

## Lesson Plan – *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Developed by:

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Concept:

- The Effect of Setting, Motivation, and Theme on the Creation of Childhood Characters

Suggested Grade Level:

- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade (adaptable through high school)

Time Frame:

- 1 90-minute lesson
- Culminating project may be completed as homework or during an additional class session.

Objectives:

- Through the use of Venn diagrams, students will compare and contrast the effects of setting, motivation, and theme on characterization in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain and *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros.

State Standards (California 7<sup>th</sup> Grade English/Language Arts):

- Literary Response and Analysis (Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They clarify the ideas and connect them to other literary works.)
  - 3.3 Analyze characterization as delineated through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.
  - 3.4 Identify and analyze recurring themes across works (e.g., the value of bravery, loyalty, and friendship; the effects of loneliness).
- Writing Applications (Students write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive texts of at least 500 to 700 words in each genre.)
  - 2.1 Write fictional or autobiographical narratives:
    - Use a range of appropriate strategies (e.g., dialogue; suspense; naming of specific narrative action, including movement, gestures, and expressions).

Assessment/Evaluation:

- Completed activities (including Venn diagrams) will be evaluated according to a scoring guide.

Language/Vocabulary:

- Literary Terms – characterization, motivation, setting, theme

Integrated Curriculum:

- Social Studies (history and geography as related to the two settings—19<sup>th</sup> century Mississippi River town and 20<sup>th</sup> century Hispanic barrio)

Background Information:

- Information should be presented and discussed relating to the lives of the two authors, with special attention to the settings of their childhood years. Reading, discussion, and any ancillary activities involving the two novels should be completed prior to this lesson.

Materials:

- Background Information on Writers (Mark Twain and Sandra Cisneros)
- Texts of Novels (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The House on Mango Street*)
- Setting/Character Organizers (2)
- Novel Excerpts
- Brainstorming Diagrams (2)
- Venn Diagrams (3)
- Dialogue Directions
- Scoring Guide

Technology Support:

- Numerous sources for background information (see above) are available in video form and on the Internet. These may be selected according to individual preferences.

Related Twain Quotes/Other Readings:

- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* may be substituted for *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in the upper grades as appropriate. This substitution would allow for a dialogue between Huck Finn and Esperanza and so alter both the process and the outcome.

Lesson Plan Format –

A. Introduction:

- Complete quick-write.

B. Lesson:

- Discuss and complete Setting/Character Organizers for Tom Sawyer and Esperanza. (This must follow the completion of the novels.)
- Read and discuss novel excerpts.
- Discuss and complete Brainstorming Diagrams for Tom Sawyer and Esperanza.
- Discuss and complete Venn Diagrams for setting, motivation, and theme.

C. Closure:

- Culminating Activity: Using the diagrams, write a three-page dialogue between Tom Sawyer and Esperanza that compares and contrasts the characters' desire to leave their childhood homes.

Scheduled Use of Time:

| Time       | Teacher Activity  | Student Activity  |
|------------|---|---|
| 10 minutes | Write prompt on board and discuss with students.<br>Quick-write prompt: As a 7 <sup>th</sup> grader, who controls your life? Who makes the major decisions for you (where to live, where and how to spend your time, what clothes to wear, what to eat, etc.)? How do you feel about this? Would you like to change it? If so, how? | Complete one-page quick-write.  |
| 10 minutes | Explain Setting/Character Organizer for Tom Sawyer.<br>Instruct students to complete organizer individually.<br>Monitor student completion.<br>Facilitate sharing and discussion of organizer.  | Complete Setting/Character Organizer for Tom Sawyer.<br>Share information from organizer and add information from discussion. |
| 10 minutes | Review Setting/Character Organizer for Esperanza.<br>Instruct students to complete organizer individually.<br>Monitor student completion.<br>Facilitate sharing and discussion of organizer.  | Complete Setting/Character Organizer for Esperanza.<br>Share information from organizer and add information from discussion.  |
| 10 minutes | Distribute and facilitate reading of excerpt from <i>Tom Sawyer</i> .<br>Facilitate completion of Tom Sawyer Brainstorming Diagram.   | Read excerpt.<br>Complete Tom Sawyer Brainstorming Diagram.   |
| 10 minutes | Distribute and facilitate reading excerpts from <i>Mango Street</i> .<br>Facilitate completion of Esperanza Brainstorming Diagram.  | Read excerpt.<br>Complete Esperanza Brainstorming Diagram.  |
| 10 minutes | Distribute and facilitate completion of Venn Diagram (Setting).   | Using information from Organizers and Brainstorming Diagrams, complete Venn Diagram (Setting).                                |

