



# *the* Dragon Code

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# The Dragon Lode

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*Demi*

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



IN THINKING ABOUT this letter in *The Dragon Lodge*, I came to see this three-year period as being one of bright innovation on the one hand and tumultuous challenges resulting in uncertainty on the other, with the gradual reopening of lives, communities, and schools after the sequester of COVID-19 at the beginning of 2020. The journal and its offerings of articles in research and literature have provided insights into ways of bringing children and books together, helping young readers see themselves in books, making reading theirs, helping them become visible with voices in the community. During the three years our editors steered the journal into an online journal available on the website, fulfilling a vision of the SIG. The themed book reviews that have been part of the CLR SIG offerings on the website continue to provide insight for educators and families in sharing books with their children. The journal includes the Notable Books for a Global Society (NBGS) list, with connecting books and teaching suggestions that enrich and brighten the lives of readers and teachers. Our new editors, Margaret Opitz and Elizabeth Thackery, have been working with Jackie and Mary-Kate to support the transition.

In the midst of the innovations and bright light of the work of the SIG are the challenges that teachers everywhere face. In this three-year period, we have seen growing constraints on what teachers can do in the classroom, what books they share with students, limiting books largely related to LBGTQIA and people of color—constraints that cause them to be teaching and serving young readers in an environment of uncertainty, a slippery slope that diminishes choice.

Recently the SIG hosted one of ILA's webinars, *Children's Right to Read: Literature in a Democracy*, for more than

150 participants, conducted by members of the SIG, offering support, resources, and ideas to teachers, academics, and librarians. The work is a continuation of the SIG's vision. In the fall 2022 issue of the journal and in the Letter from the President, Danielle Hartsfield wrote, "In our shaken world, this work is more important than ever before. While we need to continue highlighting the value of diverse literature, our SIG's mission calls us to speak up against the rising tide of censorship, a battle among adults that ultimately hurts children." The SIG has been an anchor in the work of ILA, and we envision redoubled support for educators and the work of the organization, with our book club meetings focusing on books from the NBGS Award list and webinars on topics teachers have said are critical to sustain and inform them. The SIG's membership and publicity committee continues to welcome and communicate with members. The NBGS Committee welcomes applicants, members of the SIG, to serve on the committee. The NBGS Practitioner and Researcher Awards selects two outstanding educators each year. The Ways and Means Committee works on ways to sustain the financial health of the SIG.

As incoming president of the SIG, I am grateful to the SIG members for putting their trust in me and for the leadership, innovation, and grace that outgoing president, Dr. Danielle Hartsfield, has provided to sustain the SIG. Her work resonates as we continue efforts to sustain the organization and its members. •

Respectfully,

**Sandip Wilson**

Children's Literature and Reading SIG, 2022–2024

# A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



AS SEMESTERS WIND DOWN and classrooms are packed up for the summer, we, as educators, face a choice. We can choose to spend the summer deeply engaged in curriculum revision, carefully examining our lesson plans and materials and tweaking, changing, possibly overhauling them to meet a myriad of external demands. Or, we can seek out a shady spot under a tree, or claim a sunny spot at the beach, and spend those lazy days of summer carried away in an endless pile of books. In all likelihood, most of us will spend the summer in some combination of these activities, with family and personal responsibilities also tugging at our attention. The reality is, of course, that all of these are important to our teaching lives. It is important to spend time in deep reflection on our teaching practices, while also spending time with new characters and places in a memorable book. And, attending to our family and personal lives matters, too. All of it makes us the teachers our students need. As you read this issue of *The Dragon Lode*, we hope it can be a part of these summer rituals, giving you both inspiration and renewal for the year ahead.

Rebecca Stortz and Miriam Martinez lead us in an in-depth study of theme, and help us consider how to help students tackle this foundational element to engaged reading. “Pathways to Theme” is an important reminder of the many ways in which theme can be taught across the curriculum. Satomi Izumi-Taylor, Yuhua Li, and Yeonsun Ro help us think about how to use literature to help preschoolers develop their gross motor skills in “Promoting Preschoolers’ Gross Motor Development Through Literature and Movement Activities.” With concrete examples you can use in your classroom right away, their article reminds us of the importance

of using literature to teach the whole child using multiple modalities. Finally, do not miss the Notable Books for a Global Society for 2023. In this article, committee members who selected this year’s books will give you ample ideas to build that stack of summer reading with diverse, globally focused books.

The “Poet’s Corner” column for this issue celebrates family. As we settle into our summers, thinking about how family plays an important role in our own lives, and those of our students, is perfectly timed. Family takes on many different forms, and the poems Janet Wong offers to us honor and celebrate all the many ways in which families are formed.

We sincerely hope this issue helps you refresh and renew your practices and perspectives in meaningful ways. We want to thank all of our outstanding authors for their contributions to this issue of *The Dragon Lode*. We are so grateful to the Children’s Literature and Reading SIG of ILA for the opportunity to serve as editors of this wonderful journal for the past two years. We would like to give the new editorial team, Margaret Osgood Opatz and Liz Thackeray-Nelson, a warm welcome! We are pleased the journal is now in their capable and creative hands. Have a relaxing and rejuvenating summer! •

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# the *Dragon* Lodge

## CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

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Spring 2024 **OPEN THEME**

*MANUSCRIPTS DUE  
JANUARY 15, 2024*

We invite manuscripts that explore contemporary issues and questions, genre study, literary theory, and research related to children's literature and reading.

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### GUIDELINES

EMAIL MANUSCRIPTS TO: [THEDRAGONLODE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:THEDRAGONLODE@GMAIL.COM)

Manuscripts must be submitted electronically and should be no longer than 20 double-spaced, typed pages. Use APA (7th edition) formatting. Author's name, affiliation, mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address should be on a separate cover page. Please be judicious in the use of tables, photographs, and charts. Book covers, photographs, illustrations, and figures should be sent as separate jpeg files. Any reference to the author that would enable the reviewer to know the author's identity should not appear in the manuscript.

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# MOVING STUDENTS DOWN PATHWAYS TO THEME



Rebecca Stortz & Miriam Martinez

TEACHERS ENGAGE their students in literature for myriad reasons, including teaching literacy strategies, addressing standards, motivating students to read, learning to identify literary elements, and offering students mentor texts for their own writing. Yet Hillocks (2016) has reminded us of what is perhaps the most important reason for engaging students in literature: “At the core, literature is concerned not only with character, plot, and setting but with moral and philosophical issues” (p. 110). Hillocks’s observation points to the importance of helping students learn to explore themes in literature.

## Defining “Theme”

Educators explain theme in various ways. Tompkins (2003) viewed theme as “the underlying meaning of a story,” which “embodies general truths about human nature” (p. 294). Morgan and DeFrancesco (2022) explained themes as “messages about the human experience that offer advice about how to live” (p. 357). According to Wolf (2004), “theme is the heart of a story—an idea or comment about life that often illuminates the emotional content of the human condition” (p. 54).

Knowing theme lies at the “heart of a story” means a critical part of literacy instruction is helping children learn to reach for theme. Yet this is a challenging goal. Authors rarely include explicit statements of theme in stories. So, readers must infer themes, and as Au (1992) noted, constructing a theme is challenging because the reader must “come up with

an idea that encompasses the text as a whole” (p. 106). Smith and Wilhelm (2010) detailed the complexity of this kind of thematic thinking:

Experienced readers attend directly to clues about character, setting, perspective, and event, and infer—using their own personal and world knowledge—to fill in gaps, and see and interpret implied relationships. Throughout their reading, experienced readers...work to develop an understanding that is consistent with the details of the text and that can be applied to other situations in our lived experience out in the world. (p. 159)

Smith and Wilhelm’s (2010) description signals the complexity involved in making thematic inferences. Yet it is a task we expect even young children to do. For example, the English Language Arts Common Core Standard 2 calls for first graders to demonstrate an understanding of message, while second graders are expected to determine the message or lesson of a story (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State Officers, 2010). Common Core expectations related to theme become increasingly demanding across grade levels (Lord, 2014).

