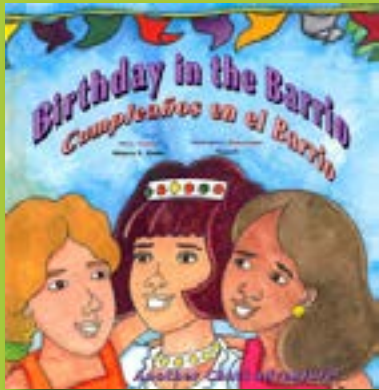


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



## Birthday in the Barrio / Cumpleaños en el Barrio

written by Mayra L. Dole, illustrated by Tonel

### About the Book

**Reading Level:** Grade 3

**Interest Level:** Grades 1–4

**Guided Reading Level:** P/O

**Accelerated Reader® Level/**

**Points:** 3.3/0.5

**Lexile™ Measure:** N/A

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

**Themes:** Sharing and Giving, Kindness and Caring, Identity and Self Esteem, Responsibility, Overcoming Obstacles, Neighbors, Immigration, Home, Holidays and Traditions (Birthdays), Friendship, Food, Families, Conflict Resolution, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Leadership, Optimism and Enthusiasm, Pride, Collaboration, Latino/Hispanic/ Mexican Interest

### Synopsis

In this second book by author Mayra Lazara Dole, lively, determined Chavi sets off on yet another Miami adventure. This time it's a fifteenth birthday party for her buddy Rosario's sister that sends her swooshing through Miami, recruiting children and grownups to help in the planning and cooking. Once again Chavi proves that she can bring an entire community together for a heartfelt special event.

Mayra Lazara Dole's bubbly prose and Tonel's bright, witty watercolors will delight readers who know and love Chavi, as well as those who are discovering this amazing eight-year-old for the first time.

First book is *Drum, Chavi, Drum!* / *Toca, Chavi, Toca!* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/drum-chavi-drum-toca-chavi-toca>).

## BACKGROUND

**Fifteenth birthday celebrations:** Called *la quinceañera*, *quinceanos*, *quinces*, or *la fiesta de quince años*, a girl's fifteenth birthday is a significant event for many Hispanic and Latinx families. Some say the tradition dates back to 18th century Spain, while others say it has Aztec roots. Regardless, it marks a girl's coming of age and transition to womanhood. Celebrations can include both a religious mass and a large party. Read more about specific traditions and history here:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/quinceanera>.

Some parties can be as extensive (and expensive) as weddings (See <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/2017/09/09/modern-quinceaneras-add-trends-tradition/645830001/> for details). Library of Congress has a helpful lecture exploring the complex rite of passage for Latinas: "La Quinceanera: A Coming of Age Ritual in Latino Communities" (<https://www.loc.gov/item/webcast-4098>).

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, 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:

- Does your family celebrate birthdays? If so, what do you do?
- How would it feel to want to do something special and not be able to because it cost too much money? What might someone do in this situation?
- How might a community work together? Have you ever been part of a community effort?

### 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)

Talk about the title of the book. 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?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, illustrations, author and illustrators' dedications and author's note.

### Setting a Purpose for Reading

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

Have students read to find out:

- how Chavi and Rosario help Rosario's sister have a special birthday
- how different people in Chavi's barrio (neighborhood) overcome challenges and work together

Encourage students to consider why the author, Mayra L. Dole, would want to share this story with young people.

## 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 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. Why is Lazarita mad at her dad? Why does he say he can't give her the party of her dreams?

## 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

quinces, "Miami Dance Hall", swan boat, live band, banquet, congas/tumbadora drums, frijoles negros (black beans), mango, homeless shelter, puerco asado (pork roast), guayaba (guava), ringlets, barrio, saints, city manager, permit, city hall, fiesta, mayor, "short notice", tiara, rosary, wedding gown, block party, paella, friend platanitos, maduros (sweet fried plantains), cook-off, bolero

### Academic

gripe, suggest, storm, organize, event, "in honor of", "raise money", trumpet, preposterous, contest, boast, scurry, donations, permission, insist, sprinkle, treasure, elegant, rhythm, snort, celebrate, delight, originally, details, entire, community, congratulate, moved, blessed

2. What's Chavi's idea to help give Lazarita a party? What does Dalili's mom say? How does Chavi revise her idea to get her to agree?
3. How do Chavi and Rosario help get ready for the party? How do others in the neighborhood help?
4. What did Chavi and Rosario forget to do? How do they react when they realize their mistake?
5. How does the mayor's daughter try to help?
6. What do Chavi and Rosario do instead when they can't get the permit for the party? How does Chavi feel?
7. What does Chuli's abuelita say on the phone? What do they find when they get to Ocean Drive? What did the neighborhood adults do?
8. What does the mayor say at the party? How does Lazarita react? How does Chavi react?

