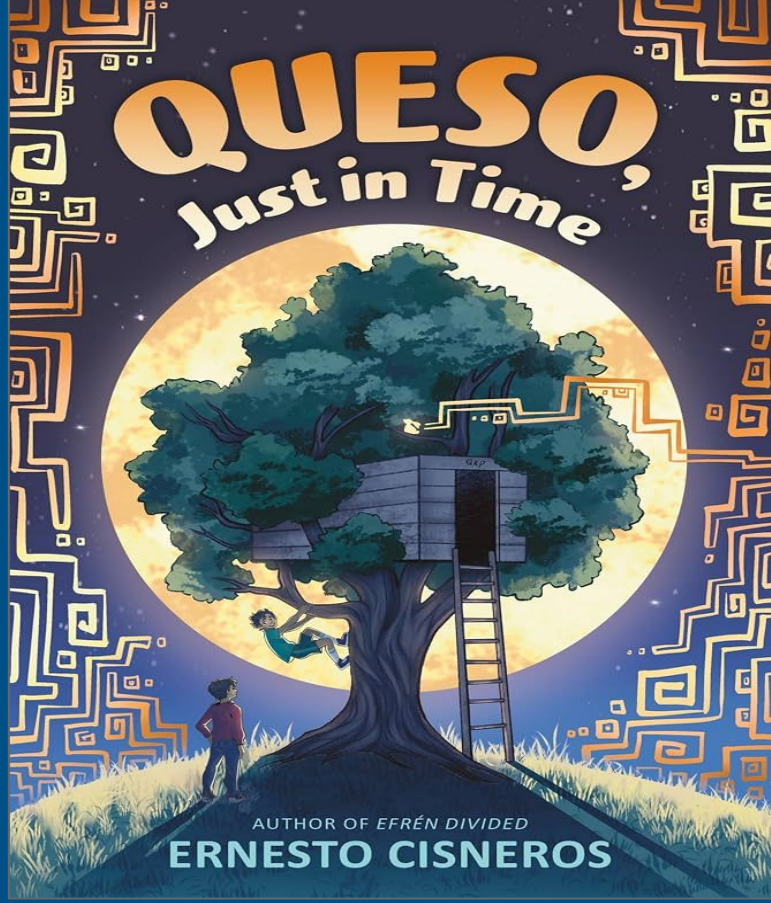
Emotions Map Activity

Developed by: Phoebe Matin & Davayah Perea for CU Boulder's Children's Book Festival 2026, Open Education Resource, Creative Commons, Available at colorado.edu/event/bookfest



Grade & Colorado Academic Standard

Content Area	Grade	Standard
Comprehensive Health	6th	Social and Emotional Wellness
Grade Level Expectation	Understand how to be mentally and emotionally healthy.	
Evidence Outcome	**Identify emotions and feelings associated with loss and grief.**	

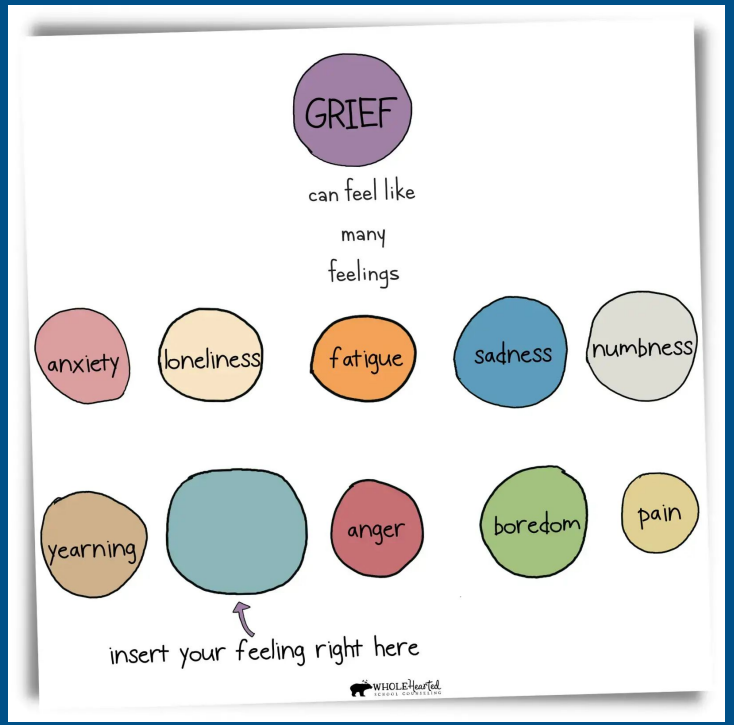
"Colorado Academic Standard information retrieved from https://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/standards.
View the full standards at https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/standards

