STORYTELLING AT EL MUSEO
Waiting for the Biblioburro

Educator Resource Guide
Grades Pre K-3
Dear Educator,

It’s storytelling time at El Museo!

We are excited to present *STORYTELLING @El Museo. Waiting for the Biblioburro*, by author Monica Brown and illustrator John Parra, is the first book of our Storytelling program.

In this story, Ana is a girl that loves stories, but has read all the books available in her small village. One day, she receives a very special visit: two donkeys carrying a collection of books and a man, the BiblioBurro, a traveling library. The book is based on the true story of Luis Soriano, a Colombian teacher and librarian who travels on his donkeys, Alpha and Beto, to bring literacy and culture to rural areas of the Country.

During the visit and through the activities here suggested, students will engage in reflections and discussions about access to culture and literacy, and the importance of reading and imagination.

We hope you will use the educational materials provided in this guide as a resource to support different areas of study in the classroom and to help prepare your students for a visit. To help you plan your lessons and units, we have included contextual information, extension activities, a glossary, and resources for further study.

We look forward to having you join us for a visit to El Museo del Barrio!

The Education Department
El Museo del Barrio
Table of Contents

About the Biblioburro

Preparing for your visit to El Museo del Barrio

Extending your visit to El Museo del Barrio: Classroom Activities

Common Core State Standards Addressed

Further readings and resources

Sources
About the Biblioburro

The Biblioburro is a traveling library that carries the books on the back of two donkeys. Biblioburro comes from the combination of the two Spanish words “biblioteca” (library) and “burro” (donkey), and it literally means the Donkey Library.

The project was started 14 years ago by Luis Soriano, a grade-school teacher, in the northern region surrounding his hometown, La Gloria, in Colombia.

Born into conflict in the 1970s, and displaced by the violence of bandit groups, Luis Soriano had to move to the city of Valledupar, to be able to complete his studies. Away from his family and friends, the local library became his safe haven, where he fell in love with literature. Soriano returned to La Gloria after finishing high-school at the age of 16. He became a reading teacher and eventually earned a degree in literature, studying with a professor who visited his village twice a month. Soriano remembered the support of his high-school teacher and recognized the transformative power of reading on himself, and felt the necessity to share the books that had transformed his life with other young people.

He started the Biblioburro project traveling during the weekends, loading his two donkeys, Alpha and Beto, with his modest collection of books, to share them with the children of Magdalena Province. At the beginning he had a small collection composed by only 70 books, and he was not very well known by the community members. People thought he had gone crazy and they made fun of him.

Today, he is the most well know and popular inhabitant of La Gloria and of Magdalena Province. He visits 15 villages on a rotating basis, serving people who are isolated and in a similar situation he was when he had to move away from home: living in a place of conflict and with little or no access to reading materials. His book collection is now composed by over 4,800 books, and Alpha and Beto transport him and 160 books at a time. This happened thanks to donations that came in after Soriano wrote a letter to a journalist he heard in the radio to ask for a copy of his book for his project. The journalist broadcast details about the Biblioburro on his radio show and the project became popular and widely supported.
Soriano was storing the book in his home, but he didn't have enough space and it was very difficult to classify and organize them. So he asked the Colombian government and other local institutions for funds to help build a local library, next to his house.

In spite of the danger of his journeys –Soriano was once assaulted by bandits, and in a different occasion, he had an accident with his donkeys, and lost a leg saving Alpha from drowning–, he and his donkeys are still venturing to foster the love for books and reading in children and in other community members.

Today, Luis Soriano fulfilled his dream of having a space for young people to fall in love with literature like he once did, and his hard work had inspired similar initiatives around the world, like donkey libraries in other countries such as Venezuela and Ethiopia.
Preparing for Your Visit to El Museo del Barrio

The following preparation is intended to support teachers in integrating the program STORYTELLING @EL MUSEO: Waiting for the Biblioburro from El Museo del Barrio into their curriculum. Use the discussion questions and activities outlined in the guide before and after your visit to continue the conversation with your students. In the guide you will also find text boxes with some contextual information related to Luis Soriano, the Biblioburro project and Colombia. This program is recommended for grades K-3rd, but the activities can be adapted for all grades. Feel free to come with the material you create at school to the museum or send us pictures to educationprograms@elmuseo.org. We will try to include your work in your visit.
Research Project

➢ K-3rd Grade Students:

As a class, reflect on what they know about libraries, and what else would they like to know about them. Then, ask your students to divide into groups and visit the school’s library, or to do the research using the classroom’s library. Explain them that this is called field research; they are going to a specific site to learn about it.

Use these guideline questions to help your students describe it and find specific information:

- Describe the space. What do you find in there? Books, shelves, chairs, tables, computers, etc.
- How does the room look like? Describe physical space
- Who is in the library at the time? Other students, teachers
- What are they doing? Reading, doing homework
- What kind of books do you have in the library?
- How do you use them in class and/or outside school?
- What is the process you need to follow to find a book?
- What is the process you need to follow to borrow a book?