### 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 do you think Pipo feels when he has to tell Lazarita she can't have the party she wants?
2. Why are Chavi and Rosario surprised at the way Lazarita acts? What might Lazarita be thinking?
3. Why do you think Dalili's mom changed her mind about helping with the party when Chavi changed her idea?
4. Why do you think Chavi mentioned Rauli's father's cooking to Sarita's father? Do Chavi is sneaky or smart? How does Rosario's cooking contest idea help even more?
5. Why do you think Chuli's abuelita agrees to bake cakes when Chavi tells her the party is to help the homeless shelter?



6. Why do you think it's difficult to get a permit to close a street on short notice?
7. What do you think Chavi means when she says that Lazarita has "stored her *quince* dreams away in a little secret place in her heart?"
8. Why do you think Lazarita tells her father "You're the best father any girl could have?"
9. What do you think Chavi would say the best thing about the party was?
10. Why do you think Rosario cried? What does Chavi's response show about Chavi as a person?
11. In what ways is Chavi resourceful?

## Reader's Response

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

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Make a list of words to describe Chavi. Next to each word, write one or more examples from the story to support that idea.
2. Make a list of the characters in the story. Next to each character, write a decision they made and how that decision impacted the story. How do the characters in this story show the meaning of community?
3. Write about an example from your own life when many family members, friends, or community members worked together to accomplish something. What did each person do to help? How did it feel to work together?
4. Read the author's note. Why do you think the author chose to share this story with young readers?

5. Imagine the conversation that happened between the community adults when they realized that Chavi and Rosario couldn't get the permit to close Ocean Drive for the party. Write about how that conversation may have sounded and how the decision may have been reached to go ahead with the party.

## 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 retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk describing their own neighborhoods, or a special celebratory tradition in their culture.
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.

## Social and Emotional Learning

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

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 *Birthday in the Barrio*:

1. Have students chart Chavi's emotions over the course of the story. How does she feel when she's interacting with each character in the story? Use the illustrations as a visual reference and way to tap into students' visual literacy skills.
2. What Social and Emotional Learning skills does Chavi exhibit over the course of the book? (some examples include problem-solving, grit and perseverance, and perspective taking) How do they influence her character? Why was it important for her to demonstrate those skills?
3. Encourage students to think about Social and Emotional Learning skills they have used to achieve something that they are passionate about. How does it relate to how Chavi accomplished her goal?
4. Have students in an essay argue whether Chavi is a role model for young people or not. What evidence can students find in the text that demonstrates Chavi's character and whether the author encourages young people to emulate her or draw caution from her.

## 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 & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 5)*

*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 5)*

1. Explore the various verbs in the story (e.g., storm, swoosh, squish, boing, dash, zip.) Notice how the book displays many verbs in different fonts and discuss why that might be. Act out some of the verbs. Encourage students to use varied and vivid verbs in their own writing.
2. Make a list of descriptive comparisons the author uses (e.g., jamming into Lazarita's father's car "like raisins in a box.") Encourage students to use comparisons in their own writing to make their descriptions richer.
3. Choose scenes from the story and as a class or in pairs, have students add thought bubbles to show what the characters could be thinking. (E.g., the scenes when Chavi and Rosario ask for their neighbors' help, or the scene when they arrive at the block party.) Encourage students to draw upon evidence in the text to form their ideas.
4. Read the prequel to this title, *Drum, Chavi, Drum* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/drum-chavi-drum-toca-chavi-toca>), in which Chavi challenges the stereotype that only boys can play the conga drums in Miami's *Calle Ocho* festival. Discuss connections between texts, especially related to Chavi's decisions and actions. In an essay,

encourage students to discuss how Chavi is similar or different in each book. How is Chavi's resourcefulness similar or different in each book? How does she change?

