

Teacher's Guide & Activity Kit



Alexandra Alessandri

illustrated by Addy Rivera Sonda



CLASSROOM GUIDE

PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR

This classroom guide is designed for students in kindergarten through third grade but can be adapted for older students. Teachers should adapt these activities according to their needs and the abilities of individual students. The activities and discussion questions in this section have been developed using current Common Core Standards, which are listed on page 7, before the “For Fun” section.



A Teacher's Guide & Activity Kit
Feliz New Year, Ava Gabriela!
Written by Alexandra Alessandri
Illustrated by Addy Rivera Sonda
Albert Whitman & Company
ISBN: 978-0-8075-0450-5

ABOUT THE BOOK

Ava Gabriela is visiting her extended family in Colombia for the holidays. She's excited to take part in family traditions such as making buñuelos, but being around all her loud relatives in an unfamiliar place makes Ava shy and quiet. How will Ava find her voice before she misses out on all the New Year's fun?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexandra Alessandri is a Colombian American poet, children's author, and professor at Broward College. Her work has appeared in *The Acentos Review*, *Rio Grande Review*, *Atlanta Review*, and *YARN*. Alexandra lives in Florida with her husband and son.



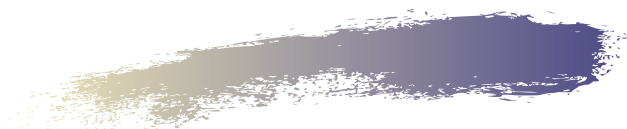
ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Addy Rivera Sonda was born and raised in the south of Mexico. She's loved creating characters since she was a little girl—drawing was her magic power! Addy currently lives in California.



PREREADING ACTIVITIES: MAKING PREDICTIONS

- Read the names of the author and illustrator. What does the author do? What does the illustrator do?
- Look at the front cover illustrations and read the title. What are some details you notice about the cover? Who do you think are the characters on the cover?
- What do you think the word “feliz” means in “Feliz New Year” in the book’s title?
- Look at the back cover. What do you think this story will be about?



EXAMINING ILLUSTRATIONS WHILE READING



- Look at the illustrations of Ava Gabriela’s expressions throughout the story, like on page 3- 7, 10-15, and 21-26. What do you think she’s feeling and why? How can you tell?
- How do the illustrations show the setting? What details about the setting does the illustrator include that help support the text?

AFTER READING: COMPREHENSION AND APPLICATION

- ☐ Who is the main character of the story? How do you know?
- ☐ What country is Ava Gabriela visiting with her parents?
- ☐ The opening sentence says, “The day before New Year’s Eve, Ava Gabriela stood with Mamá and Papá in Abuelita’s finca.” How do the illustrations help us know what the word “finca” means?
- ☐ How does Ava Gabriela feel when she arrives at her abuelita’s finca? What words in the text make you think so?
- ☐ What is Ava Gabriela’s main challenge? What does she do to try to overcome it?
- ☐ Who are Ava Gabriela’s family members? Compare and contrast how each of them respond to Ava.
- ☐ What does Ava’s Tía Nena do that makes Ava feel more comfortable?
- ☐ Who does Ava help with building the Año Viejo?
- ☐ Name some of the New Year’s traditions the author and illustrator include in the text. Which do you think are Ava’s favorites? Why?
- ☐ In the beginning of the story, Ava’s extended family “felt like strangers.” Do you think her opinion of them changed by the end of the story? Why?
- ☐ *Feliz New Year, Ava Gabriela!* is considered realistic fiction. What details in the text show this is realistic fiction?

