Title/Author: *René Has Two Last Names* by Rene Colato Lainez

Suggested Time to Spend: 5 Days (Recommendation: two sessions per day, at least 20 minutes per day)

Common Core Grade-level ELA/Literacy Standards: RL.K.1, RL.K.2, RL.K.3, RL.K.4, RL.K.7, RL.K.10; W.K.2, W.K.8; SL.K.1, SL.K.2, SL.K.5, SL.K.6; L.K.1, L.K.2, L.K.4

Lesson Objective:

Students will listen to an illustrated read aloud of *René Has Two Last Names,* and use literacy skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) to demonstrate their understanding of the Big Idea.

Teacher Instructions

**Before the Lesson**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis below. **Please do not read this to the students**. This is a description to help you prepare to teach the book and be clear about what you want your children to take away from the work.

Big Ideas/Key Understandings/Focusing Question

René is determined to keep his cultural identity of two last names. Through the reading of this book, students will gain an understanding of the Hispanic cultural tradition of taking both last names and consider how their families make up their cultural identity. Students will develop an awareness of and appreciation for cultures different from their own.

Focusing question: Why is it so important to René that people use both his last names?

Synopsis

René moves from El Salvador to the United States with his family. When he goes to school, René is confused why his teacher only uses one of his last names on his name tag. He had two last names, but all of his friends at school had only one last name. While playing soccer, some of his classmates make fun of his last name, calling it “long dinosaur name.” René does not get upset, but, rather, is determined to explain the important of both his last names to his teacher and friends. This begins a journey into the Hispanic cultural tradition of using both last names as René unveils the origin of his two last names, Lainez and Colato. By the end of the story, Rene’s classmates have a new appreciation for his long name, and so does the reader. This book is an autobiography of the author’s experience when he came to the United States when he was young.

1. Go to the last page of the lesson and review “What Makes this Read-Aloud Complex.” This was created for you as part of the lesson and will give you guidance about what the lesson writers saw as the sources of complexity or key access points for this book. You will of course evaluate text complexity with your own students in mind, and make adjustments to the lesson pacing and even the suggested activities and questions.
2. Read the entire book, adding your own insights to the understandings identified. Also note the stopping points for the text-inspired questions and activities. *Hint: you may want to copy the questions vocabulary words and activities over onto sticky notes so they can be stuck to the right pages for each day’s questions and vocabulary work.*

