

Where Wonder Grows

written by Xelena González

illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia

About the Book

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Format: 32 pages, 8-1/2" x 8-1/2"

ISBN: 9781947627468

Reading Level: Grade 4

Interest Level: Grades PreK–6

Guided Reading Level: S

Spanish Guided Reading Level: R

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Biracial/Multiracial Interest, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Empathy/Compassion, Environment/Nature, Families, Grandparents, Gratitude, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest, Native American Interest, Nature/Science

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/where-wonder-grows

leeandlow.com/books/donde-las-maravillas-crecen

SYNOPSIS

When Grandma walks to her special garden, her granddaughters know to follow her there. Grandma invites the girls to explore her collection of treasures—magical rocks, crystals, seashells, and meteorites—to see what wonders they reveal. “They are alive with wisdom,” Grandma says. As her granddaughters look closely, the treasures spark the girls’ imaginations. They find stories in the strength of rocks shaped by volcanoes, the cleansing power of beautiful crystals, the mystery of the sea that houses shells and shapes the environment, and the long journey meteorites took to find their way to Earth. This is the power of Grandma’s special garden, *Where Wonder Grows* and stories blossom.

Where Wonder Grows is also available in Spanish, *Donde las maravillas crecen*.

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

BACKGROUND

Author's Note from Xelena González

Dear Reader,

The idea for this picture book came from you—our readers. Adriana and I have traveled to many schools and libraries around the country. Along the way, you introduced us to your rock finds and friends. You invited us to rock parties, stone painting sessions, and gem hunts. Your belief in the magic of rocks inspired us!

Adriana and I enjoy making art in unusual ways. She had a strong vision for what this book could be, and I shaped words that would match her splendid paintings. These illustrations are very dear to me because they feature my family (my nieces, my mother, and my daughter—who also appeared alongside my dad in *All Around Us*.) We hope that our books remind you of the very special connection you have to your grandparents, your ancestors, and nature. Because of this, you are powerful and enduring. Just like a rock.

Love and light,

Xelena

Facts that Rock from the Backmatter

The Elements

The elements of fire, earth, water, and air are celebrated in various Indigenous ceremonies and art forms. Our book features four relics from nature that represent these four elements: volcanic rocks symbolize fire, crystals represent earth, shells illustrate water, and meteorites express air.

What do you gather in your nature collections? What is their story?

Nature Finds

Some people keep their most powerful nature finds in a special place, like Grandma does in her garden. Others carry their treasures with them in a medicine bag. They call it medicine because many people can cure and find healing from the stones and plants provided by nature.

Does your family practice any remedios or natural remedies? Where do you carry or keep your special tokens from nature?

Sweat Lodges

A sweat lodge is a ceremonial place where some people go to cleanse their body and spirit by sitting in a natural steam bath, praying and singing alongside people from their Native American community. Various circles practice this custom differently. In our story, the children wait until they're older to enter the lodge, but in some tribes, there are no age limits.

In the Nahuatl language of Mexico, a sweat lodge is called a temazcal. It's fun to say! Can you try it?

Do you have any special places where you go to sing or pray with others?

Collecting Rocks

Not all rocks are ready to be collected. Some parks prohibit taking rocks and plants from their natural environment. Before collecting a new find, be sure to check the park rules. And even check with the being itself. Do you name any of your rock friends? How about shells? How about house plants?

Additional Information about Sweat Lodges and Sweat Lodge Ceremonies

Sweat lodge ceremonies are practiced by many Native and First Nations people in North America. The location of the sweat lodge is chosen with great care. After the location is selected, a hole is dug where specially chosen rocks are heated. A pit is also dug in the center spot where the lodge is going to be built. Saplings are gathered and bent to form a dome and then covered with blankets or canvas tarpaulins. Additionally, hot rocks are brought into the darkened sweat lodge. Participants of the sweat lodge experience a purification of the mind, spirit and community as they feel the heat of the steam and offer prayers and songs. For more information about sweat lodges and sweat lodge ceremonies, consult the resources below:

(https://teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk/import/sweat-lodge_ceremony.php) (<https://pluralism.org/sweat-lodge>) (<http://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture2d.htm>) (<https://www.lakotaway.org/sweat-lodge-inipi-faq>)

Additional Information about Rocks and the Elements

Rocks are incredibly important in many Indigenous cultures. Studying rocks is important because people can learn valuable lessons about the Earth from rocks. Special rocks are chosen for specific ceremonies, rituals, marking sites for celebrations, and more. It's very important to learn about the rocks' origin because some are not meant to be touched (<https://www.manitoba.ca/iem/min-ed/kidsrock/earthwise/index.html>).

