



Aria: A Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood
By Richard Rodriguez

Spanish/English Activity

Directions: Look up the context of each quotation below. Then decide if the author is describing something about Spanish or something about English. Write the letter that corresponds to the quote in the appropriate column. Be ready to explain your answer and what it shows us about the author and his experiences.

<i>Describing Spanish</i>	<i>Describing English</i>

- A. "Hearing them, I'd grow nervous, and my clutching trust in their protection and power would be weakened."
- B. "Conveyed through those sounds was the pleasing, soothing, consoling reminder that one was at home."
- C. "I recognize you as someone special, close, like no one outside. You belong with us. In the family. Ricardo."
- D. "Those were the others: *los gringos*. That term was interchangeable in their speech with another, even more telling: *los Americanos*."
- E. "Often the speech of people in public seemed to me very loud, booming with confidence. The man behind the counter would literally ask, 'What can I do for you?' But by being so firm and clear, the sound of his voice said that . . . he belonged in public society."
- F. "Like others who feel the pain of public alienation, we transformed the knowledge of our public separateness into a consoling reminder of our intimacy. Excited, our voices joined in a celebration of sounds. . . . At dinner we invented new words. . . ."
- G. "It became the language of joyful return."