Given the importance of helping children learn to make inferences about theme, we present ways teachers can support students in this challenging task. We begin by looking at what research reveals about children’s thematic understand-



ing and theme instruction. We then discuss various *textual pathways* that can lead readers to thematic insights. Finally, we discuss characteristics of picturebooks for read-alouds focused on theme, as well as instructional ideas teachers can use to guide children toward thematic understandings.

### What Research Tells Us

While research focused on theme is limited, researchers have conducted some investigations focused on children's thematic understanding. In addition, research also offers some insight into theme instruction.

#### Children and Thematic Understanding

Research reveals that children, even young ones, can engage in thematic thinking. Lehr (1988) looked at the responses of kindergartners, second graders, and fourth graders to two different tasks: identifying stories with related themes and articulating themes for stories. In selecting stories with the same themes, the second- and fourth-grade students made the same selections as adults more often than kindergartners did. Further, the older children were more successful in making their own thematic statements for the stories than were younger ones. Yet, Lehr found that even the youngest children were able to make thematic statements about stories. While their statements differed from those made by adults, the themes were, nonetheless, congruent with the stories.

Lehr's findings align with those of Hickman (1981), who investigated the naturally occurring literary responses of children in multigrade classrooms—K/1, 2/3, and 4/5. Hickman found that even her youngest participants reached for theme. However, the thematic statements of kindergartners and first graders were typically expressed in the context of the story. By contrast, the fourth and fifth graders talked about theme using more abstract thematic statements not tied directly to story content.

#### Theme Instruction

While researchers have found that children can make inferences about theme, this type of thinking may not be the way children typically respond to stories. Rather, children initially become engaged in the story world instead of responding to themes that emerge from stories (Martinez & Roser, 1994). The propensity of children to focus on the story world points to a need for more structured instruction related to theme. While Morgan et al. (2021) noted the “limited research and

professional materials to guide teachers' instruction about theme” (p. 429), educators who do write about theme instruction repeatedly emphasize the importance of discussion in helping students reach for theme.

Au (1992) looked at the features of teacher-guided discussions that led middle-grade students to thematic inferences. She found that opportunities to participate in discussion of theme facilitated children's ability to infer theme. However, she noted that such discussions must be carefully orchestrated by teachers. Successful discussions require teachers to be cognizant that more than one theme can emerge from a story and to adjust their questioning to build on students' thinking. Au also noted the importance of offering students repeated opportunities to discuss theme in stories.

Morgan et al. (2021) offered guidelines related to theme instruction based on their own work in classrooms. Like Au, they emphasized the role of discussion and provided specific recommendations for scaffolding students' discussions:

- Consistently use the word “theme” in talking with students.
- Work toward having students construct multiple themes in stories.
- Support students in moving beyond one-word articulations of a topic related to theme or simple clichés.
- Invite students to make connections between the themes they construct and their own lives (p. 434).

### Pathways to Theme

Included in all the recommendations related to theme instruction that we have found is the recommendation that students be invited to provide textual evidence for the themes they put forth. However, students need to learn the kinds of textual evidence that can lead to themes. Smith and Wilhelm (2010) argued that noticing is an important interpretive skill for students. They observed that students “need to understand the kind of cues authors provide for them to notice” (p. 29). Stories offer various cues or *pathways to theme*, and teachers must help students become aware of these pathways and learn to follow them in making inferences about literary themes. In the following section, we discuss two types of pathways, those offered by literary elements and devices and those offered by signposts.

**Table 1**  
**PATHWAYS TO THEME IN SELECTED PICTUREBOOKS**

TITLE	OVERVIEW	POSSIBLE THEME
<b>CHARACTER CHANGE</b>		
<i>Watercress</i> by Andrea Wang (2021)	A young girl gains insight into the hardships her immigrant parents endured before leaving China.	It is important to be mindful of the experiences of others and seek to understand those experiences.
<i>Milo Imagines the World</i> by Matt de la Peña (2021)	Milo imagines the lives of people on the subway, only to realize that all he imagines may be wrong.	Judgments about others based on appearances are often faulty.
<i>Last Stop on Market Street</i> by Matt de la Peña (2015)	As CJ travels through the city with his grandmother, each of his complaints is countered by his grandmother, who sees the world in a different light.	Finding the beauty in the world means looking beneath the surface.
<i>Hello! Hello!</i> by Matthew Cordell (2012)	Members of a family find joys in the world when they set aside their technology and go out into nature.	Nature offers delights not found through technology.
<i>After the Fall</i> by Dan Santat (2017)	After falling from the wall, Humpty Dumpty is transformed when he faces his fears and climbs up on the wall again.	Facing one's fear means conquering one's fear.
<i>Leonardo the Terrible Monster</i> by Mo Willems (2005)	A little monster who is determined to scare someone comes to the realization that it is better to be a friend than a terrible monster.	It is better to extend one's hand in friendship than to bully another.
<b>CHARACTER INTERACTIONS/RELATIONSHIPS</b>		
<i>Bear Has a Story to Tell</i> by Philip Stead (2012)	His too-busy friends do not have time to listen to Bear's story, so instead, Bear helps each one prepare for the coming winter. In the spring, Bear's friends reciprocate.	Friendship means giving—not just receiving.
<i>Bully</i> by Laura Vaccaro Seeger (2013)	Only when a little goat calls out a bull for his bullying does the bully understand how others see him.	Stopping bullying may mean standing up to bullies.
<b>SETTING</b>		
<i>Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood</i> by F. Isabel Campoy (2016)	An inner-city neighborhood is transformed when a little girl and an artist inspire everyone to help paint murals throughout the neighborhood.	We can each take action to make our community more beautiful.
<i>Harlem Grown</i> by Tony Hillery (2020)	A classroom of children join with a man working to transform a vacant lot into a community garden.	By working together, people can transform the communities in which they live.
<i>Mr. Tiger Goes Wild</i> by Peter Brown (2013)	After Mr. Tiger returns home from the wilderness, changes are apparent in his uptight town, with animals beginning to interact with one another, walk on all fours, and even go without their clothes.	It is important to be oneself rather than having one's life defined by rigid social rules.
<i>The Night Gardener</i> by Terry Fan & Eric Fan (2016)	A dull, gray town is transformed into a lively, colorful place through the creative topiaries created by a gardener who is passing through.	One way to enrich our lives is by making the world a more beautiful place.
<b>AHA MOMENTS</b>		
<i>Last Stop on Market Street</i> by Matt de la Peña (2015)	As CJ travels through the city with his grandmother, each of his complaints is countered by his grandmother, who sees the world in a different light. This leads CJ to a new insight: "He wondered how his nana always found beautiful where he never even thought to look."	Finding the beauty in the world means looking beneath the surface.
<i>Saturday</i> by Oge Mora (2019)	After looking forward to spending a special Saturday with her mother, the day is filled with one disappointment after another, until the little girl has a realization: "'Don't worry, Mommy,' Ava reassured her, 'Today <i>was</i> special. Today <i>was</i> splendid. Saturdays are wonderful...because I spend them with you.'"	Special times are really about spending time with someone you love.
<i>Milo Imagines the World</i> by Matt de la Peña (2021)	Milo imagines the lives of people on the subway, only to realize that all he imagines may be wrong. This leads him to conclude: "Maybe you can't really know anyone just by looking at their face."	Do not make judgments about others based on appearances.