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| 10 minutes | Distribute and facilitate completion of Venn Diagram (Motivation). | Using information from Organizers and Brainstorming Diagrams, complete Venn Diagram (Motivation).  |
| 10 minutes | Distribute and facilitate completion of Venn Diagram (Theme).      | Using information from Organizers and Brainstorming Diagrams, complete Venn Diagram (Theme).   |
| 10 minutes | Distribute and explain dialogue directions.                        | Complete dialogue. (This may be completed as homework or as an additional class session. Several drafts may be required to facilitate use of the writing process to improve writing. Teacher suggestions and revision may also be incorporated.) |

Strategies/Accommodations to Support Students with Exceptionalities:

- Lesson may be altered to accommodate English language learners as well as students with learning disabilities by providing more support during the completion of organizers and diagrams. Accommodations may also be implemented for the culminating project (dialogue) by adjusting the project length or offering alternative projects such as personal letters between Tom and Esperanza, journal entries, storyboards, etc.

Possible Follow-up Activities:

- Students rehearse and present dialogues to the class.

Possible Guest Speakers/Other Resources:

**SETTING/CHARACTER ORGANIZER**  
**TOM from *THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER***

**Setting Of Novel**

Time

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Place

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Details of Setting

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**Description Of Character**

Physical Description

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Background (family, home, etc.)

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Character Traits

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**SETTING/CHARACTER ORGANIZER**  
**ESPERANZA from *THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET***

**Setting Of Novel**

Time

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Place

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Details of Setting

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**Description Of Character**

Physical Description

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Background (family, home, etc.)

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Character Traits

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## Excerpts from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain

### Chapter 13

Tom's mind was made up, now. He was gloomy and desperate. He was a forsaken, friendless boy, he said; nobody loved him; when they found out what they had driven him to, perhaps they would be sorry; he had tried to do right and get along, but they would not let him; since nothing would do them but to be rid of him, let it be so; and let them blame *him* for the consequences—why shouldn't they? What right had the friendless to complain? Yes, they had forced him to it at last: he would lead a life of crime. There was no choice. (98)

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

## Excerpts from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros

### Four Skinny Trees

They are the only ones who understand me. I am the only one who understands them. Four skinny trees with skinny necks and pointy elbows like mine. Four who do not belong here but are here. Four raggedy excuses planted by the city. From our room we can hear them, but Nenny just sleeps and doesn't appreciate these things.

Their strength is secret. They send ferocious roots beneath the ground. They grow up and they grow down and grab the earth between their hairy toes and bite the sky with violent teeth and never quit their anger. This is how they keep.

Let one forget his reason for being, they'd all droop like tulips in a glass, each with their arms around the other. Keep, keep, keep trees say when I sleep. They teach.

When I am too sad and too skinny to keep keeping, when I am a tiny thing against so many bricks, then it is I look at trees. When there is nothing left to look at on this street. Four who grew despite concrete. Four who reach and do not forget to reach. Four whose only reason is to be and be. (74-75)

### Mango Says Goodbye Sometimes

I like to tell stories. I tell them inside my head. I tell them after the mailman says, Here's your mail. Here's your mail he said.

I make a story for my life, for each step my brown shoe takes. I say, "And so she trudged up the wooden stairs, her sad brown shoes taking her to the house she never liked."

I like to tell stories. I am going to tell you a story about a girl who didn't want to belong.

We didn't always live on Mango Street. Before that we lived on Loomise on the third floor, and before that we lived on Keeler. Before Keeler it was Paulina, but what I remember most is Mango Street, sad red house, the house I belong to but do not belong to.

I put it down on paper and then the ghost does not ache so much. I write it down and Mango says goodbye sometimes. She does not hold me with both arms. She sets me free.

One day I will pack my bags of books and paper. One day I will say goodbye to Mango. I am too strong for her to keep me here forever. One day I will go away.

Friends and neighbors will say, What happened to that Esperanza? Where did she go with all those books and paper? Why did she march so far away?