READING LITERATURE

Timeline: Place the following events in the correct chronological order:

	Tía Nena takes Ava to make buñuelos.
	Ava eats a grape for good luck.
	When the clock struck midnight, Ava popped the Año Viejo with her cousins, calling out, “¡Feliz Año Nuevo!”
	Ava’s cousin Pedro tells Ava about the Año Viejo and together, they assemble him.
	Everyone laughs and has a good time around a table bursting with food. Ava, though, sits by the Año Viejo.
1	Ava Gabriela arrives to her abuelita’s farm with her parents.
	Fireworks swished and squealed and boomed.
	The family prepares the farm for New Year’s Eve.
	Mami lays out Ava’s clothes, including yellow underwear for good luck.
	Ava wanders the farm alone because she’s too shy to play with her cousins.



SIMILES

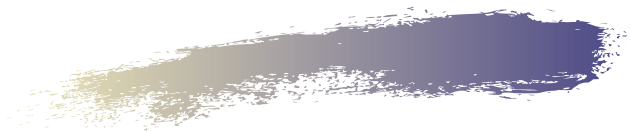
Feliz New Year, Ava Gabriela! uses several similes, which are comparisons using “like” or “as” to describe how Ava is feeling, such as “Ava’s heart thumped like Papá’s tambor” and “Ava wished she didn’t feel as small as a mouse.”

What do you think these similes mean? Can you find others?

Now, try making your own similes!

as _____ as _____

_____ like _____



IDIOMS

Idioms are expressions that have a different figurative meaning than the literal meaning. Both English and Spanish have idioms!

In *Feliz New Year, Ava Gabriela!*, Abuelita says, “¿Te comieron la lengua los ratones?” (“Did the mice nibble your tongue?”). And, when Ava is drawing a face on the Año Viejo, she thinks it looks ready to “hablar como loro mojado” (“talk like a wet parrot”).

What do you think Abuelita meant when she asked Ava if “mice had nibbled her tongue”?

What do you think it means to “talk like a wet parrot”?

In English, “get cold feet” and “I’m all ears” are idioms. What do you think they mean? Can you think of others?

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

In several small groups, or in one larger group, have a discussion about cultures and new year's celebrations.

Cultures all around the world celebrate the new year, and not all celebrate on the same day. What are some things you do to celebrate the new year with your family?

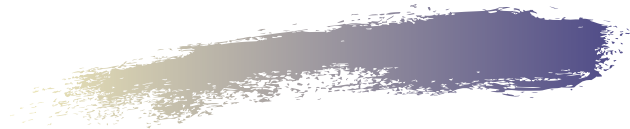
Compare and contrast New Year's Celebrations in Colombia and the United States. How do people in the United States celebrate New Year's Eve? What are some similarities? What are some differences?

What are some new year's traditions in your family? How are they similar or different than Ava Gabriela's family?

Are there special foods you eat?

Is there special music you play?

Does your new year have a different name? Is it celebrated on a different date than in the United States?



