

NAMES/ NOMBRES by Julia Alvarez

Setting: 1960's New York City (Julia lived in New York City but she lived in the Dominican Republic until she was ten.)

Questions

- 1.) A.) How would YOU feel when your name is mispronounced. B.) Are you proud of your name? C.) Would you change your name if possible?
- 2.) **Theme** (page 6:3) Julia's teachers and friends mispronounce her name, and Julia wonders if she should correct them. What point is Alvarez trying to make about her identity?
- 3.) **Inferring** (page 6:3): What do you think Julia's mom means when she says, "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."
- 4.) **Theme** (page 6:4) : Alvarez creates an alternative identity for herself. What connection is Alvarez making about the connection between one's name and one's identity?
- 5.) **Evaluate:** Discuss why Julia Alvarez put American beauty in quotation marks. Was it appropriate to do so?
- 6.) **Critical Thinking:** What does the author mean by the phrase..."not yet in."
- 7.) **Literary Elements Plot**-Internal conflict: Discuss why Julia tells others she is from New York, even though she mostly lived in the Dominican Republic.



8.) **Critical Viewing:** The Musicians, 1979 Fernando Botero. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

Fernando Botero is a contemporary artist from Columbia. He often paints cheerful, balloon-shaped, not quite true-to-life people. Which scene from the story would you like to see painted in the style of Botero. Explain.

9.) **Evaluate:** Identify the proper spelling Puerto Rico. Why do you think the author gives this spelling considering the pronunciations are the same?

10.) **Literary Elements Theme:** What is the connection between the story's title and theme in this passage?

a. "They were just being curious, I knew, but I burned with shame whenever they singled me out as a "foreigner," a rare, exotic friend. Say your name in Spanish, oh

please say it!" I had made mouths drop one day by rattling off my full name, which according to Dominican custom, included my middle names, mother's and father's surnames for four generations back. 'Julia Altagracia Maria Teresa Alvarez Tavarez perello Espaillat Julia Perez Rochet Gonzalez. I pronounced it slowly a name as chaotic with sounds as a Middle Eastern bazaar or market day in a South American village." How would a name this long define one's identity?

- 11.) Although this selection is autobiographical, do you think it is entirely believable? Explain why you think so.
- 12.) **THEMATIC FOCUS:** What I Am, What I Want to Be – Essay_ Compare Julia's feeling of not wanting to be a foreigner or a rare, exotic friend." With how you would feel in a similar situation. Provide examples.