

Name: _____

Adam wrote this article about Sandra Cisneros. He hopes to inform readers about her inspirational and influential life. Read Adam's paper and look for the revisions he should make. Then answer the questions that follow.

The House on Mango Street

Author Biography: Sandra Cisneros (1954 -)

(1) Sandra Cisneros was born on December 20, 1954, in Chicago, Illinois. (2) Her father, a Mexican immigrant, worked as an upholsterer and frequently talked about his sons, but not as often about Sandra. (3) Her mother worked in a local factory and completed most chores around the house so Sandra could focus on her schoolwork because she felt an education was very important to her daughter's future.

(4) Señor Cisneros's family still lived in Mexico City, so the entire family made an annual trip to spend quality time with their extended family. (5) Each time they returned to Chicago, they unpacked their belongings into a new apartment, and the children enrolled in a different school. (6) Consequently, Sandra Cisneros had trouble making friends and feeling like she belonged. (7) She found reading, especially reading fairy tales, an excellent way to escape her lonely childhood, and she was thankful that it was possible to do so, even in a poor family, with the library card her mother helped her achieve.

(8) During her college years, first at Loyola University in Chicago and then in the Master's Program at the University of Iowa, Cisneros found her unique writing voice. (9) At first, she looked around her classes and observed the faculty, realizing that she was very different because she was a woman from a poor neighborhood with a personal identity that was part American and part Mexican. (10) Eventually she discovered that she could pull experiences from her own life, especially the people and places from the neighborhoods of her childhood, to write poems and stories that were both important and interesting.

(11) At first, Cisneros could not make enough money as a full-time writer to pay her bills, so she took a job as a counselor for high school dropouts at Latino Youth Alternative High School in Chicago in 1978. (12) During the day, she helped the students deal with their personal and academic troubles while encouraging them to focus on their goals. (13) In the evenings, Cisneros gave public readings of her writing and worked on a small chapbook of her poetry, entitled *Bad Boys*, which was published in 1980 as a limited run. (14) Also that year, she left the high school to take a job as a recruiter at her alma mater, Loyola University, in an effort to encourage more Latino students to attend college. (15) While in both school environments she continued to meet interesting people and collect their stories which served as more inspiration for the writing she did in her free time.

(16) In 1982, Cisneros got her first big break: the National Endowment for the Arts awarded her a grant, which allowed her to quit her job and focus only on her writing for a while. (17) She finally had time to put all her short writing pieces together, and the concept for her most famous publication emerged. (18) To get some distance from her home and the people she was writing about, she left the United States to travel around Europe while she revised her little stories, called vignettes. (19) During this time, she also wrote more poems and built friendships with people overseas. (20) These friendships reminded her of how similar all people are, despite their many differences. (21) She returned to the United States in 1984 for the publication of *The House on Mango Street*, which received so much critical praise for its new style and fresh voice that it won the Before Columbus American Book Award. (22) In 1987, she published a book of poems, *My Wicked, Wicked Ways*, which further cemented her reputation as a gifted writer and may have been the catalyst for Random House to offer her \$100,000 for another book of fiction—the largest advance ever offered a Latino writer at that time.

(23) When Cisneros was a child, there were no Mexican writers that served as role models to her. (24) As a young Mexican-American girl, most people expected Sandra to grow up strong, get married, have children, and take care of the home. (25) Instead Cisneros made a place in the world for herself, where a young Latina can be creative, thoughtful, and intelligent while also being happy and successful. (26) Although she did not have suitable role models for her writing, as a best-selling author and possibly the most famous Mexican woman writer, Cisneros has become a role model for young writers, especially women, who are inspired by her dedication and talent. (27) She has also been able to use her writing as a means of educating non-Spanish speakers about the Latino experience in America, thereby increasing our understanding of the basic human themes of identity, belonging, and home.

1. The word “achieve” does not effectively convey Adam’s meaning in sentence 7. Which of the following would be the best replacement for achieve?

- A obtain
- B accomplish
- C undertake
- D accept

2. Adam wants to tell more about the statement she has made in sentence 9. Which of these ideas would best follow and support sentence 9?

- A Who likes feeling on their own anyways?
- B It’s not easy being different from those around you.
- C Her different upbringing would ultimately be the key to her distinct writing style.
- D Upbringing doesn’t have a lot to do with who you are though.

3. What is the most effective revision to make in sentence 15?

- A While in both school environments she continued to meet interesting people and collect their stories. Which served as more inspiration for the writing she did in her free time.
- B While in both school environments, she continued to meet interesting people and collect their stories, which served as more inspiration for the writing she did in her free time.
- C While in both school environments she continued to meet interesting people. She would collect their stories, which served as more inspiration for the writing she did in her free time.
- D No revision is needed in this sentence.

4. Adam would like to further develop the fourth paragraph (sentences 11-15). Reread the paragraph carefully. Which detail could best be added after sentence 14 to add to the main idea of this paragraph?

- A Latino enrollment wasn’t high at all in that time.
- B Once again, Cisneros used her past experiences to influence her current ones.
- C She never really liked the high school job in the first place.
- D She was mostly motivated by money.

5. The meaning of sentence 5 is not completely clear. Adam can help clarify what he is trying to say in this sentence by replacing one of the pronouns “they” with —

- A Sandra Cisneros
- B the neighbors
- C the extended family
- D the Cisneroses

6. Adam wants to improve the transition from the second paragraph (sentences 4-7) to the third paragraph (sentences 8-10). Which sentence should Adam add after sentence 7 to provide a more effective transition?

- A It’s important that all young children have access to the library.
- B Being poor didn’t matter at the library because borrowing books was free.
- C Her love of reading would also feed her desire for higher education.
- D The stories helped her not feel so alone.

7. Adam would like to add the following detail to the sixth paragraph (sentences 23-27).

She has never gotten married or had children because she says she needs the quiet of her home to write, and her books and poems are like her children.

Where should he insert this sentence?

- F After sentence 24
- G After sentence 27
- H After sentence 28
- J Adam should not add this detail to the fourth paragraph.