**Table 1 cont.**  
**PATHWAYS TO THEME IN SELECTED PICTUREBOOKS**

TITLE	OVERVIEW	POSSIBLE THEME
<b>WORDS OF THE WISER</b>		
<i>Jabari Jumps</i> by Gaia Cornwall (2017)	Jabari has learned to swim and really wants to jump off the high board. However, he is a little too afraid, until his father shares some words of wisdom: "Sometimes, if I feel a little scared, I take a deep breath and tell myself I am ready. And you know what? Sometimes it stops feeling scary and feels a little like a surprise."	We can overcome fear by believing in ourselves.
<i>Amazing Grace</i> by Mary Hoffman (1991)	Grace is discouraged when a classmate tells her she can't be Peter Pan in the class play because she is Black. It is through the support of her nana that Grace realizes that possibilities are endless, leading her nana to observe: "If Grace put her mind to it, she can do anything she want."	Realizing dreams requires determination and hard work.
<i>Alma and How She Got Her Name</i> by Juana Martinez-Neal (2018)	When Alma expresses concern about her very long name, her father tells her about all the family members after whom she is named. Most important, though, is the name "Alma," because, as her father explains, "You are the first and the only Alma. You will make your own story."	We are each part of a family, while simultaneously being our own selves.
<i>The Bee Tree</i> by Patricia Polacco (1998)	After a rollicking adventure seeking a bee tree, a grandfather tells his granddaughter: "There is such sweetness inside of the book too!" He continues, "Such things...adventure, knowledge and wisdom. But these things do not come easily. You have to pursue them. Just like we ran after the bees to find their tree, so you must also chase these things through the pages of a book!"	Reading offers rich rewards for those who pursue them.
<i>Each Kindness</i> by Jacqueline Woodson (2012)	A new girl is ostracized by her classmates, who recognize the error of their judgment after it is too late to reach out to the girl. " <i>This is what kindness does</i> , Ms. Albert said. <i>Each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple, into the world.</i> " The teacher tells the students, " <i>Each kindness...makes the whole world a little bit better.</i> "	Kindness makes the world a better place.
<b>AGAIN AND AGAIN</b>		
<i>The Bell Rang</i> by James Ransome (2019)	In this story about the brutality of slavery, flying birds appear repeatedly in illustrations and emphasize the importance of flights to freedom.	Freedom is for all people.
<i>Thank You, Omu!</i> by Oge Mora (2018)	Omu repeatedly shares her stew until none remains. Her neighbors share their food with her.	The world is a better place when we share with others.
<i>Daniel Finds a Poem</i> by Micha Archer (2016)	Daniel repeatedly asks each animal he meets in the park what poetry is.	We find poetry by looking closely at the world around us.
<b>SYMBOL AND EXTENDED METAPHOR</b>		
<i>The Uncorker of Ocean Bottles</i> by Michelle Cuevas (2016)	The "uncorker" leads a lonely life, delivering messages found in ocean bottles but never receiving any message himself. When he retrieves an invitation to a party without an address, he tries repeatedly (and unsuccessfully) to deliver the message. So, he goes to the party himself where he finds something new—friends. The narrator states: "The Uncorker's heart was a glass vessel filled to the brim."	There is nothing as fulfilling as connections with others.
<i>Extra Yarn</i> by Mac Barnett (2012)	A little girl finds a magical box filled with yarn that is never depleted. So, the little girl begins to transform her drab and dreary town by making colorful coats for everyone (and everything) in the town.	We can change the world with a giving spirit.

### Literary Elements and Literary Devices as Pathways to Theme

The literary element of character often serves as an important pathway to theme. In fact, Golden and Guthrie (1986) argued that understanding characters and their motivations may be the key to interpreting themes in literature. In a similar fashion, Wolf (2004) noted that “more complex stories develop themes on an implicit level through the affect and actions of their characters” (p. 55). Lehr’s (1991) research supports the contention that attending to character may offer an important pathway to theme. She found that children who understood the inner workings of characters were able to take that information and “generate an overarching construct for the story” (p. 52).

Literary elements work in tandem, of course, with character and plot being integrally linked. As plots unfold, we learn of characters’ experiences and their interactions with others, and we often see characters changing as a consequence of those experiences and interactions. Reflection on how (and why) a character has changed can often lead readers to thematic insights. For example, in *Leonardo the Terrible Monster* (Willems, 2005), a little monster is determined to “scare the tuna salad” out of someone. Leonardo believes he has finally succeeded when he sneaks up on Sam, who bursts into tears as Leonardo endeavors to scare the little boy. Leonardo’s feeling of accomplishment changes when Sam shares a litany of hurts that reveals the true reasons for his tears. It is at this point that Leonardo makes a “big decision,” to be a wonderful friend instead of a terrible monster. Given the change in Leonardo’s perspective, young readers can be guided to infer a message about reaching out a hand in friendship that emerges in this story.

In some picturebooks, setting can be the literary element that offers a pathway to theme, particularly in stories in which shifts in setting occur. In *Mr. Tiger Goes Wild* (Brown, 2013), Mr. Tiger becomes frustrated by the rigid rules governing his town, and little wonder. Illustrations reveal a town in which every house is identical. Animal inhabitants of the town walk on two legs, wear only the most proper of clothing, and behave in the stuffiest fashion imaginable. Frustrated, Mr. Tiger discards his clothing and runs off to the wilderness. Illustrations of the wilderness reveal colors and shapes that are in dramatic contrast to those seen in the town, and the wilderness appears to offer Mr. Tiger freedom to be himself. But he soon becomes lonely, so he decides to return

to town—a town that is changing: Animals are now smiling, some walk on all four legs, and others have even discarded their clothing. Readers can infer that a place that allows one to be oneself provides opportunities for happiness.

Literary devices can also lead readers to theme. Eeds and Peterson (1991) have highlighted the potential of symbols and extended metaphors, noting that these literary devices can suggest meanings not directly stated and point to what a story is really about. They explained that through symbols and extended metaphors, authors can abstract “some of the components of life and order them in such a way that they are illuminated” (p. 121). As such, these literary devices can provide pathways to theme. For example, in *Bear Came Along* (Morris, 2019), a river serves as a metaphor for community building when a motley crew of animals—all living separate lives at the beginning of the story—find themselves united on the adventure of a lifetime as they come together on a runaway tree barreling down the river.

### Signposts as Pathways to Theme

Beers and Probst (2012) have identified features of stories found repeatedly in longer texts that hold the potential of helping students read more deeply—if they attend to the features. Beers and Probst called these features “signposts.” While these scholars explored the signposts in chapter books, these same signposts can be found in some picturebooks for younger children. Like Morgan and DeFrancesco (2022), we believe that three of these signposts can serve as pathways to theme: aha moments, words of the wiser, and again and again.

Aha moments are “moments when a character’s sudden insight or understanding helps us understand the plot’s movement, the development of the character, or the internal conflict he faces” (Beers & Probst, 2012, p. 71). For example, in *Milo Imagines the World* (de la Peña, 2021), a little boy traveling by subway to visit his mother in prison makes quick judgments about his fellow travelers—including a little boy he has pegged as rich and privileged. It is only when Milo sees the boy entering the prison to visit his own mother that he has an aha moment: “Maybe you can’t really know anyone just by looking at their face.” Milo’s new insight can lead readers to recognize the fallacy of making judgments about others based on outward appearances.

