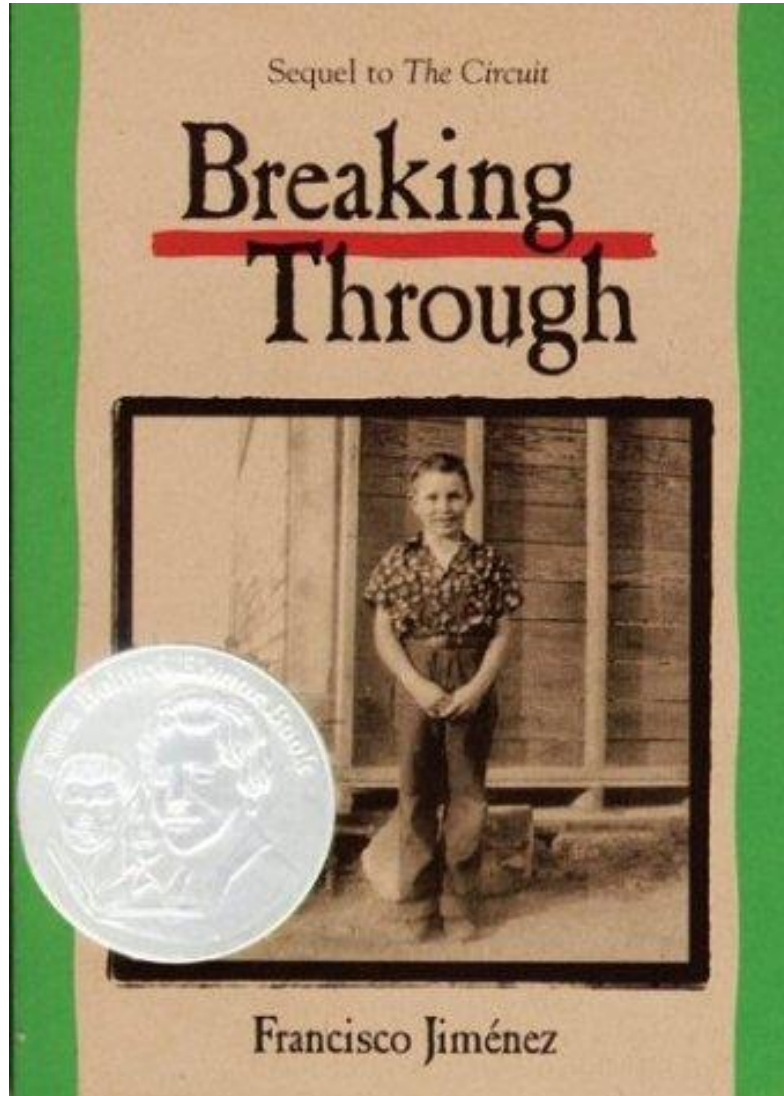


Breaking Through: Study Packet



Breaking Through: Character Notes

Note: One strategy that research proves is one of the most effective strategies for increasing reading comprehension is to take notes while reading. For this reason, we have provided the following list of important characters that appear throughout the book followed by a large, empty space that we would recommend be used for taking notes as you read. One strategy could be to list every important description of these characters, any time you figure something out about these characters, and any important event that involves these characters. These notes are recommended, but not required, but as an incentive to take good notes and to keep up on them, they will be permitted to be used on one or two "open notes" tests that will occur throughout this book.

Francisco (nickname: Panchito): narrator and author

Mama (Jaoquina)

Papa (Francisco, Sr.)

Roberto (nickname: Toto): Francisco’s older brother

Jose (nickname: Trampita): Francisco’s younger brother

Juan Manuel (nickname: Torito): Francisco’s younger brother

Avelina (nickname: Rorra): Francisco’s younger sister

Other Characters: Any other character that is named in the book and seems significant for any reason can be added to your notes in the spaces below.

Character's Name: _____

Notes on character: _____

Character's Name: _____

Notes on character: _____

Character's Name: _____

Notes on character: _____

Character's Name: _____

Notes on character: _____

Character's Name: _____

Notes on character: _____

Character's Name: _____

Notes on character: _____

Character's Name: _____

Notes on character: _____

Character's Name: _____

Notes on character: _____

Character's Name: _____

Notes on character: _____

Breaking Through: Comprehension Questions

Note: Unless assigned as a mandatory quarterly project, the following comprehension questions are designed for *optional* study support. If students want to be proactive about preparing for tests or if they are struggling on the comprehension tests, it would be a good idea to complete the questions below prior to taking the comprehension tests. The questions generally focus on the most important content of the reading, so they can help the students to identify the big ideas. While the questions can be useful study material, they will not relate to every detail that will appear on the tests.

