

❀ ZONIA'S RAIN FOREST ❀

Juana Martinez-Neal

ABOUT THE BOOK

Zonia's home is the Amazon rain forest, where it is always green and full of life. Every morning, the rain forest calls to Zonia, and every morning, she answers. She visits the sloth family, greets the giant anteater, and runs with the speedy jaguar. But one morning, the rain forest calls to her in a troubled voice. How will Zonia answer?

Acclaimed author-illustrator Juana Martinez-Neal explores the wonders of the Peruvian rain forest with Zonia, an Asháninka girl, in her joyful outdoor adventures. Illuminating back matter includes a translation of the story in Asháninka, information on the Asháninka nation, and facts about the Amazon rain forest and its wildlife.

This guide has been created to support caregivers, educators, and students learning about the Amazon rain forest and its inhabitants. Information in the back of the book identifies major threats to the rain forest and to the Indigenous nations who have, for millennia, lived and thrived there. By reading and sharing this book, we can learn to become more thoughtful, intentional stewards of this fragile Earth and its many inhabitants.

Common Core Connections

This guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL). Questions can also be used in writing prompts for independent work.

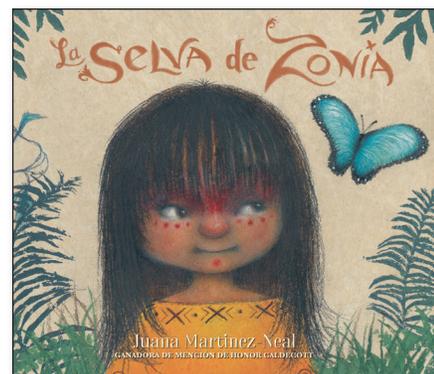


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Spanish edition, *La selva de Zonia*

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Both are also available as e-books.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what part of the rain forest does Zonia live? Across which other countries does the Amazon rain forest exist?
2. What is the name of the type of butterfly that follows Zonia on her adventures? What do you think the butterfly might symbolize in the story?
3. What other animals does Zonia encounter in the rain forest?
4. How does Zonia interact with her animal friends? What do you think she might learn from each of them?
5. To what nation of Indigenous people does Zonia belong? What does the book teach us about them?
6. If you were to ask Zonia who is in her family, what do you think her answer would be?
7. What are some of the threats to the Amazon rain forest and to the plants, animals, and people who live there? Who is affected by the destruction and shrinking of the rain forest?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST

Zonia's people are the Asháninka, the largest Indigenous nation living in the Peruvian Amazon. More than four hundred different Indigenous nations call the Amazon rain forest home. When learning about any of the world's Indigenous nations, one must also learn about and understand colonization, disenfranchisement, and forced relocation. Through activism, community organization, and legal action, the Asháninka are today fighting to save their land and their culture, fighting for their human rights and for their lives. You may find it helpful to create personal, community, or classroom definitions for some of these words.

Have your students use the following resources (or others they can access) to research and learn more about the Asháninka. Using the reproducible page, ask each student to create a mini-poster that highlights new facts they have learned about the Asháninka nation and includes a question of their own.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

From the World Culture Encyclopedia:

<https://www.everyculture.com/wc/Norway-to-Russia/Ash-ninka.html>

From Survival International:

<https://www.survivalinternational.org/galleries/ashaninka>

From Peru.info:

<https://peru.info/en-us/talent/news/6/24/meet-the-largest-ethnic-in-the-peruvian-jungle>

From Povos Indígenas no Brasil (Encyclopedia of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil):

<https://pib.socioambiental.org/en/Povo:Ashaninka>

Name _____

Culture is defined by Merriam-Webster as “the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time.”

- In box one, draw or explain one **fact** you have learned about the Asháninka culture.
- In box two, draw or explain one **question** you would ask an Asháninka person if you could.
- In box three, draw or explain one **challenge** the Asháninka face.
- In box four, draw or explain one **event** you have learned about connected to colonization, disenfranchisement, forced relocation, activism, community organization, legal action, or human rights.

