

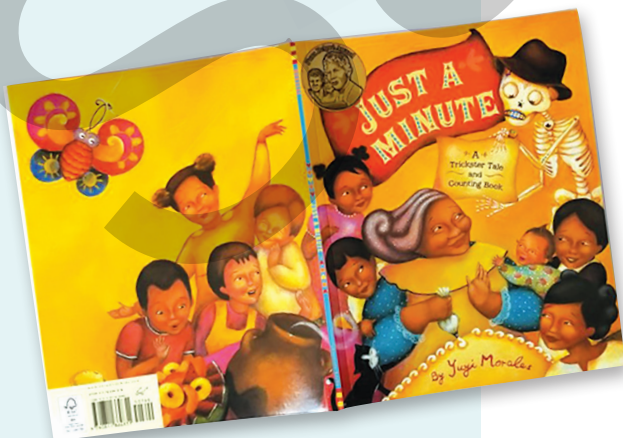
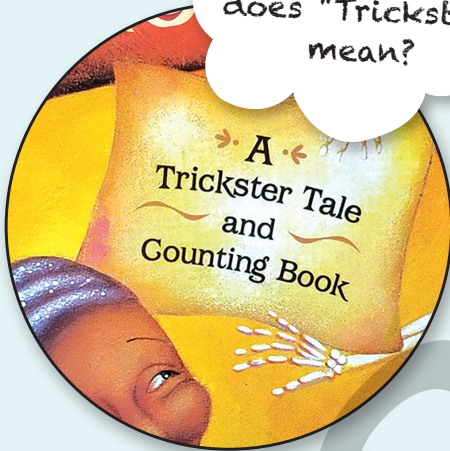
Elements to Highlight

- 1 Jacket Art and Title
- 2 Typography
- 3 Extension Activities & Resources

Keywords

Epistolary: Written in the form of a letter or a series of letters.

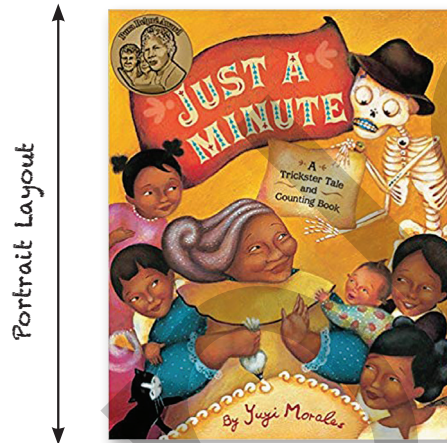
What does "Trickster" mean?



• Whole Book Approach Storytime Guide •

Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book

by Yuyi Morales



This playful counting book serves as an excellent concept book for children mastering basic numeracy while delivering a satisfying trickster tale. It also does the necessary work of providing readers with a culturally specific story that references elements of the Mexican traditions around Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead). Students who share this heritage can feel affirmed and proud of their identity as you share this book together. Invite your class to make meaning of the words and pictures working together to tell a story while also teaching numbers 1–10 in English and Spanish.

Discussion Prompts

1 Jacket Art and Title

Read the full title and subtitle aloud and say that you know that the students know what a counting book is, and then ask:

Questions & Follow-Up Context

"Can you guess what 'trickster' means?" If they come up with a close definition, ask the group to look closely at the jacket to tell you who they think will be the trickster character and to provide justification for their ideas.

Will they guess that the skeleton (Señor Calavera) is the trickster? Or the woman (Grandma Beetle)? Or one of the other people in the picture? Refer back to their guesses and evidence as you proceed through the book.

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You might also wish to use questions inspired by Visual Thinking Strategies to prompt children to read the action of the scene.

“What do you see happening in this picture?”

This question grounds the group in the visual and prompts thinking about narrative, as opposed to mere listing.

“What do you see that makes you say that?”

This question engages evidentiary thought, a cornerstone of critical thinking.

“What else can we find?”

This question asks the group to dig deeper and to notice more about the picture they are reading together, inviting collaborative meaning-making.

Scaffold students’ comments by paraphrasing their responses, pointing to things that they mention in the pictures, and linking ideas shared by different people.