They will not know I have gone away to come back. For the ones I left behind. For the ones who cannot out. (109-110)

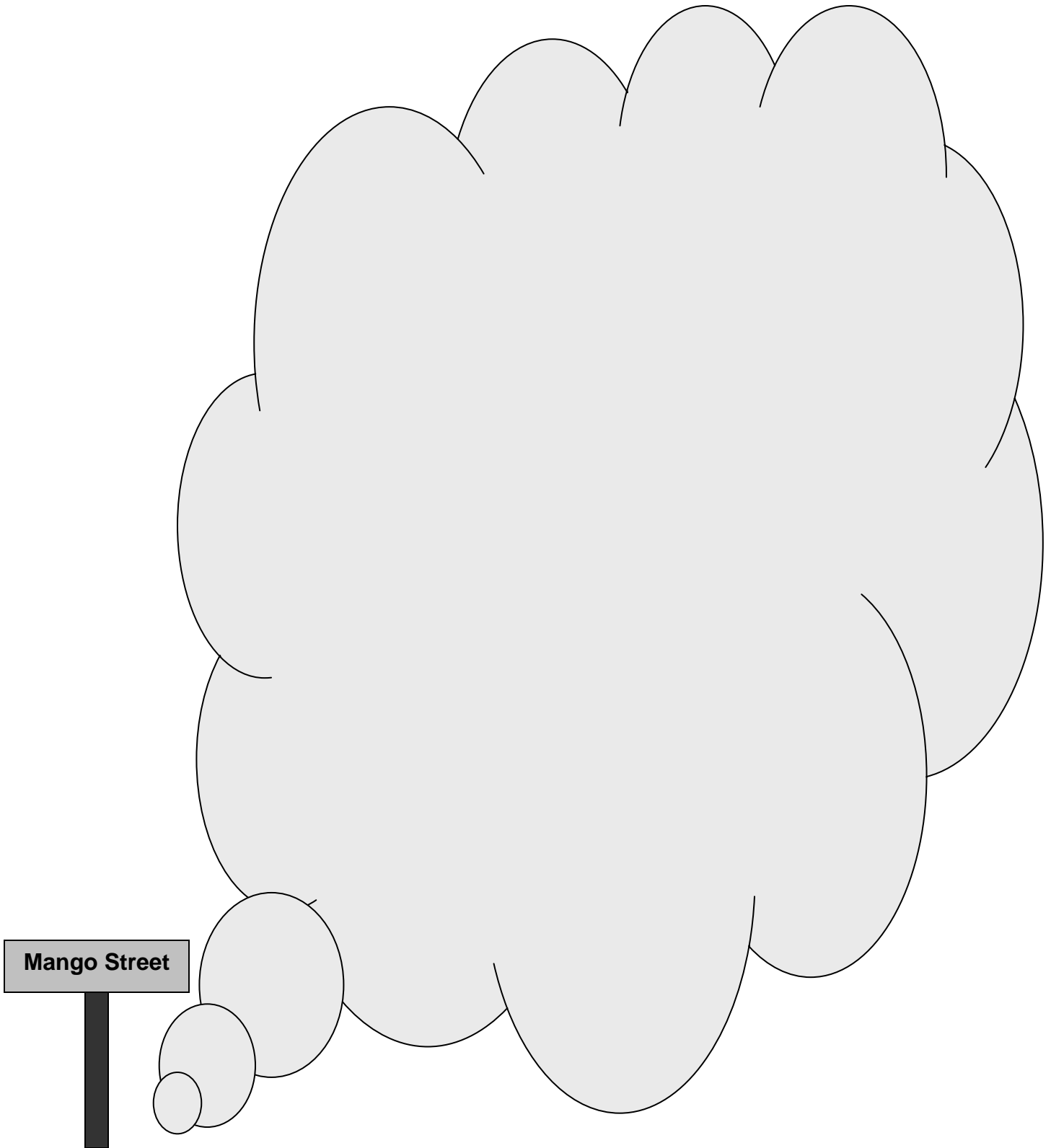
Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.

