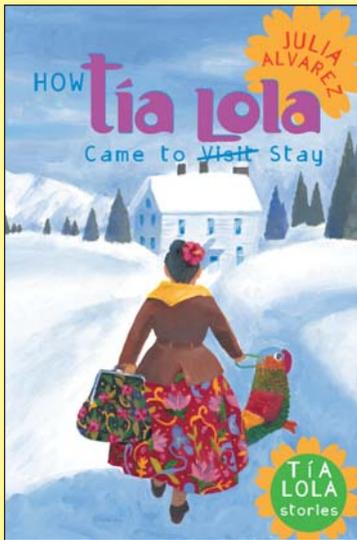
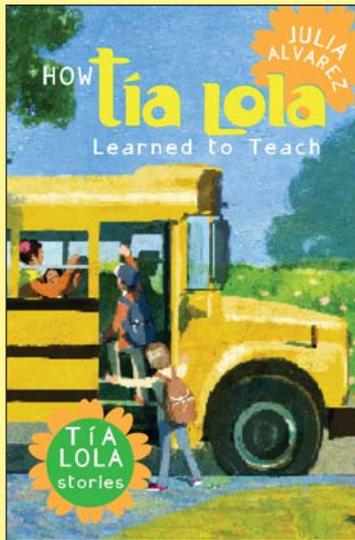




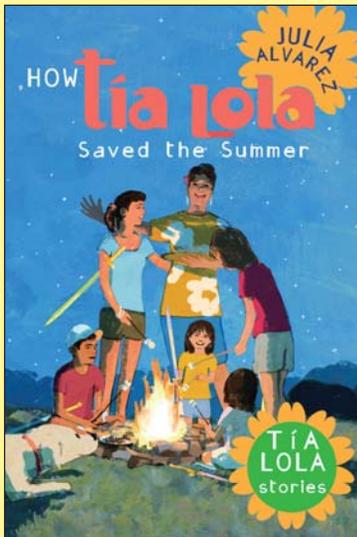
# educators guide



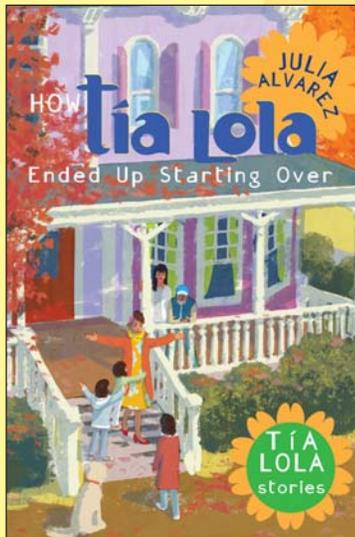
PB: 978-0-440-41870-2  
HC: 978-0-375-80215-7  
EL: 978-0-307-53118-6



PB: 978-0-375-85792-8  
HC: 978-0-375-86460-5  
GLB: 978-0-375-96460-2  
EL: 978-0-375-89584-5



HC: 978-0-375-86727-9  
GLB: 978-0-375-96727-6  
EL: 978-0-375-89766-5



HC: 978-0-375-86914-3  
GLB: 978-0-375-96914-0  
EL: 978-0-375-89995-9

## about the books

Grades  
3-7

Tía Lola, Miguel, and Juanita's great-aunt from the Dominican Republic stands out in Vermont like a tropical bird in a snowstorm.

When Tía Lola's visit to Vermont turns into a long stay, she captures the hearts of everyone in the community. She is brimful of quirky, fun, and maybe magical ideas: sewing uniforms for Miguel's baseball team, teaching Spanish at Miguel and Juanita's elementary school, planning a summer treasure hunt to unite two families, and opening a B&B for visitors to Vermont from all over the world.

## themes

Family • Community  
Belonging • Loneliness  
Self-Discovery • Change  
Values in Conflict

Illustration © 2002 by Barbara Kuch

# thematic connections

## pre-reading activity

Tell the class that Tía Lola is from the Dominican Republic, and that she would feel more at home here if Miguel and Juanita, the main characters, knew something about her country. Instruct students to use books in the library or sites on the Internet to find out four facts about the Dominican Republic. Then have them prepare questions related to these facts that Miguel and Juanita might discuss with Tía Lola when she first arrives in the United States.

**Family** Ask students to discuss how Miguel's idea of family changes from the beginning of *How Tía Lola Came to Visit Stay* to the end of *How Tía Lola Ended Up Starting Over*. A family is about giving and receiving. The Colonel isn't related to the Guzmáns, but he does become part of their family. What does he give, and what does he receive?

