

Pedro's Yo-Yos

written by Rob Peñas

illustrated by Carl Angel

About the Book

Genre: Biography/Memoir

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Reading Level: Grade 4–6

Interest Level: Grades K–6

Guided Reading Level: R

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
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Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Asian/Asian American Interest, Biography/Memoir, California, Courage, Diversity, Dreams & Aspirations, Games/Toys, History, Leadership, Nonfiction, Optimism/Enthusiasm, Overcoming Obstacles, Persistence/Grit, United States History

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/pedro-s-yo-yos

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

SYNOPSIS

Discover the backstory of one of America's favorite toys, the yo-yo, in this colorful biography of businessman Pedro Flores.

It can spin and roll, leap and twirl. You can stretch it between your hands or swing it between your legs. The tricks you can do with one are nearly endless. No wonder the yo-yo is one of the most successful toys ever made! And its popularity began with a Filipino immigrant.

Pedro Flores was born in the Philippines in 1896, when Spain still ruled his country. After the US took over, Pedro traveled to California, received an education, and looked for ways to go into business for himself. Then he remembered a toy from his childhood called the yo-yo, which means "come back" in Tagalog. With a couple of blocks of wood and a little string, Pedro created his first model yo-yo and practiced tricks to show it off.

It was an instant hit! When children saw the yo-yo in action, they clamored to get one themselves. So Pedro always performed his tricks near movie theaters, outside candy shops--anywhere he knew children would see the toy. Soon he was hiring fellow Filipinos to advertise it for him, while he ran factories that manufactured more than a million yo-yos a week! Winner of Lee & Low's New Voices award, *Pedro's Yo-Yos* is the lively story of one immigrant's ups and downs as an entrepreneur and his determination to create a toy that would capture the imagination of children and adults all over the world.

BACKGROUND

Author's Note and Backmatter from *Pedro's Yo-Yos*

"I was originally inspired to write this book when I learned that the ever-popular yo-yo toy was credited to a Filipino. Like many historical figures, Pedro did not leave behind an extensive written record of his life, and there was a great deal of missing and conflicting information—even in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, which holds the archives of the Duncan Toys Company. Eventually, however, author and yo-yo expert Jonathan Auxier put me in touch with Kevin Walters, Pedro's grandson, who shared his memories of his grandfather, as well as his journal. The facts surrounding the life of Pedro Flores and his creation of the yo-yo presented in this book were largely based on those hours of interviews with Kevin, and I thank him for his help and participation."

The Philippines

The Philippines is a nation that today consists of more than 7,000 islands in the western Pacific, occupied by 109 million people. A loose group of tribes lived among the Philippine islands when explorer Ferdinand Magellan arrived in 1521. Magellan claimed the islands for Spain, and subsequent Spanish colonizers brought the Catholic religion and other European customs to the Filipinos. Spain ruled the Philippines for more than three hundred years, until 1898, when the United States purchased the islands from Spain. Filipinos who had rebelled against Spain felt betrayed and continued their fight in a war lasting years. Because the United States had also fought for independence, opinion was divided on taking another people's freedom away. After much debate, the government promised to give Filipinos their freedom back. The Second

The Yo-Yo

The toy we now know as the yo-yo originated in China thousands of years ago. Then called the bandalore, it traveled west over the centuries to Europe, where it was considered an amusement for adults and the upper class. It appeared in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century but failed to achieve widespread acceptance. The bandalore also spread throughout Asia and the Philippines, where it became highly popular by the late nineteenth century, when Pedro Flores was born. The first printed reference to the term "yo-yo" in the West was in *Scientific American* magazine, which published an article on "Filipino Toys" in a July 1916 issue.

Pedro Flores

Pedro Edralin Flores was born in Vintar, in the Ilocos Norte province of the Philippines, on April 26, 1896. Not much is known of his early life. When Pedro came to the United States in 1915, it was common for young men to leave their countries and go abroad in search of work—usually difficult, low-paying manual labor in fields or factories. Fewer than 20 percent of all Americans finished high school during this time, but Pedro attended the High School of Commerce in San Francisco (1919–20) and later the University of California at Berkeley and Hastings College of Law in San Francisco.

