

Books about Immigrants

j782.42 / BIO / Trapp

Maria von Trapp: Beyond the Sound of Music. 2002. 112 p.
Biography of the woman who inspired the movie, "The Sound of Music".
Describes their trials and triumphs as immigrants to America, including their detention on Ellis Island.

General Books to Encourage Awareness of and Respect for Other Cultures

j304.6 / SMI

If the World Were a Village: A Book about the World's People by David J. Smith. 2002. 32 p. (K – 6th grade)
What if the world were a village of just 100 people? This creative and startling look at the human race tells about language, religion, nationality, age, etc. Includes notes on sources and suggested activities for teaching children about the global village.

j305.23 / HOL

Wake Up, World! A Day in the Life of Children Around the World by Beatrice Hollyer. 1999.
Eight children (representing Britain, US, Brazil, Ghana, Russia, Vietnam, India and Australia) are shown living their daily lives. (K-3rd)

j306 / WE

We Are All Related: A Celebration of Our Cultural Heritage with art and quotations by the students of G. T. Cunningham Elementary School. 1996. 56 p.
Creative collaborative effort of elementary school students who created art and text with photos of their ancestors, symbols of their culture of origin, and words of wisdom from their grandparents.

Y / Stories / Wal

A Walk in My World: International Short Stories About Youth edited by Anne Mazer. 1999. 223 p. (High School)
In a starred review of this anthology of 16 modern stories, which include the works of three Nobel Prize winners, Publishers Weekly wrote that "Mazer invites readers to examine pearls of wisdom collected from five continents, and they will likely want to embark on future expeditions with the writers they discover here." Use selected individual stories or as read-aloud with high-schoolers.

Immigration Historical Overview

j304.8 / SAN

Immigrants by Martin W. Sandler. 1995. 92 p. (4th - 8th grade)

A *Library of Congress* publication which gives a very readable and interesting overview of the immigrant experience. Includes superb photos illustrating topics such as immigrant life in cities, tenements, education, labor, and the pioneer life.

j301.43 / FRE

Immigrant Kids by Russell Freedman. 1980. 69 p. (4th - 6th grade)

Russell Freedman, a legend in non-fiction for young people, uses archival photos and an accessible, informative style to depict the lives of immigrant children. A classic. (4th - 6th grade)

J323.73 / WHI

Immigrant Children by Sylvia Whitman. (3rd - 5th grade)

Describes the flood of immigration into the US in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, focusing on the experiences of the youngest immigrants, both on their journeys and in their new country. The text is sometimes simplistic or awkward, but the book has wonderful photos and some nice resources in the back. (3rd - 5th grade)

j304.873 /KOR (3rd - 5th grade)

An Album of the Great Wave of Immigration by April Koral. 1992. 63 p.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, millions of people came to the US from countries all over the world. This book tells about why they came, what the journey was like, and what they found when they arrived. Included are many old photographs and quotes from immigrants describing their experiences.

j304.873 / I

I Was Dreaming to Come to America: Memories from the Ellis Island Oral History Project selected by Veronica Lawlor. 1995. 38 p. (4th and up)

Brief quotes from those who passed through Ellis Island accompanied by simple artistic drawings.

j325.109 / LEV

If Your Name was Changed at Ellis Island by Ellen Levine. 1993. 80 p. (2nd - 5th grade)

Question / Answer format about Ellis Island and Immigration for elementary schoolers.

Immigrant Groups

I very highly recommend the ***American Family Albums*** Series which “tell the multicolored and often heroic stories of American immigrant groups, largely through their own words and pictures... Each book is a pictorial and written record of the ‘old country’ left behind, the journey to America, the life that the newcomers made for themselves in their adopted country, and the group’s

contributions to the brilliant diversity of these United States. Our library has albums featuring several ethnic groups including Scandinavian, Jewish, Irish, Japanese, Mexican, Chinese, Italian, African, German, and Cuban. (Useful with upper elementary and above, and as an important teacher resource)

Each book in the **Journey Between Two Worlds** Series focuses on a family who has immigrated to the United States. We own five of these: *A Kurdish Family*, *A Russian Jewish Family*, *A Bosnian Family*, *A Guatemalan Family*, and *A Sudanese Family*. These books have the format of a picture book, with photos and illustrations on each page. The text, however, provides a complex history to the conflicts which prompted each family to flee their native country, and as such they are probably better suited for use with middle schoolers and older.

African Immigrants

j304.8 / ASH

The New African Americans by Brent Ashabranner. 1999. 107 p. (6th and up) Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly West Africa, is the ancestral home of over thirty million African Americans whose forebears were brought to North America as an enslaved people. Yet few of today's immigrants come from Africa. This book explores the history and current issues of African immigration to the US.

j380.144 / HAS

Bound for America: The Forced Migration of Africans to the New World by James Haskins and Kathleen Benson. 1999. 48 p. (6th and up) Clear and disturbing historical account of the capture and forced migration of Africans during the slave trade.

Latin American Immigrants

j304.8 / DAW

Over Here It's Different: Carolina's Story by Mildred Leinweber Dawson. 1993. (3rd – 6th grade) The story of one immigrant family from the Dominican Republic.