5. Encourage students to write the next adventure of Chavi—what might a third book featuring Chavi entail? Students should study the two stories to think about what Chavi likes or doesn't like, how she sounds/thinks/feels, and what her neighborhood is like. After analyzing Chavi and each text as a class, make a list of possible adventures she might go on and then encourage students to write a story starring Chavi.

### Music

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

1. Have students reenact the scene when Chavi, Rosario, and her family arrive at the block party and hear the music. Use the onomatopoeia in the book and drums, maracas and horns, or makeshift instruments. Encourage students playing the party guests to dance to the rhythm.

### Art

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaborate, Strands 1 and 2)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 5)

1. Have your class or a small group create a mural map showing where Chavi and Rosario traveled in their neighborhood and the community members to whom they spoke. Include speech bubbles that summarize their various conversations.
2. Study the illustrations to notice how Tonel portrays each character's physical characteristics. Draw or paint portraits of people in your school community (taking care to be respectful and avoiding stereotypes) and display them on a class bulletin board.

### Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

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

1. Help students locate Miami and Cuba on a map. Learn more together about Cuban culture and how it's represented in Miami. Use information from this blog post about taking kids to Little Havana (<https://www.mommynearest.com/edition/south-florida/article/7-things-to-do-in-little-havana-with-kids>) to take students on an imaginary sensory trip to Little Havana.
2. If students are not familiar with the Cuban food and music references in the story, have them each choose one to research and report back to the class.
3. Have students investigate other birthday or coming of age traditions from cultures around the world and compare findings to those depicted in the story. Additional titles about birthdays could help spark ideas, such as *The Birthday Swap* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-birthday-swap>) or *Marisol McDonald and the Clash Bash* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/marisol-mcdonald-and-the-clash-bash-marisol-mcdonald-y-la-fiesta-sin-igual>).
4. Plan a school block party to benefit a school or community cause. Involve students in planning the event details and requesting help from community members in person or in writing.
5. Find out about efforts to support homeless individuals and families in your community. Plan a way to contribute to these efforts if possible.

### School/Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

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

Review the author's note with students, in which Mayra Dole explains how her own experience inspired this story. Have students ask an adult at home what story they'd write from their childhood to showcase the spirit of their community. Share responses at school.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Mayra L. Dole** was born in Marianao, Cuba, and raised in a Cuban barrio outside Miami. A prolific author, an accomplished and passionate musician, and an advocate for the differently-abled, Mayra has also been a dancer, landscape designer, and hairdresser. She lives in Coral Gables, Florida.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Tonel** is a visual artist and art critic who was born in Havana, Cuba, where he illustrated several children's books. His work for grownups has been exhibited in North and South America, the Caribbean, and Europe. He received a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in the Humanities and a John S. Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship for painting and installation art. He lives and teaches in Vancouver, British Columbia.

## 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](http://leeandlow.com).

## ORDERING INFORMATION

### On the Web:

[www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](http://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering) (general order information)

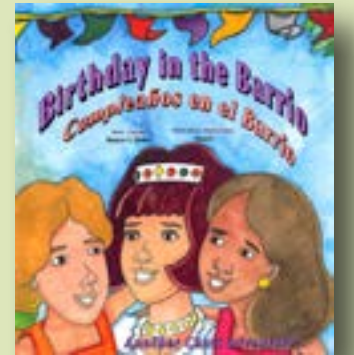
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/birthday-in-the-barrio-cumpleanos-en-el-barrio> (secure online ordering)

**By Phone:** 212-779-4400 ext. 25 | **By Fax:** 212-683-1894

**By Mail:** Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

## Book Information for

*Birthday in the Barrio /  
Cumpleaños en el Barrio*



\$8.95, PAPERBACK

9780892393015

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\*Reading Level: Grade 3

Interest Level: Grades PreK–5

Guided Reading Level: P/O

Accelerated Reader® Level/  
Points: 3.3/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

**THEMES:** Sharing & Giving, Identity/Self Esteem/Confidence, Responsibility, Overcoming Obstacles, Neighbors, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest, Immigration, Home, Holidays/Traditions, Friendship, Food, Families, Conflict resolution, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Bilingual, Leadership, Optimism/Enthusiasm, Realistic Fiction, Pride, Collaboration

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/birthday-in-the-barrio-cumpleanos-en-el-barrio>

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