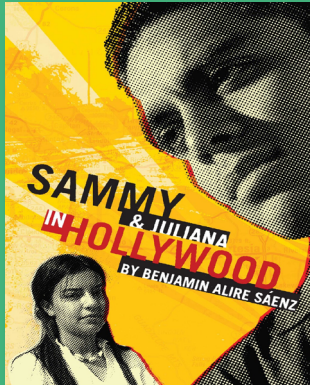




Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood

written by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

About the Book

Genre: Young Adult

Format: Paperback, 320 pages

ISBN: 9781933693996

Reading Level: Grade 10–11

Interest Level: Grades 9–12

Guided Reading Level: Z+

Accelerated Reader® Level: 10

Lexile™ Measure: 390L

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Coping with Death, Cultural Diversity, Discrimination, Diversity, Fiction, History & Civics, Latinx / Latino / Hispanic, Overcoming Obstacles, Poverty, Realistic Fiction, Responsibility, Teen Interest, War, YA interest

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/sammy-and-juliana-in-hollywood/

SYNOPSIS

The “Hollywood” where Sammy Santos and Juliana Ríos live is not the West Coast one, the one with all the glitz and glitter. This Hollywood is a tough barrio at the edge of a small town in southern New Mexico. Sammy and his friends—members of the 1969 high school graduating class—face a world of racism, dress codes, the war in Vietnam, and barrio violence.

In the summer before his senior year begins, Sammy falls in love with Juliana, a girl whose tough veneer disguises a world of hurt. By summer’s end, Juliana is dead. Sammy grieves, and in his grief, the memory of Juliana becomes his guide through this difficult year. Sammy is a smart kid, but he’s angry. He’s angry about Juliana’s death, he’s angry about the poverty his father and his sister must endure, he’s angry at his high school and its thinly disguised gringo racism, and he’s angry he might not be able to go to college.

Acclaimed author of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* Benjamin Alire Sáenz captures the essence of what it meant to grow up Chicano in small-town America in the late 1960s.

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

BACKGROUND

Teaching about Death and Grief

Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood deals with death and grief throughout the story. Edutopia's "Teaching Students about Death and Grief" provides tips and strategies on how to prepare students when talking about death and discussing grief (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/teaching-students-about-death-and-grief/>). The National Association of School Psychologists also have general tips on supporting students through grief and also when addressing grief and death in the classroom or school settings (<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/addressing-grief/addressing-grief-tips-for-teachers-and-administrators>). "Helping the Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers" (<https://chilliwackhospice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/7-A-Helping-the-Grieving-Student.pdf>) also details the basic concepts of grief, the stages of grieving, and how to support students during difficult and traumatic times in their lives.

Teaching about the Vietnam War

For more resources on the teaching about the Vietnam War, consult the following organizations:

PBS Learning Media: <https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/teaching-the-vietnam-war/>

EDSITEment! Vietnam War Resources: <https://edsitement.neh.gov/vietnam-war-lesson-guide>

Zinn Education Project: Rethinking the Teaching of the Vietnam War: <https://edsitement.neh.gov/vietnam-war-lesson-guide>

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund: Teaching the Vietnam Era: <https://www.vvmf.org/education/>

The New York Times' Teaching the Vietnam War With Primary Sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/29/learning/lesson-plans/teaching-the-vietnam-war-with-primary-sources-from-the-new-york-times.html>

Stanford University's Teaching Diverse Perspectives on the Vietnam War: <https://fsi.stanford.edu/news/teaching-diverse-perspectives-vietnam-war>

Human Rights Watch: Vietnam: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/vietnam>

Teaching with *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*

The themes in this story must be addressed and handled with deep sensitivity and open mindedness.

Teachers must be aware and prepared that by teaching this novel (and the corresponding topics addressed in it) they may be addressing a legacy of harm, suicidal ideation, and violence, specifically within largely minority and underrepresented socioeconomic groups.

Set the example of what culturally responsive teaching looks like:

- Collaborate with students to establish guidelines early on. This will serve as a reminder for discussion etiquette as thought-provoking topics are developed.
- Anticipate how your students will respond to controversial topics presented in the novel. While teachers should encourage students to share their views without fear of judgment, teachers should consider how to respond to emotion, and use this to guide instruction and for future instructional planning.