CULTURAL FACT	QUESTION
CHALLENGE	EVENT

ANIMALS OF THE AMAZON

Have your students use the book and any other resources you may have to research the animals in *Zonia's Rain Forest* and then create a short story about one or more of the animals that teaches readers:

1. What they look like
2. What they eat (or what eats them)
3. Where they live in the rain forest (for instance, in water or high in the canopies of trees)
4. Threats to their survival (how deforestation, farming, mining, logging, or oil and gas extraction might affect them)

CHOOSE ONE THREAT TO THE RAIN FOREST AND IMAGINE A SOLUTION

Throughout the book, a blue morpho butterfly follows Zonia on her adventures. The butterfly can symbolize many things, but it is most widely known to symbolize change or rebirth because it changes from a caterpillar to a winged insect through a process called metamorphosis.

In the back of the book, there is more information about four major threats to the Amazon: illegal logging, farming, mining, and oil and gas extraction. Have your students draw a blue morpho and write a paragraph or short poem about one thing they would change about the world in order to protect the rain forest. You can provide the following sentence starters to help them organize their ideas.

1. Now we _____, but in the future we will _____, which will help the rain forest by _____.
2. If we stop _____, this will help the rain forest have more _____.
3. We can help _____ in the rain forest by _____ instead of _____.
4. If we change _____, it will help the people and animals by _____.

Or students can create an acrostic poem with the letters *CHANGE*.

Example:

C: Care for the plants and animals that share the piece of Earth on which you live.

H: Heed the words of the Indigenous nations living in the rain forest; follow their lead.

A: Act to teach people in your community about the negative effects of deforestation.

N: Never forget that we are all connected to the earth and to one another.

G: Grow your own plants using environmentally responsible practices.

E: Expand your awareness and appreciation of the many different cultures and ecosystems that exist on Earth.

LANGUAGE

In the back of the book, the story's text is provided in the Asháninka language. Many Indigenous languages throughout the world are in danger of being forgotten or lost as educational systems use the language of colonizers rather than teaching young people about Indigenous languages. Have your students learn more about Indigenous languages and create materials to teach others.

1. Have your students research other Indigenous languages and mark on a world map where they are spoken and how many people speak each of them.
2. Give each of your students an index card on which you have written one word from the Asháninka translation. Have students learn how to pronounce the word on their card. Then have them complete their card with the written phonetic pronunciation, a translation of the word into English, a dictionary definition of the word, and an illustration. Put students into groups of three or more and have them teach their words to one another. After completing the group work, combine all the cards on one poster, bulletin board, or virtual display.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

From Omniglot on Asháninka language, alphabet, and pronunciation:

<https://omniglot.com/writing/ashaninka.htm>

Glosbe's English/Asháninka online dictionary:

<https://glosbe.com/en/cni>

OUR RAIN FORESTS ARE A GIFT

A rain forest is only one of Earth's habitats, but it is vital in keeping the rest of the world alive and thriving. There are many beneficial medicines and materials that come from the world's rain forests. Engage your students in learning more about resources that come from the rain forest habitat.

1. Zonia lives in the Amazon rain forest. Ask each student to find and learn about one product or material that comes from the Amazon rain forest and then tell the class about its origins and how it is useful to humans. For example, mahogany (a type of lumber) comes from a mahogany tree.
2. As a class, identify one product, resource, or material for each letter of the alphabet and put together an alphabet rain forest book. Invite another class to read the book and then come together to talk about the importance of protecting one of the world's most fragile ecosystems.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE

Fort Wayne Children's Zoo's list of rain forest products:

<https://kidszoo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Rain-Forest-Products.pdf>

ZONIA'S FRIENDS AND FAMILY

As you read, encourage your students to take note of the interactions Zonia has with the other characters in the book, human and animal. Ask them who those characters are and how Zonia feels about each one. How do they know how Zonia feels about them? Have students examine Zonia's face and pay attention to her words and the observations she makes about the people, plants, and animals in her world. Then have each student draw a picture with Zonia and one of the other characters, plants, or animals in the book. Under their picture, have students explain how Zonia feels using one of the following sentence starters.

Zonia feels curious around _____, and I know this because her face shows _____.

Zonia feels _____ about _____, and I know this when she says _____.

Zonia feels _____ when _____ happens. I know this because _____.

TAKING ACTION

Using resources from your classroom, the internet, the library, or their homes, have your students read about ways young people are taking action to preserve and educate others about the rain forests of the world. Each may choose to research and create a piece of art or make a short presentation about another rain forest in another part of the world that needs protecting.

