

P.O.V.'s Borders: Leaving Elsa – Discussion Questions for Classroom Use

JOURNAL #1 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. From the plate sale, what do we learn about Cecilia's family?
2. When Cecilia sits for her diary, what emotions does she seem to convey?
3. Where do you think these emotions are coming from?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. Do you think it's good at that age to already have a plan for what you want out of life?
2. Do you think it's a bad thing to question or change that plan?
3. Gilbert says "it terrifies me that I'm not exactly sure what I want." What are your thoughts about your future? Is there anything that "terrifies" you?

Kate Gandara watch video...

1. What do we learn about Kate from this clip?
2. What do we think of the advice Kate gets from her young students? ("Date everyone!", "Only date guys who love you," "Don't date guys with tongue rings")
3. If someone has a strong community in a place they are comfortable with, and are surrounded by people they love, do you think it's a good thing or a bad thing for them to leave that place?

JOURNAL #2 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. What do we learn about Cecilia's life in Elsa from this clip?
2. Why do you think she says she is happy to leave Elsa?
3. Why would leaving help her get a "fresh start"?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. How do you think that senior year is different from any other year?
2. What would you miss most about your life right now if it were to change completely in a few months from now?

Kate Gandara watch video...

1. What do you think of her new dorm? Were you surprised by anything? Would you be happy living there?

2. What emotions do you think you will be feeling the first day away from home? Would your reactions be the same or different than Kate's?

JOURNAL #3 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. How does Cecilia find strength in difficult situations?
2. Where do other people draw strength from in similar situations?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. Is a 17-years-old too young to be looking back at his or her own life?
2. From watching the diary, how does it seem like it has affected Gilbert to grow up without a father?
3. Gilbert's friends encouraged him to seek out his father. What advice would you give a young person in a similar situation?

Kate Gandara watch video...

1. How would you characterize Kate's attitude toward being in college?
2. What advice would you give someone like her who is trying to find their place in the social scenes in college?

JOURNAL #4 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. What is your impression of the campus? How is it different than you expected or different than high school?
2. Cecilia says "I'm honestly hanging in there a lot better than I thought I had it in me." What qualities do you think Cecilia has that helps her get through challenging situations?
3. What qualities do you draw on to get through tough situations?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. Gilbert says "It's also about me and a lot of self doubt" Is this kind of self-doubt a good thing or a bad thing? Can anything be done about it? What do you do about it?
2. Do you think its fair for a teacher to tell Gilbert that he's not allowed to think that he could go to Brown? What advise would you give that teacher?

Kate Gandara watch video...

1. How would you deal with such a huge amount of reading and writing? What do you think are the most important study skills that one needs to cope with so much work?
2. How is health related to success in college?
3. Which extra-curricular activity are you most excited about being involved with at college?

JOURNAL #5 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. Coming from a rural town in south Texas, does Cecilia seem at-home or out-of-place in New York?
2. Are there challenges in college that you didn't expect? What do you think will be the biggest challenge for you in college? Why?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. Describe Gilbert's realization this week.
2. How do people find their own path in life?
3. What steps could people take to help them find a path that's right for them?

Kate Gandara watch video...

1. How do you feel when you meet someone who grew up in the same place where you grew up?
2. What's more important in college: getting all your school work done or experiencing the places, events, and activities around you? How are you going to prioritize your time in college?

JOURNAL #6 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. What's your favorite way to procrastinate?
2. When you go to college, do you feel you should have to read ancient Greek philosophers?
3. Now that Cecilia's in college, do you think she should focus on her own future or should she be trying to help out her family back home?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. Gilbert is trying to cherish the moments with his friends in his last year of high school. What is a favorite moment you've had with friends in the last year?

2. Gilbert says that the greatest challenge is that "youth aren't inspired." What do you think are the biggest challenges facing youth today?
3. How could today's youth be more inspired?

Kate Gandara watch video...

1. Would you ever join a sorority or fraternity?
2. Why do you think groups have a "pledge" process? What do they accomplish?
3. When do you think hazing is okay and when is it not okay?

JOURNAL #7 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. What do we learn about Cecilia from her box of stuff?
2. What are your most precious objects? Do you have objects that are attached to certain memories?
3. What do you think of Cecilia "turning the camera" on the New York Times reporter? What does that say about her personality?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. Do you think Gilbert stressed too much about the SAT?
2. Gilbert says that it's "like therapy" to get advice from friends and give advice to friends. What do you think he means by this?
3. What advice would you give Gilbert in his situation?

Kate Gandara watch video...

1. What questions would you want to ask Kate about the sorority pledging process?
2. After watching the video journals over seven weeks, how would you compare or contrast the three characters' experiences at school this fall?