Although he did not finish college, Pedro started his Yo-Yo Manufacturing Company in Santa Barbara, California, in 1928. His slip-string—a twisted string wrapped loosely around the axle—was a major innovation in yo-yo production, allowing the toy greater flexibility and the ability to "sleep" at the end of the string. Pedro adopted marketing strategies, such as interactive demonstrations and

contests, which propelled his toy to national success.

Pedro at first made the yo-yos by hand, selling them for a dime each. Applying what he may have learned in law school, Pedro filed a trademark to protect his rights to the name of the yo-yo in 1930. That same year, two investors, James Lewis and Daniel Stone, gave him money to expand, establishing the Flores and Stone Company in Los Angeles and the Flores Yo-Yo Corporation in Hollywood. About this time, the Yo-Yo Manufacturing Company relocated to Los Angeles. At this point, machines cut the yo-yos from wood, with factories producing up to tens of thousands of yo-yos per day. A few years later, entrepreneur Donald Duncan bought Pedro's company, including the trademark, and asked Pedro to stay on as his promoter and manage a team of mostly Filipino demonstrators.

During the Great Depression, many businesses shut down and work became scarce. Some people blamed foreigners for taking their jobs away, and riots against Filipino workers forced many to flee back to the Philippines. Pedro continued to promote the yo-yo for the Duncan company around the United States, traveling with his wife—a white woman named Edria—along with other kabayan such as Fred Mendoza, Perfecto Valdez, Joe Radovan, and Fortunato Anunciacion. The toy remained popular throughout the Great Depression, for it was easy to learn, highly portable, and provided a lot of fun for little cost—as low as 15 cents.

Pedro continued to be involved with yo-yos the rest of his life. In the 1930s, he started the Bandalore Yo-Yo Company in Rockford, Illinois, selling yo-yos with the thin-line design of those he made earlier. Shortly after the outbreak of World War II, Pedro and his family moved to Coshocton, Ohio, his wife's home state, where they lived for more than twenty years until his death in 1963.

Backmatter

For more information about sources used in *Pedro's Yo-Yos*, see the Author's Note section at the back of the book.

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:

- What does it mean to have a passion? Do you have a passion? What is it? Why do you like to do that particular activity? How does it make you feel?
- What does it mean to be persistent? How do you demonstrate persistence even though something may be challenging? Why is it important to be persistent? Do you think persistence can be learned? How so?
- Was there a time when you took a chance on something? What did you do? What was the end

result? Was it worth taking a chance? How are taking chances important in your life?

- Is there a family member or friend that helped to encourage you to pursue your hobby and/or interests? What did they do to support you? Why were they helpful?
- What does it mean to have a dream? What are some of your life dreams and goals? What inspires you? What are your passions? Why do you have those dreams?
- What does innovation mean to you? What does it mean to innovate? Why is innovation important? Can you think of some innovations that you know of?
- What kinds of qualities are important for a person to have if they want to achieve an important goal?

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, *Pedro's Yo-Yos*. 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?

Book Walk: Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author's dedication, and Author's Note at the end. Display the book and analyze the cover. What do students notice in the illustrations?

Read Rob Peñas Biography: Read about Rob Peñas on the jacket back flap. Encourage students to think about what could have been his inspiration for writing *Pedro's Yo-Yos*.

Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or see new words.

Have students write about their feeling(s) in the notebook while reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote those feelings down and have them write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

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

Have students read to find out:

- who Pedro Flores was
- what was Pedro's childhood like
- how did Pedro's journey to the United States influence his life and career

- what it means to have a passion
- what it means to be resilient and persistent
- what jobs Pedro performed and how they influenced his life
- how Pedro's ingenuity helped popularize the yo-yo

Encourage students to consider why the author, Rob Peñas would want to share this story about Pedro Flores with young people.

