



Resource Guide: *Pepita and the Camino Real*

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Overview

Pepita is a proud little dog with a big job! She travels the long Camino Real from Mexico City to a church in Tomé, New Mexico, with her beloved master, Father Gilbert. But as the days grow hotter and the land turns dry, their water runs out. Pepita knows she must help, but how? She bravely wanders into the unknown, where she meets a surprising new friend. A giant Sandhill Crane with a secret to share.

Pepita and the Camino Real, a warm, adventurous tale about faith, friendship, and finding help in unexpected places, will have young readers cheering all the way home.

Learning Goals

- Build reading comprehension through prediction, sequencing, and retelling
- Practice new vocabulary in context
- Explore themes of bravery, kindness, and problem-solving
- Connect story events to students' own experiences

Before Reading (5-10 minutes)

- **Picture Walk:** Show the cover and a few illustrations. Ask:
 - o What do you notice first?
 - o Who might Pepita be? What clues do you see?
 - o Where do you think the story takes place?
- **Predict:** Have students complete the sentence: “I think Pepita will...”
- **Background Connection:** Briefly explain that a *camino* can mean a path or journey

During Reading (10-15 minutes)

Pause occasionally for quick check-ins:

· **Stop & Think Questions**

- o What is Pepita trying to do right now?
 - o What problem is happening?
 - o What would you do in Pepita’s place?
- **Notice Feelings:** Ask students to point to a picture and name how Pepita might feel (excited, worried, proud, surprised)

After Reading (10-20 minutes)

Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the main character? What do we learn about them?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. What is the biggest problem in the story?
4. How does Pepita solve the problem (or try to)?
5. What lesson do you think Pepita learns?

Retell Activity (Sequencing)

Have students draw or write **3-5** events in order:

- Beginning: Pepita...
- Middle: Pepita...
- End: Pepita...

Vocabulary (Choose 4–6 words)

Pick words from the text that match your class level. Suggested categories:

- **Journey words:** path, travel, explore, map
- **Character words:** brave, curious, careful, helpful

Quick Practice:

- Act it out (charades)
- Use it in a sentence
- Draw a quick picture of the word

Discussion: Themes & Social-Emotional Learning

- **Bravery:** What does it mean to be brave? Can you be brave and still feel scared?
- **Kindness:** How do characters help each other?
- **Problem-Solving:** What choices did Pepita make? What other choices were possible?

Extension Activities

- **Create a Map:** Students draw a simple map of Pepita’s journey with 3–5 labeled stops
- **Animal Research Mini-Poster:** Choose an animal from the story (or a similar one). Include:
 - o Habitat
 - o Food
 - o One interesting fact
- **Write a New Scene:** “What happens next?” Students write 3–5 sentences or dictate to an adult
- **Art:** Watercolor or crayon illustration of a favorite moment with a caption

Differentiation

- **Support:** Provide sentence starters and allow oral retells
- **Challenge:** Ask students to write from Pepita’s point of view using “I…” statements

Family Connection

Send home one prompt:

- “Ask your child to tell you about Pepita’s journey and one brave choice Pepita made.”