Asian Immigrants

j305.8 / GRA

Where the River Runs: A Portrait of a Refugee Family by Nancy Price Graff. 1993. 71 p. (upper elementary and above) Insightful profile of a Cambodian family's immigration to the United States. Includes discussion of how assimilation affects relationships in the family, and the complex ways these immigrants hold on to their Cambodian roots.

j305.89592

Hoang Anh: A Vietnamese-American Boy by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith. 1992. 31 p. (3rd - 8th grade)

Well-written, straightforward account of one family's flight from North Vietnam in 1978. Picture book format appropriate for elementary schoolers.

Middle Eastern Immigrants

j305.892 / WOL (2nd - 5th grade)

Coming to America: A Muslim Family's Story by Bernard Wolf. 2003.

Picture book about an Egyptian family that has immigrated to New York. An important theme of the book is the struggle to adapt to American life while retaining traditional values and customs.

j305.892 / MOR

Grandma Hekmatt Remembers: An Arab American Family Story by Ann Morris. 2003. 31 p. (Elementary grades)

Picture Books

***j 304.873 / MAE

Coming to America: The Story of Immigration by Betsy Maestro. 1996.

This picture book takes readers from the Ice Age, when the very first Americans traveled from Asia to Alaska, through the days of slavery and Ellis Island, and right up to the present day. Lively pictures show people of many races and nationalities. Also included is a table of dates and interesting facts. (K – 5th)

E / Garland, Sherry

The Lotus Seed. 1993. 32 p.

The narrator's grandmother carries a lotus seed with her for luck when bombs destroy her village and she flees Vietnam. Many years later, her grandson's mistake unexpectedly becomes a way to pass on the story to her grandchildren.

E / Moss, Marissa

In America. 1994.

As Walter and his Grandpa walk to the post office to mail a present to Grandpa's brother, Walter learns the story of how his grandfather came to the US while his brother stayed behind in Lithuania.

E / Say, Allen

Grandfather's Journey. 1993. 32 p.

Paintings that look almost like family photographs illustrate this autobiographical story. Like his grandfather before him, the narrator has spent part of his life in Japan and part of it in the US and wherever he is, he always feels a little homesick for the other place. Allen Say also has other picture books about his Japanese relatives.

E / Shea, Pegi Deitz

The Whispering Cloth: A Refugee's Story. 1995. 32 p.

Mai and her grandmother are Hmong people, living in a refugee camp in Thailand. Mai learns to stitch a *pa'ndau*, an embroidered story cloth, and through it she tells the story of her flight with her grandmother from their village in Laos. Watercolor paintings of life in the camp alternate with the story cloth.

Fiction

Y / Auch, Mary Jane

Ashes of Roses. 2002. 250 p. 6th-9th grade

The honest and compelling story of a young girl's newfound independence, from her entrance into a new country to her frightening involvement in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911.

Y / Avi

Beyond the Western Sea Series by Avi (both Book 1 – *The Escape from Home*; published in 1996 with 325 p.; and Book 2 – *Lord Kirkle's Money*; 1998 with 425 p.) 6th – 9th grade

One of the most popular contemporary young adult authors uses swashbuckling, cliff-hanger style to recount the story of Irish immigrants bound for America in the 19th century. Avi is especially good at engaging reluctant readers and those who are drawn to action-packed, shorter chapters.

Y / Collier, James

Chipper (6th - 9th grade)

Written by the popular author of *My Brother Sam is Dead*, this terrific story is set in the 1890s. Chipper was orphaned at the age of six and beaten by his guardians, and now he has little choice but to run away, learning to live on the streets of New York City. Chipper is now twelve years old and a member of a street gang of kids who pickpocket and pilfer to stay alive. Lots of adventure with great historical detail.

Y / Garland, Sherry

Shadow of the Dragon (7th - 12th grade)

Contemporary story of a Vietnamese teenager caught between the desire to fit in with his American friends and the struggle to please his tradition-bound grandmother. A violent Vietnamese gang and the threat of white supremacist skinheads further complicate his life. Gripping and thought-provoking.

J / Mayerson, Evelyn Wilde

The Cat Who Escaped from Steerage (3rd - 6th grade)

When nine year old Chanah and her family are traveling by steerage on a ship from Poland to the US, Chanah's cat escapes and cannot be found. To make matters worse, the family is worried that Chana's cousin, who cannot hear or speak, will be turned away at Ellis Island.

Y / Na, An

A Step from Heaven (8th grade and up)

A highly acclaimed contemporary story of immigration. The Korean-born protagonist of this novel recreates scenes of her childhood as an immigrant who is trying to adjust to American ways and remain a good Korean daughter despite her father's alcoholism and abuse.

Y / Soto, Gary

Buried Onions (7th grade and up)

Stark contemporary urban story of a Mexican American teenager trapped in the grip of poverty, crime, and unfulfilled dreams. Bleak, but widely acclaimed - and very high interest for teenage readers.

J / Uchida, Yoskiko

A Jar of Dreams. (3rd - 6th grade)

In San Francisco during the Great Depression, eleven year old Rinko hates feeling different and left out at school because she is Japanese. Her family struggles against poverty, discrimination, and the threat of violence. Then, when Aunt Waka comes from Japan for a visit, somehow everything changes.

The **Dear America** Series has many titles about young immigrants, including:

J / Dear America

A Coal Miner's Bride: The Diary of Anetka Kaminska. Lattimer, Pennsylvania, 1896.

J / LAS

Dreams in the Golden Country: The Diary of Zipporah Feldman, a Jewish Immigrant Girl. New York City, 1903.