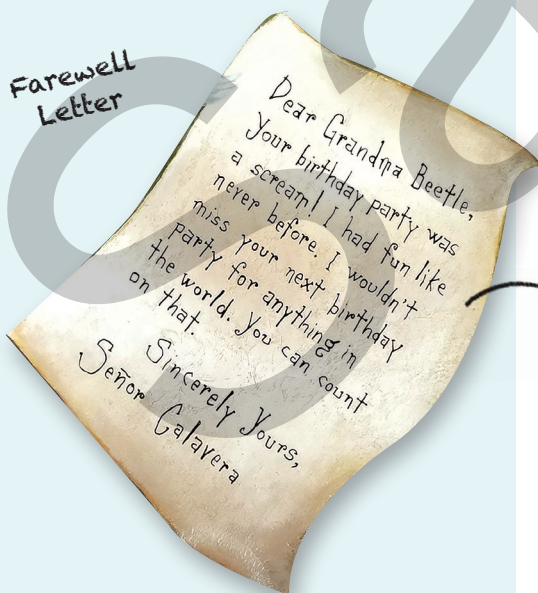
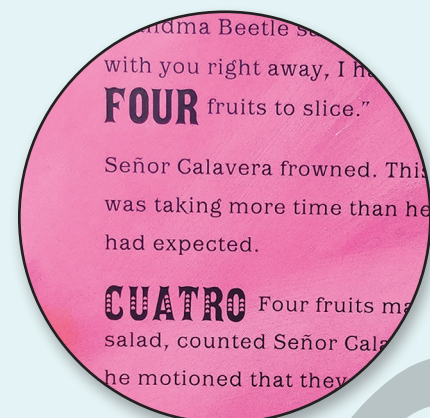
2 Typography

As you proceed into the book proper, note that some of the words use a bigger font than others. These words are the names of the numbers, which are given in both English and Spanish. The larger font size creates a sense of emphasis or importance for these words, which makes sense because this is a counting book. Invite children to say the number words with you as you point to each one, encouraging them to use big voices to match the big font. At the very end of the book, direct students’ attention to how Yuyi Morales concludes *Just a Minute: A Trickster Counting Book* with a moment of **epistolary**, intraiconic text. Direct students’ attention to the illustrated farewell letter, and before reading it aloud ask them:

“Who do you think wrote this letter?” Will they notice that the black hand-lettering on a white sheet of paper looks as if it were written by Señor Calavera’s shaky hand?

How might you plan them to this understanding while holding space for other insights and questions?

The lettering stands in stark contrast with the Barcelona and Posada typefaces used for the display type and narrative text throughout the picture book, with letters that have long ascenders and descenders (the



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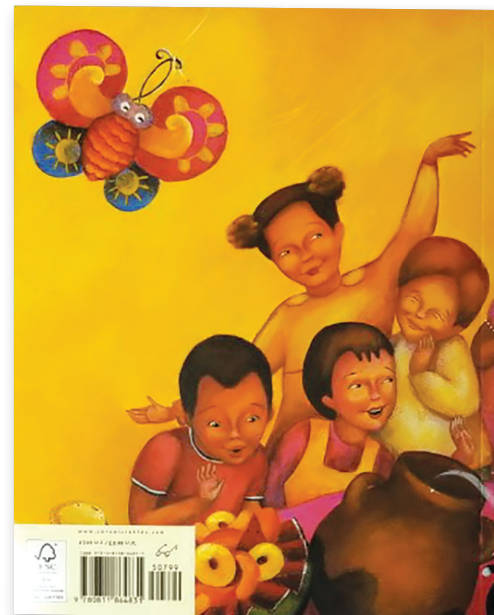
parts of the letters that slope down or reach up in characters like d or y). Introduce these words to your students and ask them why they think the writing looks like this. Will they suggest (as some children at my storytimes have) that the letters look like the long, thin limbs of the skeleton?

3 Extension Activities & Resources

- It's a great idea to plan students in learning more about Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead) as a Mexican holiday that honors one's ancestors, or to invite students of Mexican heritage to share their experiences if they'd like to. Visit Yuyi Morales's website (<http://www.yuyimorales.com/2.htm>) to view videos she's posted about creating this picture book, and especially the character of Señor Calavera and his connection to the holiday. I recommend against classroom activities or celebrations that could risk somehow appropriating or inadvertently mocking the holiday.
- Lead your students in counting 1–10 in Spanish and English, and then ask if anyone can count in languages other than Spanish and English. If so, invite them to do so. If not, teach them at least one other language, perhaps using a recording.
- Show students the papel picado illustrated on the copyright and dedication page, and tell them this is a traditional Mexican art. Let them practice their cutting skills, using scissors to cut patterns into tissue papers. For more information about papel picado, visit this site: http://www.cut-it-out.org/about/papel_picado.htm

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Notes:



Back Cover
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