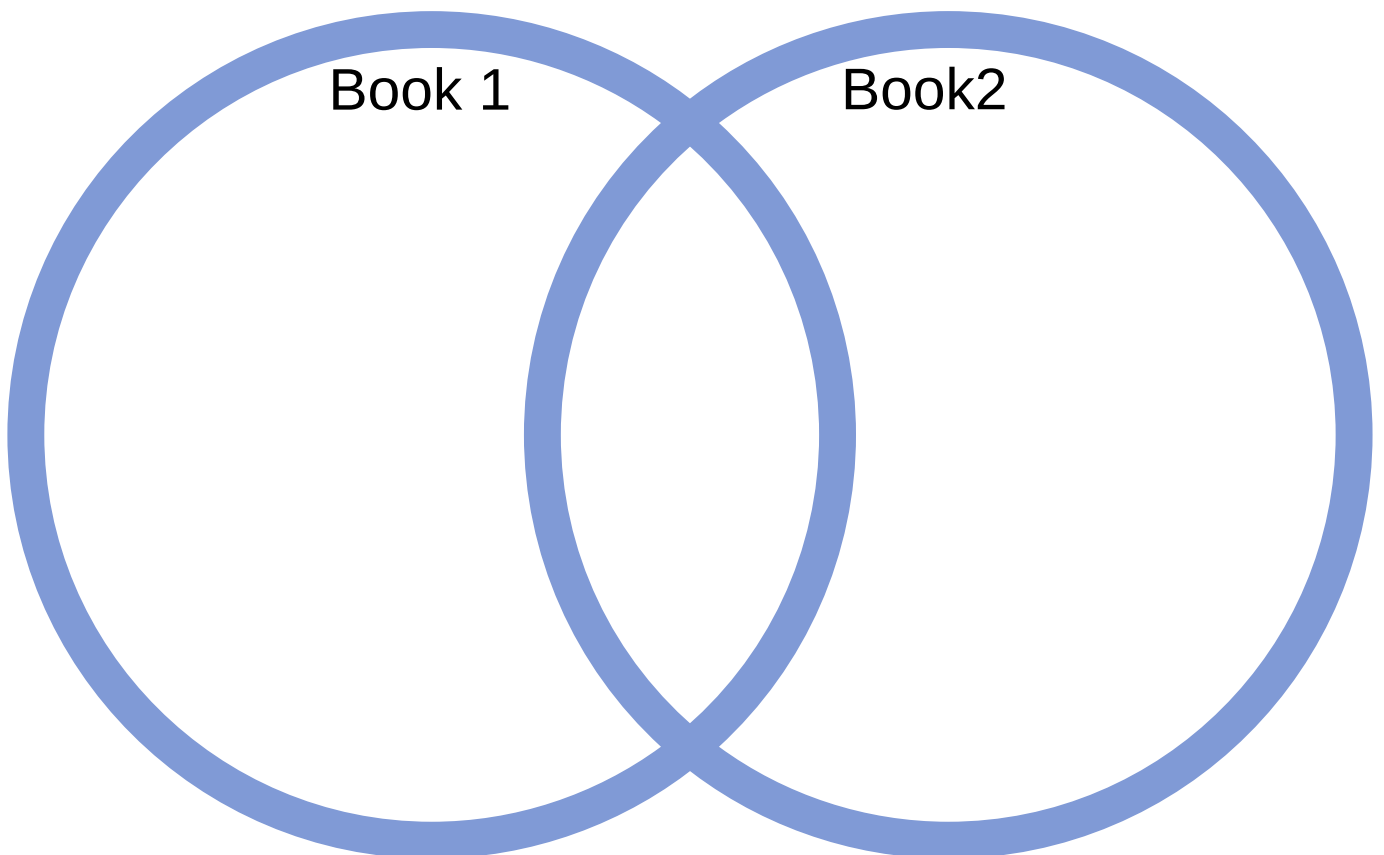
WRITING

Have students write their own narrative about a special celebration in which they participate with their family (i.e. holiday festivities, family events, cultural celebrations, etc.). Narratives should have a distinct beginning, middle, and end, and they should use sensory descriptions (i.e. sight, smell, sound, taste, touch) as well as transition words that show event order.

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

Read *Feliz New Year, Ava Gabriela!* alongside another book about a new year. Some options include *Shante Keys and the New Year's Peas* by Gail Piernas-Davenport, *Goldy Luck and the Three Pandas* by Natasha Yim, *Squirrel's New Year Resolution* by Pat Miller, *Freedom Soup* by Tami Charles, and *A Moon for Moe and Mo* by Jane Breskin Zalben.

Then, using the Venn diagram below, compare and contrast the characters, setting, and/or plot of the two stories (you can also compare/contrast the illustrations!).



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



MATH

Take a poll and graph the results. Ask students what foods they eat during their new year's celebrations and keep track of the answers.

Then, using those answers, create a graph using the "Create a Graph" tool in the [National Center for Education Statistics Kids' Zone](#).

Ask students: What month do you celebrate the new year? How many days are in that month? Compare answers and review the months of the year.