**Community** Ask students to describe the community of Bridgeport, Vermont. Talk about the contribution that Tía Lola makes to the community. In *How Tía Lola Learned to Teach*, Tía Lola learns that her visitor's visa is about to expire. Discuss how the community becomes involved in the campaign to extend Tía Lola's visa.

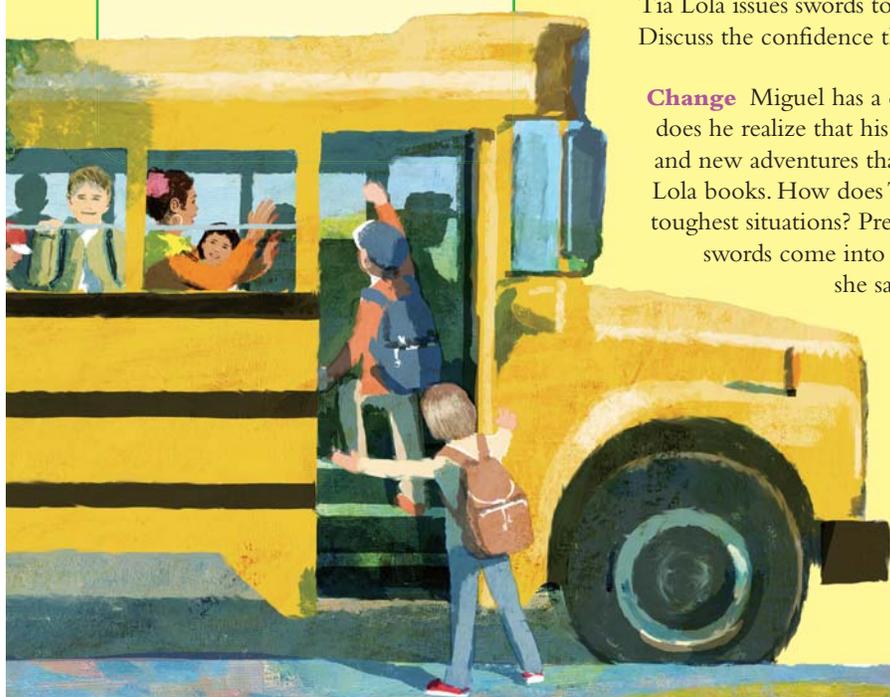
**Belonging** The Guzmáns have just moved to Vermont in *How Tía Lola Came to Visit Stay*, and Miguel doesn't feel that he fits in at his new school. Ask students to discuss how being Latino contributes to his feeling of "not belonging." At what point does Miguel finally become one of the gang? Talk about other characters in the Tía Lola books that deal with issues related to belonging.

**Loneliness** In each Tía Lola novel there are characters that experience loneliness: Tía Lola, Juanita, Miguel, Colonel Charlebois, the entire Espada family, Henny and Odette Beaugard, and even Margaret Soucy. Explain how each of these characters deals with his/her loneliness. Which faces the toughest battle? Discuss how they help one another.

**Self-Discovery** Miguel is a poor reader and feels inferior to Juanita, who is younger and a very good reader. Tía Lola never went past fourth grade and doubts her ability to teach Spanish. Discuss how each conquers their lack of confidence. Discuss how Tía Lola instills confidence in others. Explain why Tía Lola issues swords to everyone in *How Tía Lola Saved the Summer*. Discuss the confidence that each character gains from their sword.

**Change** Miguel has a difficult time accepting change. At what point does he realize that his parents' divorce is final? Plot all of the changes and new adventures that the Guzmáns encounter throughout the Tía Lola books. How does Tía Lola's wisdom provide humor though the toughest situations? Predict the changes that the family faces as the swords come into their lives. Explain what Tía Lola means when she says, "The good news is that time is a great healer." (*How Tía Lola Ended Up Starting Over*, p. 56)

**Values in Conflict** In *How Tía Lola Learned to Teach*, Juanita worries about lying to Tía Lola in an effort to get her to come to the school. Her mother assures her that it is okay because it was only a "white lie." Ask students to justify a white lie.



# curriculum connections

**Language Arts** In *How Tía Lola Learned to Teach*, Tía Lola says, “Remember you have to have adventures in order to have stories to tell.” (p. 33) Ask students to pick an adventure from one of the Tía Lola books and write it as a short story told from the point of view of one of the following characters: Miguel, Juanita, Victoria, Essie, or Cari.

In *How Tía Lola Ended Up Starting Over*, Colonel Charlebois thinks the B&B should be named for Tía Lola because her name adds a touch of exoticism. He explains that exoticism means “something out of the ordinary, exciting, and enchanting.” Ask students to write a feature article for the Bridgeport paper about Tía Lola that illuminates her qualities of exoticism.

