**Name: . Period: .**

TotalPoints

.

**18**

***The House on Mango Street***

**Pre-reading**

**Objective:** Establishing a purpose for reading the story.

Read the following student reviews for *The House on Mango Street*. Based on these reviews, complete the questions on the next page. Note: All references come from the Vintage edition of *The* *House on Mango Street,* published 1991.

A. “When I read this book in my seventh grade English class, I was instantly in love! This book tells the story of Esperanza, a young girl living in the Latino section of a poor city, through a series of vignettes. It talks about the joys and hardships of being a young girl and having to live with what is around her, even something as simple as wanting her name to be something more like ‘…Zeze the X. Yes, something like Zeze the X will do.’ Cisneros’ distinct style of writing captured my mind and got me lost in these vignettes. It’s a very unique style; this one is like no other. My class wrote a book based on the style of writing and the storyline Cisneros displays in *The House on* *Mango Street* because of how much we love it! This book is one you will read and will not be disappointed with!”

B. “Well, I think it’s now safe to say that Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street* is a classic. Not just a “Chicano/a Classic,” but a book that rightfully is included in school curricula throughout the United States. This heartbreaking coming of age novella is presented in short but powerful chapters. Esperanza Cordero (note: “Esperanza” means “hope”; “Cordero” means “lamb”) is a young girl in a poor Latino neighborhood who tells us her story in vignettes. One of the most moving chapters is “Red Clowns” where Esperanza tells her friend Sally about being raped at the carnival: ‘Sally Sally’ a hundred times. Why didn’t you hear me when I called? Why didn’t you tell them to leave me alone? The one who grabbed me by the arm, he wouldn’t let me go. He said I love you, Spanish girl, I love you, and pressed his sour mouth to mine.’ This short chapter displays the beauty and potency of Cisneros’ prose: she uses simple language, that of a young girl, and juxtaposes the child-like world of the carnival with the adult ugliness of rape. This is a moving, well-crafted book that should be on your list of ‘must reads.’”

C. “This book is directed towards females so that might be why I didn’t like it. It never got my attention. Maybe it was the way it was written or maybe the contents of the book. There were very few parts of this book that I enjoyed. One part I enjoyed was when Louie’s cousin stole a car and all of the kids asked where he got it from and he said, ‘get in.’ Another part I liked was when she got her first kiss and it wasn’t all she thought it was supposed to be. Esperanza said, ‘I waited my whole life. You’re a liar.” Reading this book was like reading French, another language because it was a girl book. I would recommend this book to a girl, but not to a guy. ‘One day you wake up and they are there,’ says Esperanza. She was talking about hips and growing up from a girl to a young woman throughout the whole book.”

**Motivation for Reading**

**4 pnts**

**4 pnts**

**4pnts**

**6 pnts**

1. State two reasons this novel is or should be part of your school’s curriculum.
2. What two things seem to interest the reviewers most?
3. What two things do some reviewers dislike about the book?

**Objective:** Reading to infer the author’s interests and possible themes.

Read the following quotations from and about Sandra Cisneros.

“As a person growing up in a society where the class norm was superimposed on a television screen, I couldn’t understand why our home wasn’t all green lawns and white wood like the ones in ‘Leave It to Beaver’ and ‘Father Knows Best.”

“The meaning of literary success,” she [Cisneros] declares, “is that I could change the way someone thinks about my community, or my gender, or my class.”

“Cisneros’ brothers sought to control and mold her according to this dominating, male-oriented ideology so much so that she later professed that she felt as if she had ‘seven fathers’ instead of one. Consequently she confesses in a 1990 interview: ‘to this day when any man tells me to do something in a certain way, the hair on the back of my neck just stands up.”

1. What themes or motifs do you think she might address in this novel? Explain your answer in a minimum of 3 sentences.