The Lesson – Questions, Activities, and Tasks

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| --- | --- |
| **Questions/Activities/Vocabulary/Tasks** | **Expected Outcome or Response (for each)** |
| FIRST READING:  Read aloud the entire book with minimal interruptions. Stop to provide word meanings or clarify only when you know the majority of your students will be confused. | The goal here is for students to enjoy the book, both writing and pictures, and to experience it as a whole. This will give them some context and sense of completion before they dive into examining the parts of the book more carefully. |
| SECOND READING:  *The second and third reading with this text focus on better understanding Rene as a character. Students will revisit the text, looking closely at what Rene says and does and how that helps the reader learn about him.*  Read page 1  Read the first sentence, “On the first day at my new school…”  What does this tell us about René?  The text says Rene thinks his teacher wrote one name because her pen ran out of ink. Do you agree? Does anyone think they know a different reason that explains why the teacher writes only one last name on his name tag? *Note: this question draws from students’ possible background knowledge. You may want to provide this information if students do not know it, and consider ways to address the unique and special stories of names in your classroom.*  What were his two last names?  Read page 3.  Where did René and his family live before they moved to the United States?  Why do you think René called his name a happy song? What does that mean?  \*Activity: Think Pair Share  Students will turn to a partner and share why they think René called his name a happy song. Teacher will call on several students to share with the whole group.   * EL Note: This is crucial for English Learners. The more opportunities they must listen and speak about the text, the greater their understanding will be.   What is a guiro? What are maracas?  How was the song different when René came to the United States?  What other things were probably different when René came to the United States? *Note: if students’ have personal experience with moving from another country/culture, this would be a good time for students to make connections to Rene’s experiences that help them to better understand this story.*  Read page 5.  Why did he think of his grandparents when he wrote his two last names?  Read the sentence, “René Colato looked incomplete.”  What does incomplete mean? Why did René say this?  The author says “it was like a hamburger without the meat or a pizza without cheese…” what does this mean?  Read page 7.  What happened at recess?  Why do you think the boys compared his name to a dinosaur, an anaconda, and a whale?  How do you think this made René feel?  How do you know?  Read page 9.  A pupusa is a traditional Salvadoran dish made of a thick, corn tortilla that is usually filled with meat and cheese. Horchata is a milky drink made from rice. Why do you think René and his family were eating these things?  What does René tell his parents about his school day?  What did Papa mean when he said that “Lainez” was in Rene’s heart? | Possible Responses:  In the text, it says, “new school,” so we know that René is going to a new school that he has never been to before.  The teacher only writes one last name on the name tag because that is the tradition here in the United States, to only take one last name, frequently (though not always) last name of your father.  Colato and Lainez  They lived in El Salvador.  He called his name a happy song because he loved his name and it made him happy like a song makes him happy. He liked the way his name sounded, just like he liked the way a happy song sounded.  A guiro is a percussion instrument made from a hollow gourd with holes cut into one side. It is played by rubbing a stick along the notches to make sound.  Maracas are percussion instruments made from a gourd or gourd-shaped container filled with dried beans or similar objects and played in pairs by being shaken.  \*Teacher may choose to show students pictures/video of the guiro and maracas for students to see as they learn the Spanish vocabulary in the book.  The song lost the guiros, maracas, and drums.  The weather, his school, his friends, his house, the food they eat, the language they spoke are all things that were probably different in El Salvador.  He thought of his grandparents because that is where his two last names come from, his grandparents. That is where our last names come from as well.  Incomplete means not having all the necessary parts.  René said this because he was used to writing both last names, so seeing just one did not look complete.  The author says this to help us understand just how incomplete René felt his name was with only one last name. Writing this way helps make the reading more fun, and it also helps the reader understand what the author is saying.  René was playing soccer with some boys in his class. The boys laughed at him and made fun of his long name.  They used these animals because all of these animals are long, like his name.  René did not like being made fun of. He did not like the boys laughing at him. We can look at the illustration on page 8 to see that he is not laughing. His face does not look happy.  Horchata and pupusas are traditional Salvadoran foods.  René tells his parents that at school they call him René Colato, not René Colato Lainez.  He meant that even though they were not calling him Lainez at school, René still knew his last name was Colato Lainez and that was the important thing. |
| THIRD READING:  *Continued from day 2*  Read page 11.  What happened in his dream?  The author says, “I dreamed my last name Lainez had disappeared from my life.” What does disappeared mean?  Read the sentence beginning with “I looked everywhere….” What does Abuela mean? Abuelo? How can you tell?  Why did René have this dream?  \*Activity: Think Pair Share  Students will turn to a partner and share why they think Rene had the dream. Teacher will call on several students to share with the whole group.   * EL Note: This is crucial for English learners. The more opportunities they have to listen and speak about the text, the greater their understanding will be.   What does René mean when he wakes up and says, “I cannot lose Lainez again!”?  Read page 13.  What is a family tree?  Who are relatives?  Miss Soria tells the students to “be creative,” what does “creative” mean?  Why was René confused about the school project at first?  How is René feeling about the class project now? How do you know?  Read page 17.  Earlier in the text, the teacher tells the students to “be creative.” How was René creative with his school project?  \*Activity: Think Pair Share  Students will turn to a partner and share why they think he was creative. Teacher will call on several students to share with the whole group.   * EL Note: This is crucial for English learners. The more opportunities they have to listen and speak about the text, the greater their understanding will be.   Read page 27.  What changed about the way the other students felt about René’s name? What made them change?  How is René feeling at the end of the story? | René dreamt that all of his relatives on his mom’s side of the family disappeared and were gone.  Disappeared means to be lost or go missing.  Abuela is the Spanish word for grandmother, abuelo is the Spanish word for grandfather. We can tell because Rene explains that they are part of his Papa’s family and Mama’s family.  René had this dream because at school people only called him by one of his last names. They didn’t call him by his mother’s last name.  René means that he does not want to only be called by his father’s last name. He does not want to forget about his mother’s side of the family.  A family tree is a diagram that shows the relationship between people in several generations of a family.  Relatives are members of a family.  Creative means to use your imagination to make something new.  He thought she was talking about real trees, like the mango and avocado trees his family had in El Salvador.  René is excited to make his family tree for his school project. He has a smile on his face, and the text says, “I know what I will do for my school project!”  René was creative by using leaves and pictures for his family tree. He used his imagination to make it more interesting than just drawing the tree and pictures.    At first, the students laughed at René and made fun of him for having two last names. After learning more about his family, they told him his name was “wonderful.” They changed because René explained why it was important for them to use both of his last names.  René is so happy that his friends know why he has two last names. They do not think it is funny or strange anymore, they think it is great. His teacher also said that he will now be called René Colato Lainez. |
| FOURTH AND BEYOND:  *The purpose of today’s reading is to better understand what we learn about the other family members in Rene’s family. Students will trace the family’s background and what we learn about them. This will also help students understand the family structure the tree reveals.*  Read page 19-21.  What do we learn about René’s father’s family from the family tree?  Teacher will make a T chart to chart each side of the family.  Example:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Colato | Lainez | |  |  |   Questions to ask during charting:  What is a potter?  Read the sentence: “He plants and harvests fruits and vegetables.” What does it mean to harvest?  Why do you think it is important that Abuelo René never gives up?  Read page 23.  What do we learn about René’s mother’s family from his family tree?  \*Teacher will add to T chart  Questions to ask during charting:  What does a poet do?  The text says, “she has won many trophies and medals.” What does this tell you about Abuela Angela?  Read page 25.  How is René similar to his grandparents?  Let’s look at the author’s name… What do you notice about the author’s name?  \*Read author’s note in the back of the book and discuss how the book is an autobiography, the author wrote this about his own personal experience coming to the United States. | Students will recall the details of René’s father’s family and teacher will add to the T chart.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Colato | Lainez | | Abuela Amelia is a potter.  Abuelo Rene is a farmer.  They work hard.  They do not give up. |  |   A potter is someone who makes objects out of clay.  When you harvest, you collect all the crops that are ready to be picked.  When you are a farmer, you have to be patient and not give up even when the seeds take a long time and a lot of hard work to grow. If he gave up, the seeds wouldn’t grow.  Students will recall the details of René’s father’s family and teacher will add to the T chart.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Colato | Lainez | | Abuela Amelia is a potter.  Abuelo Rene is a farmer. | Abuela Angela was a dancer.  Abuelo Julio is a poet. |   A poet is someone who writes poems.  She is a very good dancer. Other people think she is great too, which is why she has won trophies and medals.    He is hard working like Abuelo René, and is as creative as Abuela Amelia. He can tell wonderful stories like Abuelo Julio, and enjoys music like Abuela Angela.  The author has the exact same name as the boy in the book. |

