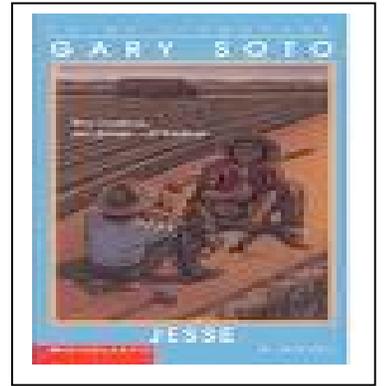


# Jesse

By Gary Soto



**Genre:**

Fiction

**Grade/Class/Subject:**

9-12 Social Studies/Language Arts

**Content Standards:**

Meets FL STATUTE 1003.42 –

*Hispanic Contributions to the United States*

*African and African American History*

*Women’s Contributions to the United States*

SS.912.A.1.7: Describe various socio-cultural aspects of American life including arts, artifacts, literature, education, and publications.

SS.912.A.7.5: Compare nonviolent and violent approaches utilized by groups (African Americans, women, Native Americans, Hispanics) to achieve civil rights.

SS.912.A.7.9: Examine the similarities of social movements (Native Americans, Hispanics, women, anti-war protesters) of the 1960s and 1970s.

SS.912.A.7.10: Analyze the significance of Vietnam and Watergate on the government and people of the United States.

SS.912.A.7.16: Examine changes in immigration policy and attitudes toward immigration since 1950.

LA.910.2.1.4: The student will identify and analyze universal themes and symbols across genres and historical periods, and explain their significance.

LA.910.2.1.8: The student will explain how ideas, values, and themes of a literary work often reflect the historical period in which it was written.

**Character Education:** Responsibility, Citizenship, Self-Control, Cooperation, and Tolerance.

**Content Objectives:**

Students will be able to compare the lives of Mexican Americans, as they assimilate into American culture, to other minority groups who also sought acceptance into the American mainstream.

Students will understand the significance of the changing immigration laws in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and how that might have affected the lives of those immigrants both socially and economically.

Students will explore the American culture as it related to the Viet Nam era, specifically how this time period impacted various minority groups.

Students will learn and demonstrate ways to stand up for important values. They will be able to relate these values to the Character Traits of Responsibility, Citizenship, Respect, Self-Control, Cooperation and Tolerance.

**Language Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to utilize multi-media to complete a brief research paper.
2. Students will prepare and present a group activity using compare/contract strategies.

**Grouping Configuration:** Whole class and small groups

**Book Synopsis:** Set in California during the Vietnam War, this novel is a moving portrait of a young man trying to overcome the limits set for him by prejudice and poverty. Jesse is 17 when he leaves his home dominated by his alcoholic stepfather, and moves in with his older brother, Abel. The two boys agree that getting an education is the best way for them to escape the hard physical labor that has been their family's way of life - and that of so many other Mexican Americans - for so long. Unfortunately, in order to make ends meet, they have to balance their classes at the community college with work in the fields. It's a hard life, made even more difficult by the tense political climate that's developing around them. As Jesse struggles to overcome such universal problems as shyness around girls, he also finds himself drawn to the protests of farm-movement leader Cesar Chavez. It's a confusing life, but the brothers rely on each other to get through the bad times as well as the good. Then Abel gets drafted . . . and Jesse must decide whether to follow him by enlisting, or carve out his own path.

Since the publication of this book - his first novel for young adults - Gary Soto has gone on to establish a well-deserved reputation as an author who skillfully addresses the concerns common to today's young people, while bringing to light themes particular to Latino teens, as well as many others underrepresented in young adult literature. Though it is set in the past, Jesse has an engaging immediacy, and readers will find themselves in the story, no matter what their background or circumstances may be.

**Key Vocabulary:** hippie, Cesar Chavez, picket, turntable, antique, tortilla, freeway, tumbleweed, strikebreakers, drafted.

**Supplementary Materials:** Chart paper, index cards, laptops, and resource materials

## Lesson Sequence

### Introduction: Building Background

#### **Pre-Reading Strategy: Prediction**

1. While holding up the book for the class to see, ask students to predict what the book might be about based upon the title and the illustration on the front cover. Using either chart paper or the board, list the ideas that are shared by the students. As conversation begins to ebb, discuss with students the genre of this book and the manner in which it is written. Discuss the elements of fiction. Review plot, theme, setting, characterization, conflict and resolution with students. Be sure that students have some knowledge of what the lives of Mexican Americans was like during the 1960's in California. Discuss the impact of the Viet Nam War and how many poor; minority young men were drafted into the military.

#### **Vocabulary**

1. Introduce each term to the students. Advise the students that there might be many other words/terms that are new to them, and a great strategy is for students to begin their own **Want to Know** list.
2. Have the words posted on a Word Wall for students, and as they come across the word in the book, they can create a definition in their own words on index cards and attach them to the word as it's posted.

#### Modeling/Guided Instruction

1. Discuss the meaning of the term, "Chicano". Share a personal experience from your own life or the life of someone you know that has experienced being labeled a "Chicano" or any other derogatory term aimed toward a minority group.
2. Allow students to share a story.
3. Discuss the more contemporary term, "racial profiling". Ask students if they can identify a connection between "Chicanos, other Hispanic groups or other minorities" and "racial profiling".

#### Independent Study and Group Assignment:

1. Have students create a Story/Character Log, and update as they read. They should include the events as they progress, conflicts and resolutions, and character studies. The character studies completed within this Story/Character Log would show movement and growth of the main characters. In this book, the characters would include Jesse, Abel, Glenda, Leslie, Raul, Luis and Jesse's mother. This can be completed as an independent assignment or as a group activity.

2. Technology/research project can be either an independent assignment or completed as a group activity. Have students research the culture of the United States during the 1960's. What might be included is Viet Nam, the hippie movement, the Mexican American movement with Cesar Chavez, the Civil Rights movement, the draft and the military, youth and protesting the various issues of the time. Students can prepare a power point presentation, a research paper with graphs/charts/tables, or any other project the teacher deems as agreeable.

**Review/Assessment:**

1. Set aside a period of time when students can share their technology projects. Prepare a rubric so that students will know ahead of time what they are going to be graded on.
2. Each student/group will share their Story/Character Logs and be able to explain what they have included. A rubric should be prepared which would give explicit direction for this assignment.
3. Assessment is the completion of the technology project and the individual/group assignment.