Curanderas and Curanderismo

Curanderas, female healers, and curanderos, male healers, have existed in many different cultures and societies throughout history, and have used natural elements, such as plants and rocks, to heal ailments and illnesses. Women specifically have upheld prominent roles as healers, particularly through their involvement with midwifery and their special knowledge of healing properties. To learn more about curanderas and curanderismo, consult the Western Journal of Medicine's article, "Curanderismo and Latino Views of Disease and Curing" (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1011018/>) as well as the VISTAS online article, "Cultural Awareness: Understanding Curanderismo" (https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/vistas/article_396cfd25f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf?sfvrsn=f2eb452c_4).

Native Americans and Oral Storytelling

Oral storytelling is integral to Native People's traditions. Joseph Bruchac, an Abenaki author, writes in his book, *Lasting Echoes: An Oral History of Native Americans*, "American Indians have been telling their own stories for countless generations. Deep, varied oral traditions existed in pre-contact times and still exist on the North American continent. These songs and traditional stories, including epic works, could fill many volumes. They have great meaning within the individual cultures, meaning that is often not easily understood by an outsider . . . Native American oral traditions may include myths and legends, tribal history, personal experience, dreams and visions. These traditions show us a world where everything is alive and everything has a voice. . . . The history of the American continent has usually been seen through European eyes. Yet there were people here long before the coming of the Europeans, and the descendants of those original native people still remain on this land." (<https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-15-201327-1>)

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- Why do you think learning family stories is important? Have you ever asked your grandparents, aunts or uncles, parents, or other adults in your life about what it was like for them when they were kids? What did you learn?
- Ask students to share a memory from when they were younger. What is an important memory you have from your childhood? What does it mean to you?
- Ask students to think about their family and what family means to them. How is family important to you? What are some favorite childhood memories of your family and/or family members? Why are these special or important to you?
- How do you show your family members that you care about them? What are some things you do to help your family? Why?
- Have students think about why it's important to take care of the Earth and the world around us. How do they make sure that they're caring for their community?
- What do you think nature and the world around us can teach us about life? Why is it important to acknowledge our environment and how it impacts us?
- Ask students what they think of when they think about rocks. Where do they see rocks? Have they ever collected rocks? What kinds of rocks do they see every day? If students collected rocks, what kinds of rocks did they look for? Why?
- Ask students why it's important to acknowledge traditions and cultures that are different from their own. Why is it essential to learn about different cultures in the United States and around the world, even if you do not identify with that particular culture or tradition?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Where Wonder Grows*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
- **Read Xelena González and Adriana M. Garcia's Biographies:** Read about long-time friends and collaborators, Xelena González and Adriana M. Garcia. What made them come up with the idea for the book? What do you think are the benefits of working with a partner on a book?
- Encourage students to stop and jot down notes in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.
- Have students quickly write their feelings in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote down those feelings and have them write journal entries about them.
- Ask students to make a prediction: Do you think this book will be fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think so? What clues help you know whether this book will be fiction or nonfiction?
- **Note:** Story is available in Spanish as well, *Donde las maravillas crecen* [leeandlow.com/books/donde-las-maravillas-crecen](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/donde-las-maravillas-crecen)

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- what family means to the young girls and their grandmother
- how grandparents and elders can provide guidance and teach young people about life
- why traditions and rituals are important
- why it's critical to take care of the Earth and the world around us
- why it's important to acknowledge and learn about cultures different from your own
- how and why culture is essential to your identity
- how rocks are representative of Earth's wonders
- how and why rocks are responsible for creating the Earth and the world around us
- how Earth's surface provides everything we need