Ava Gabriela and her cousins pop the Año Viejo at midnight. To help them, have students use the clock below to draw 12 o'clock AM (midnight).

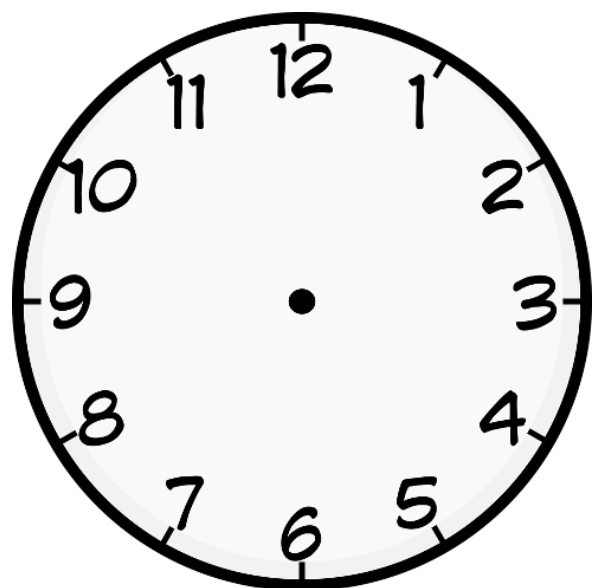
SOCIAL STUDIES

Show students a world map and have them locate Colombia, the Andes Mountains, and the students' hometown.

What is the capital of Colombia? With a teacher's help, find the distance between the capital of Colombia and the student's hometown.

What are some land masses found in Colombia? How are these similar or different to the United States?

In what continent is Colombia? In what continent is the United States?



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1

With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3

Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.5

Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.6

With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4

Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5

Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.9

Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7

Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.5

Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.4

Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3

Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.3

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

FOR FUN: AÑO VIEJO BALLOON DOLL CRAFT

When Ava Gabriela visits her family in Colombia for New Year's Eve, she learns about the fun tradition of the Año Viejo! Now, you can make your own Año Viejo to pop at midnight.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Pack of balloons (25+)
- Old pair of pants and long-sleeved shirt
- Needle and thread, safety pins, or a stapler
- Permanent marker(s)
- Scissors
- String
- Optional: hat, gloves, and/or accessories of your choice.



WHAT YOU'LL DO

IMPORTANT: Some of these steps require an adult's help.
These will be marked by an asterisk (*).

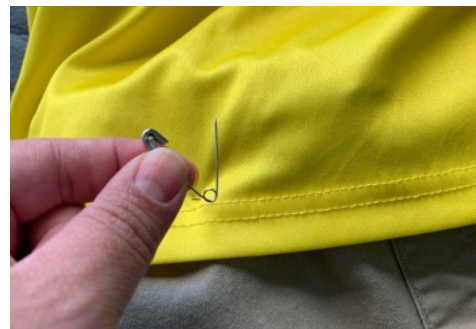
STEP 1

Collect all the materials above. The size of the clothing will determine the size of the Año Viejo doll.



STEP 2

*Have an adult use a needle and thread, safety pins, or a stapler to connect the shirt to the pants at the waist. If the pant legs and shirt sleeves are too large, use needle and thread, safety pins, or stapler to seal all ends so the balloons don't fall out.



STEP 3

Blow air into the balloons for the body (pants/shirt) and tie the ends into knots. These should be about 4" in diameter, or whatever size works with your pant legs and shirt sleeves. Test a balloon or two before doing the rest.



STEP 4

Begin stuffing the balloons into the pant legs from the foot opening. If the bottom of the pant legs haven't been sewn/pinned/stapled closed, wedge a slightly larger balloon at the foot to prevent the rest from falling out.



STEP 5

Once the legs are full, start stuffing the shirt from the neck opening. Keep inserting balloons until the torso and sleeves of the doll are full but not ready to burst.



