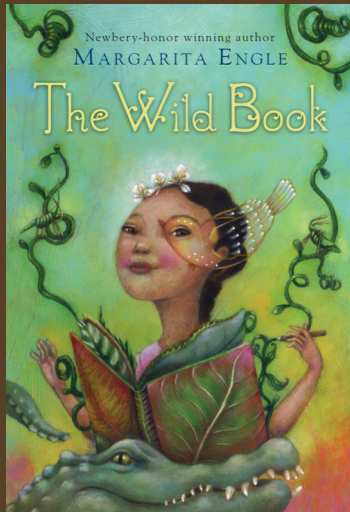


The Wild Book Reading Guide



Questions and Ideas for Consideration

- **Poetry:** How does the poetic form affect your perception of this text? What impact do aspects like word choice, line breaks, rhythm, or other poetic devices have? Why would Engle write in poetry instead of prose?
- **History:** In what way does this book provide a unique historical account? How does the poetic form play into this?
- **Age Range:** How does the form and ages of the characters complicate the age at which this book might be read? In what ways is it children's, adolescent, or adult literature?
- **Disability:** How does this story portrayal dyslexia and a child struggling with a disability in a unique and meaningful way?
- **Culture:** Do you think the text presents diversity (whether related to ethnicity, geography, disability or religion) in a way that highlights cultural authenticity? What examples support this?
- **Family:** Consider the relationships Fefa has with her mother and father, as well as those with her brothers and sisters. How are her family dynamics similar or different from other books we've read this semester?

Daybook Possibilities

- Research other Pura Belpre Award winners, including fiction, poetry, and picture books. What do you note about these books?
- Choose another historical event to write a short narrative poem about. How does describing history with poetry change your perception of it?
- Using the author's note, do additional research to discover more details about the revolution in Cuba.
- Learn about setting by reading about the climate, geography, and lives of people in Cuba. Find photographs to support your research.
- Look up other books by Margarita Engle or visit her website at <http://www.margaritaengle.com/>. How many of her books are award winners, and why do you think she is so commonly recognized?
- Rewrite some of Engle's story into prose and consider how this changes the story.
- Engle's writing is frequently very visual—create illustrations you might add to this text.

Suggested Critical Reading

"Children of the Revolution: A Literary Case Study" by Rafael Ocasio and Fiona Doloughan

"Cuban-Exile Identity and Novels for the Young" by Alexandra McPherson

"Is There Poetry in Children's Poetry?" by Janice Bogstad

"Beyond Tamales, Tacos, and Our Southern Neighbors" by Susie Jans-Thomas

Background and Context

Winner of many awards including the Newbery Honor and Pura Belpre Award, Margarita Engle published *The Wild Book* in 2012. The story is based on true accounts of her grandmother, Fefa. Written as narrative poetry, *The Wild Book* explores Fefa's experience of dyslexia, or "word blindness" as it was called in 1912, set during a tumultuous time in Cuba's history.