Encourage students to consider why the creators, Xelena González and Adriana M. Garcia, would want to share with young people this story about young girls and their grandmother, and what she

teaches them about the wonders of the world around them.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Content Specific

beings, molten heat, sweat lodge, crystals, curanderas, Halite, Celestine, Quartz

Academic

relics, bubbling, transfixed, conjuring, marvels

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the grandmother tell her granddaughters about rocks?
2. What do the daughters say they learn about rocks in school?
3. What do the grandmother and her granddaughters call rocks?
4. What does the grandmother ask her granddaughters to wonder about rocks?
5. Where do rocks help send songs and prayers?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. How does the grandmother in the story teach her granddaughters about life lessons? What are different ways that she explains how the Earth provides us our life?
2. What does the grandmother teach her granddaughters about observing the Earth around us, with a special focus on rocks? What can rocks teach us? Why is it important to wonder about them?
3. Why are rocks an important part of the story? What can rocks teach us about strength and wisdom? What does the grandmother show her granddaughters about rocks throughout *Where Wonder Grows*?
4. What role do the illustrations play in the story? How does the artwork demonstrate the story's message and themes? How does the illustrator show emotion and feeling through her artwork?
5. How do the young girls show their grandmother respect? Why is listening to elders and grandparents important? What can they teach us about life?
6. What does *Where Wonder Grows* teach readers about the importance of family? How does the grandmother's message about rocks and respecting the Earth connect to the power of family and recognizing your ancestors?
7. How does nature play a role in *Where Wonder Grows*? What are the different things that the grandmother teaches her granddaughters about giving back to the Earth? How do they love and care for their environment?
8. Have you had a grandparent, a teacher, or an elder that has been impactful in your life? What did they teach you? How did you show them respect? What kind of stories did they tell you? How are they meaningful to you?
9. Read Xelena González's "Dear Reader" section in the back of the book. What does she tell young readers who engage with *Where Wonder Grows*? Does her note help you understand the story in a new way?
10. How can you take what you learned about rocks and appreciating the Earth in your own life? What are some of the things in *Where Wonder Grows* that you can apply to your day-to-day life?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about your own family and what they mean to you. What is your takeaway from this book? What would you tell a friend about this book?
2. What do you think Xelena González and Adriana M. Garcia's message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind the creators' intentions to write this story. What do you

think they wanted to share with readers?

3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make between the book and your own life? What did you relate to and how did they make you think of your own childhood or experiences growing up?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while reading *Where Wonder Grows*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make between the text and/or art in the book and what you have seen happening in the world, such as on television, in a newspaper, or online? What in this book made you think of that?
6. What do rocks mean to students after reading? After reading *Where Wonder Grows*, what did you realize or find out about rocks? What do rocks represent, and what can they teach us about the greater meaning of life?

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to tell what they learned about one of the spreads. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about what they identified with most from *Where Wonder Grows* and why. Students may also share their own childhood experiences or memories of something from their own cultures or heritages.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
6. *Where Wonder Grows* is also available in a Spanish edition, *Donde las maravillas crecen* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/donde-las-maravillas-crecen>). If this is applicable to your

classroom or relevant setting, have students who can read the books in both languages think about the following questions: How do the English and Spanish versions differ? What was it like to read the book in English and separately in Spanish? Did you think about the story any differently in either version? Why or why not?

