# Student Journal

## Dying to Cross

by Jorge Ramos

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### Reading Schedule

**Group members:**

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**Can you ever know the whole truth?**
Getting Started

What If?

Your best friend tells you that your teammate has been complaining about you to other people. The teammate has been saying that you are a selfish player because you never pass the ball to anyone and always want to defend the most exciting player.

You decide to talk to your teammate because you do not think this is true. You are a team player. You approach your teammate about her comments and she denies saying anything bad about you. In fact, she says that your best friend is the one that said you were selfish!

Make notes about how this would affect you.

• Who would you believe?
• How could you find out more information?
• Could you ever know the whole truth in this situation?

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Connect to The Exchange Question Discuss how this situation could relate to The Exchange Question: Can you ever know the whole truth? Summarize your discussion.

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Introduction

Read the Introduction on pages 9–11 in *Dying to Cross*. The Introduction will help you understand key concepts in the book. Knowing them will help you discuss and write about the book.

The Introduction includes information about

- the controversial immigration incident that is told in *Dying to Cross*
- what “coyotes” are
- why Jorge Ramos was inspired to write the book

After you read the Introduction, answer these questions to check your understanding.

1. What happened to a group of illegal immigrants on the night of May 13, 2003?

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2. What was Jorge Ramos’s purpose in writing *Dying to Cross*?

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3. Why did this tragedy create controversy?

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Introduction: Key Concepts

Word Web

Study the Word Web for source. What words does source make you think of? Write a sentence using the word source.

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Word Web

Key Concept
source

where something comes from

information

witness

resource

On a separate sheet of paper, create a similar Word Web for journalist, ordeal, and risk. Write a sentence for each one.
Respond to Chapters 1–3

1. **Personal Response**  The story of the immigrants’ deadly journey was covered by reports all across the country. Many people were affected by this story. What news stories affect or interest you? Why?

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2. **Sources**  Ramos describes the immigrants’ ordeal through his investigation and interviews. What do you find out from each source? Use the word *source* in your response.

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3. **Author’s Style**  How does the author make the immigrants’ story less like a newspaper article and more personal?

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4. **Generate Questions**  Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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5. **Opinion** In Chapters 1–3, you learn about the conditions inside the truck, how and why this trip was arranged, and about some of the victims. List details about the tragedy that you know. Then list details that you want to know.

If the immigrants were told the truth about how they would be traveling, do you think they still would have gone? Why or why not?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Do I Know?</th>
<th>What Do I Want to Learn?</th>
<th>What Did I Learn?</th>
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Respond to Chapters 4–5

1. Personal Response The conditions inside the truck were unbearable and caused horrible reactions. What surprised you the most about the physical conditions inside the truck or people’s behavior? Explain.

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2. Cause and Effect Reread page 67. Why didn’t the immigrants make noise at the inspection booth? Use the word risk in your response.

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3. Author’s Purpose The author included photos of the tragedy and some of the victims. Why do you think the author chose to include photos in this book?

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4. Generate Questions Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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5. **Mood** In Chapters 4–5, you learn about the first three hours of the drive to Houston. Write what the immigrants did in the truck during the first, second, and third hour of the trip.

**Cluster**

Describe the mood inside the truck during these three hours. How did the mood change as time passed? Why?

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Respond to Chapter 6

1. Personal Response  In the aftermath of the tragedy, people experienced different emotions such as fear, hope, and confusion. Which person’s reaction and story affected you the most? Explain.

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2. Opinion  Many of the immigrants who survived this ordeal fled from the truck in pursuit of freedom. Do you think that it was right for the survivors to flee? Why or why not? Use the word ordeal in your response.

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3. Evaluating Sources  Norma claimed that Karla was following the truck the whole time. Karla claimed she was at a hotel in Victoria. Was Norma a credible source? How do you know?

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4. Generate Questions  Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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5. **Judgments** List Karla’s and Tyrone’s claims about their involvement in the tragedy. Use the **Idea Web** to answer the question.

Based on the information above, do you think that Karla and Tyrone were aware that the immigrants in the truck were in danger? Explain.

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1. **Personal Response**  The story of this tragedy started debates about immigration laws. Has reading this book changed your mind about any immigration issues?

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2. **Conclusions**  In the aftermath of this tragedy, immigration policies were being closely examined. Why were Mexican officials so eager to catch coyotes because of this? Use the word *immigrants* in your response.

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3. **Evaluating Sources**  What makes the author a reliable source? What makes him biased?

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4. **Connect**  Look at your notes on *Student Journal, page 2*. Think about what might happen if you did not know if someone was telling you the truth. Compare this to *Dying to Cross*. Will all of the facts of this tragedy ever be known?

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Respond to Chapters 7–8, continued

5. **Judgments** In this section, you learn about the trial and the results of the investigation. Revisit the KWL Chart from page 6 of this Student Journal. Then tell what you learned in the last column.

**KWL Chart**

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Do you think Karla was treated fairly by the authorities? Why or why not?

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