- Don't be afraid to share your own learning journey as it pertains to cultural identity and mental health. This will create a positive classroom climate and an overall feeling of sameness.
- Aim to include and discuss outside materials that align with the text and essentially address underrepresented groups' experiences in ways that do not trivialize or marginalize their experiences.

Crisis Text Line:

Text HOME to 741741 or visit www.crisistextline.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or visit

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

The Trevor Project:

Text START to 678-678 for Trevor Text or call

TrevorLifeline at 1-866-488-7386 or visit

www.thetrevorproject.org

If you'd like to help those who may be experiencing a mental health challenge, consider becoming trained in Mental Health First Aid.

Mental Health First Aid:

Visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- What do you know about New Mexico? How did it become a part of the United States? What are the demographics of the people who live there?
- What do you know about life and issues during the 1960s? What are some issues of the time?
- What images come to mind when you think of the word poverty? What are some root causes of poverty? How is poverty a structural dilemma?
- Ask students to think about their community and what community means to them. Is community important to you? How do you interact with people in your neighborhood? Does your neighborhood feel like a community? Why or why not? What makes a community?
- What are some ways to deal with grief?
- What are your goals and aspirations? How would you feel if people disapproved of these goals or told you they were unattainable? Would you still go after them? Why or why not?

- As a hook for readers, consider showing students a homemade *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood* book trailer, posted on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqD5N11U0LO>

You may want to have students journal their responses to these questions so that they can refer back to it throughout and after the reading of the book to further their thinking on the topic(s).

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book and the book cover image. Ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how death impacts communities
- how young people show resilience through difficult times
- what lessons Sammy learns about confronting difficult feelings
- how trauma manifests and what support is needed in times of crisis and grief
- the impact of discrimination on self-image

Encourage students to consider why the author, Benjamin Alire Sáenz, would want to share this story with young people..

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Content Specific

Altar, cellophane, barrio, gringos, accomplice, hippie, rosary, gargoyle, genuflect, eternal, keg, foreman, Protestants, enlisted, draft, mortal, salvation, strike, Colonel, prosthetic

Academic

Disdain, accomplice, docile, virtue, aroma, gratitude, insincere, remnants, eternal, integration, commentaries, massacred, assembly, miser, immaculate, slogan, enlighten, exile, petition, optimism, epiphany, administration

Note on Vocabulary

Have students observe stylistic use of Spanish vocabulary words and phrases. Ask students to pay attention to their own comprehension skills when reading in Spanish. If there are places where they do not understand, ask them to follow these three steps: first, glean meaning from context clues; second, translate in own words as appropriate; and third, use a dictionary or ask someone for the meaning when necessary.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What character traits do you learn about Sammy and Juliana in the first chapter? What is your first impression of each of?
2. Where does the story take place? Does it have anything to do with Hollywood, CA? How does Sammy describe where he lives?
3. Why do people call Sammy 'the Librarian'? How does he feel about it?
4. What time period does this story take place in?
5. Describe Sammy's family and family members. What is Sammy's relationship to each family member?
6. How does Sammy feel about movies?
7. What is Sammy's relationship to school?
8. What happens to Juliana? What role does Juliana's father play in what happens to her? How does Sammy respond? How does the community respond?
9. What job did Sammy quit and why? What new job did he get instead?
10. Who is Pifas and how does he show his friendship for Sammy?
11. Why does Sammy create this idea of the garden? Who is he inspired by? What does the garden represent? What is in Sammy's garden?
12. What is Pifas relationship to the military? How do his friends feel about it?
13. By the time Pifas leaves for the army, Sammy's feelings for Pifas and his opinion about Pifas have changed. How have they changed? What does Sammy think about Pifas now?
14. Who is Gigi? Name her characteristics.