**Social Studies** Tía Lola comes to the United States on a visitor’s visa. Now, her visa is about to expire. Ask students to find out the purpose of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services by visiting the following website: [www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis](http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis). Note what steps Tía Lola must take to extend her stay in the United States. Engage students in a discussion about why Ofie’s family has to return to Mexico when Tía Lola is allowed to stay.

**Foreign Language** Every Wednesday night is Spanish night at Rudy’s Café. The entire menu is printed in Spanish. Make a Wednesday night menu for Rudy’s that includes favorite American foods, and dishes from the Dominican Republic that Tía Lola has taught Rudy to make.



**Science** Tía Lola plants a garden in the shape of the United States. Divide students into groups and assign them a region of the country. Ask each group to find out what crops grow in the states in their assigned region. Then have them chart the growing season, the soil conditions, estimated large farm yield per year, etc. Groups should report their data in a PowerPoint presentation, or on a large blank map of the United States.

**Art** In *How Tía Lola Learned to Teach*, Tía Lola thinks that it would be fun to have a school-wide Carnaval. Divide students into groups and have them make a piñata that best represents their favorite character from the Tía Lola books for the Carnaval.

**Music** In *How Tía Lola Ended Up Starting Over*, all the kids plan a half-birthday party for Tía Lola. Have the class learn to sing “Happy Birthday” in Spanish in honor of Tía Lola.

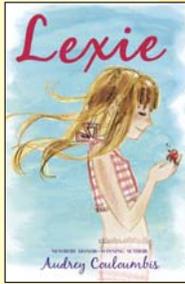
## vocabulary/ use of language

Students should be encouraged to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them taking clues from the context. Such words may include:

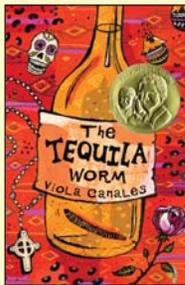
In *How Tía Lola Came to Visit Stay*, *sensitive* (p. 6), *quivers* (p. 30), *astonished* (p. 48), *bodega* (p. 87), *lighthearted* (p. 112); *How Tía Lola Learned to Teach*, *voracious* (p. 37), *perspective* (p. 43), *veto* (p. 62), *admonitions* (p. 84), *fate* (p. 104), *reminisce* (p. 126); *How Tía Lola Saved the Summer*, *sullen* (p. 4), *delirious* (p. 5), *penitently* (p. 6), *refute* (p. 8), *barter* (p. 11), *incredulous* (p. 20), *respective* (p. 36), *profound* (p. 52), *contingent* (p. 74); *How Tía Lola Ended Up Starting Over*, *memorabilia* (p. 26), *confided* (p. 39), *premises* (p. 51), *rendered* (p. 62), *pliant* (p. 70), *impugn* (p. 75), *proficient* (p. 119), and *absolves* (p. 131).



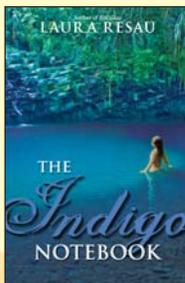
## related titles



**Lexie**  
Audrey Couloumbis  
Grades 4–7  
HC: 978-0-375-85632-7  
family • change  
loneliness • self-discovery



**The Tequila Worm**  
Viola Canales  
Grades 7 up  
PB: 978-0-375-84089-0  
family • change • loneliness  
self-discovery  
hispanic/latino interest



**The Indigo Notebook**  
Laura Resau  
Grades 7 up  
PB: 978-0-375-84524-6  
self-discovery • cultural diversity  
adventure



## about the author

**Julia Alvarez** grew up in the Dominican Republic with dozens upon dozens of aunts, or *tías*. They were like second mothers to her, and they were all different. When Alvarez started writing the *Tía Lola* books, she found that she couldn't base her main character upon just one of her *tías*. Alvarez says, "I took a pinch of this aunt, a spoonful of that one, and a cup of this other one—whatever I needed to make up my *Tía Lola*!" The result is wise, witty, and loving *Tía* who makes a difference to an entire community.

Julia Alvarez is also the author of several other novels for young readers including *Return to Sender*, *Finding Miracles*, and *Before We Were Free*, winner of the Pura Belpré Award. Her books for adults include *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*, *In the Time of the Butterflies*, and *Once Upon a Quinceañera*. She is a writer-in-residence at Middlebury College in Vermont.

## internet resources

### Best Spanish Websites

[www.uni.edu/becker/Spanish3.html](http://www.uni.edu/becker/Spanish3.html)

This site provides links to a number of Web resources for teaching Spanish to children.

### Culture of Dominican Republic

[www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Dominican-Republic.html](http://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Dominican-Republic.html)



Illustration © 2011 by Taisara Kuchi