Words of the wiser is the second signpost that can lead readers to theme. Beers and Probst (2012) explained the signpost this way: “This is the scene in which a wiser

**Table 2**  
**SAMPLE EXPLANATIONS OF SELECTED PATHWAYS TO THEME**

PATHWAY	EXPLANATION OF PATHWAY	GUIDING QUESTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS EXPLORE PATHWAY IN A STORY
Character Change	Characters in stories can have all kinds of experiences, and they often meet different kinds of people. And just like us, they can learn from new experiences or from the people they meet. The author rarely tells us what the character has learned, but we can usually figure out the character’s “life lesson.” That life lesson points to the theme of the story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What important thing happens to [main character] in the story?</li> <li>• What do you think the character learned from this experience?</li> <li>• What can <i>we</i> learn from the character’s experience? That is, what message or theme does the story have for <i>us</i>?</li> </ul>
Again and Again	Sometimes in a story we see something that is repeated again and again. Maybe a character does something again and again or says something again and again. There may even be something that appears in illustrations again and again. When we see something appearing repeatedly in a story, it is usually important. So, we need to ask ourselves, “Why has the author included this again and again? What does the author want us to think about?” This will often lead us to the theme of the story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did we see something in the story that happened again and again? (Or did a character say something again and again?)</li> <li>• Why do you think this happened again and again?</li> <li>• What do you think the author may want us to learn from this again and again?</li> <li>• What message or theme does the story have for <i>us</i>?</li> </ul>
Words of the Wiser	In some stories, there is a character who is older than the other characters, and sometimes this character shares something important that really teaches the younger character something they hadn’t thought about before. We call these “words of the wiser.” And the words of the wiser can help readers understand the big idea or theme of the story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is the older and wiser person in this story?</li> <li>• What wise words did this person share?</li> <li>• How did this help the character?</li> <li>• What can <i>we</i> learn from the story?</li> </ul>
Aha Moment	Sometimes characters in stories have an experience that makes them realize something they have never known before. This usually happens after the character has an important experience of some kind. When this happens in a story, we say the character had an “aha moment.” And this aha moment can often help readers understand the big idea or theme of the story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you remember a time in the story when the main character suddenly understood something important? This is an aha moment.</li> <li>• What words in the story tell us what the character actually understood?</li> <li>• What happened in the story that made the main character realize this?</li> <li>• How did it change the main character?</li> <li>• What can <i>we</i> learn from the story?</li> </ul>

and often older character offers a life lesson of some sort to the protagonist. This lesson often emerges as a theme” (p. 72). We see this signpost in *Each Kindness* (Woodson, 2012), a story in which a new girl is repeatedly ostracized by her classmates. After the new girl moves away, the teacher talks with the children about kindness: “*This is what kindness does, Ms. Albert said. Each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple, into the world.*” The teacher tells the students that “*each kindness... makes the whole world a little bit better.*” These words of wisdom lead the main character to recognize the hurt she has likely caused by refusing to play with the

new girl, and these same words can help readers infer the message of Woodson’s story.

The final signpost is again and again, and Beers and Probst (2012) explained the signpost this way: “This is an image, word, or situation that is repeated, leading the reader to wonder about its significance. Repetition might provide information about a character, about the conflict, about the setting, or about the theme” (p. 72). *Thank You, Omu!* (Mora, 2018) features the again-and-again signpost. Enticed by the smell of Omu’s stew, neighbors come knocking on Omu’s door one by one. Each time, Omu generously shares her stew.



When she discovers there is no stew left for her own dinner, Omu hears another knock on her door—and discovers her neighbors have come to visit bringing all kinds of delectable treats. This pattern gives insight into the importance of sharing what we have with others. *The Bell Rang* (Ransome, 2019) also contains the again-and-again pattern, but the pattern is revealed through the illustrations rather than the verbal text. The story focuses on the suffering of an enslaved family whose son successfully escapes to freedom. Flying birds appear repeatedly in the book's illustrations, emphasizing the importance of flights to freedom.

While some of the pathways we have discussed may be found less frequently in picturebooks, we have been surprised to discover that quite a few picturebooks include one or more pathways to theme and hence provide opportunities for theme instruction. In Table 1, we offer a list of picturebooks that serve as exemplars of such pathways. While we do not intend this table to be a comprehensive list of picturebooks with these pathways, we included ones that we believe to contain clear examples that can be used for instruction.

### Supporting Students' Explorations of Theme

In this section, we conclude by focusing on ways in which teachers can support young children in learning to make inferences about theme. As referenced previously, Morgan et al. (2021) provided guidelines for theme instruction: consistently using the word "theme," being open toward students' construction of multiple themes, supporting students into moving beyond topics or clichés, providing opportunities to share textual evidence that supports their thinking, and inviting students to connect the themes to their own lives (p. 434). Classroom activities that incorporate these guidelines might include teacher-led read-alouds, small-group discussions, and opportunities to write about the stories.

Given that thinking about theme may not be the way children typically respond to stories, the role of the teacher is critical if children are to learn to make inferences about theme. The first consideration in introducing a new pathway to theme is book selection, to ensure that the book offers a

clear example of the target pathway. Table 1 contains numerous examples of such picturebooks.

Teacher-led read-alouds are a promising context for introducing new pathways and providing explanations related to the pathway. As part of this introduction, teachers must clearly explain what the pathway is and guide the students into discovering how the pathway is constructed in the story and helps to develop the themes. The read-aloud provides opportunities for student questions, connections, and discussion. In Table 2, we offer sample explanations of selected pathways and prompts that teachers can use in guiding students down these pathways.

For the students to really begin to "own" each pathway, they need numerous opportunities to explore new picturebooks as well. For example, they can engage with their peers in small-group discussions or draft written responses that can then be shared with peers. And only after ample opportunities for the students to become comfortable with each pathway should the teacher introduce another.

**By explicitly introducing pathways to theme, repeatedly guiding children down these pathways, and offering opportunities for students to explore on their own and with peers, the classroom can be a context for thinking deeply about stories and how they relate to our lives.**

### Conclusion

Reaching for theme can be a challenging part of literary instruction, but we believe that thematic thinking is within the reach of young children. By explicitly introducing pathways to theme, repeatedly guiding children down these pathways, and offering opportunities for students to explore on their own and with peers, the classroom can be a context for thinking deeply about stories and how they relate to our lives. It is when we share the right picturebooks with children and offer supportive instruction that we will be helping children learn to reach for the moral and philosophical insights that Hill-ocks (2016) noted are central to understanding literature. •

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- Martinez-Neal, J. (2018). *Alma and how she got her name*. Candlewick.
- Mora, O. (2018). *Thank you, Omu!* Little, Brown.
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- Morris, R. T. (2019). *Bear came along* (L. Pham, Illus.). Little, Brown.
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# PROMOTING PRESCHOOLERS' GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LITERATURE AND MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES



Satomi Izumi-Taylor, Yuhua Li, & Yeonsun Ro

**Blair:** “I can’t slide goodly!”

**Teacher:** “Here, let me help you. I can put some powder on the slide. Now try it!”

**Blair:** “I did it! It is much better when you put powder on the slide! Can you put some more?”

THIS WAS A CONVERSATION between a 4-year-old and her teacher as the teacher helped Blair at a slide on the preschool playground. Running, balancing, chasing, swinging, jumping, hopping, galloping, skipping, kicking, throwing and catching balls, and sliding contribute to preschoolers’ physical development (Morrison, 2015). Preschoolers simply cannot learn physical skills through just playing (Battaglia et al., 2019; Pica, 2013) since they tend to repeat some of the same patterns of movements. To ensure early and sustained success for children’s healthy development, carefully designed movement environments and progressive educational experiences are needed (Haibach-Beach et al., 2018).

This article presents the importance of gross motor development for preschoolers and describes three developmentally appropriate physical activities through the use of literature and

movement with music. Literature refers to “the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language” (Huck et al., 2000, p. 4). Early childhood teachers already use books and stories throughout their curricula; thus, this strategy will not require extensive time to implement in classrooms. We also present a list of books that children and teachers can read to promote children’s gross motor skills (see Table 1).