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

Abaca fields, subjects, Tagalog, colonial, vast, province, steamer, kabayan, voyage, vessel, bellhop, axle, imitations, proclaimed, advertisements, gravity, NASA space shuttle, "rock the baby", "walk the dog", "Loop the loop"

Academic

yoked, grooved, rebelled, swaggering, marveled, seasick, labored, enduring, journeyed, teeming, manufacture, clamored, complicated, promoted, craze, readily, ingenuity, enriched

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 country ruled over the Philippines in 1896? What was life like for Filipinos under colonial rule?
2. What did Pedro and his friends play with as children? What does the name of the toy mean in

Tagalog?

3. What happened to the Philippine people when the Spanish went to war against the United States?
4. What new language and knowledge did Filipinos have to learn?
5. Why did Filipinos begin to leave the country? Why did Pedro leave? How old was he?
6. How did Pedro feel during his time at sea?
7. What job did Pedro do during his time in Honolulu? What did Pedro decide to do after working there for two years?
8. What did Pedro do after his short time in San Francisco?
9. What did Pedro eventually decide to do about his education?
10. Where did Pedro move to after college? What was Pedro's job? What did Pedro realize?
11. What does Pedro think about when he is playing ball with a young boy? What did he make to replace the rubber ball toy?
12. What does it mean to make the yo-yo "sleep"? How does the boy react to the tricks?
13. What does Pedro teach the family he lives with? What happened to the first set of yo-yos Pedro worked on?
14. How did the boy's father help Pedro? Who else helped Pedro?
15. How were the yo-yo factories doing? What did Pedro's advertisements say?
16. What are the names of the different tricks you can do with a yo-yo?
17. What did Pedro realize when people saw the yo-yo in action? Why did Pedro hire kabayan?
18. What was special about the way Pedro promoted his yo-yos?
19. Who is Donald Duncan? What deal did Duncan make with Pedro? What did this deal mean to Pedro?
20. Where did the yo-yo travel to in 1985? What was cool about this?
21. How did Pedro's ingenuity popularize the yo-yo?

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. What does the title *Pedro's Yo-Yos* mean to you after reading the book?
2. What was the overall theme or lesson you learned from reading *Pedro's Yo-Yos*?
3. How did the popularity of the yo-yo begin with Pedro Flores?
4. How was Pedro's promotion different than that of other American toys?
5. How did Pedro's childhood influence his career?

6. What lessons did Pedro learn from every job he had before manufacturing the yo-yo?
7. How did Pedro persist despite the different obstacles he faced? How did Pedro continue to strive for his goals throughout his life?
8. How did colonization affect the Philippines and its people? Why did Pedro decide to leave the Philippines?
9. What were some of the ways that Pedro demonstrated his work ethic? How is working hard important to achieve your goals and lifelong dreams? How did Pedro show his hard work throughout the book?
10. What did you admire about Pedro? What were some of the things that you respected about Pedro? How could Pedro inspire you in your own life?
11. What is the role of community and collaboration in helping Pedro accomplish his dreams?
12. Explore the structure of *Pedro's Yo-Yos*. Does the story describe events chronologically, as comparison, cause and effect, or offer problems and then solutions? Why do you think the authors structured the text the way they did? How does this story compare to other texts you have read?
13. After reading *Pedro's Yo-Yos*, have students reflect on the Backmatter and Author's Note from Rob Peñas. What did they learn from reading the Author's Note? Did the author's message impact what they thought about the book?
14. What does it mean to become an American citizen? What does it mean to assimilate to a culture or a society?
15. 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 the artwork?
16. How does Pedro change over the course of the book which takes place over several years? What are some events that cause Pedro to change?
17. How would you describe Pedro Flores to a person who had never heard of him? What are some of the qualities you would use to describe him? What are the most important things to say about Pedro Flores' life and legacy?

