



PURPOSE

As a student pursuing an international relations major and an education studies minor, I am always seeking for opportunities to fuse together my two interests of global issues and education. The most recent way in which I have sought to do this was by enrolling in the course, EDU.319: Children's Literature, a Multicultural/ International Approach; taking this course has allowed for me to read and analyze children's literature that addresses the immigrant experience. These books are listed below, and they are all available in the Larissa Gertsel Critical Literacy Collection at American University's Library. By reading these books, I found that it is important for immigrant or refugee children to be exposed to such literature because they come from diverse backgrounds, and these books not only help children deal with the physical process of moving to a new country, but they also encourage students to reflect on how they dealt with major transitional issues like changing schools and making new friends. Additionally, these books give immigrant and refugee children a voice in a society that often undermines newcomers and individuals who come from a different culture. And once this voice is given to such children, they will learn to never be silenced again, encouraging social change and justice.

By:

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and Health, the library for
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Twenty-two Children's Books on the Immigrant Experience

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Title	Author	Key Words	Brief Description	Call No.	ISBN	Reading Level
<i>Going Home</i>	Eve Bunting	Mexico, traveling, migration, labor, family, Spanish, home, Christmas	Carols and his family live in America, but for Christmas this year they are going to Mexico to visit their family. At first, Carlos struggles to understand why his parents call Mexico, and not America, their home, but through the help of his sister and his own thoughts, he realizes that his mother and father sacrificed a lot to leave their first home and give Carlos and his sister more opportunities in America.	PZ7.B 91527 Gne 1996	00602 62966	Ages 4-8
<i>How I Learned Geography</i>	Uri Shulevitz	War, poverty, world, dreams, refugees, Poland	A young boy and his mother and father flee from Poland to Kazakhstan after WWII, and one day the father goes out to buy bread. The father does not return with any food, though, and he brings home a map. Instantly mesmerized by the color and size of the map, the young boy spends countless hours staring at it and learning the names of faraway countries; the map allows for the boy to be transported from his problems, as he dreams of traveling to other parts of the world.	PZ7.S5 594 Ho 2008	03743 34994	Ages 6-12
<i>Test</i>	William Sleator	Standardized tests, English, corruption, cheating, future, conspiracy	This book takes place in the future in a time when standardized tests determine the success of one's life. The tests are corrupt, though, and an immigrant with poor English language skills named Lep is able to score well on the tests because he receives the answers from the landlord in his apartment in exchange for	PZ7.S6 313 Tes 2008	08109 93562	Ages 12-18

helping him kick out bad tenants. Ann is in the same English class as Lep, and once her life is threatened by Tony—a man who helps make the tests—, they both decide to work together to stop the oppressive and unjust use of standardized tests.

<i>Trouble</i>	Gary D. Schmidt	Immigration, refugees, grief, death, family, prejudice, Cambodia	Henry Smith always tries to stay out of trouble, but one night his brother, Franklin, is hit by a car when he is running outside. The driver is said to be Chay Chouan, whose family are refugees from Cambodia. There is already a lot of prejudice towards the Cambodian community in the Massachusetts region, where the book takes place, and both populations usually stay far away from each other to decrease resentment. However, Henry seeks out Chay, and, as their lives become more intertwined, and Henry learns of his brother's racist attitude, he invites Chay to climb Mount Katahdin with him allowing for Henry to finally face both his social and physical fears.	PZ7.S3 527 Tro 2008	06189 27662	Ages 12-18
<i>The Arrival</i>	Shaun Tan	Graphic novel, immigration, fear, confusion, love, survival, determination	This graphic novel contains no words, and it is perfect for any reader, as it takes one on a universal journey through the separation of a family due to immigration. A father must leave his family so that he can find work in another country, which is depicted as vast and busy, and once he saves up enough money he will have them come to the new country	PZ7.T 16123 Ar 2006	04398 95294	All ages

as well. The story resonates with anyone who has dealt with separation and having to be in an unknown land, but it reminds us all to stay strong in the face of adversity so that our dreams can be fulfilled.

<i>Drita, My Homegirl</i>	Jenny Lombard	Refugee, Kosovo, friendship, prejudice, school	Drita, a Muslim Albanian refugee from Kosovo, is initially teased and not accepted because she cannot speak English well when she arrives at school in Brooklyn, New York. In particular, Maxine, a popular African American student is very mean to Drita. However, Drita's social studies' teacher sees the way that Maxine is treating Drita, and for punishment, Maxine is to interview Drita on her experience as a refugee and her life in Kosovo. Over time, the girls come to an understanding of the different and similar hardships they have both had to endure throughout their lives, and they eventually grow closer.	PZ7.L 83315 Dri 2006	03992 43801	Ages 9-12
<i>One Green Apple</i>	Eve Bunting	Muslim, immigrant, English, children, acceptance, diversity, language barrier	Farah, a Muslim immigrant who knows very little English, goes on a field trip to an apple orchard with her fellow classmates. She feels self-conscious and realizes that she dresses differently, and she also becomes frustrated by the language barrier during the field trip. However, she is able to help her classmates understand the importance of inclusion and diversity: she is the only student who picks a green apple, but when all of the apples are ground together	PZ7.B 91527 One 2006	06184 34771	Ages 5-9