## The Importance of Gross Motor Development for Preschoolers

Activities that promote children’s gross motor skills are vital to maintain healthy bodies because inactivity is one cause of obesity in young children (Gomes, 2021; Harlow et al., 2020).

Children’s busy schedules, less outdoor playtime, and playing indoors with computer-related games contribute to their obesity (Izumi-Taylor, 2022). Preschoolers need to be active throughout the day (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.; Morrison, 2015) and to learn about themselves, others, and environments through unconstrained physical activities (Harju, 2022).

Children are innately drawn to moving around their environments, and responding to and moving with music

**To ensure early and sustained success for children’s healthy development, carefully designed movement environments and progressive educational experiences are needed.**

can increase children's cognitive development (Battaglia et al., 2019). As children's brains develop, their balance and perceptual skills improve, making it possible for them to control their own gross motor skills (Pangelinan et al., 2011). When preschoolers have well-developed motor skills, they find it easy to engage in physical activities. One way to engage children in movement activities is through literature (Izumi-Taylor et al., 2012).

Benefits of early development of gross motor skills through literature and movement activities are well-known (Battaglia et al., 2019), and teachers need to implement such activities for preschoolers every day. Because preschoolers' early experiences with literature and movement activities can determine their later cognitive knowledge and attitudes (Battaglia et al., 2019), teachers must use developmentally appropriate teaching strategies (Coppie & Bredekamp, 2009). Much of preschoolers' learning should come from the large muscles (Morrison, 2015), so they need to engage in early gross motor activities. Through careful observations of children, teachers can determine what kinds of movement activities they can offer to their charges.

### Promoting Gross Motor Skills Through Literacy and Movement Activities

Children's literature functions as a link between what children see and what they think about the world around them (Galinsky, 2020). Reading and discussing carefully selected books can support children's developmental skills that they need to learn (Meredith et al., 2020). Such books can encourage and support children's sensory motor, fine motor, and gross motor skills. Children's books are versatile, and children can develop their fine motor skills by pointing to books and turning pages. They also can develop gross motor skills by imitating body postures and movements in the books (Gonzalez-Mena, 2014). Teachers can select books that encourage children's engagement in movement activities.

Creating authentic environments that encourage children's imagination and creativity through movement is important in promoting their gross motor development (Edwards et al., 2009). Through reading high-quality books, teachers can offer preschoolers opportunities to develop the basic movement skills (Bailey, 2006). When teaching movements, teachers can use direct approaches such as modeling, demonstrating, and imitating (Edwards et al., 2009). Preschoolers enjoy nursery rhymes, including "Simon Says," "Follow the Leader," "Three Little

**Table 1**

### LIST OF BOOKS ON PROMOTING CHILDREN'S MOTOR SKILLS

- Adrienne, M. (2005). *Move it! Motion, forces and you*. Kids Can Press.
- Bradley, K. (2005). *Forces make things move*. HarperCollins.
- Buehner, C. (2004). *Snowman at night*. Dial Books.
- Burk, R. (2021). *Stomp, wiggle, clap and tap: My first book of dance*. Rockridge Press.
- Carle, E. (1995). *The very busy spider*. The World of Eric Carle.
- Carle, E. (1999). *From head to toe*. Harper Festival.
- Cauley, L. (1992). *Clap your hands*. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.
- Craig, L. (2012). *Dancing feet*. Knopf Books for Young Readers.
- Cronin, D. (2005). *Wiggle*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.
- Edwards, D. (2021). *My first animal moves: A children's book to encourage kids and their parents to move more, sit less and decrease screen time*. Explorer Publishing.
- Evans, L. (2000). *Snow dance* (C. Jabar, Illus.). Scholastics.
- Jackson, C. (2020). *Animal moves at the zoo*. Spring Willow Books.
- Litwin, E. (2010). *Pete the cat: I love my white shoes*. Harper Collins.
- Mitton, T. (2016). *Dinosaurumpus!* Cartwheel Books.
- Montague, M. (2021). *Damien the cow: A yoga story for kids*. Independent Publishing.
- Neitzel, S. (1990). *The jacket I wear in the snow*. Scholastics.
- Page, R. (2018). *Move!* Clarion Books.
- Raffi. (2020). *Shake my sillies out*. Knopf Books for Young Readers.
- Rosen, M. (2003). *We're going on a bear hunt*. Aladdin Paperbacks.
- Smee, N. (2007). *Clip-clop*. Boxer Books.
- Stille, D. (2004). *Motion: Push and pull, fast and slow*. Picture Window Books.
- Thomas, J. (2009). *Can you make a scary face?* Beach Lane Books.
- Wallace, A. (2020). *How to catch a snowman*. Sourcebooks Wonderland.
- Willems, M. (2010). *Can I play too?* Hyperion Books for Children.
- Williams, L. (2019). *The old little lady who was not afraid of anything*. Harper Collins.
- Yoo, T. (2012). *You're a lion! And other fun yoga poses*. Nancy Paulsen Books.

Pigs,” “Rain, Rain, Go Away,” “One Potato, Two Potato,” and “Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat” (Izumi-Taylor et al., 2012). Children and teachers could record their singing and use that for movement activities (Izumi-Taylor et al., 2012). Teachers can enhance children’s enjoyment of movement by providing them with simple instruments and enough room to move around, selecting developmentally appropriate books and songs, keeping activities short, and using a direct approach.

### Activities to Develop 4-Year-Olds’ and Older Preschoolers’ Gross Motor Skills

The following are several examples of physical activities that involve the processing of sensory-motor stimulation, integration, and adaptation that would result in greater benefits of healthy motor development for children.

#### Step Reaction Time on Visual or Auditory Signal

##### *Benefits of the Activity*

This activity requires children’s eye-foot coordination, wherein children can learn decision-making skills. Children are encouraged to react as quickly and accurately as possible.

##### *Book and Summary*

Together the teacher and children can read Watty Piper’s *The Little Engine That Could* (1990) and discuss the importance of trying things. Children have been enjoying this classic story for over 60 years.

##### *Strategies Using the Book to Support*

##### *Children’s Gross Motor Skills*

Teachers can ask children questions: “What do you think of this little engine? Can we move like this little engine? Do you think this little engine has a positive ‘can-do’ attitude? Have you ever said to yourself, ‘I think I can?’” Then they can invite children to participate: “So, everyone, let’s try this game and see what happens.”

Teachers can model how to move like an engine, and then introduce the following fun physical activities to children:

- Ask the children to stand with both feet apart, approximately the width of the shoulders.
- Draw one square in front of the left foot and one square in front of the right foot. Draw one square behind the left foot and one square behind the right foot.
- Use a pointing finger pointing in a direction as a visual signal or verbal signal, such as “left-front,” “right-front,” “left-back,” or “right-back.”

- Ask the children to react to the signal as fast as possible by stepping on the designated targeted square, then quickly return to the original start position.
- Wait for the next signal.

#### Musical Chairs

##### *Benefits of the Activity*

This activity encourages children’s trust and confidence and also promotes attention skills. Teachers need some music, but no chairs.

##### *Book and Summary*

Children and the teacher can read Jeremy Tankard’s *Grumpy Bird* (2007) and talk about the importance of being friends. They can discuss how we might feel grumpy when waking up, but if our friends stick with us to walk everywhere, we might just feel fine and happy. Grumpy and his friends walked and walked, and then he felt better because of his friends.

##### *Strategies Using the Book to Support*

##### *Children’s Gross Motor Skills*

The teacher can ask questions about this book, such as “Have you ever felt grumpy after getting up? Do you sometimes feel like you don’t want to get out of bed?” To reflect on children’s understanding of the book, the teacher can ask, “Why do you think the grumpy bird felt better after walking? Do you have friends who are nice to you even if you are grumpy?” Asking open-ended questions can promote children’s thinking skills. After the discussion, the teacher can announce, “I know the grumpy bird and friends walked a lot, and now let’s walk in a circle with music. Listen to the music and pay attention when it stops. Watch how I do it.”