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. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? What is your takeaway from this book? What would you tell a friend about this book?
2. What do you think Rob Peñas message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations

behind the author's intentions to write this book.

3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make between the story and your own life? What do Pedro's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while reading *Pedro's Yo-Yos*? 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 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 does resilience mean to you after reading this book? How did Pedro's passion for a better life fuel his success? Why is resilience important? How do you demonstrate resilience in your own life?
7. Why is Pedro Flores an essential person to learn about? How did Pedro's determination help him popularize one of America's favorite toys?

Multilingual Learners 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 multilingual learners (ML).

1. Assign ML 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 poems. 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 *Pedro's Yo-Yos* and why. Did they learn something new about history that they hadn't known before?
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 Multilingual 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. Consider consulting www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/ for more ideas on how to support

Multilingual Learners.

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. Which illustration in *Pedro's Yo-Yos* do you think best shows an emotion? Explain which emotion you think it is. How does the artist portray that emotion?
2. Choose an emotion such as happiness, fear, hope, sadness, and so on. Illustrate or act out what that emotion looks like in *Pedro's Yo-Yos*.
3. What are the ways that Pedro demonstrates perseverance throughout the story? Create a chart of the different times that Pedro encountered an obstacle and what he did to overcome it.
4. Pedro experienced adversity during his life. How does he demonstrate resilience in *Pedro's Yo-Yos*? What are the different strategies he uses when he is feeling defeated?
5. What gives Pedro confidence to pursue his dreams? What kept Pedro going during his journey not only in life but in his journey to America?
6. At 15, Pedro decided to leave his homeland in search of a new life. What do you think it was like for Pedro to leave behind his family and friends at that age? How did this journey affect his emotions throughout the book?

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)

- **Have students come up with a list of questions to ask author Rob Peñas.** What do students want to know about the process behind writing a children's book? How did Rob come up with the idea to *Pedro's Yo-Yos*? What was it like to write his first picture book? Why did he choose Pedro Flores to write about? What did he like about writing a book? What was challenging? Consider contacting Rob Peñas and inviting him to your school, library, or other relevant setting for an author visit.
- **Consider using *Pedro's Yo-Yos* as an anchor text to teach students about biography writing.** ReadWriteThink's "Writer's Workshop: The Biographical Sketch" has tips and step-by-step instructions on how to ease students into writing biography and the different techniques and strategies that are used to make engaging and informative stories (<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/writers-workshop-biographical-sketch>). Afterwards, have students select a picture book biography in their classroom and create their own book about that historical figure. Have students conduct a research study about their own historical figure from a picture book of their choosing to simulate the process behind *Pedro's Yo-Yos*. Have students identify the different features in *Pedro's Yo-Yos* that would help to inform their own book about their historical figure. What kinds of information do they need to research? How should they present it in the book? What images, diagrams, or photographs would be helpful to their reader?
- **Conduct a figurative language study with students.** Have students go on a figurative language scavenger hunt in *Pedro's Yo-Yos*. Refer to Read Write Think'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). Ask students to keep track of what they find in a notebook or other written format.
- **Have students think about expository nonfiction versus narrative nonfiction.** How was reading *Pedro's Yo-Yos* different from reading a newspaper article about Pedro? Have students read the article from the Smithsonian Institute, "Yo Yo Ups and Downs"

(<https://invention.si.edu/yo-yo-ups-and-downs>). Have students create a Venn Diagram with the headings, "Narrative Nonfiction: *Pedro's Yo-Yos*" and "Expository Nonfiction: 'Yo Yo Ups and Downs.'" Students can compare the different formats of the texts and the information they learn in both. What did they learn from both texts? What was it like to take in information from a picture book about Pedro Flores versus an internet article about him?

