



The Tortilla Factory

Gary Paulsen , Ruth Paulsen (Illustrator)

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In clear and eloquent language, Gary Paulsen pays tribute to a cycle of life--from seed to plant to tortilla. Workers till the black soil, operate the clanking machinery of the factory, and drive the trucks that deliver the tortillas back into the hands that will plant the yellow seeds. With Ruth Wright Paulsen's expressive paintings, *The Tortilla Factory* brings forth the poetry and beauty of a simple way of life. "This title is beautiful to look at, and will also fit nicely into units on food, regional culture, art, and many other topics."--*School Library Journal*

The Tortilla Factory Details

Date : Published April 15th 1998 by HMH Books for Young Readers (first published 1995)

ISBN : 9780152016982

Author : Gary Paulsen , Ruth Paulsen (Illustrator)

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Food and Drink, Food, Economics, Cultural, Realistic Fiction, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review The Tortilla Factory for online ebook

Pynteya Bate says

A story about what it takes to make a tortilla. It starts with plowing the soil and planting the seeds, waiting until it will grow tall and then until the corn dries out so it can be grounded to the flour. After that, the flour gets transported to the factory where the dough is made. The dough will be cut into small pieces that will be flatten and then backed. After that, tortilla will be packed and delivered to our tables.

Very good book with beautiful painting-like illustrations, I really like it. It teaches students about the steps it requires to produce something.

Josiah says

Once again readers benefit from the near perfect confluence of Gary and Ruth Wright Paulsen's talents, Mr. Paulsen with his lush, dignified writing, and his wife with her mesmerizing artistry. Text and images could hardly blend more harmoniously in this story of the circle of life, where the miracle of conscious existence is beautifully expressed in mundane everyday labors. No author appreciates this quiet truth better or communicates it to young readers more sincerely than Gary Paulsen. By his gift for illuminating the stories behind drab routine, we gain nobler perspective on the wonder of life.

Spring thaw is just the start of the season's ubiquitous greenery. As frosty fields soften, farmhands scramble to plant their crop. The seeds they sow grow to become plants that feed us, including corn shipped to factories and ground into flour, then molded and pounded flat into tortillas to be exported around the world. This good food of the earth strengthens weary workers to go out again next spring and restart the planting and harvesting process. Diligent work is the means by which we support our families and recreational pastimes, and its reward is the rest and recovery promised by nourishing meals and deep sleep at night. Life's cycle is simple and unglamorous for most, but it's our lot in the unending circle of human existence. All things considered, it's not so bad.

Gary Paulsen's writing has a soothing quality, but Ruth Wright Paulsen's illustrations add at least as much to *The Tortilla Factory*. The oil on linen technique is splendidly evocative, and several of the double-page panoramas are gorgeous: the enormous fallow cornfield at winter's end, the children playing among rows of tall corn, the wood-paneled room at the factory where tortillas are crated for distribution, the workers back at their job the following year, one digging with a shovel and the other plowing fields on his tractor. These marvelous paintings bring the experience to life. I'm glad we have Ruth Wright Paulsen's artwork to enrich her husband's unique storytelling that much more.

The Tortilla Factory ranks up there with *Canoe Days* among the Paulsens' best picture books, a subdued homage to the work ethic of the common man who does his job without complaining, to serve and provide for his family. What society can survive without dedicated laborers? A big part of me wants to give *The Tortilla Factory* two and a half stars, and I recommend it for readers seeking a look at society from a slightly different angle. You can count on Gary Paulsen for that every time.

Nicki says

Beautiful pictures!

Melinda Garman says

This juvenile non-fiction book talks about the cycle of life, cause and effect, and uses many adjectives to explain the process. The book starts with “black” land in winter, in Spring worked by “brown” hands, “yellow” seeds planted, which become “green” plants, then becomes “golden” corn taken to the tortilla factory. The corn is turned into food that feeds the brown hands that work the black Earth. This book does not specifically target a group of people but rather seems to target the culture of some Hispanic communities which work the fields and crops to grow and harvest the food that is important to their culinary preferences. This book would be great to use when talking about the life cycle of plants, learning about adjectives, or about cause and effect.

Liliana says

Grade:2nd-3rd grade

Lexile Measure-510L

Genre:Poetry/Realistic Fiction

Characters: Factory workers

Setting: Places where tortillas making occur

POV: The story is told by the narrator

This book illustrates the story of a tortilla from the time the corn is planted until it is ground, mixed, made into dough, baked, packaged, and brought into homes to be eaten. This book tells about the steps it requires to produce something. The book uses a lot of adjectives to explain the process such as “black” land in winter, or “green” plants, etc. The illustrations are also very colorful and show how workers operate the clanking machinery of the factory and drive the trucks that deliver the tortillas to those who produce more.

I would use this book in 3rd grade classroom to introduce expository writing. This is a good way to focus on step by step procedures to produce a thing. I would also use this book to talk about human resources and the cycle of things we use daily. I can have them research ways that other things are produced such as cheese, bread, chocolate, etc. I will have them write the procedures. One expository example I had my students do is on how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I can use this as a read aloud before or after that assignment

Natalia Leston says

Text Set Book #2

This text introduced students to the process of making bread, particularly tortilla bread. It gives students insight into the hard work and sacrifice that people endure in order to make tortillas, and the Latino cultural importance of appreciating tortillas for this reason, and thinking about the people who have done so much to produce this bread.

