many avenues: radio, TV production, print, media, and roles in talent coordination, publicity, and digital advertising. It has become my goal to collect and create materials, ideas, and initiatives to implement seeds of empowerment con mi gente/with my people. I have helped formerly incarcerated fathers find employment to provide for their families and served as the executive director of the Garifuna Coalition to help my immigrant community navigate the many resources needed to thrive in New York City. I became the first Afro-Latina director of operations for the NYC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and became the first investor in the Boogie Down Grind Café: the only coffee shop in the South Bronx owned by two women of color.

Today, I live in the South Bronx with my husband and my two daughters. As a mom, an advocate for equity, and an author, I know that representation matters. Making sure that our girls understand that they are wonderfully made is important to my husband and me. We are planting seeds of what is possible without limitation. We are teaching them that their essence, their imagination, their language, and their talents matter. We know that carefully chosen books play a part in helping my daughters and all children envision who they are and what they can become.

When I explored the books in this Rising Voices collection, I was blown away by the beautiful images of Latino people on the covers—and by the names of authors and illustrators. These are real Latinos telling our stories. And when I opened the books, it was exciting to see my community represented in such a vibrant and positive way. The stories are diverse in the sense that some of them took me to places and cultures within my Latino roots that I'd not ever been to. I discovered beautiful traditions that, like those from my own culture, also connect families and show the value of community. These books showcase human experiences that in some ways are culturally specific but in other ways feel universal.

I am honored to serve as a mentor and help to share this transformative collection with educators and students across the country. Bringing Rising Voices: Elevating Latino Stories to classrooms will allow all of our children to appreciate that there is something magical about being seen and appreciated for where you are from and who you really are.

ABOUT SULMA ARZU-BROWN

For more than 15 years, Sulma Arzu-Brown has been working as a champion for diversity and inclusion, well before the term became a trending topic. As the award-winning author of *Bad Hair Does Not Exist!/Pelo Malo No Existe!* and *My Hair Comes With Me—Shifting the Paradigm of What Success Looks Like* and the creator and co-writer of the nation's first Afro-Latino TV series *D'que Latino*, she utilizes her platform to bring honor to the global Black and Afro-Latino diaspora. The timely message of Sulma's work helps address the infinite possibilities for girls and boys of color.

Her work has been featured in: *Black Enterprise* magazine and the *Huffington Post*; she has appeared on NBC, Telemundo, Black News Channel, Univision's *Despierta America*, @Dove Twitter, @TwitterVoices, and Remezcla; and has consulted with major brands and educational institutions, such as Barnes & Noble, Mastercard, Nasdaq, Edelman, PepsiCo, DoorDash, Columbia University, Stony Brook University, the New York City Department of Education, and Unilever's Crown Act campaign to end hair discrimination nationwide in schools and corporations.



Ending Cultural Apartheid

by John Leguizamo

I wasn't always as successful as I am now. No, early in life, my family was poor and we ended up in a very tough neighborhood in Queens. My brother never left the house, and he became an avid reader. So was I. Reading was my friend, my sitter, my extended family. It was the escape from my life that I desperately needed. On top of that, my parents were ghetto tiger parents. My parents believed that reading was the only way out. I had to read the encyclopedia to even

get my Christmas presents. I remember when I was on the Ds, I said to my friend, "Doug, donating of your detailed decadent debacle is depressing and demoralizing to me."

When I got into my teens, I discovered a new connection to reading. I was forced to go to therapy in high school but it turned me on to reading plays at 17. They became my passport to places I had never been and a way to understand my life. I could be in the South with Tennessee Williams, in London with Harold Pinter, in Chicago with David Mamet, or feel like I was seen with *Down These Mean Streets* by Piri Thomas, who was Puerto Rican. I was addicted to plays. They spoke to me like no other form.

I became an actor, but because of the Hollywood system I hit a glass ceiling, invisible quotas, and cheap tokenism. I quickly realized I was never going to have the same opportunities as my White colleagues, even though we Latinos are the oldest ethnic group in America, after my Native American brothers and sisters—and we are the largest minority ethnic group. This exclusion forced me to rely on myself. It forced me to create my own material so I could see plays by us, for us, and with us. I got my strength because the real world was populated by people who looked just like me. It was only in media and entertainment where I felt I was living in a cultural apartheid. We are equal to Whites in population in most cities (but particularly my hometown), yet we are less than 1% of the staff and stories at *The New York Times*, *New Yorker*, *New York* magazine, and *The New York Post*. That's cultural apartheid.

When I wrote my plays and they were produced on Broadway, my audience found me, paying prices they could not afford just so they could feel like their lives mattered.

Seeing themselves and their culture on stage made them feel validated, and their enthusiasm has fueled and kept me on my quest to get 20% of the stories being told in America to match our more than 20% of the population. I will not rest till our stories—stories by us and written, published, and filmed by us—are seen by everyone.

The power of this Rising Voices collection is what I needed early on in my life because then I could have avoided several traumatic steps in my life. When Latino children read about themselves as protagonists, they will know they matter, they will know they count, they will know that they can be thinkers and inventors. They will intuit that they can achieve. Reading about people like yourself reinforces that you can be anything you choose without limit. Seeing themselves in books will give them the self-love that will help them soar. And for me, it does a great service of shattering cultural apartheid in America.

ABOUT JOHN LEGUIZAMO

A multifaceted creator, John Leguizamo has established a career that defies categorization. With boundless energy and creativity, his work in film, theater, television, and literature covers a variety of genres, continually threatening to create a few of its own. Leguizamo has garnered numerous accolades throughout his career including an Emmy Award, a Special Tony Award, and a Drama Desk Award, as well as nominations for Golden Globes, Tony Awards, and Critics' Choice Awards.

Leguizamo seeks through much of his work to build awareness of the role that talented Latinos play and have played in our nation and the world. Among his numerous film credits, children may know him as the voice of Bruno from the beloved animated film *Encanto*, which celebrates a Colombian family endowed with special gifts. Leguizamo received a Special Tony Award in 2018 after wrapping an extended Broadway run of *Latin History for Morons*, his latest one-man show, delivering his take on 500 years of Latin History spanning the Aztec and Incan Empires to World War II. Leguizamo's *Ghetto Klown*, a graphic novel adaptation of his Broadway one-man show of the same name, was nominated for an Eisner award. He also released a comic book, *Freak*, based on his solo show of the same name. Additionally, John is at work on several children's books to be published by Scholastic.



For more information, visit [scholastic.com/risingvoices](https://www.scholastic.com/risingvoices)