



## Student Reading Journal

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# A Note for Teachers

Dear Educators,

We are thrilled to release this exclusive student reading journal to pair alongside your instruction and facilitation of the award-winning [Gabi, A Girl in Pieces](#) in the classroom.

This journal is designed to be flexible and adaptable for all your teaching needs, with a special emphasis on student creativity and response. Included in this guide are suggested vocabulary and questions to ask students before and after reading. There are interdisciplinary activities to integrate the reading experience with other subject areas. These can also be used as extension activities or to build a home-school connection.

As a gentle reminder, this is a supplemental tool meant to complement any other lessons or plans. We hope you'll use it with our Teacher's Guide. Check out the [book résumé](#) for additional resources as well as a list of awards and accolades.

Please note that there are sensitive topics in *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*, such as drug use, addiction, self-esteem/body image issues, pregnancy, sexual exploration, and dated stereotypes about gender roles. Some of these themes and topics can and may be triggering for students. Use the resources in this Reading Journal and corresponding Teacher's Guide to help prepare students for this title.

As always, we welcome your feedback on ways to improve our support for educators at [educators@leeandlow.com](mailto:educators@leeandlow.com).

We hope you enjoy *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*!  
The Literacy Team at Lee & Low

# Vocabulary

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to you. Review some or all of the vocabulary below.

## CONTENT SPECIFIC

caliente	neurotransmitter	cochinadas	torrid	mucus
payasa	intravenous	quadratic	profound	ovaries
spiel	hepatitisbandc	precarious	didgeridoo	libertinaje
probrecita	xerostomia	quinceañera	prophecy	zealot
madre	rosary	porcelain	refuge	bruja
herpes	salvationist	dialysis	revive	curandera
dopamine	pagans	haiku	chisme	convalescent
formication	sanación	prostrate	pariah	viejita
receptors	birria	callous	deranged	
methamphetamine	trimester	cucarachas	placenta	

## ACADEMIC

intimacies	affliction	stupor	generic	rendezvous
embryos	nopal	machete	karma	tirade
irrationally	addict	cascade	nemesis	noxious
compassion	chronic	anguish	pensive	levee
dysfunctional	psychotic	erratically	penitent	vicious
hypothetical	sinew	gluttonous	erratic	penitentiary
flouncy	resurrect	reprimand	calloused	elated
chagrin	coerced	corporal	mellow	vigorously
treasonous	kindred	endorphins	mantra	hymen
forbidden	dissipation	euphoria	fugitive	

## Before Reading Questions

As a reminder, there are difficult topics discussed in *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*. **These are a few questions that you may wish to reflect on before reading:**

1. Do you imagine going to college? Why or why not? What does college represent for you?
2. How can poetry influence someone's life?
3. What do you enjoy about your family and what do you not enjoy? Why might a person have complicated feelings about their family dynamics?
4. Read about the author in an interview for *School Library Journal*: <https://www.slj.com/story/constructing-a-life-a-conversation-with-isabel-quintero>. What was the story behind *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*? What is her writing process like?

## Setting a Purpose for Reading

**Read to find out:**

1. How does creative writing influence Gabi's life?
2. How does gender, class, and sexuality shape the experiences of characters in the story?
3. What is the importance of self-expression in the story?
4. How do the young people in the story show resilience through difficult times?

## After Reading Questions

**After reading the book, answer the following questions.** Refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support your responses. Cite textual evidence with your answers.

1. Why do you think Isabel Quintero decided to write this book using journal entries? Why do you think she chose not to use prose? How did this impact your reading of the book?
2. What is Gabi's relationship to being Mexican American? How does her culture influence her life? How does her mother view her and how does Gabi view herself?
3. What impact does Ms. Abernard have on Gabi throughout the story?
4. Gabi writes that "poetry helps heal wounds." Do you agree or disagree? Why?
5. As a teenage mother Cindy faces many obstacles. What are some of the challenges Cindy faces? How does she deal with those challenges?
6. What is Gabi's emotional relationship to food? Why do you think there is a connection between food and feelings?
7. How does empathy play a significant role in the story? Cite examples from the text.
8. What is the role of family and friendship in helping Gabi over the course of the story?
9. The story is told from Gabi's perspective. How would the story have been different if it were told from Cindy's perspective? Sebastian's perspective? Beto's perspective? How does Gabi's narration affect how you experience the story?
10. How did you feel about the way *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* ended? Were you satisfied with the ending? Why or why not? What is the significance of the book's title after reading?