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. How does *Where Wonder Grows* show positive family relationships? What are the qualities of a positive family relationship? How do the young girls interact with their grandmother? What are the different ways that they show respect to one another? Students can brainstorm ideas on chart paper that can be presented and accessible for the whole class. Alternatively, students can create a word cloud and see what qualities come up the most and are the largest (<https://www.wordclouds.com/>).
2. What one part of your heritage, culture, or identity are you most proud of? Do you think your school or classroom has been a safe place to share that part of yourself? Why or why not?
3. The young girls' grandmother teaches them about the importance of connecting to nature. What is a life lesson that you learned from a teacher, a friend, or a family member? What was it? How did it impact you? How can you pass on your knowledge to another friend?
4. The characters use storytelling throughout *Where Wonder Grows*. How does listening to a story make you feel? What do you like about listening to stories? What's it like to listen to a story versus telling a story? What kinds of skills do you need to do those things? Have students work with a partner and tell each other a story of their choosing. Afterwards, students can reflect on what it felt like to listen to their partner's story and then tell their own story.
5. Which illustration in *Where Wonder Grows* do you think best shows an emotion? Explain which emotion you think it is. How does the artist portray that emotion?
6. Choose an emotion such as happiness, fear, hope, sadness, and so on. Illustrate or act out what that emotion looks like in *Where Wonder Grows*.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Encourage students to write about a childhood memory or something that is meaningful to them about their identities or cultures.** Using inspiration from *Where Wonder Grows*, have students think about what they want to communicate about themselves, their families, and/or their favorite childhood experiences. What do they want to share and why did they pick that particular topic to write about? Students can share their work with a partner, a small group, or the whole class. Consider creating a class book with illustrations and have the book available to students in the classroom library.
- **Discuss the symbol of rocks from *Where Wonder Grows*.** In a graphic organizer, have students brainstorm the ways that rocks play a role in *Where Wonder Grows*. Students can go back through the text, and, make a chart listing all of the ways the grandmother says rocks can be used and what they represent. Pose the following questions to aid students' thinking: What did the grandmother teach her granddaughters about rocks? What kinds of rocks did they examine in the story? How did the rocks connect back to the book's message? What do you think rocks can represent? What can rocks teach us about respecting our Earth? Students can write an essay after their brainstorming session about how and why rocks were a symbol in *Where Wonder Grows*.
- **Unpack the grandmother's statement about rocks: "They were here long before us and know more about our world than we ever will."** What do they think this means? What do they think rocks represent? How do students think this applies to the story's overall message? How can rocks tell a story, the way grandmother tells her granddaughters stories? Students can write their reactions in an essay and think about what they learned from the grandmother's wisdom and what rocks represent in *Where Wonder Grows* about the concepts from the story.
- **Read All Around Us** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/where-wonder-grows>), **Xelena González and Adriana M. Garcia's counterpart title to *Where Wonder Grows*.** Conduct a study using both of these books and comparing and contrasting the themes and messages presented in both of the titles. Ask students the following questions: How is *Where Wonder Grows* a follow-up title to All Around Us? What are the similarities between the two titles? Are there similar themes? What are they? What message do Xelena and Adriana pose to young readers? How are grandparents present in both of the books? Why do you think Xelena

and Adriana decided to have grandparents and grandchildren as their characters in both of these books? Students can write an essay about what they learned from *All Around Us* and *Where Wonder Grows* and what the books' messages mean to them.

- **Examine the figurative language used in *Where Wonder Grows*.** Have students go on a figurative language scavenger hunt in *Where Wonder Grows*. Refer to ReadWriteThink's "Figurative Language Resource Page" as a tool for students to use during their search (http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson79/figresource.pdf). Create a chart with different rows for figurative language terms (i.e. simile, metaphor) and students can fill it in with specific examples from *Where Wonder Grows*. Afterwards, students can experiment using figurative language in their own writing inspired by the book.
- **Have students come up with a list of questions to ask author and illustrator Xelena González and Adriana M. Garcia.** What do students want to know about the process behind writing a children's book? How did they come up with their idea to write *Where Wonder Grows*? What was it like to write and illustrate a picture book together? What's it like to work with your friend on an important book? Consider contacting Xelena and Adriana to learn more about school and library visits (xelenag@gmail.com; wordpress@adrianamjgarcia.com).
- **In an essay, poem, or other written format, have students share something about their environment that's important to them.** Is there something, like rocks, that they care about in the environment around them? What intrigues them about the natural world? What do they like to observe in the park, or on the playground? What makes them curious about the environment and the Earth?
- **Have students read other stories about the cycle of life, the importance of nature and giving back to the Earth, including *Giving Thanks*, (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/giving-thanks>), *If I Were a Tree* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/if-i-were-a-tree>), *I Know the River Loves Me/Yo sé qué el río me ama* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/i-know-the-river-loves-me-yo-se-que-el-río-me-ama>), and *When the Shadbush Blooms* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/when-the-shadbush-blooms>).** Compare and contrast the books using the following guiding questions: How does this story demonstrate the importance of nature? How do the people in the story give back to the Earth? What are the ways that they show respect and admiration of their environment? How do the themes in the book relate to the message the grandmother conveys in *Where Wonder Grows*? Have students write a culminating essay about what they learned about giving back to the Earth from all of the books and how they relate to *Where Wonder Grows*.
- **How has a family member or friend close to you impacted your life?** The young girls' grandmother clearly has a positive impact on their lives, even in the short period that we get to see them in the story. Have you had a family member or other person who really changed your life? What were some things that person did that were significant to you? Students can write a poem, essay, or display their work in any other visual format that works best for their learning needs.