JOURNAL #8 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. What do you think are some of the challenges of dating in college? When is it a good idea and when is it not a good idea?
2. Why do you think Cecilia likes hanging out in McDonalds?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. Do you think it was an important moment for Gilbert to meet Al Gore (even if Gilbert's not a Democrat)?

2. Do you think it's worth missing school to go to a conference like that? Why?
3. Why would it a conference on leadership think it's important to include young people like Gilbert? What perspective would young people offer?

Kate Gandara watch video...

1. What would you do to keep from getting sick in college?
2. How would you describe Kate's decorating style?
3. Would you consider Kate to be "boy crazy"?

JOURNAL #9 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. Do you think you'd be able to handle that much work in one week? Where would you draw your strength from?
2. Why do you think it's important for Cecilia that people stick by her right now?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. Why do you think Gilbert is so attached to the moments of his senior year?
2. If you're a senior, are you reacting in a similar way to Gilbert regarding the issues of your last high school year? If you're going to be a senior, do you predict that you'll react in a similar way to Gilbert?

Kate Gandara watch video...

1. Why do you think Kate dropped her sorority?
2. Were you surprised she dropped her sorority? Why?
3. If Kate didn't see herself fitting into the sorority, where do you think she will find her place in college? What kind of people do you expect to see her hanging out with over the next four years?

JOURNAL #10 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza watch video...

1. Why do you think Cecilia took out her lip piercing?
2. Why would getting kicked in the head count as stress relief?
3. How would you describe Cecilia's approach to dealing with stress?

Gilbert Perales watch video...

1. What do you think of Gilbert's theory that "In School Suspension" is something everyone should try once in a while?

2. What's keeping Gilbert from starting his Brown application if it's so important to him?
3. How would you feel if you life were on the Web each week? Would it be "embarrassing" or would it help you reflect on yourself? What other things do people do to reflect on their own lives?

Kate Gandara [watch video...](#)

1. Why do you think Kate enjoys acting?
2. Why would it be important for kate to "explore one side of her personality" or to "be someone else for a while"?
3. What do you think Kate will do with this interest in theater?

JOURNAL #11 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza [watch video...](#)

1. Does Cecilia's school seem diverse? Is a diverse student population important to you in choosing a school?
2. How does it seem to be affecting Cecilia to have her life on the Internet?

Gilbert Perales [watch video...](#)

1. Do you think Llano Grande is a good place for Gilbert to grow and learn? What specific things from his footage makes you think one way or the other?
2. Do you think Gilbert coped well with his SAT scores? Do you think he should take his scores more or less seriously?

Kate Gandara [watch video...](#)

1. What does Kate get out of modern dance? Why do you think she's now more interested in a dance that's more "emotional" and "free" than ballet?
2. Does Kate seem sad her mother couldn't make her performance?

JOURNAL #12 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza [watch video...](#)

1. Why would Ceci take out all her old clothing and jewelry and dress the way she use to in Texas? Can you identify with this urge?
2. Do you agree that she's the "Same old Ceci" or do you think she seems different from the old Ceci who used to regularly dress that way?
3. Does Ceci seem to have a different energy when she's sitting in the park? Where are the places you "run away to"?

Gilbert Perales [watch video...](#)

1. What is causing Gilbert to procrastinate on his applications? What advice would you give him to overcome his obstacles?
2. Why would it be "liberating" for Gilbert to care less about his school work? Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?
3. What does he mean when he says "It's about understanding yourself as a person and understanding friends"? Do you agree that these things are important during your senior year?

Kate Gandara [watch video...](#)

1. Why didn't Kate pledge for the sorority? Does she seem sad?
2. What are the important factors in making that kind of a decision?
3. Why do you think Kate gets along so well with her roommate? What qualities are most important for you in a roommate?

JOURNAL #13 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Cecilia Garza [watch video...](#)

1. Does Cecilia seem to have a good Thanksgiving? Does she seem to have problems fitting in to new situations?
2. How has Cecilia changed over the last 2 months?
3. How does she approach life's challenges differently than the other characters?

Gilbert Perales [watch video...](#)

1. Why would Gilbert express more to the camera than he would to his friends?
2. How do you think doing the diaries has affected him?
3. How has Gilbert changed over the series?
4. How does he deal with life's challenges differently than the other characters?

Kate Gandara [watch video...](#)

1. Were you surprised to hear about the turmoil in her family? Can you relate to her not wanting to think about it too much, or do you think it's better to think about those kinds of things more?
2. How has Kate changed over the 13 weeks?
3. How does she deal with life's challenges differently than other characters?

WRAP-UP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which character do you relate to most? Why?
2. What do you think are each character's greatest strengths?
3. What do you predict the characters will be doing in 10 years?
4. What did you learn about the challenges of college that surprised you?
5. If you could ask questions to any of the characters, what would they be?