- Have the children form a circle, then turn toward their right (left shoulders to the center of the circle).
- Ask them to move comfortably closer, so that the circle becomes smaller.
- Put on some music and ask the children to walk in a circle.
- Stop the music. The children will bend their knees and sit on the thighs of the child behind them in a “chair pose.”
- Start the music up again.
- Variations: Have the children turn around and move in the opposite direction or raise their arms overhead as they sit.

## Mountain Range

### *Benefits of the Activity*

Creativity and problem-solving skills will be developed through this game. It requires the group to cooperate and move together; it encourages camaraderie.

### *Book Summary*

*Barnyard Dance!* by Sandra Boynton (2014) is a fun book for children and the teacher to read. It is about high-spirited and fun animals who want to dance, clap their hands, and stamp their feet. It is easy to read, and its simple pictures are enjoyable.

### *Strategies Using the Book to Support Children's Gross Motor Skills*

The teacher and children can discuss this book's beautiful illustrations and colors. The teacher can ask the children what they think of these fun-loving, dancing animals: "Would you like to dance with the animals? Can you stomp your feet? Can you clap your hands? Are you ready for a barnyard dance?" After discussing the barnyard dance, the teacher can model what they are going to do by saying, "Now, everyone dance and move around; we can do this mountain range movement. I'll show you how to do this, and we'll try it."

- Demonstrate the mountain pose by placing the hands in a peaked position. Then ask the children to stand side by side in a line in mountain pose, their feet hip-width apart. Each foot must touch the foot of the person on each side.
- The group has to walk across the room without separating their feet from those of their partners.
- If the group separates, they must begin again.
- Variation: Ask the children to walk on their toes.

## Conclusion

By understanding how preschoolers' physical and gross motor skills develop, teachers can recognize why active learning is important. Preschoolers need to learn and test their bodies, and they need to learn what they can do and how they can do it (Morrison, 2015). Highly skilled teachers implement integrated music and movement activities with literature to support preschoolers' physical development. Developmentally appropriate literature and movement activities with music can support such development in children. As they engage in such activities, children strengthen the development of their brains through cognition, balance, and perception. When teachers offer in-

triguing music and movement activities through literature daily, children experience the joy and beauty of physical activities. •

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# 2023 NOTABLE BOOKS FOR A GLOBAL SOCIETY: A BOOKLIST FOR GRADES PRE-K–12 JOURNEYS ALONG THE FAMILIAR AND NEW



Edited by Mary Ellen Oslick and Jeanne Gilliam Fain

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## Committee Members and Contributing Writers for the 2023 NBGS Award List

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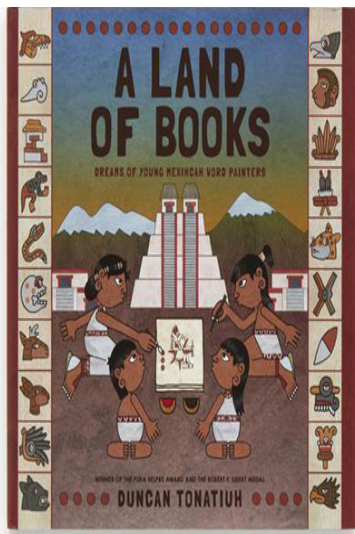
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BEGINNING IN 1996, the Notable Books for a Global Society (NBGS) Committee annually selects a collection of 25 books that address issues from around the world, appropriate for readers in pre-K to 12th grades. These books reflect diversity in the broadest sense and celebrate a wide variety of voices and topics, including war, racism, immigration, Indigenous populations, environmental advocacy, Black Lives Matter, and LGBTQ+ issues. Furthermore, they empower cultural groups with preservation of identity as they facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and respect between readers from different cultures (Yahya, 2021).

After reading and discussing over 500 books this year, our committee agreed that while a common theme among the award-winning books was journey, we urge readers not to focus

on the destination. Instead, we invite readers to enjoy the company of historical and fictional characters along their journeys, both familiar and new. They journey to find their voices (*Lotus Bloom and the Afro Revolution* and *Dream, Annie, Dream*), find their freedoms and rights (*Rima's Rebellion* and *Because of You, John Lewis*), find the courage to live (*Ain't Burned All the Bright and The Talk*), and find the courage to leave (*Still Dreaming and Torch*). The company we keep on these journeys provides the mirrors, windows, and sliding doors for readers, following Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop's (1990) powerful metaphor. In addition to book reviews, members of the committee thoughtfully and carefully provide teaching suggestions and related books in hopes of pushing readers to become more globally aware and empathetic (Newstreet et al., 2018).

## The Books in the 2023 Collection of Notable Books for a Global Society Award



**Tonatiuh, Duncan. (2022). *A Land of Books: Dreams of Young Mexihcah Word Painters*. Abrams Books for Young Readers. 48 pp. GR K–3. Historical fiction picturebook.**

Told from the perspective of young Mexihcah, who assisted their parents in the creation of “amoxin,” or “codices,” this book depicts the flourishing Mixtec culture that existed for 1,000 years before its decimation by the conquistadors. This civilization was considered an “amoxtlalpan,” the Nahuatl word for “a land of books.” Highly respected artists of both genders painted the codices as pictograms that were read by the Mixtec elite. Sadly, only 15 codices have survived. Duncan Tonatiuh uses Nahuatl vocabulary to convey the history. His classic illustrations are inspired by Mixtec codex art, with two-dimensional depictions and earthen colors. Hand drawing and digital methods enhance the bold appearance of the artwork. A glossary, author’s notes, photographs, bibliography, and list of websites are included. This book is a must for the teaching of Mesoamerica. *Reviewed by Sharryn Larsen Walker*

### Teaching Suggestions

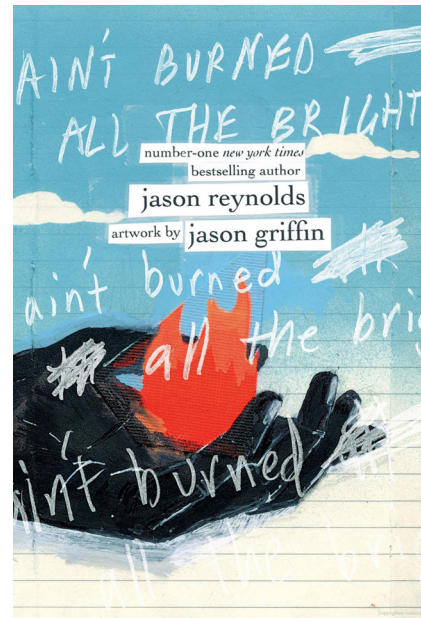
- Examine Tonatiuh’s illustrations in his various award-winning books. View his interview on *StoryMakers* (<https://duncantonatiuh.com/videoresources/>). Discuss his illustration process.
- Examine posters that use few or no words to convey

meaning. Ask students to examine the message, how the process is like the one the Mexihcah used, and the visual art elements displayed. Create a class chart of the findings.

- Have students select a topic related to social-emotional learning (SEL). Using the information on the classroom charts as a guide, have students create a pictogram about their SEL topic. The pictograms can be displayed as a poster.

### Related Books

- Dauids, S., & Mays, N. K. (2021). *Sharice’s big voice: A Native kid becomes a congresswoman* (J. M. Pawis-Steckley, Illus.). HarperCollins.
- Rippon, J. (2020). *Rise up! The art of protest*. Charlesbridge.
- Tokuda-Hall, M. (2022). *Love in the library* (Y. Imamura, Illus.). Candlewick Press.