FINAL DAY WITH THE BOOK - Culminating Task

* Conduct a shared writing task which the class will answer the following question:

Why was it so important to René that people used both his last names?

First, break students into groups of 2-3. Give them the prompt and let them discuss in their small groups. After several minutes, bring the class together to share their ideas and craft a response. As students dictate sentence, have them identify the starting place, initial capitalization, spelling the words aloud, using fingers to make spaces, and use end punctuation. If possible, share the pen with the students and let them come up and write the beginning letter/sight word/punctuation.

* The following questions can be used to illicit student responses for the sharing writing:
  + In the beginning of the story, what did we learn about René?
  + Why does René have two last names?
  + What was so special about his two last names?
  + What did we learn about René in this story?
  + Which side of his family did he keep feeling like he was losing?
  + How do the other students at school change from the beginning of the story to the end of the story?

Español:

* ¿Por qué era tan importante para René que la gente usara sus dos apellidos?

Preguntas:

* Al comienzo de la historia, ¿qué aprendimos sobre René?
* ¿Por qué René tiene dos apellidos?
* ¿Qué fue tan especial sobre sus dos apellidos?
* ¿Qué aprendimos sobre René en esta historia?
* ¿De qué lado de su familia seguía sintiendo que estaba perdiendo?
* ¿Cómo cambian los otros estudiantes en la escuela desde el comienzo de la historia hasta al final de la historia?

