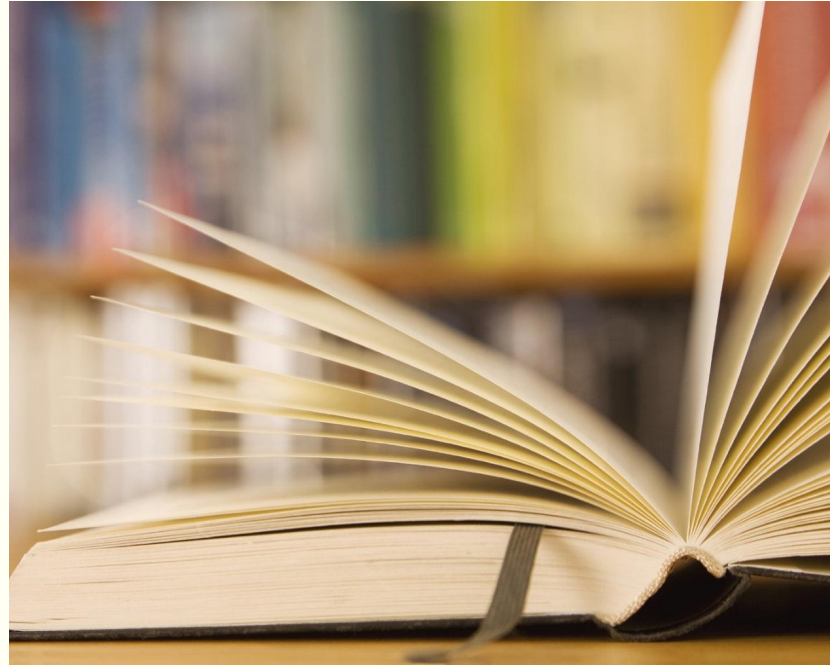




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# The Female Coming-of-Age Story in the Chicana Novel

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# Abstract

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The goal of this project is to study the image that Mexican-American authors portray of the young girl as she psychologically matures into a young woman. The project explores the life events and various rites-of-passage experienced by these young women in their journey towards womanhood. It also looks into the manner in which these young women discover their identity as Mexican-Americans. It includes some of the challenges that these young women of color contend with in this country. Finally, the project includes discussion and analysis of three rite-of-passage novels by Mexican-American authors Malín Alegría, Sandra Cisneros, and Pam Muñoz Ryan.

## Significance of Study

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I decided to study this topic more in depth because it is something I can relate too. Throughout the years, I have struggled with finding my own chicana identity. I've had to create my own hybrid culture where I combine the two cultures within me. The young women in these novels pass through a rite of passage that impacts their life. They will have to accept their lives as Mexican-Americans.

## What is *bildungsroman*?

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The term *bildungsroman* is a literary genre. It is a combination of two German words. It means “educational novel.” The novel must include a young protagonist going through its years of formation. The novel must talk about the psychological development and moral education. The protagonist must go through from innocence to maturation.

## What is a chicano coming of age novel?

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- A girl protagonist
- An important event (rite of passage)
- Change the way they think
- A moment of realization that they have grown
- Feel gratitude towards what they couldn't sta

# Authors and Novels

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- Malin Alegría – *Sofí Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico*
- Sandra Cisneros – *The House on Mango Street*
- Pam Muñoz Ryan – *Esperanza Rising*

# Young Latina Statistics

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According to the United States Census 2012, there are 9 million latinas living in the country between the ages of 10-19. They make up the 17.7% of latinos in the US. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

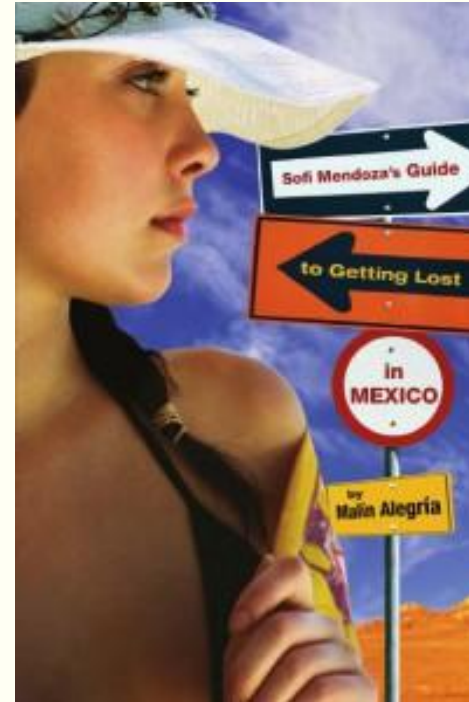




# Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting lost in Mexico

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- Malín Alegría
- Omniscient narrator
- Divided by chapters
- Takes place in Rosarito, Baja California, México
- Sofi, about to turn 18 and graduate from high school becomes stranded in Mexico.
- Sofi, her parents, Taylor, Olivia, Andrés, and Yesenia
- Love, Lies, family, identity, growing up



# Summary

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- Sofi is an 18yr old about to graduate from high school.
- Sofi's parents oppose her traveling to Rosarito for a party.
- Despite her parents decisions, Sofi decides to go to Rosarito to celebrate that she will soon be graduating.
- The trip to Mexico was a failure. When the girls try to return to the US, Sofi is denied entrance to the country since her green card is fake.
- Sofi must go live with her family in Rosarito and misses her graduation.
- She meets Andrés who turns into her bf. He shows her how beautiful Mexico is.
- Sofi finds out that her grandmother is a US citizen, Sofi will be able to return to the United States.
- Sofi is able to find her identity as a Mexican American, she's hurt to have to leave her family.