Some ideas for using the comprehension questions to support studying:

- Since the questions follow the reading selections sequentially, students can use the questions to guide their reading by reading one question at a time and reading the book until they find the answers, thus answering the questions as they read.
- Students can use the questions to test their comprehension by answering them after reading the selection.
- Students can read the material independently and use the questions for discussion with a study peer or at-home reading partner. This works well for students who study with friends or students who have parents, guardians, older siblings, or tutors that want to read the materials along with them.

Chapter 1 -- "Forced Out"

1. Why does Francisco say that he was constantly afraid between the ages of four and fourteen?
2. What was the main reason that Francisco did not want to return to Mexico?
3. When Francisco is picked up at school by immigration officials, why is the situation ironic?
4. How do the differing attitudes of Mama and Papa about their deportation and uncertain future show through in their observations of nopales cacti?
5. How does the family travel back to Mexico after reaching the immigration office?
6. Francisco takes a rock from the motel office and then returns it. What does this action tell the reader about his character?
7. Why is it good news for the family when they are granted an immigrant visa?
8. Is it a good decision to send Roberto (a high school student) and Francisco (a middle school student) back to Santa Maria to live and work by themselves? Why or why not? Do you think this situation still happens today?
9. Why does Francisco cry after he boards the bus and sees a little boy on his father's lap?

Chapter 2 -- "Home Alone"

1. What is a bedpan? Why does the family have to use one at night?
2. Francisco and Roberto wake up early to do household chores every morning before going to school. What does this tell you about their character?
3. Roberto loses his job as a janitor at the school, which forces the brothers to leave school and return to the fields. Why do both brothers see this as a hopeless turn of events?
4. When Roberto and Francisco are invited out to dinner, why is this an important and somewhat stressful event? How is this occasion different for them than it is for you?
5. After Roberto gets his job back cleaning the school, what is the daily routine like for the Jimenez brothers? Do you think there are still kids with similar responsibilities and daily lives in Mason today? How does this compare with your responsibilities and daily life?

Chapter 3 -- "Stepping Out"

1. How does school help Francisco deal with his loneliness?
2. In what ways do Francisco and Roberto try to live up to their father's saying "If you respect others, they will respect you"?
3. What does his Elvis impersonation tell the reader about Francisco's personality?
4. What does Francisco do at his first dance to make sure that he and his brother will be respected the next time they go?
5. Why does Francisco feel uncomfortable when his friend Peggy wants to show him her room?
6. Why do you think Peggy starts to ignore and avoid Francisco after she has asked him to walk her home from school? What is Francisco's reaction to her ostracism?

Chapter 4 -- "Together Again"

1. Why do you think that Roberto and Francisco spend so much time fixing up and decorating their home before their family arrives?
2. What are the religious beliefs of the Jimenez family? Why is faith so important to them?

Chapter 5 -- "Back to the Fields"

1. Why does Papa decide to become a sharecropper? How does this decision ultimately affect him? How does it affect his family?
2. Why does Papa not want Roberto and Francisco to attend the dance?

Chapter 6 -- "Saint Christopher Medal"

1. Francisco writes a creative journal about a fictitious journey through the solar system and earns a grade of A+. Why is this a particularly amazing accomplishment?
2. What does Papa's gift of a used religious medal tell about his feelings toward Francisco?
3. Why do you think that Francisco's parents do not attend his graduation?

Chapter 7 -- "Summer Skirmishes"

1. Why does the Jimenez family take such pains to prepare for Mr. Ito's weekly visit? What are the different ways that they try to demonstrate respect for him?
2. Based on his paycheck, how many hours per day does Papa usually work, typically working at least 6 days a week? Do you think that his wage of \$1 per hour is reasonable for picking strawberries? What wage would you require per hour to pick strawberries all day long?
3. Why does Mr. Ito not tell Papa about Francisco's behavior in the fields?
4. What does the goldfish-selling venture tell you about the character of the Jimenez children?
5. Why is it a big deal that Papa cuts Francisco's hair?

Chapter 8 -- "Becoming a Saint"

1. What assumptions does the school counselor, Mr. Kinkade, first make about Francisco and his plans for the future? Do you think Mr. Kinkade is justified in his thinking? Why or why not?
2. Unlike his classmates, why is Francisco so excited about having to take a shower in gym class?
3. What does Francisco's reaction to the social studies movie tell about his character?
4. What is Francisco's overall attitude toward high school? How does his attitude compare with the attitude of high school students that you know?