- **Conduct a mentor text study on Black, Indigenous, People of Color entrepreneurs and inventors using the following Lee & Low titles: *The Unstoppable Garret Morgan* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-unstoppable-garrett-morgan>), *Nacho's Nachos* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/nacho-s-nachos>), *George Crum and the Saratoga Chip* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/george-crum-and-the-saratoga-chip>), *Honda* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/honda>), and *Drummer Boy of John John* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/drummer-boy-of-john-john>).** Analyze the main characters' different actions in these texts and how they are similar. What risks did they take to achieve their goals? What did they have to do in order to overcome obstacles in their lives? How did they demonstrate persistence and hard work? How did they come up with their various inventions, and how are those inventions impactful today? What did they learn from each of these historical figures and their creative thinking skills? What character traits do they share to allow them to overcome obstacles while still pursuing their dreams? Provide students with a graphic organizer to differentiate the three titles, and then have students write an essay answering the previous questions.
- **Students can write a piece about a hobby that's meaningful to them.** Do students have a hobby, such as a sport or another activity, that their family members or friends do that is also important to them? Pedro loved to carve out yo-yos and teach people how to use them. Students can write a small moment piece or another reflection on their hobby, how it makes them feel, how they practice, and why it's meaningful to them. If possible, students can show off the hobby to the class or bring in an artifact that demonstrates their hobby to the class.
- **Tell students to imagine they will be interviewing Pedro Flores for a local newspaper or talk show.** Ask students develop a list of five interview questions they want to ask. What do they want to learn about the Philippines, the process of creating a yo-yo, and so on? Lead a class discussion, creating a combined list of questions and then narrowing that list down to ten questions.
- **How has a family member or friend close to you impacted your life?** The family that Pedro temporarily lived with, helped support his yo-yo business as well as his friends. 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)

- **Locate the Philippines on a map.** Have students learn more about the Philippines by answering the following questions: Where is the Philippines located? Why is it considered an archipelago? Why is the Philippines an important part of the sea route for regional trade? What is the population of the Philippines? What are the main islands of the Philippines? Have students consult this resource to begin their research (<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/philippines-political-map.htm>). Students can present their findings through a visual presentation.
- **Have students research how Spanish colonization impacted the Philippines.** Assign students in groups and have students research the impact of Spanish colonization on the following: education, language, religion, government and economy. Have students create a graphic organizer comparing the Philippines before and after Spanish rule. After, have students reflect and share to the class what they learned from their research. Consider consulting this resource from Association for Asian Studies to inform your teaching about Philippines and colonial rule (<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/the-philippines-an-overview-of-the-colonial-era/>).
- **Create a timeline of the United States colonization of the Philippines.** Have students research the following history topics and place them on their timeline: The Spanish-American War of 1898, The Philippine-American War, the Treaty of Paris, the Battle of Manila Bay. Why are those wars and the treaty significant to the history of the Philippines? Have students end their timeline with the independence of the Philippines. Consulting the following resources for additional information (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/war>), (<https://guides.loc.gov/chronicling-america-philippine-american-war>) and (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-15581450>).
- **Have students research how the United States colonization impacted the Philippines.** Assign students in groups and have students research the impact of US colonization on the following: education, language, religion, government and economy. Have students create a graphic organizer comparing the Philippines before and after US rule. After, have students reflect and share to the class what they learned from their research. Consider consulting this resource from Association for Asian studies (<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/america-and-the-philippines/#:~:text=English%20was%20introduced%20as%20the,this%20%E2%80%9Cnational%20development%E2%80%9D%20process.>).
- **Find a world map and plot each of the cities Pedro passed through on his journey before settling down in Santa Barbara.** Have students re-read *Pedro's Yo-Yos* and mark on

a map each city that Pedro passed through. Have students reflect and respond to the following questions: What do students notice about his journey? What was his experience in each city?