Vocabulary

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| **These words merit less time and attention**  (They are concrete and easy to explain, or describe events/  processes/ideas/concepts/experiences that are familiar to your students ) | **These words merit more time and attention**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, and/or are a part  of a large family of words with related meanings. These words are likely to describe events, ideas, processes or experiences that most of your student will be unfamiliar with) |
| Page 3 – cha cha cha – a Latin American dance  Page 3 – guiro - a percussion instrument made out of a hollow gourd with holes cut into one side  Page 3- maracas- percussion instruments made out of a gourd or gourd-shaped container filled with dried beans  Page 7- anaconda- a type of snake  Page 9- pupusa- a traditional Salvadoran dish made of a think, corn tortilla that is filled with meat and cheese  Page 9 – horchata- a milky drink made from rice  Page 13- relatives- members of a family  Page 15 – chest- a large strong box used for storage  Page 19 – present- appear formally in front of other people  Page 21- potter- someone who makes objects out of clay  Page 21- harvest- to collect the crops that are ready to be picked | Page 5 – incomplete- not having all the necessary parts  Page 11 – disappeared – to be lost or go missing  Page 13 – creative - to use your imagination to make something new  Page 21 – delicate – easily broken or damaged |

Fun Extension Activities for this book and other useful Resources

* Math: Graph names- Have the students write their last names. Together as a class, sort the names from shortest to longest, etc.
* I Am Different: Ask students to think about how they are different from one another. (Kindergarteners may notice mostly physical characteristics, encourage them to go deeper) Pass out drawing paper and have the students draw a picture that shows what they are proud of. Encourage them to use speech bubbles.
* Home/School Connection: Family Tree- Students can research their own family by asking their parents questions and then bring in a family tree to share with the class, just like René did in the book.
* Name Game: As an opener or as a brain break, sing the name game with the students. There are many options, but here is an example: Willabee Wallabee - Here’s a good chant for rhyming. Substitute the first sound in each child’s name with a /w/.

“Willabee wallabee Wohn. An elephant sat on John. Willabee wallabee Wue. An elephant sat on Sue.”

Note to Teacher

If you have students in your class who are of Hispanic origin, this book will be a great connection for them. They may even have two last names like René had. Capitalize on these opportunities to engage these students and build a stronger classroom community that is accepting of all cultural backgrounds.

**What Makes This Read-Aloud Complex?**

1. **Quantitative Measure**

Go to <http://www.lexile.com/> and enter the title of your read-aloud in the Quick Book Search in the upper right of home page. Most texts will have a Lexile measure in this database.

Most of the texts that we read aloud in K-2 should be in the 2-3 or 4-5 band, more complex than the students can read themselves.

2-3 band 420-820L

4-5 band 740-1010L

590 L

1. **Qualitative Features**

Consider the four dimensions of text complexity below. For each dimension\*, note specific examples from the text that make it more or less complex.

Implicit meaning/purpose.

Rene is determined to explain the importance of using both his last names. Determination helps us overcome the obstacles and challenges we may face in our lives.

The text is an autobiography. Understanding this offers a deeper understanding of the text.

“Rene Colato Lainez came to the United States from El Salvador as a teen, and he writes about his experiences in children’s books…” –Author’s Bio in back of book

Figurative language

“It was like a hamburger without the meat…”

Domain specific vocabulary: guiros, maracas, pupsa, horchata

The text draws on knowledge of the Hispanic tradition of taking both of your parents’ last names, in contrast to the more typical American custom of using one last name. The text also assumes some knowledge of family units and how they make up a family tree.

**Meaning/Purpose**

**Structure**

**Language**

**Knowledge Demands**

1. **Reader and Task Considerations**

What will challenge my students most in this text? What supports can I provide?

The concept of determination is abstract, which will challenge the students to identify it within the text independently. Students will need connections here to their own lives to help make the concept more tangible. They will need explicit think aloud modeling from the teacher to uncover this meaning fully.

How will this text help my students build knowledge about the world?

The idea of determination and patience in problem solving is a skill that students should learn about and then apply to their everyday lives. Gaining information about a culture or tradition different than one’s own helps create an appreciation for diversity and a cultural sensitivity that is crucial in the world we live in today.

1. **Grade level** What grade does this book best belong in? Kindergarten