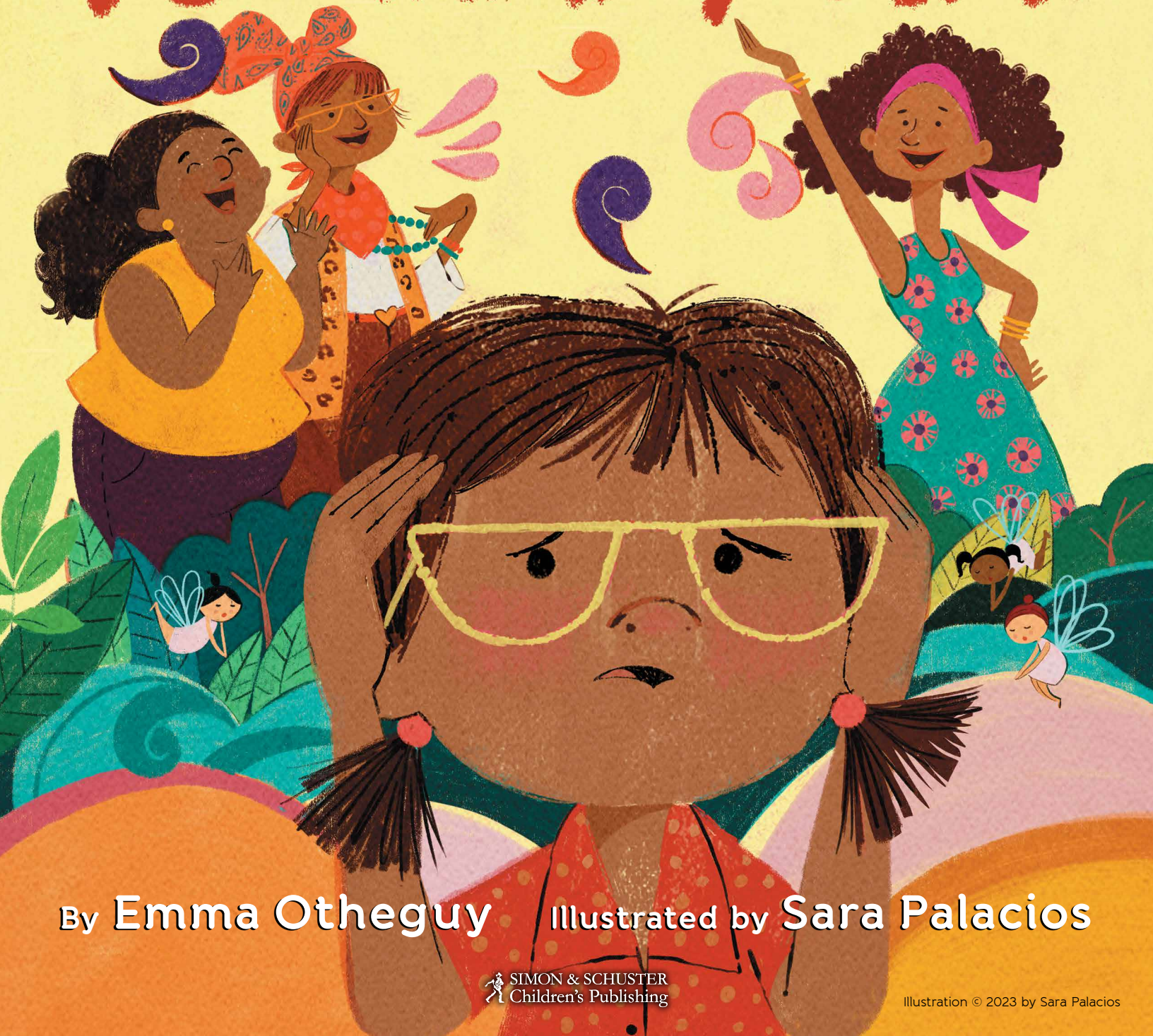


# TEACHING GUIDE

## Martina Has TOO MANY TÍAS



By Emma Otheguy

Illustrated by Sara Palacios

## About the Book

Written by Emma Otheguy and illustrated by Sara Palacios, *Martina Has Too Many Tías* is a sweet story about a quiet girl overwhelmed by her loud and rambunctious family. As Martina searches for a quiet place, she tumbles into a magical land. But she slowly discovers that the place where she is known and loved, even though it's the loudest, is her true home. This is an imaginative retelling of the beloved Cuban and Caribbean folktale “La Cucaracha Martina.”

## Prereading Suggestions

Before reading, it would be helpful to support students in exploring some ideas to ensure comprehension. This allows for them to capture the content and engage with the ideas and discussions more productively.

- ★ **Tías:** This is the Spanish word for “aunt.”  
In this book, Martina has three tías that come to visit. Discuss with students how some families share a lot of time with their extended relatives. It is common, particularly in Latinx communities, for relatives to visit and engage in party-like activities.
- ★ A strength of this story is that it features a Latina character who does not fit a stereotypical depiction of her group. Martina is quiet, appreciates silence, is a storyteller, and enjoys fantasy. Her character is well-developed; therefore, tracing her character arc can help equip students with the knowledge they’ll need to counter stereotypes they might hear in the world around them.
- ★ A folktale is a story originating in popular culture, often passed on by word of mouth. Folklore is typically shared by a particular group of people, and encompasses traditions common to that culture or group. *Martina Has Too Many Tías* is inspired by a popular folktale about The Little Roach, or *La Cucaracha Martina*, which has many iterations and retellings in Cuba and the Caribbean. Before or after reading *Martina Has Too Many Tías*, consider examining and reading other folktales from various cultures, including other retellings of The Little Roach.

