# Talking Points for Classroom Discussion: Tomás and the Library Lady

## Show & Theater Company:
- Tomás and the Library Lady by Childsplay

## Art Form:
- Musical theater (a play with songs)

## Context:
- This play is a bilingual musical, adapted from the book written by Pat Mora “Tomás and the Library Lady” published in 1997.
- Pat Mora grew up in El Paso, Texas, in a bilingual home. She is an award-winning poet and author of books for adults, teens, and children. Tomás and the Library Lady was Pat Mora’s first children’s book. She is a former teacher and university administrator, as well as the founder of the family literacy initiative El día de los niños / El día de los libros, Children's Day / Book Day.
- The book is based on the true story of Tomás Rivera, the Chicano author, poet and educator who went on to become the first Mexican American Chancellor in the University of California Riverside where the library bears his name. Tomás was born in Texas, to a migrant Mexican-American family and worked in the fields as a young boy. He started writing when he was twelve, and was an avid reader.
- This play tells the story of Tomás, as a young boy, who moves from Texas to Iowa for the fruit picking season and falls in love with reading. It is not easy moving time and time again, but Tomás and his family are migrant workers who travel from state to state, helping farmers harvest their crops. When they arrive in Iowa for the summer, Tomás finds an escape from the extreme heat at the town library. Once inside, he discovers a surprising book world filled with dinosaurs, tigers, explorers and a great new friend, the library lady who changes his life.
- In the play, Tomás moves a lot between Texas and Iowa. What would it be like to have to leave your home for months at a time? What would you miss the most?

## Main Concepts/Characters:
- **Main Characters:**
  - Tomás Rivera
  - Three members of Tomas’ family (parents and younger brother)
  - Library Lady
- **Main Concepts:**
  - Shows how reading, education, and self-esteem can make anything possible.
  - Books can influence a person’s life
  - Finding one’s special talent – follow your passion!
  - Tomás is bilingual (speaks Spanish & English). What does it mean to be bilingual? (A person who equally speaks two different languages.)

## Special Things to Look For:
- How is the show the same as the book and how is it different?
- There are two actors that play five roles in this show. How can an actor play more than one role? What “tools” would they use, besides their costumes? (They will use their bodies, their voices, and they will depend on your imaginations!)

## Theater Etiquette:
- Respect the theater, one person to a seat, limit bathroom breaks, do not kick the seats, no food or drink in the theater (bottled water okay), no audio, video recording or photography and turn off cell phones & no texting.
- How is watching live theater different than watching a movie or TV?
  - Can’t pause, rewind, or fast forward with live theater
  - Students are in the same room as the performers. Every sound they make and moving around can affect the performers and other members of the audience.

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**Show info:** Tomás and the Library Lady ● Wednesday, October 10, 2018 ● 9:30 am ● Grades K-5