- **As a follow up to the previous activity, have students research and plot the places where Pedro and his kabayan toured, giving yo-yo demonstrations and mark them on the map.**
- **Have students learn more about who Donald Duncan was and how he helped Pedro Flores manufacture the yo-yo.** Who was Donald Duncan? When did he buy the rights to the yo-yo? How did Pedro Flores continue to work with Duncan? Have students write down and share any interesting facts they find in their research. Consult the following resource for more information (<https://oprfmuseum.org/people/donald-duncan>)
- **Learn more about the history of the yo-yo.** Have students conduct additional research on the origins of the yo-yo. Have students answer the following the questions throughout their research: When is it believed that the yo-yo was first invented? Who brought the yo-yo to the United States? On average, how many yo-yos were being produced at the Yo-Yo Manufacturing Company? What is the popularity of the yo-yo around the world? What are some additional fun facts about the yo-yo? Use the following resource to guide student research (<https://www.nationaldaycalendar.com/national-day/national-yo-yo-day-june-6>).
- **June is Immigrant Heritage Month.** Have students learn more about Immigrant Heritage Month (<https://www.iamanimmigrant.com/>). When was the first annual Immigrant Heritage Month? Why is it important to celebrate Immigrant Heritage Month? Who did the I Stand With Immigrants foundation work with to star in their short films? What was the message these stars shared in their short films? What did the Biden administration do in 2022? What is the United States' perspective on immigration?
- **Have students research immigrant figures and their contributions to United States.** If time allows, consider consulting the following lesson from PBS, "Faces of America" to introduce students to the history of immigration in the United States (<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/facesofamerica/for-educators/lesson-overview/16/>). Afterwards, have students read this article from Time Magazine, "These Iconic Figures of American History Were All Immigrants" (<https://time.com/4108606/history-american-immigrants/>) to learn more about these figures and their contributions. Students can choose one person and conduct a further study on them. Students can prepare a visual presentation of their choosing while thinking about the following questions: why did they pick this particular figure? What was their contribution? How was it impactful? Why is their story important to people today?
- **Facilitate a lesson on the varying immigrant journeys that are experienced across the world and the United States.** Consider using the following lesson plan from Learning for Justice, "Exploring Young Immigrant Stories" (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/>)

[classroom-resources/lessons/exploring-young-immigrant-stories](#)). The following lesson from The Library of Congress, "The Immigrant Experience: Down the Rabbit Hole" (www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigrant-experience-down-the-rabbit-hole/) could also be a resource for teaching about the immigrant experience in America. After facilitating the lesson, have students reflect on the following questions, what did they learn from the stories they read? What is something that they would like to learn more about? What resonated with them the most after this lesson? Have students record their initial responses and allow time to discuss those responses in small groups or as a class.

- **Have students research the first early Asian immigrants to arrive in the United States.** Use the following lesson plan from The Asian American Education project, "Redefine American" (<https://asianamericanedu.org/define-american.html>) in the classroom. After facilitating the lesson, have students reflect on the following questions: What is an immigrant? What does it mean to be an "American"? What is the "American Dream"? What were their reasons for immigrations? What success and or challenges did they experience? How was their experience similar or different to that of Pedro's journey?
- **Conduct a study on BIPOC entrepreneurs and inventors with students.** Encourage students to select an inventor or entrepreneur of their choosing to present a research project about. To prepare students, consult Library of Congress's "Getting Started with Primary Sources" (<https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/>) for their research process. Students can refer to different lists of entrepreneurs and inventors of color online to begin their search (<https://www.commerce.gov/news/blog/2022/02/black-inventors-and-entrepreneurs-past-present-and-future>) (<https://invention.si.edu/tags/asian-pacific-american-inventors>) (<https://invention.si.edu/immigrant-inventors-giving-back>). Afterwards, have students prepare a visual presentation of their choosing while thinking about the following questions: why did students pick this particular inventor? What was their invention? How was it impactful? Why is it important to people today?

Science/STEM

(3-PS2-1. Plan and conduct an investigation to provide evidence of the effects of balanced and unbalanced forces on the motion of an object.)

