

EXPLORE Living one's duality

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DIFFÉRENCIATION

A bunch of heads call out to [Sofia], “Hey, Sofe!” “Yo, girl!” “There she is!” and wave.

Sofia waves back, pulls Danny by the arm toward a group of girls sitting on a blanket in an uneven semicircle. [...] She points them out and rattles off names: “Carmen, Raquel, Angela, Bee, Juanita, Flaca and Guita.”

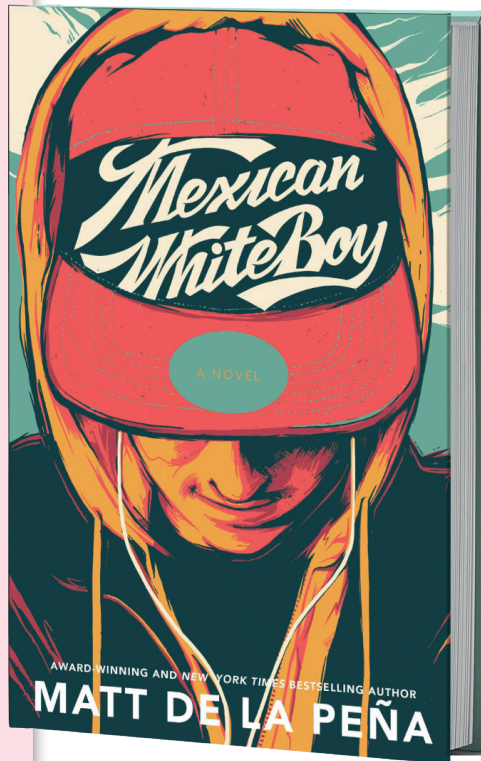
“Hey,” the girls singsong in unison. [...]

Danny’s sixteen, a shade over six foot¹ and only a year younger than Sofia, but unless he’s on a pitching mound² he feels like a boy. He’s long and thin with skinny arms hanging down skinny thighs³—his arm length the reason he can fire a fastball so hard. [...]

And Danny’s brown. Half-Mexican brown. A shade darker⁴ than all the white kids at his private high school, Leucadia Prep. Up there, Mexican people do under-the-table yard work⁵ and hide out in the hills because they’re in San Diego illegally. The only other people on Leucadia’s campus who share his shade are the lunch-line ladies, the gardeners, the custodians. But whenever Danny comes down here, to National City—where his dad grew up, where all his aunts and uncles and cousins still live—he feels pale. A full shade lighter. [...]

Danny cringes at how different he must seem to his cousin’s friends. They’re all dark chocolate-colored, hair sprayed up, dressed in pro jerseys and Dickies, Timberlands. Gold and silver chains. Calligraphy-style tats⁶. Danny’s skin is too clean, too light, his clothes too soft.

Matt DE LA PEÑA, *Mexican WhiteBoy*, 2010



▲ Book cover of *Mexican WhiteBoy* (2018).

1. un peu plus que 1m80 2. specific place in a baseball field 3. cuisses
4. skin color 5. travail d'entretien non déclaré 6. tattoos

WAY 1

1. **Observe** the book cover and the title. **Brainstorm** ideas about the plot, using some of the following words: *cap – hood – teenager – bicultural – might be about ...*

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2. a. **Read** the extract and **find** the correct answers:

- The scene takes place in California in ☐ Leucadia Prep ☐ National City.
- Danny is Sofia's ☐ friend ☐ cousin.
- Carmen and the other girls are ☐ Sofia's friends ☐ Danny's friends.

b. Complete the following grid with elements from the text:

	Leucadia	National City
White Americans		
Mexican people	☐ teachers ☐ agriculture sector ☐ service-industry workers Examples:	

c. Compare the two places and their environment. You can use some of the following words:

whereas – while – however

.....

.....

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3. Highlight all the words referring to skin color and **use** them to complete the following sentences:

Danny is than his white classmates.

He is than his cousin and her friends, who are

When he is with them, he feels

4. Recap why Danny feels divided about his identity. You can use the following words:

dark-skinned – pale – struggle – biracial – belong to – feel different from

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WAY 2

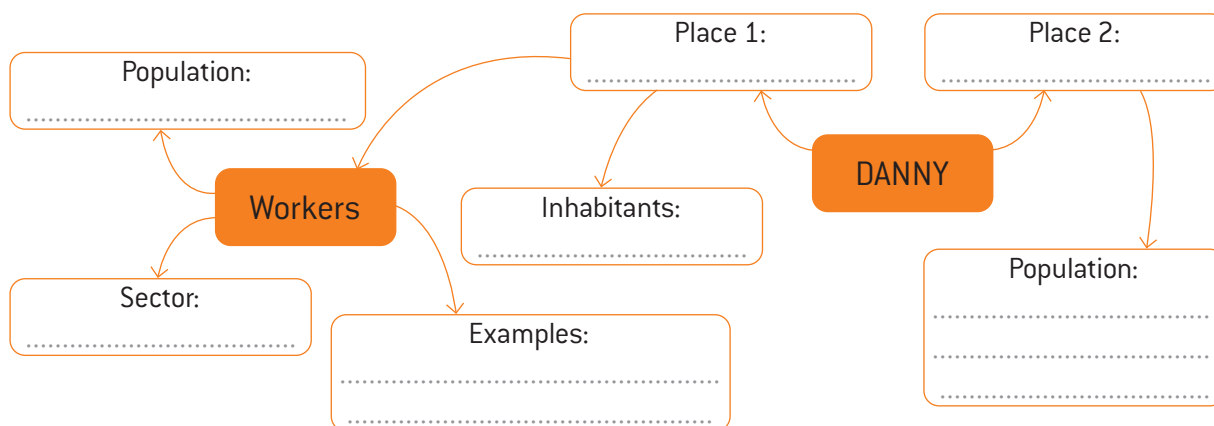
1. Observe the book cover and **analyse** the title. **Imagine** what the plot might be about.

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2. a. Read the extract and **focus on** the setting (characters, places, environment). **Complete** the following mindmap:



b. Recap the situation for the population in this region.

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3. Highlight all the words referring to skin color and **say** who they refer to:

Danny:

His cousin's friends:

4. Explain how this situation impacts Danny and **analyse** the choice of the novel title.

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