15. What is the relationship between Pifas and Gigi?
16. Why does Gigi want to be class president?
17. What happens when Gig gets up to give her speech? What does she say? How does the audience respond? What do you think of Gigi's speech?
18. What happens to Jamie and Eric? Why? How do different characters react to this event? What does Sammy learn?
19. What happens to Reyes? What happens to Pifas? How are their stories intertwined?
20. Describe the pigeon Sammy has within him. When does he notice it? How does it influence his actions and feelings?
21. What does graduation mean to Sammy?
22. Why does Sammy's father need surgery?
23. Why does Sammy have mixed feelings about having plans?
24. What does Sammy learn about himself when everyone else believes he should paint his truck?
25. What bird does Sammy pick for Gigi? Why?
26. What two meaningful things does Mrs. Apodaca give to Sammy? What happens to Mrs. Apodaca?
27. Describe the ending of the book. How does Sammy feel at the book's conclusion? How do you feel about the ending of the book? Is it what you wanted? How would you have ended it?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. On the dedication page, Sáenz writes "every generation has to find its own way. Embrace the journey." How does Sammy find his way? What journey do you think your generation is on?
2. How is Hollywood a character in the story? How do the specifics of Hollywood, New Mexico enhance the story?
3. How do cultural perceptions and expectations influence the way Sammy sees himself?
4. Read Sammy's quote on the very first page. What do you think he means when he says, "The first thing the dead do is lose their voices?"
5. Cigarette smoking occurs throughout the story. When did Sammy first fall in love with the smell of tobacco and why do you think he started to smoke? Given that smoking has detrimental impact on health, why do you think smoking is a hard habit for many to break?
6. What does Sammy's relationship with Mrs. Apodaca teach him? Why are elders in community important?
7. On page 115, Sammy observes that democracy isn't always a simple thing. Do you agree or

disagree? Why? What do you think Sammy means by that statement? What factors influence people's ability to experience democracy?

8. Sammy reflects on why students are afraid of school. Where does this fear come from? Do you understand what students mean about school when they say "They make you hate your mom and dad. They turn you into a gringo" (pg 121). Have you ever been afraid of school?
9. What role does faith and religion play in Sammy's story?
10. Why does Sammy conclude that love is another name for exile? How does this concept show up for other characters in the story: Gigi, Pifas, Juliana, etc.
11. What does the statement on, page 124, "it was better to be from Ireland than to be from Mexico. I knew that" tell us about race or racism in Hollywood?
12. How would you describe Sammy's relationship to home and Hollywood?
13. What is the significance of the wings Sammy feels inside of himself? What is the significance of birds?
14. How does Sáenz's use of multiple languages enhance the story? What role does language play in the story?
15. Sometimes Sammy puts on a façade as if he cares about nothing. What are some instances where Sammy shows his emotions and how much he truly does care about those around him?
16. What is the significance of the falcon throughout the story?
17. What is the difference between tolerance and acceptance?
18. Explore the structure of this text. Does the story describe events chronologically, as comparison, cause and effect, or problems and solutions? Why do you think the author structured the text the way she did? How does this story compare to other texts you have read?
19. Why are there different stories about La Llorona? What is the significance of La Llorona?
20. What lessons about anger and love does Sammy learn? What do you learn about anger and love from this story?
21. Many characters in the story reflect on what they will do when they leave Hollywood. What are your own aspirations after high school?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What is one big thought you have after reading this book? Think about how Sammy navigates and experiences his community, as well as trauma, throughout *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*. How does he individually and collectively process change and trauma throughout the story?

2. What do you think the author's message to the reader is? Think about Sáenz's. What do you think he wanted to tell young readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What are ways you express yourself after an emotional event?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world or on the news? Why did *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood* make you think of that?
6. Grief can result in deep sorrow and harmful behavior. Have you or someone you know experienced grief? What behaviors did you notice? Why is grief a powerful emotion? What are some ways get support as someone processes their grief?
7. Sammy learns let people in emotionally, to receive the help he needs. Why is it difficult to be vulnerable? What does vulnerability mean to you? Think of the people in your life who you look to for guidance and support. How do these people support and help you? How have these people helped you overcome traumas and challenges?
8. Have students write a book review after reading *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*. Students can also refer to other book reviews for references. What did they enjoy about *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*? What would they tell a friend or another person who wants to read the book? Students can share their book reviews with small groups or the whole class.