			to make cider, the children realize it still tastes just as yummy. Farah also realizes that her classmates can be nice, and she feels more confident and less excluded.			
<i>19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East</i>	Naomi Shihab Nye	Middle East, aspirations, struggles, children, immigration	This book is a collection of poems that is meant to convey the struggles, dreams, and thoughts of Arab children living in the Middle East and America. The author's father came to America as an immigrant, and the author has frequently traveled to the Middle East. The book is an attempt for peace, as the author wishes to reshape the image that Americans have of Arabs in the U.S. and abroad after September 11 th occurred.	PZ7.N 975 Ni 2005	00605 04048	Ages 12-18
<i>Seeing Emily</i>	Joyce Lee Wong	Chinese-American, empowerment, teenage, love	Told in free-verse poetry, this book tells the story of Emily, a Chinese-American teenager. Emily's parents have sacrificed a lot for her, but she becomes distracted and confused when she starts dating a handsome boy named Nick. Emily soon realizes, though, that Nick is not as kind as she thought, and once she sees his prejudice towards her, she decides to end their relationship. However, Emily continues to struggle with her decision and is still trying to figure out her identity, and since her parents are worried, they send her to China to live with her Aunt. Emily is able to reconnect with her past and realizes that her future is full of many wonderful opportunities.	PZ7.L 51514 See 2005	08109 57574	Ages 12-16

<i>A Step from Heaven</i>	An Na	Korean, immigration, English, language barrier, assimilation, family	Young Ju Park, a four-year old girl living in Korea, thinks that her family is happy, and when they go on a plane, she thinks their family is flying to Heaven to be with her grandfather that has died. However, she quickly realizes that this is not the case when she does not see her grandfather anywhere after they get off the plane, and she soon realizes that her family is not in Korea anymore. Young eventually learns that her parents have come to America for a better life, but they seem unhappy and she is confused why they ever left. When Young goes to school, she is teased for her poor English, and her exposure to the American culture makes it difficult to uphold Korean culture when she goes home. While Young deals with her own problems, she quickly begins to see her family is deteriorating, with her father falling deeper into alcoholism, and her mother is often very tired and sad, even after the birth of a desired son.	PZ7.N 1243 St 2001	18869 10588	Ages 12-18
<i>One Boy from Kosovo</i>	Trish Marx	Refugee, Kosovo, photography, biography, rehabilitation, ethnic cleansing, home	This book shares the story of Edi, a twelve-year old boy who fled his home in Kosovo to live in a Macedonian refugee camp when the Serbs pursued a policy of ethnic cleansing against Albanians in 1999. The story uses the power of photography and the information that the authors received from Edi to convey the emotional trauma that Edi and his family have faced, but	DR20 87 .M37 2000	06881 77328	Ages 8-12

			their hope and gratitude for still being alive. It also contains a brief history on the conflict in Kosovo.			
<i>Keeping Quilt</i>	Patricia Polacco	Jewish, immigration, family ties, tradition	When the author's great grandmother came from Russia to America, she made a quilt from her old clothes to remind her of where she came from. This quilt was passed along through the generations, and it was used during weddings, births, deaths, and parties. The quilt has kept the family together, and it has allowed for the author's heritage to be preserved.	PZ7.P 75186 Ke 1998	06898 20909	Ages 5-8
<i>Lily's Crossing</i>	Patricia Reilly Giff	Hungary, refugee, World War II, isolation, orphan, friendship	Like most summers, Lily spends her days at Rockaway Beach in New York. However, this summer is different because of the war: her father had to leave to fight in it, and her best friend had to move. Lily feels all alone, but she eventually meets Albert, a Hungarian refugee, and they become friends. However, Lily has told some lies that come back to cause problems, and she has to figure out how to fix her friendship with Albert.	PZ7.G 3626 Li 1997	03853 21422	Ages 9-12
<i>So Far From Home: The Diary of Mary Driscoll, an Irish Mill Girl</i>	Barry Denenberg	Irish, labor, immigration, prejudice, poverty	This story is set in 1847 in Lowell, Massachusetts, and it is told through the accounts that Mary describes in her diary. Mary comes to America to work in the mills with her aunt because her family is economically hurt by the potato famine. Mary realizes that there is a lot of prejudice towards Irish immigrants in America. However, she soon becomes friends with Patsy, a	PZ7.D 4135 So 1997	05909 26675	Ages 8-12