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“She couldn’t believe that Officer Cohn had called her an illegal. How could she be? She was infinitely more American than she was Mexican. She barely understood anything about this strange, backward place (Alegría, 92).”

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“A new feeling was spilling into her heart. It was a crystal-clear awareness that she was related to all these people. *They are Mexican like me*, she thought (Alegría, 154).”

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“ Her heart was elated, because she finally knew who she was. Sofi was a border girl. Not fully American or Mexican. She was both, a bridge between two cultures, the best of both worlds (Alegría, 276).”

# Esperanza Rising

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- Pam Muñoz Ryan
- Omniscient narrator
- Divided by chapters
- Takes place in the San Joaquin Valley
- Esperanza is forced to move to the United States when they lose their land
- Esperanza, her mother, Isabel, and Miguel
- Persavrance, injustices, love, social status, growing up, the American dream



# Summary

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- Esperanza lives a privileged life in Mexico, her father is murdered by bandits.
- Esperanza's mother refuses to marry her deceased husband's brother.
- Her uncles set her house on fire. Esperanza and her family lose all their belongings.
- Esperanza and her mother escape to the United States with the servants
- Esperanza and her mother live in a camp for farm workers with bad conditions, they must work to survive.
- Esperanza's mother gets terribly ill and is about to pass away.
- Esperanza manages to bring her Abuela to the United States and her mother recuperates.

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“She took a deep breath. The aroma of the oranges from a nearby grove wa reassuring and familiar. Maybe it wouldn’t be so different here (Muñoz Ryan, 87).”



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“I’m still rich, Isabel. We will only be here until Abuelita is well enough to travel. Then she will come with her money and we will buy a big house. A house that Papa would have been proud for us to live in. Maybe we will buy two houses so that Hortensia, Alfonso, and Miguel can live in one and work for us again. And you can visit us, Isabel. You see, this only temporary. We will not be here for long (Muñoz Ryan, 105).”

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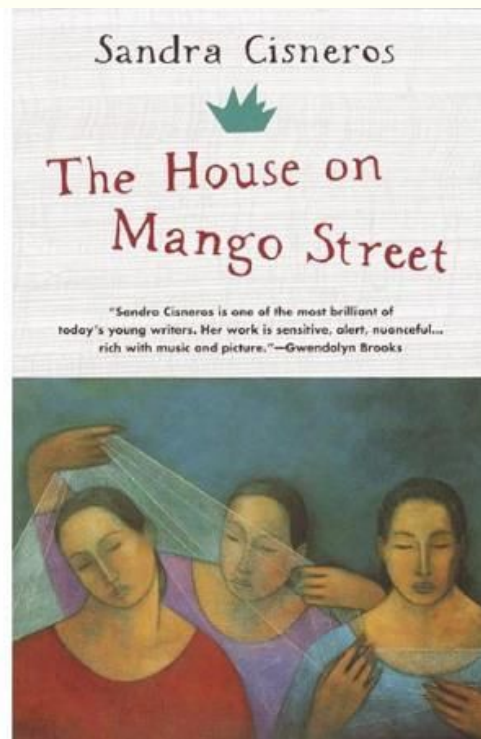
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“In town, the parents did not want the children going to the same schools with the Mexicans. Living away from town in the company camp had its advantages, she decided. The children all went to school together: white, Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino. It didn’t seem to matter to anyone because they were all poor. Sometimes she felt as if she lived in a cocoon, protected from much of the indignation (Muñoz Ryan, 188).”

# The House on Mango Street

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- Sandra Cisneros
- First person
- Divided by short stories
- Takes place on Mango St. Chicago, Illinois.
- Tells about Esperanza's life on Mango st.
- Esperanza, Rachael, Lucy, Sally, Nenny, Alicia, Minerva
- Identity, innocence, social classes, and the role of a man and a woman



# Summary

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- Esperanza and her family move to Mango St. It is not the house of her dreams, but it is better than the prior ones.
- She meets Lucy and Rachael.
- She talks about her neighbors: their habits, the way they behave, their troubles.
- Esperanza repeatedly express how ugly Mango st. She does not identify with Mango St. Her wish is to move and never come back.
- We see esperanza act as a girl.
- Seeing her neighbor changes her. She's able to learn through them.
- Esperanza denies belonging to Mango St.
- Esperanza is raped and sees her whole life as a lie.
- Esperanza wishes to be an author, she says she will always denies being from Mango St. Once she is grown, she always thinks about that house.

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“In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing (Cisneros, 11).”

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“Sally, who taught you to paint your eyes like Cleopatra?  
And if I roll the little brush with my tongue and chew it to  
a point and dip it in the muddy cake, the one in the little  
red box, will you teach me?(Cisneros, 102)”

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Sally, you lied. It wasn't what you said at all. What he did. Where he touched me. I didn't want it, Sally. The way they said it, the way it's supposed to be, all the storybooks and movies, why did you lie to me?  
(Cisneros, 122)

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“One day I will pack my bags of books and paper.  
One day I will say goodbye to Mango. I am too strong for  
her to keep me here forever” (Cisneros, 134)



## Works cited

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**¡Gracias!**