## Discussion of Key Ideas and Details

The discussion questions below invite readers to explore key ideas and important details of the story’s plot. These can be questions a teacher engages students with during a read-aloud or afterward as they process together.

1. When the story begins, what news does Martina get from her mother, and how does she feel about it?
2. When the tías come over, how does Martina react?
3. Throughout the book, we notice that Martina likes to do something. What is it? How does storytelling help her discover her home?
4. Martina is searching for something. What is she searching for? When she finds it, what is missing? Why does she then want to return to her loud home?
5. By the end of the book, what does Martina realize about home and her tías?



# Understanding Craft and Structure

By understanding craft and structure, readers can identify elements of the text that help them with comprehension and basic analysis. The discussion topics and corresponding activities below will help students to discuss words they don't know as well as sight words for basic literacy building.

## Vocabulary

- ★ Young readers can benefit from exploring specific words in the text that may be unfamiliar to them. As they're exploring new words, they can use the template below. This work can be done in partners or individually. A suggested list of vocabulary words pulled from the book are below:



- ★ The template invites students to practice writing the word in the first box (top left). In the second box (top right), they can draw an image of what they understand the word to mean. In the bottom section, students can use play dough to re-create appropriate words or build the word with available letters.

Materials needed: this template, crayons, play dough, pencil

## Sight Words

- ★ Both kindergarten students and first graders benefit from exploring sight words and sound blends as the building blocks for literacy growth. *Martina Has Too Many Tías* includes many words that can be used for study. In partners, invite students to browse each page of the book, and write down all the sight or high-frequency words they can identify on each page. After they have collected the list, they can share with another pair and compare their answers. The following template can be used for this exercise.

Materials needed: the book, pencil, this template



**Write the word in this box.**

**Draw a picture of the word.**

**Create the word here.**

SIGHT WORD	PAGE IMAGE

## Extended Activities

- ★ **Storytelling:** Throughout the book, we notice that Martina enjoys storytelling. She thinks of stories at home, and later wants to tell Ratoncito a story. Ask students to sit with partners and dream up a magical story. Then have them switch partners and tell them their magical story. Lastly, have students create a drawing that goes with the story.
- ★ **Folklore:** Martina's journey is a retelling of a popular Cuban and Caribbean folktale, The Little Roach. Explore two to three other retellings of The Little Roach or La Cucaracha Martina, and compare those to *Martina Has Too Many Tías*. Using a Venn Diagram, have students write out the differences and similarities of the retellings. Discuss as a class which elements of the stories are similar, and which elements are very different.
- ★ **Art:** There are many flowers, fruits, and plants featured in the book. Step outside as a class and notice what plants and flowers are in the schoolyard. Invite students to select one that they want to draw. If you want, ask students to write a descriptive sentence or two about the plant or flower they've chosen.
- ★ **Math:** In the story, Martina finds a coin and uses it to buy a daffodil. Turn this into a money-identifying opportunity. Have students identify various bills and coins. Either have images up on a screen or have them look at and touch real money.
- ★ **Food:** Martina falls into a pot and enters a magical land. What drew her to the pot? If possible, bring guava in so students can smell and taste it. It's a popular Caribbean fruit and flavor. There are guava fruits and guava pastes you can try with students.
- ★ **Spanish:** The book features certain words in Spanish. Invite students to stop and focus on those words. Practice saying them aloud. Teachers can consider welcoming a guest speaker who speaks Spanish to say some of those words and more for students. The guests can either share a song in Spanish or practice saying common words with them. This book can be an opportunity for students to be introduced to Spanish in a personal and engaging way.
  - Some of the Spanish words include: tías, salsa, bodega, cuidado, adiós
  - The book is also available in its entirety in Spanish, entitled *Martina tiene muchas tías*

## Paired Readings

Here are some other books teachers can read to explore alongside *Martina Has Too Many Tías*:

- *Martina the Beautiful Cockroach* by Carmen Agra Deedy, illustrated by Michael Austin
- *Welcome to the Island* by Dela Costa, illustrated by Ana Sebastián
- *Bhangra Baby* by Kabir Sehgal and Surishtha Sehgal, illustrated by Ani Bushry
- *Homegrown* by Jeffrey Burton, illustrated by Andrés Landazábal
- *Listen* by Gabi Snyder, illustrated by Stephanie Graegin

Lorena Germán is a Dominican American educator who works with middle and high school students, as well as supporting teachers and schools to ensure best practices in terms of inclusivity and antibias, anti-racist approaches. She has been published by NCTE, ASCD, and EdWeek, and was featured in the New York Times. She's a two-time nationally awarded teacher and is cofounder of #disrupttexts and Multicultural Classroom, and she currently chairs the National Council of Teachers of English's Committee Against Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English.

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