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Encourage students to learn more and take action about how you can give back to your environment.** The grandmother in *Where Wonder Grows* states, “From its core to its surface, our Earth gives us everything we need to survive.” How does this statement apply to what you can do within your school and community? Encourage students to think about this statement and how they can help their school and immediate neighborhood. The New York Times has a compilation of resources and lesson plans titled “Making a Difference: Ideas for Giving, Service Learning and Social Action” (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/17/learning/lesson-plans/ideas-for-giving-service-learning-and-social-action.html>). Begin with brainstorming different ideas about how students can give back, and translate those ideas into action. Students can work in small groups or with the whole class on one singular project. Afterwards, connect the experience back to the grandmother’s statement. What did they learn from this process, and how did it make them feel? How does it make them appreciate the Earth and what it provides us every day?
- **If possible, have students go on a neighborhood walk around their school and/or community to observe rocks.** Make several stops along the way where students can identify rocks. Where do they see rocks? Do they see any rocks on the sidewalk? What do they look like? What about the rocks in a park, or the playground? How are they different? Students can record their observations and/or drawings in a notebook, and then reflect on the experience afterwards. After reading *Where Wonder Grows*, how did it help them to observe and think about rocks differently? What can rocks teach us about ourselves and the world around us?
- **Conduct a study on sweat lodges and how they’re integral to Native and Indigenous communities.** Students can research what sweat lodges are, how they’re made, what they’re used for, and who visits and participates in the ceremonies that take place in a sweat lodge. For more information about sweat lodges and sweat lodge ceremonies, consult the following resources (https://teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk/import/sweat-lodge_ceremony.php) (<https://pluralism.org/sweat-lodge>) (<http://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture2d.htm>). Throughout the research process, ensure that students are using reputable resources from Native organizations. Have students also investigate how rocks play a role in sweat lodges and connect their findings to the text in *Where Wonder Grows*. Students can discuss what they found with a partner, small group, or whole class.
- **Have students look up how rocks are used in everyday life, and their uses around the world, particularly in Native and Indigenous communities.** As a starting point, the Museum of Natural and Cultural History’s “Rocks and Minerals: Everyday Uses” provides the different ways that rocks are a part of our everyday lives and their importance (<https://mnch.uoregon.edu/rocks-and-minerals-everyday-uses>). Have students think about the way they interact with rocks every day, after conducting their research. What do they see around them that’s made from rocks? Students can connect their findings to the meaning of rocks

from *Where Wonder Grows*. Afterwards, students can examine how rocks are critical to Native and Indigenous communities (<http://www.native-languages.org/legends-rocks.htm>). What have specific Native and Indigenous tribes used rocks for? How are they powerful? What do they mean to the particular tribes? Students can reflect on what they learned about rocks that they hadn't known before engaging with *Where Wonder Grows*.

