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## Woman Hollering Creek Presentation

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  - a. Relevant images/photos.
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  - c. Strong connections between Woman Hollering Creek, Real Woman Have Curves, poetry, and articles. Explore recurring themes.
  - d. Select textual evidence from the texts/film to explain/analyze. Show how these quotes connect back to the themes.
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### #1: "The Borderlands"

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#### **"The Borderlands": cultural/language divides**

1. **Essential Questions:** How are Ana in the film Real Women Have Curves (2002) and the characters in Cisneros's stories struggling and surviving in the "borderlands" of language and culture?
2. **Texts:** "Where You From?," "Fully 'American'" article, "Woman Hollering Creek," "Bien Pretty," "Why am I so Brown?," "Learning English"
3. **Themes:** borders of language/culture/nationality, cultural identity vs. assimilation, what it means to be "Mexican American"
4. **Textual Evidence:**
  - "To survive the Borderlands you must live *sin fronteras* be a crossroads" (Gloria Anzaldua)
  - "But you speak English! 'Yeah... we're Mericans" (Cisneros 20)
  - Making love in Spanish vs. English (Cisneros 153)
  - "Soy de aquí / y soy de allá," from "Where You From?" (Valdes 1-2)
  - "to understand me / you have to know Spanish / feel it in the blood of your soul," from "Learning English" (Ambroggio 2-4)
  - "I don't have to dress in a serape and sombrero to be Mexican, I *know who I am*" (Cisneros 151).
  - Jimmy sharing Spanish curse words (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - Ana traveling daily between two worlds: from Boyle Heights to Beverly Hills (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "This is a country where we speak English, not Spanish," Trump in "Fully American" article (Branson-Potts)
  - "On the one side, the Hispanics tell you, 'You're way too American.' On the other, you'll have the Americans telling you you're too Hispanic. It's hard to be in the middle," from "Fully American" article (Branson-Potts)

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## #2: Female Sexuality

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### **Female Sexuality**

1. **Essential Questions:** Carmen in the film says that a "man wants a virgin." Yet, as Teresa Finney writes in her article, "La Malinche..." the Virgen is an "impossible standard to which we should hold ourselves to." How do Cisneros's characters and Ana in the film deal with female sexuality?
2. **Texts:** "Never Marry a Mexican," "My Tocaya," "One Holy Night," "Bien Pretty," "Guadalupe the Sex Goddess" (article from Cisneros, mnriddle.com)
3. **Themes:** sexuality vs. virginity, Malinche vs. Virgen de Guadalupe, real love vs. romantic fantasy (telenovelas), having sex outside of marriage
4. **Textual Evidence:**
  - "Many Latinas are told from a young age to deny or repress the kind of blatant sexuality we saw in La Malinche. If we don't, we run the risk of being called a whore, a woman asking for it. There is not one thing more disappointing than this to a Hispanic father," From "La Malinche..." (Finney)
  - Mother Carmen prays to St. Antonio for Ana and Estela to get married (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "There is a silencing of female sexuality in our culture," From "La Malinche..." (Finney)
  - "A man wants a virgin," mother Carmen (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - A woman is more than her virginity. "She has thoughts, ideas, a mind of her own," says Ana (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - Jimmy calls kissing "sinning" and Ana lies to mother, telling her that she's at church mass when she's on a date (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "I don't think they [people] understand how it is to be a girl. I don't think they know how it is to have to wait your whole life" (Cisneros 34)
  - Clemencia has an affair with a white married man, Drew, in "Never Marry a Mexican" (Cisneros)
  - Telenovelas in "Bien Pretty" (Cisneros 161-162) and mother Carmen is obsessed with her telenovelas in (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)