**Reynolds, Jason. (2022). *Ain’t Burned All the Bright* (Jason Griffin, Illus.). Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books. 384 pp. GR 7–9. Poetry.**

In only 10 phrases, Jason Reynolds captures the symbolism of breath and oxygen that became even more important to human survival during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through poetry and illustrator Jason Griffin’s use of collage, this book pays tribute to the deepest fears, sorrows, and hopes of the pandemic. Readers are able to explore the emotions, both stunning and terrifying, of the past few years. Through lines such as “still glued to the no-good / glued to the high-defini-



tion glare of a low-definition life,” the tolls of isolation and suffocation are exquisitely explored. Two primary themes guide these 10 phrases: the loneliness of quarantine and the inability to literally and metaphorically catch our breath. Students will find much to discuss and unpack as they continue to evaluate their own experiences during the pandemic. *Reviewed by Tracey Hodges*

### Teaching Suggestions

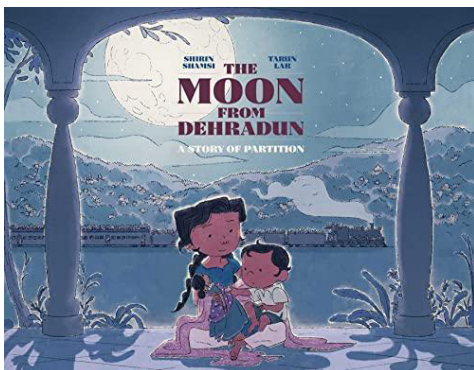
- Provide students with the distinct phrases from the book and have them practice reading and rereading the phrases with prosody, or intonation and emotion. Have students practice with different rates and allow them to reflect on their comprehension based on varying prosody and rate.
- Have students set up a reflection journal. Pull phrases from the text and ask students to reflect on both the global meaning of the phrase and the meaning to them personally. Repeat daily or weekly through reading the text.
- Select one of the books listed in related readings. Have students read that text alongside *Ain't Burned All the Bright*. Create guiding questions to allow students to compare the texts.

### Related Books

Yang, K. (2022). *New from here*. Simon Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Grimes, N. (2021). *Legacy: Women poets from the Harlem renaissance*. Bloomsbury Children's Books.

Grimes, N. (2022). *Garvey in the dark*. Wordsong.



**Shamsi, Shirin. (2022). *The Moon From Dehradun: A Story of Partition* (Tarun Lak, Illus.). Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 40 pp. GR K–3. Historical fiction picturebook.**

Ayra's father bursts in with unsettling news: The family must flee their home in India. With no time to pack, they rush out in the midst of chaos. People are shouting because their homeland has been divided and they don't know where they belong anymore, the father explains. Ayra clings to her baby brother when she realizes that in the scramble she left behind her dear doll, Gurya, handmade by her daadi. Once in their new house in Pakistan, Ayra unexpectedly finds a forgotten doll under a bed. She promises that she will keep her safe and prays someone will take care of Gurya, too. The story honors the author's own family and the countless families displaced during the Partition of India in 1947. The artwork invites the reader to pause and reflect. *Reviewed by María Teresa Manteo*

### Teaching Suggestions

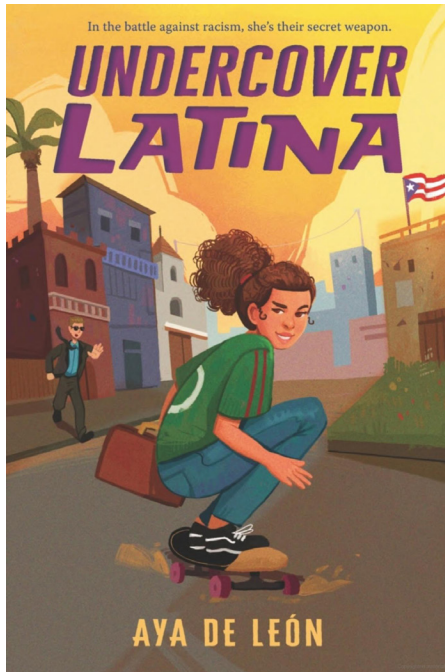
- Invite students to go on a slow walk through the illustrations and discover things: What Indian objects can you find? What do you learn about Indian culture? What moods and feelings are created by the use of a limited palette of tans and blues? And finally, look closely at the use of panels and double-spreads on the closing pages. What's the new story told there?
- Ayra's story is told concurrently with the story of the country's political and social unrest. How does the artwork help tell the story of the country at large? Focus on the color and size of the illustrations, and some very telling motifs such as the train, the flags, and the crowds of people. Have students write an account of the country's story as they see it. Then they can read the back matter and compare their thoughts.
- The story is very dynamic and has dramatic changes in place, general and immediate, interior and exterior settings. Have students write a script with stage directions that mark location shifts as well as mood. Make sure the script stays true to cultural aspects.

### Related Books

Lasky, K. (2022). *Yossel's journey* (J. Yazzie, Illus.). Charlesbridge.

Marwan, Z. (2022). *Where butterflies fill the sky: A story of immigration, family, and finding home*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Van, M. T. (2021). *Wishes* (V. Ngai, Illus.). Orchard Books.



de León, Aya. (2022). *Undercover Latina*. Candlewick Press. 320 pp. GR 5–9. Contemporary fiction.

Fourteen-year-old Andréa and her family work for the Factory, an international intelligence organization of people of color, on a mission to serve people of color. When a white supremacist makes threatening comments online and the Factory can't locate him, Andréa is called to action. Andréa is briefed, provided a cover story, and guided in the art of passing for white. The plan is for Andréa to infiltrate a high school in Phoenix, Arizona, make a connection with the estranged son, and gain intel through the friendship. Andréa struggles to hide her identity at school, especially when she hears the popular girls make racist comments, but she remains focused on her mission. By observing her target and learning his interests, she enters his world and helps to uncover the truth about his father and the real culprit behind the terrorist threats.

Reviewed by Julia Hillman

### Teaching Suggestions

- Watch a PBS video (<https://az.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/what-is-racial-passing-video/origin-of-everything/>) on the history of passing for white and discuss what motivates someone to disguise their race, gender, religion, and other characteristics.

- Invite students to create a secret code to use to write the next mission for Andréa. Students then pair up to switch coded missions and decipher their partner's code.
- Choose a connecting book to read. Create a chart to compare the settings, characters, events, and themes to those in *Undercover Latina*.

### Related Books

Hood, S. (2022). *Alias Anna: A true story of outwitting the Nazis* (G. Dawson, Illus.). HarperCollins.

Krasner, B. (2022). *Ethel's song: Ethel Rosenberg's life in poems*. Calkins Creek.

Yee, B. (2022). *Gold Mountain*. Carolrhoda Lab.



Nayeri, Dina. (2022). *The Waiting Place: When Home Is Lost and a New One Not Yet Found* (Anna Bosch Miralpeix, Photog.). Candlewick Press. 64 pp. GR 7–9. Nonfiction picturebook.