Back in the classroom, share the information that your students found. When they are finished sharing, ask them: what else do you want to know about your school’s library?
Then, come up with three questions they would like to ask to the librarian of the school’s library. Go back to the library and interview the librarian.

After looking at their school’s library, and answering the questions about it, think:
Where else can they find libraries?
Are there any libraries close to school or close to where they live?
How are they similar to the one at school?
How are they different?

Students can come up with more questions to interview the school’s librarian, or choose to interview a librarian from a library nearby.
Discuss

- **K-3rd Grade Students:**

After you learn how a library works and what we can use it for, reflect on how books in general, and libraries in particular, have affected you and your students’ lives and the way you view the world.

Here are some guideline questions for you to facilitate the discussion:

- **K-1st Grade Students:**

Share your favorite stories.
- What is your favorite story and why?
- Do you remember who first shared it with you?
- Do you remember how it made you feel?

Extension activity for Kindergarten and 1st grade:

- Create a *travelling* book. You will need a notebook that will be traveling around your students’ homes. Ask your students and their families to share some of their own stories in this *travelling book*.

- **2nd-3rd Grade Students:**

- What are the benefits we get out of reading?
- How can people who read help their communities?
- How does reading help you to succeed now and in the future?

Extension activity for 2nd and 3rd grade:

- Build students’ literacy, critical thinking and writing skills by asking them to write reviews of their favorite books. Use a resource like Purdue University’s “Writing a Book Review” (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/704/01/) to guide students through the process of planning and drafting their reviews.
Extending your visit to El Museo del Barrio: Classroom Activities

Research project

➢ *K-3rd Grade Students:*

In class, create a chart with the following questions:

What did we learn about Biblioburro?
What else do we want to know about Biblioburro?

Then, ask them to choose something specific from the list they created and look for information at home. They will share with the class the way they did their research and their results, such as pictures, stories, texts, etc. With all the material that the students bring, they can create a collective mural and share it with the rest of the school.

Extension activity for k-3rd grade:

• Have the students think about the titles of books that they have read and that they like. Ask them to pick 3 that they would recommend to take if they had their own Biblioburro, and make a list of all the recommendations. Use those recommendations to create a Biblioburro mural for the school. You can draw a donkey and hang it on a hallway, where the students will post their recommendations. Invite the rest of the school to post their reading recommendations as well. This exercise will help the students to revise their own reading history at the same time they will provide and receive a lot of peer recommendations for new books to read.

Extension activity for 2nd and 3rd grade:

• Ask the students to select one book from the classroom library, or from the school library, to share with younger students. Just as Luis Soriano, they will bring that book to another classroom and read it to them.
Creating Stories

Look at this picture of him, Alpha and Beto traveling to the children’s villages to bring books to them.

Then, ask your student to imagine that they are Juan Soriano, Alpha, or Beto, and they have to travel to a village to bring books to the children. They will write or draw a story of that journey: was it too warm, too cold? Was it a long journey?

You may use the following chart to help them think about different components of a story:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who? List the characters that will appear in the story:</th>
<th>When? When is the story happening? Daytime, the past, the future, etc.</th>
<th>Where? The setting; where the story takes place.</th>
<th>What? What will happen? What conflict will the characters need to solve?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

When they are finished with their stories, they can divide into groups and randomly select a story to act them out.
Common Core State Standards for College and Career Readiness

The standards address throughout the program

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R.1
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R.7
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL. 1
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
Further Readings and Resources

Online Resources:

For more information about Biblioburro and Luis Soriano, you can visit: http://www.pbs.org/pov/biblioburro

To look at other mobile libraries around the world: http://www.pbs.org/pov/biblioburro/photo_gallery_mobilelibrarymap.php#.VUZPyGR_Oko

You can watch with your class this short documentary about Luis Soriano-Bojorques and his Biblioburro: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuTswmx9TQU

Further reading:

Nonfiction

Winter, Jeanette. Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia. New York: Beach Lane Books, 2010. Grades K-2. Luis loves to read, but soon his house in Colombia is so full of books there’s barely room for the family. What to do? He comes up with the perfect solution—a traveling library! He buys two donkeys—Alfa and Beto—and travels with them throughout the land, bringing books and reading to the children in faraway villages. Based on Luis Soriano’s story.

Winter, Jeanette. The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 2005. Grades K-4. In a warstricken country where civilians—especially women—have little power, this true story about a librarian’s struggle to save her community’s priceless collection of books reminds us all how, throughout the world, the love of literature and the respect for knowledge know no boundaries.


describes the geography, people, government, culture, history, religion, economy, and wildlife of Colombia.

Fiction


Sources:


Credits and Acknowledgements

Text written by Romina Muguira, Education Programs Coordinator (On-Site) with the assistance of Remei Capdevila Werning, Senior Manager of Education and Samantha Schott, Education Programs Coordinator (Off-Site), and Amalia Guajardo-Cruz, Group Visits Coordinator.

Special thanks to author Monica Brown and illustrator John Parra, for this amazing story and their permission to share it and use the education materials.