- **Investigate curanderas and their purpose throughout history.** The New Mexico Historic Women Marker Initiative has additional information about curanderas (<https://www.nmhistoricwomen.org/location/curanderas-women-who-heal/>). The students can answer the following guiding questions during their research: What are curanderas? What is the general practice of curanderismo? What is the purpose of curanderas? What kinds of tools and other natural elements do curanderas use in their work? For more scientific information about curanderismo, VISTAS online provides more research and findings about curanderismo and curanderas' work throughout history (https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/vistas/article_396cfd25f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf?sfvrsn=f2eb452c_4). See the California Health Report (<https://www.calhealthreport.org/2013/05/15/curanderismo-is-alive-and-well-in-america/>) and National Center for Farmworker Health (http://www.ncfh.org/uploads/3/8/6/8/38685499/teaching_curanderismo_-_holistic_medicine_in_a_modern_world.pdf) for additional information about curanderismo.
- **Find out how crystals have healing properties and how different cultures have used crystals for medicine.** Students can do a research study on crystals and the ways different crystals are used to treat specific things (<https://www.oprahdaily.com/life/a35045011/types-of-crystals/>). Students can answer the following questions: What are crystals used for? What are their benefits? Have students pick one particular crystal and answer the guiding questions to aid their thinking and research study, and then present their findings with photographs and other written documentation.
- **Study Native oral storytelling and research its origins.** Throughout *Where Wonder Grows*, the young girls refer to their grandmother's storytelling and its importance. Native oral storytelling is critical to passing along knowledge about the Earth, family, food and more (https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/oral_traditions/). Conduct research online and with books from reputable Native authors and organizations about oral storytelling and what it was and is continued to be used for (<http://blog.nativepartnership.org/storytelling-in-native-american-cultures/>). How does the grandmother use storytelling throughout *Where Wonder Grows*? How does she pass on her knowledge about rocks and the Earth to her granddaughters through her words and stories? Students can present their findings in a visual presentation format of their choosing.

STEM/Mathematics

MATH.CONTENT.1.G.A.2: Compose two-dimensional shapes (rectangles, squares, trapezoids, triangles, half-circles, and quarter-circles) or three-dimensional shapes (cubes, right rectangular prisms, right circular cones, and right circular cylinders) to create a composite shape, and compose new shapes from the composite shape.

- **Conduct a geology research study on rocks.** National Geographic has plentiful lesson plans that provide videos, images, and information about geology for students (https://www.nationalgeographic.org/topics/rocks/?q=&page=1&per_page=25) (https://www.nationalgeographic.org/topics/rocks/?q=&page=1&per_page=25)

nationalgeographic.com/science/article/rocks). National Geographic Kids' "Geology 101" also provides basic details to begin a geology unit (<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/geology-101>). Students can answer the following questions in a visual presentation format of their choosing, with images, text and references crediting their work: What are the different types of rocks? What are they made of? Where can they be found? How do they indicate their age? What kinds of colors do you see in this particular rock type? Students can then focus on the rocks that are mentioned in *Where Wonder Grows*. What are White Halite, Sky Blue Celestine, and Quartz? Students can prepare posters or other visual demonstrations of their geology research study.

- **Investigate rocks in the ocean.** Quanta Magazine's "Inside Deep Undersea Rocks, Life Thrives Without Sun" provides more information and details about the fascinating rocks in the ocean (<https://www.quantamagazine.org/inside-deep-undersea-rocks-life-thrives-without-the-sun-20200513/>). What kinds of rocks can you find in the ocean? How are rocks part of the Earth's foundation, starting with the ocean? How do rocks in the ocean differ from typical rocks that you'd find on land? Students can work with a partner or small group, and present their research with images, text, videos, and other resources that will be helpful in teaching about ocean rocks.
- **Have students investigate the grandmother's statement, "Water makes and breaks even the biggest rocks, very slowly, over time."** What does this statement mean? Students can investigate the history of rocks and the Earth's formation. National Geographic's lesson plan and video, "Wind and Water, Meet Rock" provides more details on how water was responsible for shaping our Earth's planets by moving and eroding rocks over time (<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/video/wind-and-water-meet-rock/>). Students can share what they learned about how water and rocks are responsible for the development of the Earth, and how it connects to the message presented in *Where Wonder Grows*.