**BRAINSTORMING DIAGRAM**  
**TOM from *THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER***

St. Petersburg



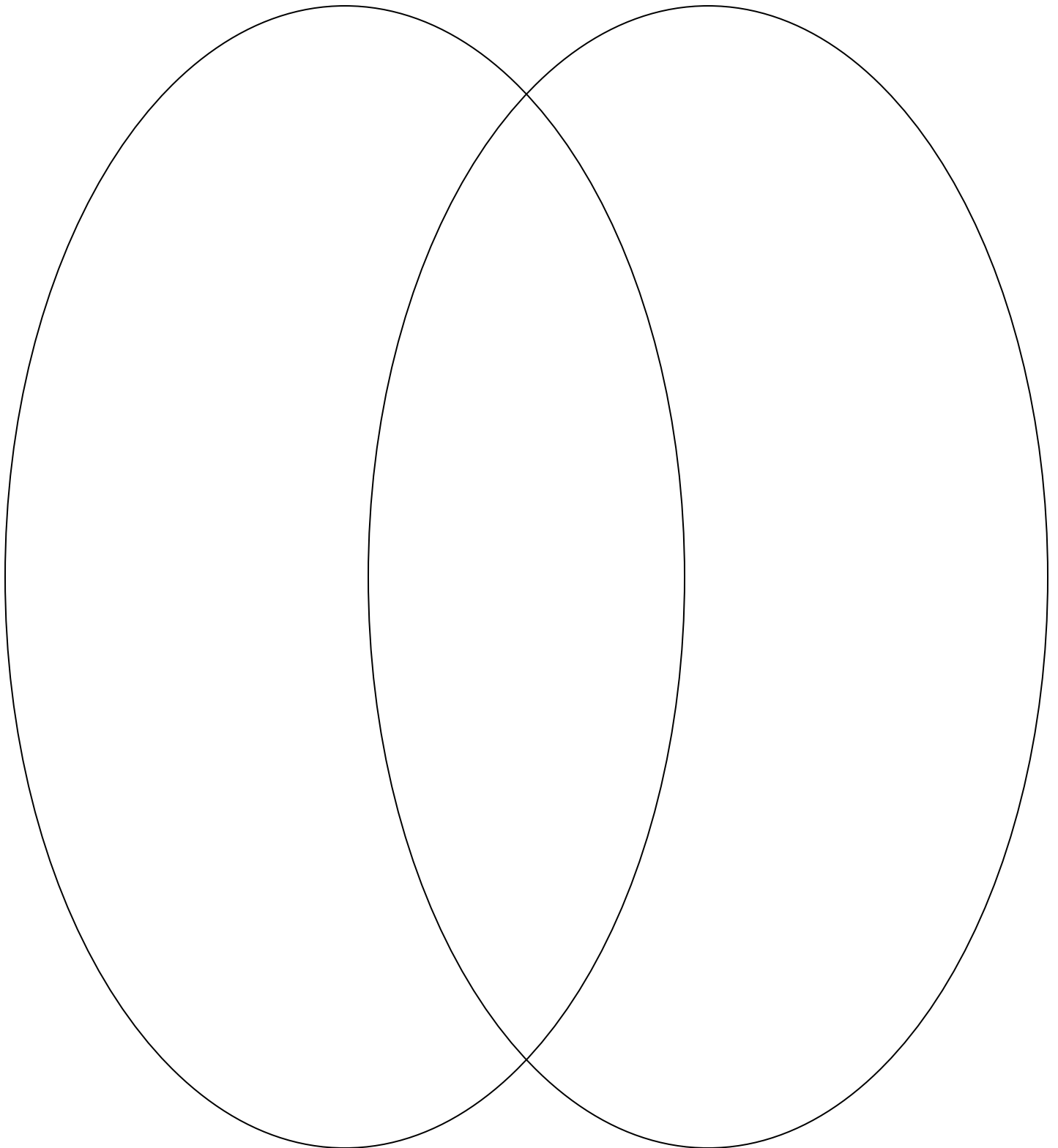
**BRAINSTORMING DIAGRAM**  
**ESPERANZA from *THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET***



