

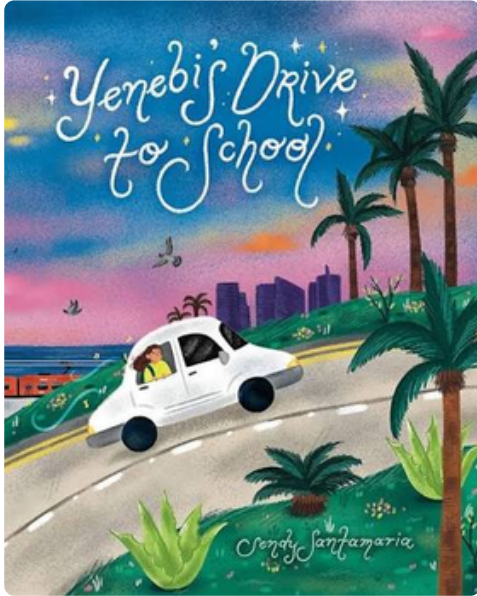
READ-ALoud GUIDE

BEST FOR AGES 5-8



YENEBI'S DRIVE TO SCHOOL

Written and illustrated by **Sendy Santamaria**



SUMMARY

Every morning, Yenebi and her younger sister Melanie wake before sunrise and pile into the car for their long drive to school. But their commute is different from many: they live in Mexico and travel across the U.S.–Mexico border to attend school in California. While waiting in the long border line, the family eats tamales from street vendors, listens to banda music, talks, laughs, and prepares for the day. The story invites children to notice both the differences and similarities in the ways families move through their everyday lives.

WHY WE CHOSE THIS BOOK

We find this book to be a warm, vibrant story celebrating family, perseverance, bilingual life, and the many different journeys children take to school.

VOCABULARY

Define these words together:

waddles: walks with short side-to-side steps

confront: face something difficult directly

arch enemy: someone strongly disliked

la línea: the line at the border, in Spanish

vendors: people who sell different things

adorned: decorated or made more beautiful

pastries: baked sweet breads or treats

“¡Ya levántese!”: Get up!, in Spanish

“Estoy lista”: I am ready, in Spanish

whiff: a quick smell of something

accordion: squeezable instrument

sways: moves slowly side to side

documents: important papers with official information

posture: the way someone holds themselves

declare: officially say or report something

stern: serious and not very friendly

identifies: recognizes who someone actually is

signals: gives a sign or message

beaming: shining with a bright light

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE READING

1. What do you notice on the cover? What do you think Yenebi's drive might be like?
2. How do you usually get to school? What happens along the way?
3. What do you think it would be like to cross a border every day?

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE READING

1. What details do you notice about what Yenebi sees, hears, & smells during the drive?
2. How does Yenebi's family make the long wait feel more comfortable or enjoyable?
3. What clues show that this trip is a normal part of Yenebi's everyday life?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER READING

1. Why is Yenebi's trip to school different from many other children's commutes?
2. What does the story show us about Yenebi's family and their determination?
3. How is Yenebi's journey similar to or different from your own trip to school?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Draw a simple map of Yenebi's trip from home to school and add important stops or details from the story.
- List something Yenebi might see, hear, smell, taste, and feel during the drive.
- Draw or write about your own journey to school, then compare it with Yenebi's.
- Pretend you are Yenebi and draw or write a postcard describing something you notice along the way.
- Find Spanish words or phrases in the story and use pictures or context to figure out what they mean.
- Recreate the sounds of Yenebi's morning using voices, instruments, or found objects.