			freed slave who wants to become more educated but faces limited opportunities—similar to Mary’s desire for a better life as well.			
<i>Coming to America: The Story of Immigration</i>	Betsy Maestro	Immigration, diversity, hardships, history, American Dream	This book gives a good overview of the history of settlement and immigration in America for children. It starts off by discussing the Native Americas and ends with a discussion of refugees. The overriding theme is that it has always been difficult for immigrants from any country to start a new life in America, but these hardships can be overcome with time. It also emphasizes that America should celebrate its diversity and come to accept those who come here for a better life.	JV645 0 .M34 1996	05904 41515	Ages 6-9
<i>Lights for Gita</i>	Rachna Gilmore	India, friends & family, immigration, acceptance, tradition, disappointment	Gita continues to remember life in India and how she celebrated Divali, the Festival of Lights, with all of her friends and family last year. Now that she is in America, Gita feels alone, and the weather seems determined to ruin her plans. Gita was excited to share the festivities with her new friends, but because of the freezing rain she must accept that there will be no fireworks this year and not as many of Gita’s friends are able to attend. However, with the help of her mom, Gita remembers the true meaning of Divali and by the end of the book she is able to share the experience with one friend, Amy, giving her a sense of hope for her life in America.	PZ7 .G438 05 Li 1995	08844 81514	Ages 5-10

<i>Morning Chair</i>	Barbara M. Joosse	Holland, immigration, culture shock, disillusionment, comfort	Bram is happy with his life in Holland, and he loves to snuggle in the morning chair with his mother. When he finds out they are moving to New York City, he instantly dreams of what it will be like, although he would prefer to remain in Holland where life is familiar and comfortable. Once he is in New York City, Bram is disappointed since it is not like anything he imagined. While Bram is dealing with all of the new changes, he yearns for the morning chair. Eventually, their furniture arrives, and Bram learns to accept his new life in America and hold on to the memories from Holland.	PZ7.J7 435 Mo 1995	03956 23375	Ages 5-8
<i>Brooklyn Doesn't Rhyme</i>	Joan Blos	Jewish, immigration, storytelling, family, identity, history	Rosey Sachs is eleven years old, and she is a first-generation Jewish America. It is the beginning of the twentieth century, and Rosey's school is composed of students like her—recent immigrants. Because of this, her teacher gives them the assignment to write about their family's histories in an attempt to help them realize their similarities and differences. Rosey is able to find her voice amid the diversity of America.	PZ7.B 6237 Bp 1994	06841 96948	Ages 8-10
<i>I'm New Here</i>	Bud Howlett	El Salvador, refugee, school/education, language barrier, friendship, biography	Jazmin Escalante and her family come from El Salvador to America to escape persecution. Complete with photographs, this book illustrates Jazmin's first day of school in America. Overall, Jazmin is very nervous and fearful, she does not like that the teacher says her name	LC374 6.H67	03956 40490	Ages 6-9

incorrectly, and she feels isolated since she cannot understand English yet. The only person who speaks Spanish is the ESL teacher. After one day in fourth grade, Jazmin is sad because she is made fun of and alone. However, after working with the ESL teacher for a few days, she is moved to fifth grade because her math and reading skills are very good. On her first day in fifth grade, Jazmin meets Allison, who ends up sticking up for her and teaching her some English words. After meeting Allison, Jazmin finally feels accepted at her new school. This book conveys a universal story that any child, and not just immigrants, can relate to if they have had to deal with changing schools.

<i>Ellis Island Christmas</i>	Maxinne Rhea Leighton	Immigration, Poland, home, family, freedom, Christmas	At six-years old, Kryisia leaves Poland with her mother, brothers, and one of her dolls, and travels to Ellis Island in the early 1900s to finally be reunited with her father. The story details the difficult journey on the boat, and the comfort that Kryisia receives upon arriving in New York and seeing a Christmas tree. The festivities are nothing, though, compared to the joy that Kryisia feels when she sees her father.	PZ7.L 5343 El	06708 31824	Ages 5-8
<i>Wildflower Girl</i>	Marita Conlon-McKenna	Ireland, immigration, labor, dreams, determination	Peggy Driscoll is only thirteen and her parents died during the Great Famine, but she leaves Ireland alone, determined to find work and	PZ7.C 76184 5 Wi 1992	08234 09880	Ages 10-14

more opportunities in America. Upon her arrival in Boston, she becomes the housekeeper for a mean, older, man. She eventually leaves this job, and is hired by a family, who has spoiled children. Peggy, though, learns to tolerate her circumstances and feels proud of what she has accomplished thus far on her own.

<i>Dmitry: A Young Soviet Immigrant</i>	Joanne E. Bernstein	Soviet Union, immigration, American society, biography	Dmitry is a Soviet-Jewish boy who must pack his belongings and move to America with his family. They end up in Syracuse, New York, and the American culture and life is very difficult to adjust to at first. However, through the support from the Russian-speaking community in their area, and with patience, Dmitry learns to enjoy America and school.	DS135 .R93 M673 1981	08991 90340	Ages 9-12
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