**VENN DIAGRAM OF SETTING**

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

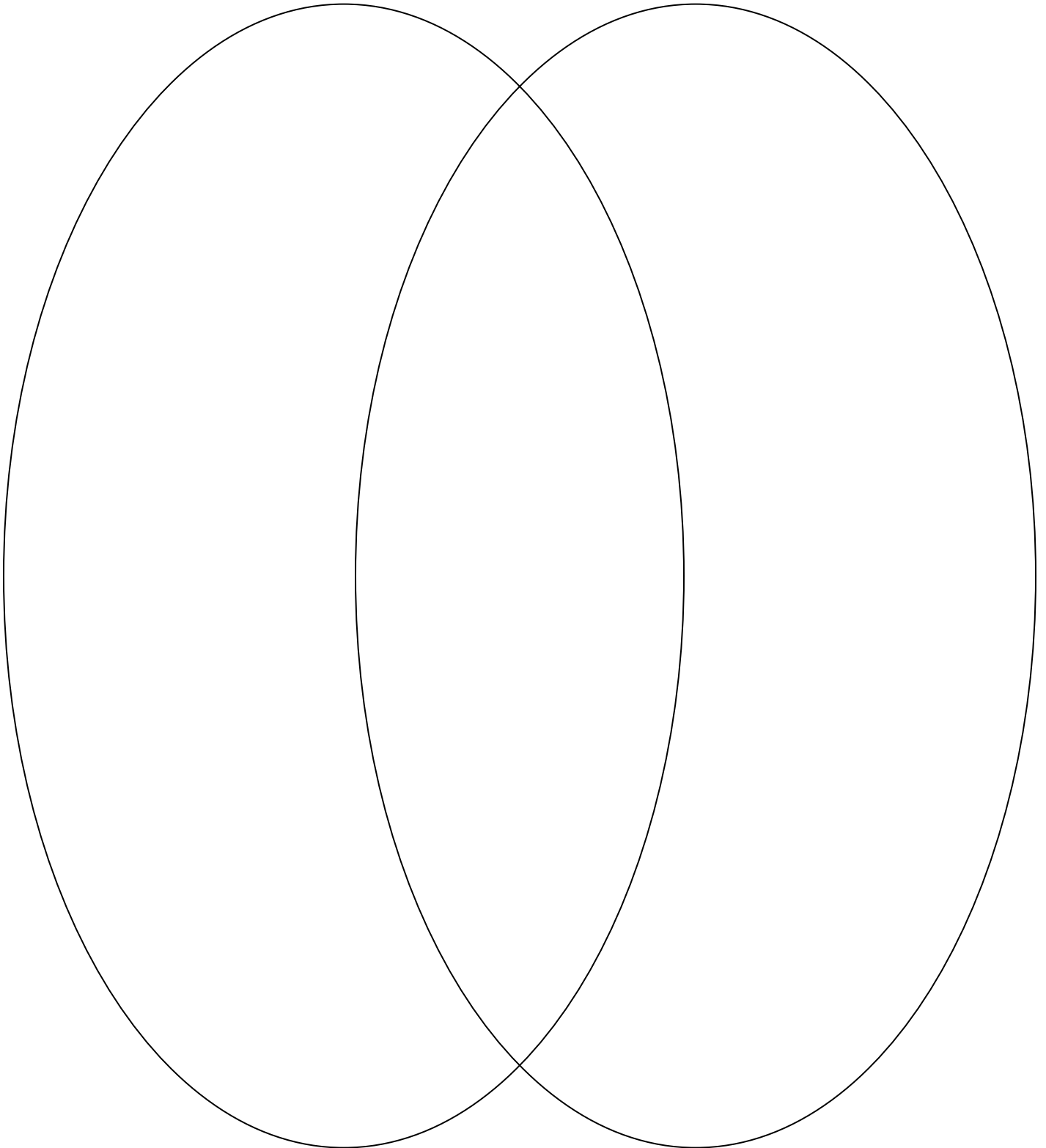
*The House on Mango Street*



**VENN DIAGRAM OF MOTIVATION**

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

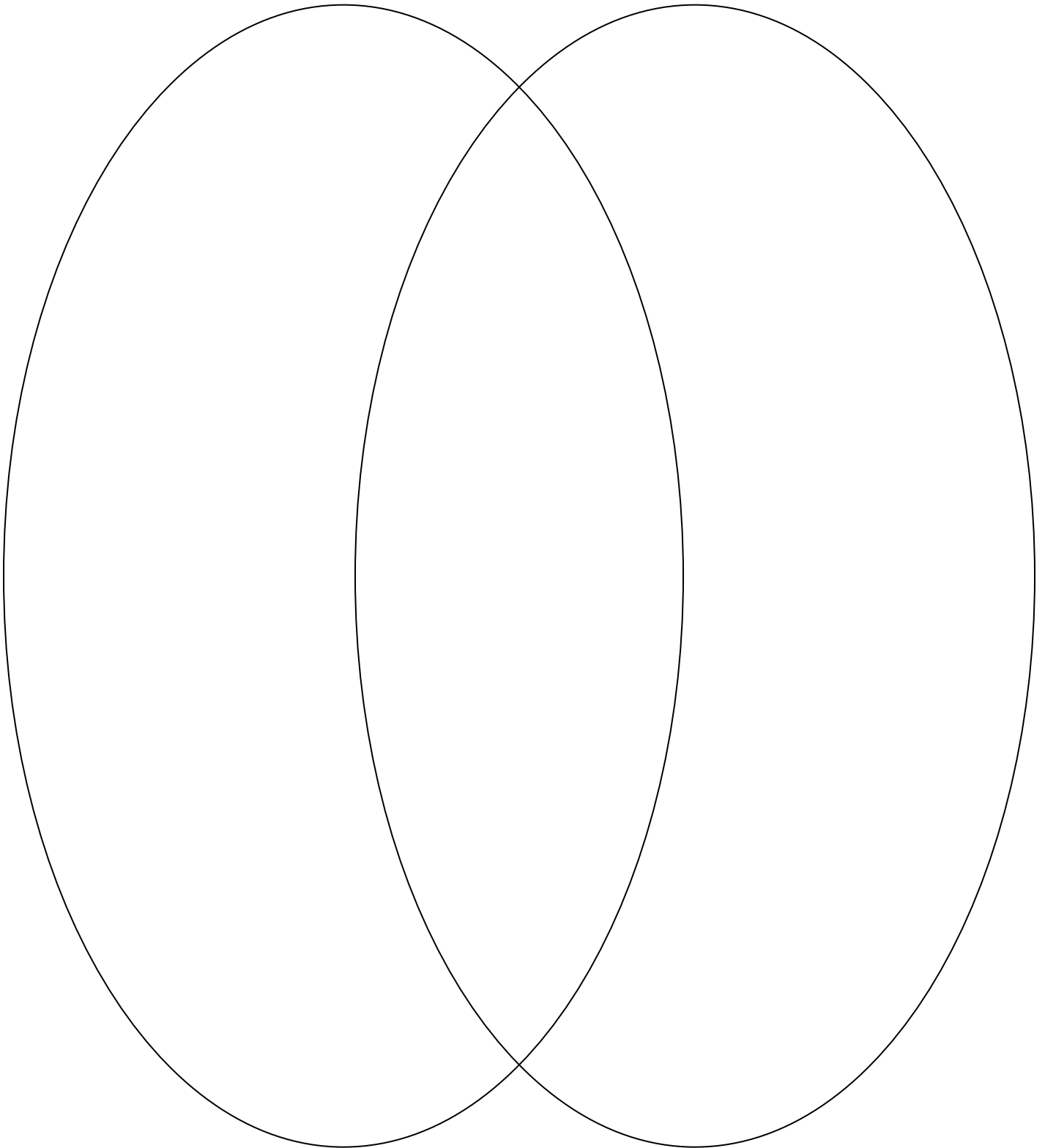
*The House on Mango Street*



**VENN DIAGRAM OF THEME**

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

*The House on Mango Street*



### **DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING DIALOUGE**

- Review the information from your three Venn Diagrams.
- Imagine that Tom and Esperanza have traveled through time and have met one another.
- Write a three-page dialogue in which Tom and Esperanza discuss their living conditions and desire to leave their homes.
- Your dialogue should accurately reflect the background information of setting, motivation, and theme of the novels and should follow standard English conventions.

## SCORING GUIDE

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Setting/Character Organizer (Tom)       | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |
| Setting/Character Organizer (Esperanza) | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |
| Brainstorming Diagram (Tom)             | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |
| Brainstorming Diagram (Esperanza)       | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |
| Venn Diagram (Setting)                  | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |
| Venn Diagram (Motivation)               | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |
| Venn Diagram (Theme)                    | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |
| Dialogue (Reflection of Tom)            | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |
| Dialogue (Reflection of Esperanza)      | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |
| Dialogue (Standard English Conventions) | 0 (0%)<br>10 (50%)<br>15 (75%)<br>20 (100%) |

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Total Points \_\_\_\_\_ / 200

Percentage \_\_\_\_\_ %