This book presents a great way to teach students about where bread comes from while also giving them exposure to another culture. One possible assignment to go with this book is to have students list the steps taken in order to make tortillas, while charting new vocabulary words.

Another possible assignment could be to have student think about and reflect upon their own families. Reflection Question: In The Tortilla Factory, the mother tells the boy to appreciate the tortillas because of how hard their family members have worked in order to make them. What is one thing that you and your family appreciate because of the hard work you or your family members have put in to make possible? Students can then share with partners or the class.

Jaelyn J. says

There are so many activities that can stem from this book (plants for older kids would be really cool). I would use this book with my very young learners because of the detailed descriptions in the book ("brown hands... black seed.... green plants"). For my one or two year olds who need to learn their colors, an activity for this book would be to set out taupe playdough (tortillas) and have the kids roll in different food dye colors. Their job would be to name the different flavors (colors) of the tortillas while playing with it.

Ardyth says

Gorgeous artwork. Lovely text, albeit as brief as Brown Bear. A cyclical format similar to Oxcart Man.

M. says

A cycle of life story with great illustrations.

Helen Kumpel says

Who this book is for:PreK-5

Reflection:

This juvenile non-fiction book talks about the cycle of life, cause and effect, and uses many adjectives to explain the process. The book starts with "black" land in winter, in Spring worked by "brown" hands, "yellow" seeds planted, which become "green" plants, then becomes "golden" corn taken to the tortilla factory. The corn is turned into food that feeds the brown hands that work the black Earth. This book does not specifically target a group of people but rather seems to target the culture of some Hispanic communities which work the fields and crops to grow and harvest the food that is important to their culinary preferences. This book would be great to use when talking about the life cycle of plants, learning about adjectives, or about cause and effect.

Students could use this book to think critically about who the author was targeting, if they are the target audience, look at how the author used colors to describe seasons, environment or people.

Donna says

Beautiful illustrations. I'm hankerin' for a dang quesadilla now. The story is about a kernel of corn that turns into a tortilla that feeds a hungry man, that works the rich earth, that plants the seed, that turns into cornstalks, that turns into corn, that turns into flour, that turns into tortillas, that feed the hungry man, who works the rich earth, plants the corn, that grows the kernel, that turns into flour, that turns into a tortilla, that feeds the hungry man, that works the rich earth..... You get the picture.

Yusra Faridi says

This book is based on farmers that do labor work and go through many processes to create tortillas for people to enjoy. The characters in this book are not mentioned, but with a little background knowledge and from the hints given in the text, "...worked by brown hands", we can assume that the story is being told about Mexican farmers. I really liked that this book has a lot of detailed phrases such as "black earth", "yellow seeds", "...eaten by white teeth, to fill a round stomach and give strength to the brown hands that work the black earth". The detailed wording can really help in painting a clear picture in the minds of the young readers or students. When researcher the author Gary Paulsen, I did realize that he doesn't associate with the specific group mentioned in this text. However, he does a really good job at portraying these workers in a positive light.

Nikole says

Fountas-Pinnel Guided Reading: J

Characters: Factory workers

Setting: The setting takes place at a factory where tortillas are made.

POV: The story is told from the narrator's perspective.

The book describes what it takes to make tortillas. The book starts with the planting of the corn until it is eaten by consumers. It goes into great detail about the different steps it takes to make tortillas, such as, the workers plowing the soil to the trucks driving the packaged tortillas to the store. The book also allows the readers to see what and how the machinery in the factories is used to make the tortillas. Gary Paulsen uses a limited amount of words on the page, but the pictures are perfect for the story; they help tell the story as well.

I would use this book in second and third grade. It is a great book to talk about the differences between goods and services as well as describe how people are consumers and producers. Then, for third grade especially, we could get into a unit of how animals are consumers and producers as well. I could also use the book as a read aloud in second grade to discuss culture and what some foods the students in the classroom eat discuss culture and diversity among the classroom. The themes throughout the book are plants, flowers, Hispanic culture, food, and cooking.

Maria Salinas says

Main Characters: workers

Setting: factory

POV: Narrator

Grade Level: k-2

Reading Level: 2.9

Genre: Informational

This book describes the process of making a tortilla. The book begins by showing the very first step in making tortillas which is planting the corn, to gathering the corn and grinding it for the dough. The book talks about how the machines are operated and how they serve to make the tortillas. The tortillas are then packed and delivered to its destination. The illustrations are vivid, and the text is very descriptive. The words correlate exactly to the illustrations. For example when the land and green plants are described, the picture shows the lands and the actual green plants. Overall, the book is very detailed and descriptive with great illustrations that show the process of a tortilla.

I would use this book to talk about the process of creating just about anything. One activity I could have students do is creating their own process of making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Various aspects would be discussed before I give this assignment such as the importance of detail and coherence.

Barbara Radisavljevic says

This book lavishly illustrates the story of a tortilla from the time the corn is planted until it is ground, mixed, made into dough, baked, packaged, and brought into homes to be eaten. The author also uses color imagery - the black earth, the brown hands, the yellow seeds, the green plants, and so on. The cycle is also continued to the new beginning, as tortillas become food to be eaten and give strength to those who will plant the new crop in the brown earth.

Though there are only a few sentences of text, the words are chosen well and have a poetic quality. The paintings (done in oil on linen by Ruth Wright Paulsen) used to illustrate the book are magnificent and worthy of framing. This book would be perfect in a unit study of food and how it is produced.