Multilingual Learners Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are multilingual learners (ML).

1. Assign ML students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Link Sammy's bilingualism to concepts of belonging and identity. How does this connect to students learning of a new language. Ask students how they felt when reading about a bilingual character.
4. Have students give a short talk about their relationship to the United States. Do they feel a part of America? Why or why not? What is their family's relationship to living in the United States?
5. Have students give a short talk about what community and heritage means to them, and how they have overcome obstacles in their life with support of people who are important to them.
6. Review the five parts of the stories. Have students summarize what is happening in each part, first orally, then in writing.

- Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
- 7. Have students give a short talk about one of the characters in the book. Have them discuss what characteristics they admire about the person they chose.
- 8. Have students illustrate or discuss a way to cope with loss and trauma.
- 9. What real-life people or events are you reminded of by characters or events in the story? Prepare a short essay, citing examples from the book and your chosen character/event to justify the similarities.
- 10. Consider consulting <https://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/> for more ideas on how to support Multilingual Learners.

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. What kinds of emotions does Sammy grapple with after Juliana's death? Using evidence from the book, discuss how Sammy's experiences complex feelings after this critical moment.
2. What are the coping strategies and techniques that Sammy uses to heal from his grief? How do the coping strategies change over time?
3. Ask students to compare and contrast ways that Sammy handled his losses with losses they have personally experienced.
4. Encourage students to identify passages where characters manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways. In a chart with five columns, write: What was the cause of the conflict? What was the consequence of the conflict? How does the character(s) resolve the problem? What are additional ways the character(s) could have solved the problem? What advice would you give?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Prepare a defensive essay that explains your views on which character changed the most throughout the course of the novel.** Defend your views by citing specific examples.
- **How would you describe Juliana?** Think about how Sammy views her, the things she says, and her interactions with other characters. Do you think she's a positive character? Would you describe her as a role model? Do you think she's a positive character? Would you describe her as a role model? Do you think she's strong? In an essay, explain your answers with examples from the text.
- **Examine the different literary elements that used throughout reading *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*.** Have students come up with a list and select portions of the text that showcase a specific literary device (i.e. foreshadowing, flashback, motif, etc). Afterward, students can select one literary device and write about how that was impactful when reading *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*. How do literary devices make the story engaging, and how do they contribute to the story overall?
- **Select a scene in which you disagreed how a character handled a situation, person, or event.** In the voice of that character, rewrite the scene as you think it should have happened.
- **Ask students to reread the letters from Jaime and Pifas and to review Gigi's dilemma on whether to write Pifas or not.** Have students observe point of view, tone, and voice. Ask students to write a letter as if they were Sammy responding to Jaime or Pifas, or as if they were Gigi and she does write the letter to Pifas.
- **What real-life people or events are you reminded of by characters or events in the story?** Prepare a critical essay, citing examples from the book and your chosen character/event to justify the similarities.
- **Assign students different characters from *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood* and have them brainstorm about a guiding question:** What and how can this character teach us? Students can think about different characters to examine as a whole class and then break into smaller, specific character groups. Encourage students to think about how characters have made mistakes and also have done good things in the book, and ultimately what they learned from that character. Have students share out their findings: How is this character important to the book, and what lessons did they teach us over the course of the story? How did their actions develop the narrative, and why are they crucial to understanding the meaning of the book?
- **On the first day back to school the students find out about the new dress code.** Do you believe dress codes at school are beneficial or detrimental? Why? Write a persuasive essay.

- **Create your own guide for teaching this book.** What grade would you teach this book to? What themes would you highlight? What activities would you create for students? What other books would you pair *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood* with?