(3-PS2-2 Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions

Make observations and/or measurements of an object's motion to provide evidence that a pattern can be used to predict future motion.)

- **Research the science behind yo-yos.** Have students research what makes yo-yos go up and down. Before teaching the science behind the yo-yo, have students make a prediction on what type of energy a yo-yo uses, use the following resource to talk about the different forms of energy (<https://www.eia.gov/kids/what-is-energy/forms-of-energy.php>). Have students record their predictions. As you guide students through the science behind the yo-yo, reflect on what kind of energy a yo-yo uses. If possible, use a drawing of a yo-yo or an actual yo-yo to demonstrate what type of energy a yo-yo uses. Consider using this resource to facilitate your instruction (<https://www.explainthatstuff.com/yoyos.html>). After, have students reflect on what they have learned and if their predictions were right.

- **Facilitate additional STEM experiments using the yo-yo.** Science Buddies has a project, "How Long Will My Sleepy Yo-yo Sleep?" (https://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/project-ideas/Phys_p069/physics/yo-yo-sleep), which allows students to learn more about how and why the yo-yo works. Students will investigate the effect of string length on the yo-yo's "sleep" trick time.
- **Have students create their own classic toy.** The National Inventors Hall of Fame has created a STEM activity will allow students to create their own spin top. Consult the following link to learn more about the steps involved to create a classic toy (<https://www.invent.org/blog/stem-activity/diy-classic-toys>). If time allows, consider consulting the following resource to create a water ballon yo-yo (<https://thatafterschoollife.com/balloonyoyo.html>).

Art/Media

(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 each student to create an illustration that represents her or his culture, identity, and/or heritage.** Pedro crafted different yo-yos for his friends and family using inspiration from his childhood in the Philippines. Think of what you would like to share with your friends and family. Afterward, students may share their artwork with a partner, a small group, or the whole class. What did students learn about themselves during this process? Why did they choose to showcase this part of their culture, identity, and/or heritage?
- **Encourage students to select an illustration that resonated with them from the story.** Have students write a reflection about that illustration. What stood out to them? How did it make them feel? What did it make them think about?
- **Have students conduct an illustrator study on Carl Angel.** Students can read his other titles at Lee & Low, *Willie Wins* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/willie-wins>), *Lakas and the Manilatown Fish* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/lakas-and-the-manilatown-fish>), *Lakas and the Makibaka Hotel* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/lakas-and-the-makibaka-hotel>), *Xochitl and the Flowers/Xóchitl, la Niña de las Flores* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/xochitl-and-the-flowers-xochitl-la-nina-de-las-flores>). Encourage students to come up with questions for an interview with Carl Angel. Brainstorm questions including about his art process, research, and motivations for his books.
- **Practice using a yo-yo.** If time and resources allow, have students take turns using a yo-yo. Students can use this resource from Duncan Toys (https://duncantoy.com/pages/tutorial-vid-eos?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwxeyxBhC7ARIsAC7dS3_wtH1DnrFe5DgP19iIXNDN-Yco-Vus67wFDER-LyJ5ToZUgVTpihcoaAo4OEALw_wcB) which will guide students on how to begin using a yo-yo. After students have had time to play around and practice with the yo-yo, have them reflect on what they liked or disliked about the yo-yo, and what tricks they found the most entertaining.
- **National Yo-Yo Day is June 6th.** Browse through this resource from the Smithsonian (<https://www.si.edu/spotlight/yo-yo>) and have students take notes on what they observe from the different yo-yos that have been created throughout the years. Have students reflect on the

following questions: which yo-yo is your favorite? What interesting facts did you learn about this yo-yo? Which Smithsonian Museum can you find it in?

- **The National Yo-Yo League hosts yo-yo contests all year.** Have students learn more about the contest rules and look for the yo-yo contest that is the closest to their city. Who won the US Nationals 1A championship in 2023? Ask students if they would want to participate in a yo-yo contest? Would they be interested in attending a contest as a spectator? Consult the following resource to learn about The National Yo-Yo League (<https://yoyocontest.com/>). If time allows, have students watch Evan Nagao, the 2023 & 2018 1st place 1A champion, compete (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dFzBRImO4s>).