STEP 6

Now it's time to make the Año Viejo's face! Blow air into a new balloon until it's about 9-10" in diameter. Knot the end. Using a permanent marker, draw a fun face on the Año Viejo! Draw eyes, a nose, and a mouth. Maybe it's wide open, as if ready to talk!



STEP 7

To prevent the face from falling, cut a piece of string and use it to tie the end of the face balloon with one of the shirt balloons.



STEP 8

Accessorize your Año Viejo however you want! Add a hat, a tiara, a scarf, or belt. Give it hair with some yarn. Use gloves to give it hands. Get creative!



THAT'S IT!

You're ready for a "popping" New Year's Eve!

FOR FUN: COLOMBIAN BUÑUELOS RECIPE

Ava Gabriela loves buñuelos, the Colombian cheese fritters her family makes—and so do I! They're one of our favorite foods every holiday season.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups finely grated cheese*
- 2/3 cup cornstarch
- 1/3 cassava flour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 2 eggs
- Vegetable oil for frying
- Heat safe spoon or ladle



*Note: Buñuelos use Queso Costeño, which is a salty, semi-hard cheese. I generally use Queso Blanco (White Cheese, pictured above), which is a natural semisoft cheese I can buy locally. Other options I've seen in recipes include feta cheese or mozzarella cheese.

DIRECTIONS

STEP 1

Gather all your ingredients.



STEP 2

Ask an adult for help with step 1. Using a cheese grater or a food processor, grate the cheese until it's very fine.



STEP 3

Add cheese, cassava flour, cornstarch, sugar, salt, baking soda, and eggs in a medium bowl.



STEP 4

This is the fun part—use your hands to mix all the ingredients together until you have dough that is not too sticky or too dry. It should have the consistency of playdough. You want to be able to make small balls without them falling apart.

Note: If the dough is too dry, add a tsp of milk at a time until it's just right. If it's too sticky, add a tsp of cornstarch at a time until it's just right.



STEP 5

Start building the buñuelos by taking a bit of dough at a time and rolling until you have about 1"-2" balls. You'll have enough dough for about 15-19 buñuelos. Set aside



STEP 6

Ask an adult for help with steps 5-7: Pour vegetable oil into a fryer or a large pot. Heat until 325 degrees.



STEP 7

One by one, carefully add the buñuelos into the hot oil using a heat-safe spoon or ladle. The dough should rise easily and start “dancing.” Don’t overcrowd the fryer/pot as you want the buñuelos to naturally turn in the oil so they brown evenly.



STEP 8

After about 6-7 minutes, when they’re golden brown, carefully use the heat-safe spoon or ladle to take one out. Cut to make sure it’s cooked on the inside (Careful! They’re very hot). If ready, remove the rest and place on a paper towel-covered plate.



STEP 9

Let cool for about 10 minutes. You’re now ready to enjoy some buñuelos, just like Ava Gabriela!



ENJOY!

Word Search

I U O F I R T T Z Q L G Z S B
 S A Y D E F F H I C W Y R P I
 A X B W V L I A T A P E D R O
 R V G U K T I S M M N U U K S
 C G A R E A I Z I I W E F G G
 F K Y G A L H O N J L V N U U
 I B R B A P I B M E L Y V A I
 R Y U A S B E T A A W R C V T
 E E L Ñ Ñ I R S A L R Y B A A
 W L U F U O N I X M L I E V R
 O L M A P E V G E P E O O A S
 R O A R A P L I I L L F O S R
 K W M M P I P O E N A D S N B
 S Z I B I Y P R S J G H J A S
 U D A N C I N G W N O Y Y G L

Feliz New Year
 balloons
 singing
 fireworks
 guava

Ava Gabriela
 Tia Nena
 grapes
 Tio Mario
 Papi

Año Viejo
 Abuelita
 family
 guitars
 Mami

buñuelos
 dancing
 Pedro
 yellow
 farm



THANK YOU FOR READING!

For more information, including school visits,
go to <http://alexandraalessandri.com>.