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Conduct a research study on Chicano history in the 1960s.** Have students research this period of time. Allow them to pick a specific event or theme during this historical period, research it, determine how it relates to or is significant to the book, and then present their findings to the class. What is the significance of the Chicano movement?
- **Conduct a research study on the Vietnam War.** Guiding questions to ask include: What caused the Vietnam War? When was it? How did hippie culture impact the war? What were some major legislative accomplishments during this time period? How did class and race impact the draft for the Vietnam War? What were some of the tactics used during this time period? How did the Vietnam War end? What is the impact of the Vietnam War on our lives today? Encourage students to find primary sources to supplement their research.
- **In the book, students plan a sit-in to protest things in the school.** What is the history of the sit-in? When else has it been used and for what other purposes? Have students answer these questions and present on the history of sit-ins.
- **Have students research the Quetzal and the significance of the Quetzal in Mayan culture.** Students should present on characteristics of Mayan culture and their legacy.
- **Design a lesson or unit about New Mexico.** Detail the history of New Mexico, including the history of it becoming a state.

Arts/Performing Arts

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Sammy reflects on the music that is popular in the 1960s.** Choose a decade and create your own playlist. Have students share playlists with each other. Additionally, play some of the songs in class.
- **Envision a sequel to *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood* and have students title the second book.** What do they think it would be called? Write a synopsis and create a cover for the book. What kind of materials do they want to use for the cover? Encourage students to consider what they think will happen in the second book, and how that reflects the artwork for the cover. How can they use the current cover to inspire their work?
- **Birds are significant for Sammy.** Create a visual for a bird that represents who you are.

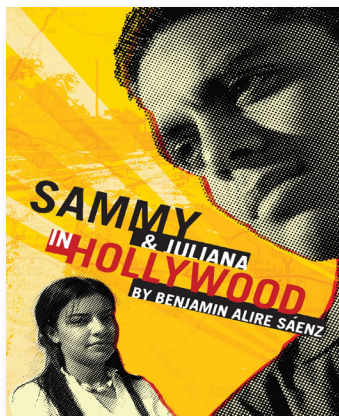
School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Use a video creating platform to create a book trailer for *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*.**
- **Interview a friend or family member who has lost a loved one in the past.** Question their strategies for how they coped after the loss. What lessons were learned? What memories will always be cherished?
- **List some ways to help a loved one who is hurting.** What are some ways to ask for help for yourself or a loved one?
- **Write a letter to your younger self.** What advice would you give? What would you want your younger self to know about the world?



Ordering Information

General Order Information:

leeandlow.com/contact/ordering

Secure Online Ordering:

leeandlow.com/books/sammy-and-juliana-in-hollywood/

By Phone: 212-779-4400

By Mail:

381 Park Ave S, Room 1401
New York, NY 10016

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Benjamin Alire Sáenz was born in 1954 in Old Picacho, a small farming village outside of Las Cruces, New Mexico, forty-two miles north of the U.S. / Mexico border. He was the fourth of seven children and was brought up in a traditional Mexican-American Catholic family. He entered the seminary in 1972, a decision that was as much political as it was religious. After concluding his theological studies at the University of Louvain, he was ordained a Catholic priest. Three and a half years later, he left the priesthood. At the age of 30, he entered the University of Texas at El Paso. He later received a fellowship at the University of Iowa. In 1988, he received a Wallace E. Stegner Fellowship in poetry from Stanford University. In 1993, he returned to the border to teach in the bilingual MFA program at UTEP. Sáenz is the author of a previous book of poetry, *Calendar of Dust*, which won an American Book Award. He is also the author of a collection of short stories, two novels, and two books for children, *A Gift from Papá Diego / Un regalo de Papá Diego* and *Grandma Fina and Her Wonderful Umbrellas / La abuelita Fina y sus sombrillas maravillosas*. An essay by Ben Sáenz entitled "Exile, El Paso, Texas," appears in another Cinco Puntos Press book, *The Late Great Mexican Border*.

His *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* won the Printz Award, young adult literature's highest honor. Ben lives and works in El Paso, Texas. Visit his website at benjaminsaenz.com

REVIEWS & AWARDS

Best Books for Young Adults, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

"Sammy's first-person narration, observant and self-aware, affords a window into a world of quiet despair and stubborn hope, set appropriately against the backdrops of late-1960s social ferment. . . His message is one of victory through endurance rather than escape." – *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*,

starred Review

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