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### #3: Independent Women

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#### Independent Women

1. **Essential Questions:** How do the characters Ana and Estela in Real Women Have Curves (2002) and Sandra Cisneros in Woman Hollering Creek challenge stereotypes of Latina women?
2. **Texts:** "Bien Pretty," "Never Marry a Mexican"
3. **Themes:** independent women, challenging gender roles/stereotypes
4. **Textual Evidence:**
  - "God made you brown, mi'ja / color bronce—color of your raza / connecting you to your raíces, / your story/historia / as you begin moving towards your future," from "Why Am I So Brown" (Sanchez 5-9)
  - "do not dream / if you want your dreams / to come true," from "Love Poem for my People" (Pietri 5-7)
  - "' *Girl*. We can't play with a *girl*,'" her "brothers' favorite insult now" (Cisneros 18)
  - Independent women in "Never Marry a Mexican" and "Bien Pretty," challenging gender stereotypes
  - "We are all widows" (Cisneros 87)
  - "A hug of protection from my *mamá*," from "My Memories" (Cano Correa 7)
  - Mother Carmen tells Ana to "walk like a lady" (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "Mexicans don't like their women strong," from House on Mango Street (Cisneros 10)
  - Mother Carmen complains about Ana, that she doesn't cook, clean (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)

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## #4: Social Class and the American Dream

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### **Social Class and the American Dream**

1. **Essential Questions:** What are people willing to sacrifice in order to achieve the American Dream? How does class (rich/poor) divide people in the film (Real Women Have Curves, 2002) and in Cisneros's stories?
2. **Texts:** "Bien Pretty," "My Tocaya," "The Monster" and "We Would Like You to Know" poems
3. **Themes:** struggle of low-wage jobs, sacrifice to support families, American Dream, garment workers, class (rich vs. poor)
4. **Textual Evidence:**
  - Patricia Benavides working in the Taco Palace in "My Tocaya" (Cisneros)
  - Flavio the pest control guy in "Bien Pretty" (Cisneros)
  - Father works as gardener, mother/sister work as garment workers (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - Ana calls the sewing factory "dirty work," a "sweatshop" (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - Estela says is proud of the works she does (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - At school, Ana says she works in a "fashion boutique" (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - Jimmy says that life in Los Angeles is "too easy," everyone gets a car, he wants to make a difference, become a teacher (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "It's not fair. I worked since I was 13 years old and Ana is 18 years old. Now it's her turn," Carmen (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - Ana and Estela go to see wealthy Ms. Glass (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "A woman like me should help a woman like you...You have to help yourself," says Mrs. Glass (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - Dresses made for \$18, sold for \$600 (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "I never stopped to think of how much work goes into the dresses," Ana says (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - Ana traveling daily between two worlds: from Boyle Heights to Beverly Hills (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "We do not all pick / lettuce, run / assembly lines, clean / restaurant tables, even / if someone has to do it," from "We Would Like You To Know" (Castillo 17-21)
  - "A large industrial sewing machine. / We called it "the monster," from "The Monster" (Rodriguez 5-6)
  - "Where Mama and the monster did nightly battle... each stitch binded her life to scraps of cloth," from "The Monster" (Rodriguez 20-28)

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## #5: Education Dreams vs. Family Loyalty

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### **Education Dreams vs. Family Loyalty**

1. **Essential Questions:** How does education shape our identities and the way we think about our culture? What is more important: reaching our individual educational goals or being loyal to our family's wishes?
2. **Texts:** "Eleven," "Born Bad," "Smart Cookie," (from House on Mango Street, mnriddle.com), "Learning English" (poem)
3. **Themes:** "coming of age" (growing up, losing innocence), dealing with authority, college dreams vs. financial struggle, personal independence vs. loyalty to family, cultural expectations, how school shapes the way we think about our culture
4. **Textual Evidence:**
  - "My family can't afford college," Ana (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out." (Cisneros 7)
  - "I wish I was invisible but I'm not" (Cisneros 9)
  - "You must keep writing, Esperanza...It will keep you free," from "Born Bad" (Cisneros)
  - "You know why I quit school? Because I didn't have nice clothes. No clothes, but I had brains. Yup...I was a smart cookie then," from "Smart Cookie," from House on Mango Street (Cisneros)
  - "If I speak another language / and use different words / for feelings that will always stay the same / I don't know / if I'll continue being / the same person," from the poem "Learning English" (Ambroggio 5-10)
  - "You left your country for a better opportunity, now it's Ana's turn," says Mr. Guzman (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "I didn't come this far to see my family break apart," Ana's father Raul says about Ana moving to New York (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "What about Estela and the factory? What about your *abuelo*? Do you want to abandon him?" mother Carmen, when Ana wants to move to New York for college (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)