Activity: Emotions Map

The goal of the Emotions Map activity is for students to actively engage with the feelings of loss and grief (and anything in between) explored throughout the personal journey in *Queso, Just in Time* within a 20-30 minute timeframe.

Students will create individual charts that follow Queso's emotional journey through several key moments in the story. Such as: struggling to understand the loss of his father, Queso's anxiety about Pancho's future, and more. The object is for students to identify emotions he experiences, think about how he feels and reacts, and wrap it up with a coping strategy that best connects with those emotions.

This activity allows students to analyze Queso's journey through an emotional lens. By mapping out specific emotions like loneliness and longing, students can build their vocabulary and learn about emotional intelligence. They will use a provided chart, create their own, and gain coping strategies they might not have had before.



The image above lists examples of possible emotions and feelings that the characters may have and can be used in the emotions map. This is a simple layout that would need to be expanded by adding a moment/example and a coping mechanism.

Materials Needed:

- **Blank sheet of paper**
  - Gives the student room to create Queso's Emotion Map.
- **Pencil**
  - Tool for students to sketch out their map and place "Queso" in the middle.
- **Colored pencils and/or markers**
  - To color code each emotion to further help students connect each emotion to a cause and coping skill.
- **Emotion word bank (write on whiteboard)**
  - A word bank will allow students to branch out from repetitive vocabulary, learn and expand their own, and have specific words laid out in front of them if any extra help is needed to connect Queso to real life experiences.