Art & Media

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Encourage each student to create an illustration of a rock to accompany their rock investigation activity in the Social Studies section of this guide.** Using inspiration from *Where Wonder Grows*, what do they imagine that this rock can do? Think about how the author and illustrator describe and present the rocks in the story. How can they get creative with thinking about their particular rock? Students can share their artwork with a partner, small group or whole class.
- **Ask students to investigate the artistic style featured in *Where Wonder Grows*.** Students can also consult the note about the art in the back of the book. What materials do you think the illustrator used to create her artwork? How do students know? What is the impact of the artwork after the main story in *Where Wonder Grows*? How did it affect students' interpretation of the meaning of the book and its message?

- **Have students illustrate a family member, friend, or caregiver who is important in their life from the English/Language Arts portion of this guide.** Students can create an artistic representation of that person, using materials in their classroom or whatever is readily available. Encourage students to think about what they want to convey artistically about this person. What kinds of materials do they want to use? Why did they choose that way to show how this person looks? How did this exercise make them feel and appreciate about this person? Students can share their artwork with the whole class.

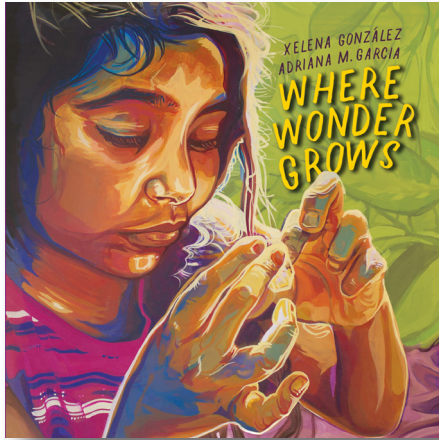
School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Encourage students to interview family members about a favorite or impactful childhood memory.** How did that event influence the family member? How did it affect the person's life moving forward? Consider having children, if comfortable, share their findings with a partner, a small group, or whole class.
- **Similarly, ask students to speak with family members about their cultures and how their cultures are special to them.** What is unique about each person's culture? How did it influence the person throughout life?
- **Have students reflect on a family member or friend who has made a difference in their life.** The young girls' grandmother is a positive influence on them and teaches them a lot about life lessons. Students and families can discuss how this family member or friend made an important impact on their life and why.
- **Ask students to have families share what they love about being in nature.** What do their families like about being outside? How do they show that they appreciate their environment and community? What do they like best about being outside?



Ordering Information

🌐 General Order Information:

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🔒 Secure Online Ordering:

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Xelena González is a storyteller, a screenwriter, a poet, and an author of picture books. Her storytelling skills were honed as a children's librarian in San Antonio, Texas, and in an international school in Guangzhou, China. As a visiting author, she has introduced her method of "tai chi storytelling" to more than sixty schools and libraries around the United States. She is a member of the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation and still lives in San Antonio, where she grew up. You can find out more about González and her first book, *All Around Us*, at allaroundus.info.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Adriana M. Garcia is a visual artist, a muralist, and an illustrator. She is the recipient of a Pura Belpré Illustrator Award Honor for her debut picture book, *All Around Us* by Xelena González. Garcia has exhibited her artwork nationally and has presented at conferences, schools, and museums around the United States. She especially loves painting portraits of strong women to honor those who have come before and those who continue to lead by example. Garcia lives in San Antonio, Texas, and you can find her online at adrianamjgarcia.com.

REVIEWS

"Lyrical words by González (a member of the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation) emphasize the intergenerational ties that bind the characters and show Indigenous knowledge in the process of being passed down. Garcia's portraits center affectionate familial gestures alongside mural-like views of sunset skies and evocative representations of fire, earth, air, and water." —*Publishers Weekly*, **Starred Review**

Starred Review

"Celebrate the wondrous stories that exist all around thanks to the marvels stored in rocks...simply dazzling." —*Kirkus Reviews*, **Starred Review**

"From a thoughtful author's note to the readers' guide at the end of the book, this author-illustrator team offers their readers a thought-provoking, mind-expanding piece of art that shows gratitude to our planet." —*Booklist*

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.