## Interdisciplinary Activities: English/Language Arts

Explore the characters more deeply with writing tasks that require perspective taking. Write a letter from one character to another (i.e., from Beto to his dad, Cindy to German, Sebastian to his parents).

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Interdisciplinary Activities: English/Language Arts

Poetry often uses rich figurative language. Search through *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* to identify one example of each: simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. Record your answers below.

SIMILE

METAPHOR

PERSONIFICATION

HYPERBOLE

A haiku is a traditional Japanese form in which a three-line poem has seventeen syllables, written in a 5/7/5 syllable count. Write your own haiku inspired by *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*.

*Title*

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## Interdisciplinary Activities: English/Language Arts

Identify three major themes of the story. Use details from the novel to support each theme in an analytical essay about *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*.

<b>THEME:</b>	<b>THEME:</b>	<b>THEME:</b>
<b>EVIDENCE:</b>	<b>EVIDENCE:</b>	<b>EVIDENCE:</b>



## Interdisciplinary Activities: Social Studies

**Gabi's grandfather was brought to the United States to pick crops.** Research and learn about the 1942 Bracero Program. Consult the Library of Congress as a resource for this activity: <https://guides.loc.gov/latinx-civil-rights/bracero-program>. In groups, examine different key aspects of the Bracero Program, such as time period, location, reason for the program, media coverage, class backgrounds within the Bracero Program, and community responses, to identify the challenges laborers faced due to race, gender, class, sexuality, or other factors.

Research notes:

**College admissions matter a lot to Gabi and her friends.** Research different colleges and universities that you would like to attend. Select a school to focus on and answer the following questions:

1. What about the school excites you?
2. What are the demographics of the school?
3. Can you see yourself living and studying there? Why?
4. If you are not interested in college, research opportunities that excite you.

## Interdisciplinary Activities: English & Arts

Review Gabi's zine (p. 194–202). Here are two example pages of Gabi's Zine. What do you like about Gabi's zine and why? Record your response below.