CLASS FUNDRAISER FOR THE RAIN FOREST

A big way to take action is to create a fundraiser. Have your students research organizations that work to protect rain forests to see if you can join forces with them! One example is <https://www.kidssavingtherainforest.org/>.

As you work as a class on your fundraiser, be sure students are answering the following questions:

Who lives in the rain forest? *These can be people, animals, plants, and other living things.*

What needs protecting? *What species are endangered, what habitats are threatened, and what people are being displaced from their home?*

Where is the rain forest you plan to support? *Draw a map with a specific part colored in to indicate which part of the rain forest you chose.*

When will you take action? *What is the time period in which you plan to raise funds? How much would you like to raise?*

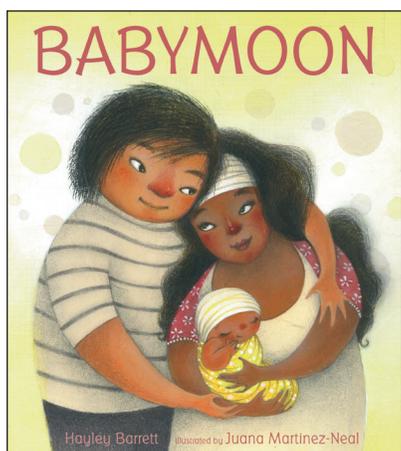
Why do you want to support rain forest conservation? *This is perhaps the most important question. Explain how protecting the community of the rain forest impacts your own community.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR-ILLUSTRATOR

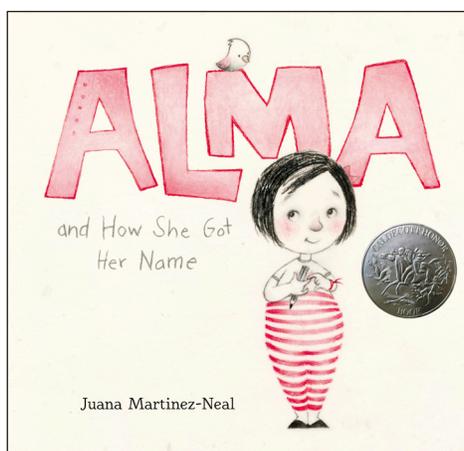


JUANA MARTINEZ-NEAL is the daughter and granddaughter of painters. She started her story in Lima, Peru, and then moved to the United States. She is the author-illustrator of the Caldecott Honor Book *Alma and How She Got Her Name* and winner of the 2018 Pura Belpré Illustrator Award and 2020 Robert F. Sibert Medal. Juana Martinez-Neal is writing the story of her life, with the help of her husband and three children, in Connecticut.

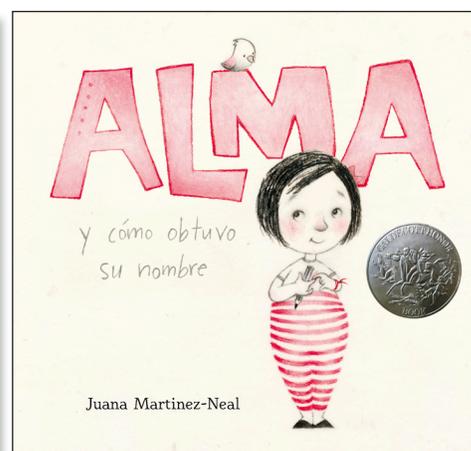
JUANA MARTINEZ-NEAL'S OTHER BOOKS



Babymoon
by Hayley Barrett
illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal
HC: 978-0-7636-8852-3



Alma and How She Got Her Name
HC: 978-0-7636-9355-8
Spanish edition, *Alma y cómo obtuvo su nombre*
HC: 978-0-7636-9358-9
Both are also available as e-books.



This guide was prepared by Julia Torres, a veteran language arts teacher-librarian in Denver, Colorado. Julia facilitates teacher development workshops rooted in the areas of anti-racist education, equity and access in literacy and librarianship, and education as a practice of liberation. She also serves on several local and national boards and committees promoting educational equity and progressivism. She is a Book Love Foundation board member, a member of the ALAN board of directors, and an Educator Collaborative Book Ambassador.