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## #6: Beauty and Fashion

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### **Beauty and Fashion**

1. **Essential Questions:** How does society shape our ideas of beauty? What is it mean to be "beautiful?" What does the title Real Women Have Curves mean?
2. **Texts:** "Bien Pretty," "My Tocaya," "Barbie-Q," "Guadalupe the Sex Goddess" (Cisneros, mnriddle.com)
3. **Themes:** beauty, weight issues, social expectations/pressures for women, the appearance of a woman vs. their identity
4. **Textual Evidence:**
  - "He made you *bien* pretty even if I didn't always know it. Yes, he did." (Cisneros 153)
  - Mother Carmen calls Ana "bigger than the cake" (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "You have a really beautiful face... Just my face?" Ana and Jimmy (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "Pretty dresses aren't just for skinny girls." (Estela, Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "If you're a cow, then I'm a hippo... And I'm an elephant... And I'm an Orca," Ana, Estela and Pancha (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "There's no better dressing than meat on those bones," Pancha (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "A girl who wore rhinestone earrings and glitter high heels to school was destined for trouble" (Cisneros 37)
  - "Don't eat the flan," Carmen says to Ana in (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - The love scene with Ana and Jimmy, Ana leaves the lights on (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - The scene with the women dancing in their underwear in the factory (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "God made you brown, mi'ja / color bronce, beautiful/strong," from "Why Am I So Brown?" (Sanchez 10-11)
  - "So what if our Barbies smell like smoke when you hold them up to your nose even after you wash and wash and wash them" (Cisneros 16)

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## #7: Pride vs. Guilt/Shame

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### Pride vs. Guilt/Shame

1. **Essential Questions:** At the end of Real Women Have Curves, Ana carries herself differently, as she walks confidently into New York. How does she turn the guilt and shame of her mother into pride? How does our family, school, culture, religion and society make us feel either pride or shame about ourselves?
2. **Texts:** "Born Bad," "My Tocaya," "One Holy Night," "Smart Cookie" (from House on Mango Street, mnriddle.com), "Guadalupe the Sex Goddess" (article from Cisneros, mnriddle.com)
3. **Themes:** guilt, shame, dealing with mistakes, family secrets, family problems
4. **Textual Evidence:**
  - Shame/guilt about weight (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)
  - "Most likely I will go to hell," from "Born Bad" (Cisneros)
  - "I don't know who decides who deserves to go bad. There was no evil in her birth," from "Born Bad" (Cisneros)
  - "And then we began to dream the dreams," from "Born Bad" (Cisneros)
  - "Shame is a bad thing, you know. It keeps you down," from "Smart Cookie," in House on Mango Street (Cisneros)
  - "What a culture of denial. Don't get pregnant! But no one tells you how not to," from "Guadalupe the Sex Goddess" (Cisneros)
  - "How could I acknowledge my sexuality, let alone enjoy sex, with so much guilt?" from "Guadalupe the Sex Goddess" (Cisneros)
  - The threat of shame doesn't stop a girl from "doing devil things" (Cisneros 28)
  - In "My Tocaya," stories of the father abusing his children
  - "This is the overwhelmingly gross privilege of looking white, or more accurately, of not looking like a minority," From "La Malinche..." (Finney)
  - Mother Carmen dealing with pregnancy and menopause (Real Women Have Curves, 2002)