Step-by-Step Process

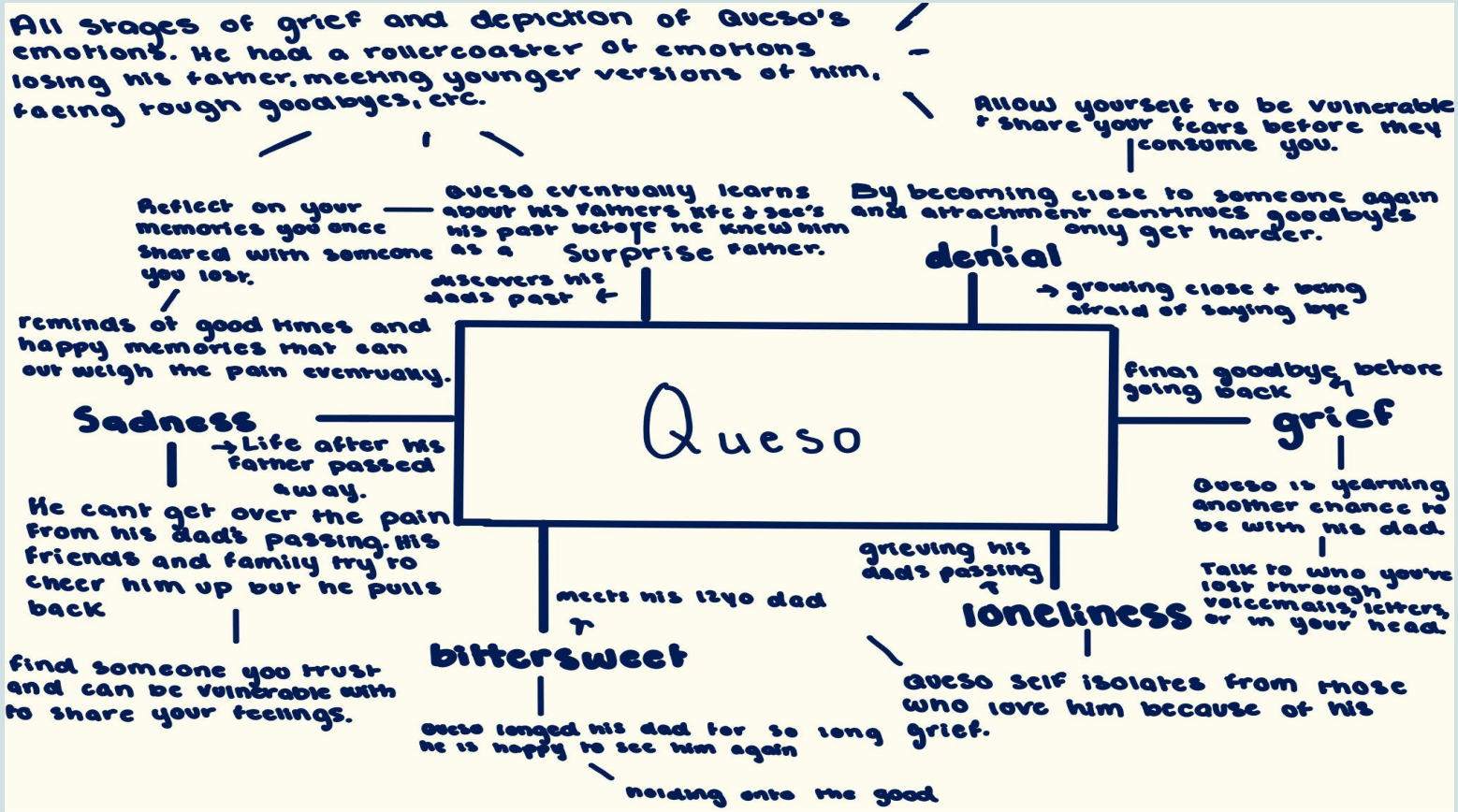
1. **Introduce the activity: Begin by briefly explaining that students will each be creating their own emotion map for the character of Queso.**

2. **Take around 5 minutes to review the story and remind students of key events that involve Queso (hinting at events that cause the themes of grief/loss) and let students refer back to the book.**

   For example: The character's name should be placed in the center, and different emotions branch out based on his experience. Connect the emotion, moment/reasoning, and coping strategy- for each of these they branch to the other. For one, Sadness: Queso struggles to get over the pain from his father's passing; he continues to pull back from his family and friends as a result. One way he copes is by finding someone he trusts and can express these feelings to.

3. **Model the first emotion. For example, say "When this happened, Queso may have felt ____ because ____, and he dealt with it by ____".**

Emotions Map Example



Steps Continued...

4. Then, it's time for each student to create their emotion map; give them 10-15 minutes to work independently on their map and explore their ideas and creative choices.

5. After 15 minutes, check in with students and invite them turn to a partner to quickly share their map before sharing it with their whole table group.

6. Finally, bring the students back together to share out as a class. Ask students to raise their hand to partake in a large discussion and share findings from the activity as a class.

7. Wrap the discussion up and either do an exit ticket in written form asking their takeaways from today or end it at the class share-out.

Ways To Assess the Activity:

- **Check for completion**
  - Check that students identified emotions and connected them to specific situations.
- **Accuracy**
  - Look for appropriate emotion/word usage and explanations of why the character may feel that way.
- **Evidence**
  - Students should use detail from the text to support their ideas.
- **Reflection**
  - Ask students to explain how their thought processes of emotions may have changed throughout the activity.
- **Discussion**
  - Have students share out in small groups/at their table their maps and compare and contrast.
- **Exit Ticket**
  - Could turn this into a quick exit ticket at the end of class asking students' takeaways.

We also hope you can join us on Saturday, November 7 at the Boulder Public Library to meet Ernesto Cisneros and hear more about *Queso, Just in Time* in-person...along with other authors and illustrators!

For more information, visit https://www.colorado.edu/event/bookfest