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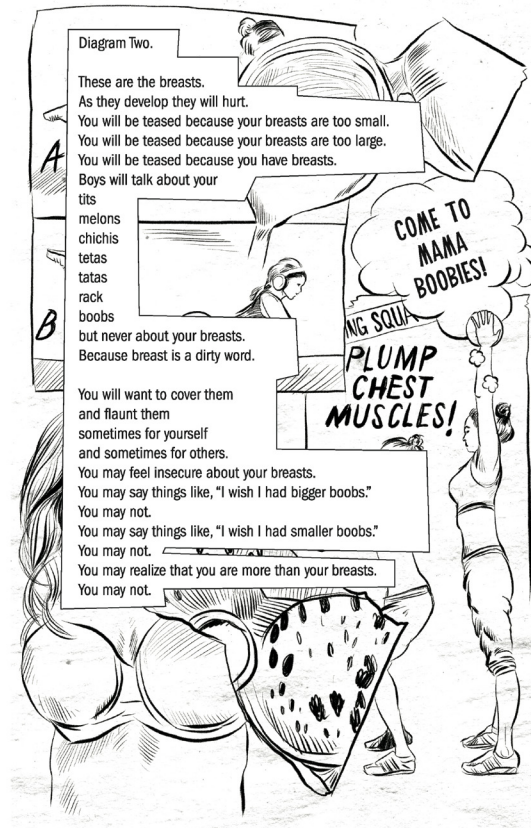
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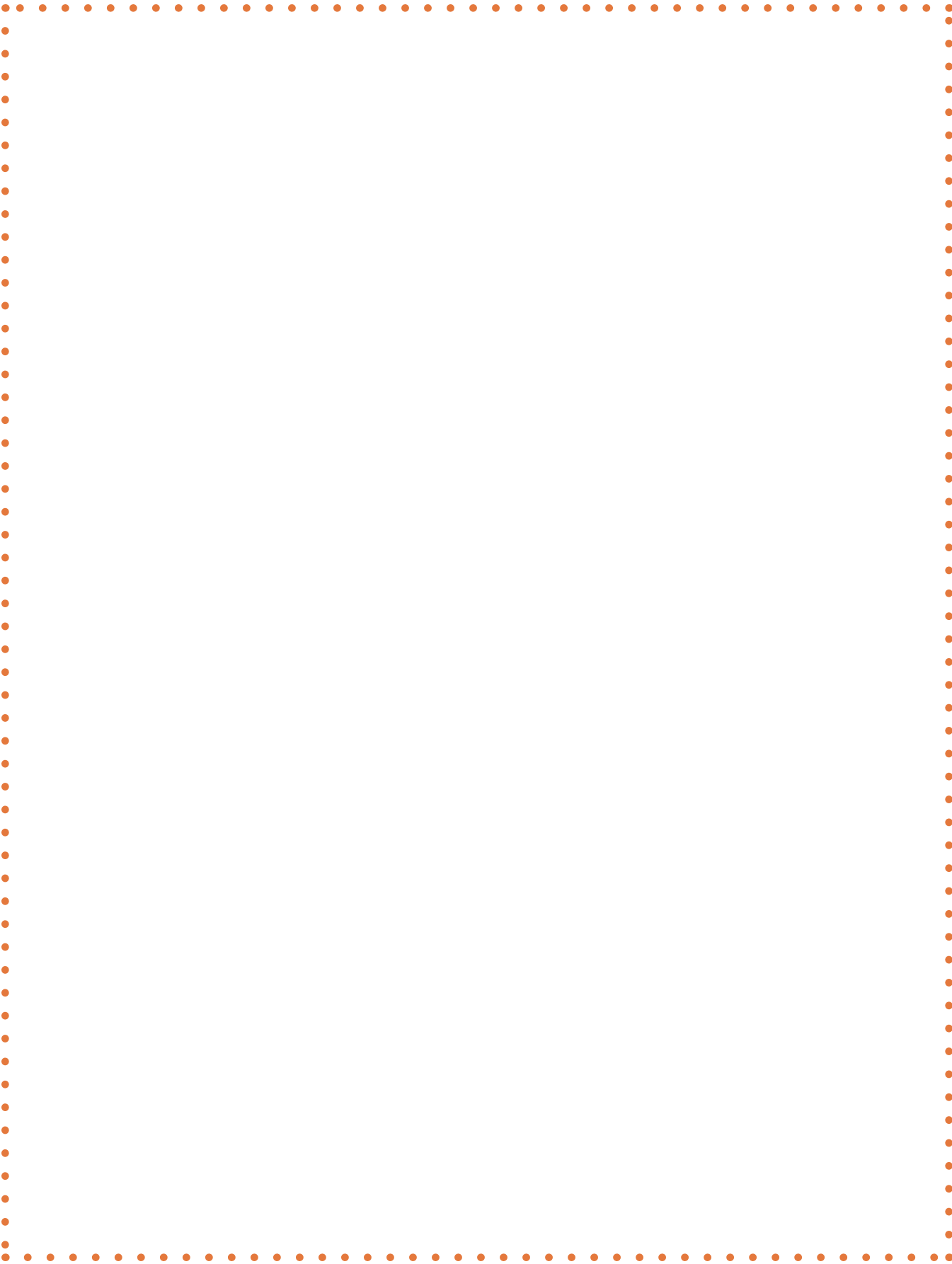
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## Interdisciplinary Activities: English & Arts

**Create your own zine on the following pages.** Refer to Barnard College's How to Make a Zine resource: <https://zines.barnard.edu/zine-basics/how-make-zine>.



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## Interdisciplinary Activities: English & Arts

**Create a cover for a book about your life.** Refer to the cover from *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* for inspiration. Use the space on the following page to create your book cover.

## Interdisciplinary Activities: English & Arts

**Write your own poem about a difficult moment you overcame.** Have your poem reflect your personal experiences and/or feelings and opinions. Use examples from *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* to help structure your poem.

## Interdisciplinary Activities: English & Arts

**Create portraits of close friends through drawing, collage, or photographs.** In writing, describe what actions and qualities you admire about your friend/s. You can write in prose or submit a poem or song.