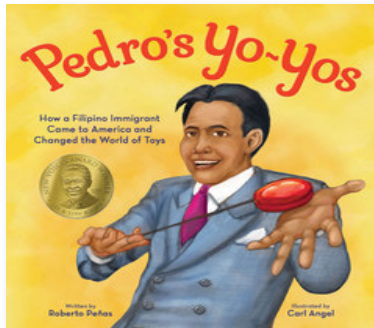
School-Home Connection

(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)

- **Pedro's success as a businessman came from a fond memory of a toy from childhood, encourage students to interview family members about a favorite or impactful childhood memory.** How did that memory influence the family member? How did it affect the person's life moving forward? Consider having students, if comfortable, share their findings with a partner, a small group, or whole class. Similarly, ask students to speak with family members about their traditions and how their traditions are special to them. What is unique about each family's traditions? How did it influence them throughout their lives?
- **Have students bring home *Pedro's Yo-Yos* and share the book with other family members.** Ask students to start a discussion about what their families learned from and connected with in the text. If resources allow, have students bring home a yo-yo and practice any tricks they learned and ask them to teach a family member how to use a yo-yo.
- **While writing *Pedro's Yo-Yos*, author Rob Peñas interviewed Pedro's grandson and he shared countless memories of Pedro's life with Rob.** Talk with family and record the things that make them feel proud of their ancestry or heritage. Have students talk with family members and ask them what things they remember about their family heritage. Ask them to think about traditions, values, and accomplishments. Ask family members how they feel about themselves when they think about the successes or failures in their family ancestry.
- **If time and resources allow, have students and their families practice using yo-yos.** Consider sharing the follow video from Lee & Low Books staff, with families for inspiration (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EdgN6smheY>). Have students ask their families the following questions: How easy was it to use the yo-yo? Was it difficult? Did the yo-yo bring up any memories? Was anyone able to "walk the dog" or do any other yo-yo trick?



Ordering Information

🌐 General Order Information:

leeandlow.com/contact/ordering

🔒 Secure Online Ordering:

leeandlow.com/books/pedro-s-yo-yos

☎️ By Phone: 212-779-4400

✉️ By Mail:

381 Park Ave S, #1401
New York, NY 10016

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rob Peñas is a second-generation Filipino-American whose parents immigrated to the United States in the 1960s. He grew up in a house filled with books and playing 16-inch softball. *Pedro's Yo-Yos* was a New Voices winner and marks his debut. Rob was inspired to write this book when he learned that the ever-popular yo-yo toy was credited to a Filipino. It was important to Rob that Pedro's story and achievement not be left in obscurity. He lives with his family in Kansas, where the prairie is not too far away.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Carl Angel is an artist, illustrator, and graphic designer whose work has been exhibited throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and Hawai'i. A Filipino American who grew up in Honolulu, Carl lives in San Leandro, California. He is the illustrator of several books, including *Willie Wins*, *Lakas and the Manilatown Fish*, and *Lakas and the Makibaka Hotel*.

REVIEWS

"A glowing addition to the stories of immigrants who have made good in this, their new country." – Starred Review, *Kirkus Reviews*

"The concise text, which nicely encapsulates key moments from Flores' life, is beautifully accompanied by Angel's naturalistic and expressive digital paintings, especially when depicting Flores' impressive yo-yo tricks. Robust back matter elaborates on Flores' life, the colonization of the Philippines, and the further history of the yo-yo.." – *Booklist*

"Readers will delight in learning (or remembering) how to "Rock the Baby," "Loop the Loop," and "Walk the Dog." An author's note provides history about the Philippines, the yo-yo, and Flores's life." – *The Horn Book*

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

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