Chapter 9 -- "If the Shoe Fits"

1. How does having his gym shoes lost or stolen affect Francisco? How does the loss affect his family? If you were to lose your gym shoes, would you be affected similarly?
2. Compared with other chapters in this book, "If the Shoe Fits" is one of the shortest. Why do you think the author decided to include it?

Chapter 10 -- "A Promotion"

1. What are the reasons for Papa's nearly constant bad mood? Does he deserve to feel this way? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think Mike Nevel hires Roberto and Francisco on the spot?
3. Why does Francisco not touch the cookies until the sign says, "Janitor, please help yourself"?

Chapter 11 -- "A Typing Machine"

1. What need does Mr. Twitchel see in Francisco that causes him to sell him the typewriter and new ribbon for five dollars instead of just giving it to him? Why is this observation important?

Chapter 12 -- "Making Connections"

1. What are some of the reasons that Francisco has difficulty with reading and writing in English, besides the fact that his native language is Spanish?
2. Why do you think his English teacher, Miss Bell, gives Francisco the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* to read?
3. Have you ever had the same experience as Francisco connecting with a book? What exactly do you think he learned from reading this book?

Chapter 13 -- "Broken Heart"

1. What does this story tell you about stereotyping and prejudice?
2. Does rejection like Roberto experiences still happen today, more than fifty years later? Why or why not?

Chapter 14 -- "Behind the Wheel"

1. Why does Roberto allow Francisco to ride with him to school in his car?
2. Why do you think the two brothers are always helping each other, even at great personal sacrifice? Do you have a similar relationship with your siblings or know someone who does? What is the driving force behind such a close relationship?

Chapter 15 -- "Turning a Page"

1. What are the things that Francisco worries about with regard to college? Do you think these are the same things that other kids worried about then? What do you think you will worry about as you prepare for college?
2. Why is this chapter called "Turning a Page"? Is Francisco only talking about turning the page in the American History book, or could he be describing something else entirely?

Chapter 16 -- "Los Santitos"

1. How is Francisco's suggestion to collect food donations for needy families ironic?
2. What does this decision tell you about how Francisco views his family's situation now?

Chapter 17 -- "Choosing Sides"

1. Francisco describes his surprise when he reads that some voters rejected Kennedy because he was Catholic. Do similar situations still happen today in politics? Give some examples.
2. What is Papa's explanation for why people are prejudiced? Do you think this is true?

Chapter 18 -- "Junior Scandals"

1. What skills and abilities does Francisco show in his decision to participate in the Junior Scandals variety show? Why do you think he decides to perform?

Chapter 19 -- "Running for Office"

1. Why is it important that Francisco meets Paul Tagaki?
2. How would you describe Francisco's way of campaigning and dealing with his competition in the school election? Do you think this a good strategy? Why or why not?

Chapter 20 -- "A New Life"

1. Why does Roberto ask his father's blessing before getting engaged?
2. Why did the author call this chapter "A New Life"? Is he only referring to Roberto, or are there other people with new lives?
3. How does Roberto's decision to marry affect the lives of his entire family?

Chapter 21 -- "A Test of Faith"

1. How do you think Francisco contracted mononucleosis, since he did not have a girlfriend?
2. Why is this disease particularly bad for Francisco and his family?
3. When problems confront the Jimenez family, what do they always rely on to solve them? Why do you think this is their ultimate solution?

Chapter 22 -- "A Fumble"

1. Why is Francisco invited to the Rotary Club luncheon?
2. What do you think of Francisco's reaction when asked to give an impromptu speech? Do you think this reaction is to be expected from him? Why or why not?

Chapter 23 -- "A Breakthrough"

1. Why do you think Mr. Penney goes to extraordinary lengths to help Francisco to apply for college and scholarships?
2. Why do you think Papa reacts to Francisco's desire for college as he does? What are the emotions that Papa must be feeling?
3. Why does Mr. Penney send the Spanish teacher to speak with Papa?

Chapter 24 -- "Graduation Day"

1. Why is it such a big decision for Francisco to apply for a college loan of \$1,000?
2. Why do you think Papa always gets sick on graduation day? Is he really ill or pretending?
3. Papa did not attend Roberto's high school graduation but does attend Francisco's ceremony. This is the first event that he has ever attended. Why do you think he decided to go?

Chapter 25 -- "Still Moving"

1. How does his entire family help Francisco to go off to college successfully?
2. As Francisco drives away toward college in Santa Clara, he sees other migrant workers in the strawberry fields. "I felt sad, then angry" (p. 191). Why do you think Francisco feels sadness and anger on what should be one of the happiest days of his life?
3. Why do you think Mama dreams of living in a house?