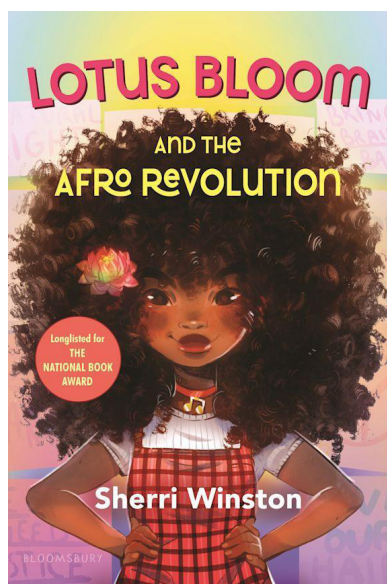
“Every war, famine, and flood spits out survivors.” The stories of these survivors, 10 displaced children living in the refugee camp of Katsikas outside of Ioannina, Greece, are documented in this nonfiction text. Author Dina Nayeri is both a daughter of a refugee and a refugee herself; her personal experiences aid in sharing the children's stories with insight, dignity, and most of all, hope. Readers are introduced to 10 young Farsi-speaking refugees from Iran and Afghanistan, aged between 5 and 17, and learn about the circumstances that forced them to leave their homes. They now live in repurposed shipping crates, some with their families and some alone, while they wait. The intimate photographs by Miralpeix show the harsh realities of the camp, as well as the dynamic and playful personalities of the children. Reviewed by Mary Ellen Oslick

### Teaching Suggestions

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has an informative website (<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/teaching-about-refugees.html>) that includes materials for teaching about refugees for different age groups. There are “explainer animations” for teachers to watch in preparation for teaching these lessons.
- Use Google to search for images of the Katsikas refugee camp. These can be displayed before or during reading for students to compare with photographs from the book. Have students contrast these images with their background knowledge of refugee camps from other media, such as movies.
- After reading, encourage students to act. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has suggestions for how to help refugees locally (<https://www.rescue.org/how-to-help>); this could include volunteering (e.g., as a donation sorter/organizer or ESL tutor) or writing letters to legislators in support of refugee and immigrant services.

### Related Books

- Davies, N. (2018). *The day the war came* (R. Cobb, Illus.). Candlewick Press.
- Del Rizzo, S. (2017). *My beautiful birds*. Pajama Press.
- Jamieson, V., & Mohamed, O. (2020). *When stars are scattered* (I. Geddy, Illus.). Dial Books.



Winston, Sherri. (2022). *Lotus Bloom and the Afro Revolution*. Bloomsbury Children's Books. 304 pp. GR 4–6. Contemporary fiction.

Lotus Bloom, a remarkable young Black girl, aspires to express herself through her love of music and unique style. A gifted violinist, she has the opportunity to play under a famous maestro at a new local middle school of the arts. However, her best friend, Rebel, believes that Lotus should stay at their underfunded neighborhood school and fight to improve it. Lotus must choose between music and her sense of social justice when she is promoted to first chair and faces discrimination from her peers, particularly Adolpho. He leads a bullying campaign targeting her beautiful afro using the school's dress code. Inspired by actual events of Black girls experiencing hair discrimination, the author explores the complexities of fighting for oneself while maintaining one's integrity and self-expression—an inspiring read with themes of inequality and racism in schools. *Reviewed by Bethany Scullin*

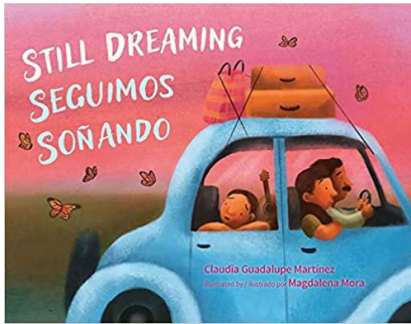
### Teaching Suggestions

- The author, Sherri Winston, explains that she wrote *Lotus Bloom* after learning about events across the United States centering on Black female hair discrimination in schools. Have students read *The New York Times for Kids* article “6 Kids Speak Out Against Hair Discrimination” (<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/22/magazine/kids-hair-discrimination.html>). Discuss their stories, focusing on what each student endured because of their hair and how they persevered.
- Explore the CROWN Act website (<https://www.thecrownact.com>). Have students write an email to their federal legislator and sign the petition to help end hair discrimination.
- One of the many themes in *Lotus Bloom* is considering how to prioritize personal values when different values come into conflict. Invite students to discuss personal or historical instances when hard choices had to be made (or should have been made) to uphold specific values.

### Related Books

- Ortega, C. A. (2022). *Frizzy* (R. Bousamra, Illus.). First Second.
- Barnes, D. (2017). *Crown: An ode to the fresh cut* (G. C. James, Illus.). Agate Bolden.
- Cherry, M. A. (2019). *Hair love* (V. Harrison, Illus.). Kokila.





**Martínez, Claudia Guadalupe. (2022). *Still Dreaming / Seguimos soñando* (Magdalena Mora, Illus.; Luis Humberto Crosthwaite, Trans.). Children's Book Press/Lee & Low. 40 pp. GR 1–3. Historical fiction picturebook.**

In this book written in both English and Spanish, readers are introduced to a young boy who is confused when his parents begin closing up their house in Texas, saying goodbye to his tías, and starting a journey to a destination he has only heard about in his papá's stories. By leaving the United States voluntarily, his family hopes they can remain together, and also return one day. On their journey, they encounter many people from elsewhere in the United States, such as Alaska, Los Angeles, and Kansas, traveling by car and train; they are all headed toward the same destination, across the border to Mexico. Illustrations in this picture storybook provide context for the careful reader. An author's note explains details of Mexican repatriation from 1930 to 1940, when an estimated two million people "repatriated" to Mexico. *Reviewed by Brenda Dales*

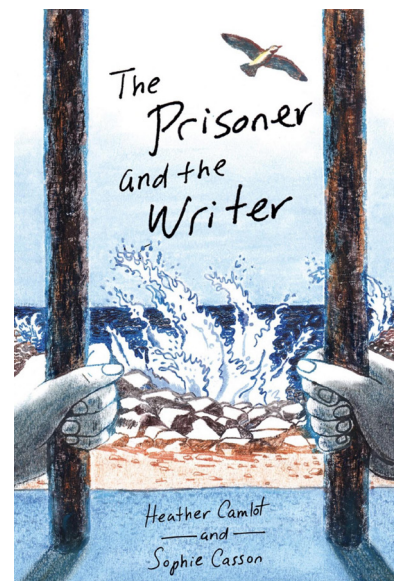
#### Teaching Suggestions

- Repatriation is discussed in the author's note, but it is complicated. Individuals of Mexican heritage were often coerced to leave the United States. Listen to an NPR interview on the subject (<https://www.npr.org/2015/09/10/439114563/americas-forgotten-history-of-mexican-american-repatriation>). After discussing this with students, examine the illustrations and text in the book for clues that suggest how this family and others were coerced to leave the United States "voluntarily."
- Ask students why they think the book is written in two languages, and how this enhances the story. This can lead to discussions about language, interest in other dual-language books, heritage language, and the importance of valuing biliteracy.

- Monarch butterflies are included in many of the illustrations. Research monarch butterflies (<https://monarchjointventure.org/monarch-biology/monarch-migration>) and also search to discover some of the symbolism of monarchs. Discuss various reasons monarch butterflies are present in this book in specific places.

#### Related Books

- Brockenbrough, M., & Lin, G. (2021). *I am an American: The Wong Kim Ark story* (J. Kuo, Illus.). Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.
- Hazzard, A., & Rivera, V. A. (2022). *Something happened to my dad: A story about immigration and family separation* (G. Félix, Illus.). Magination Press/American Psychological Association.
- Marwan, Z. (2022). *Where butterflies fill the sky: A story of immigration, family, and finding home*. Bloomsbury Children's Books.



**Camlot, Heather. (2022). *The Prisoner and the Writer* (Sophie Casson, Illus.). Greenwood Books. 64 pp. GR 4–7. Historical fiction novel in verse.**

In the late 1800s, Captain Alfred Dreyfus was the only Jewish officer in the French high command when he was accused and convicted of betraying France. Dreyfus was sentenced to life in prison and sent to Devil's Island. His only crime, in his own words, "is to have been born a Jew." French writer Émile Zola read the French news reports, reviewed the evidence, and discovered a conspiracy. A key piece of evidence used to convict Dreyfus, known as the *bordereau*, contained handwriting that

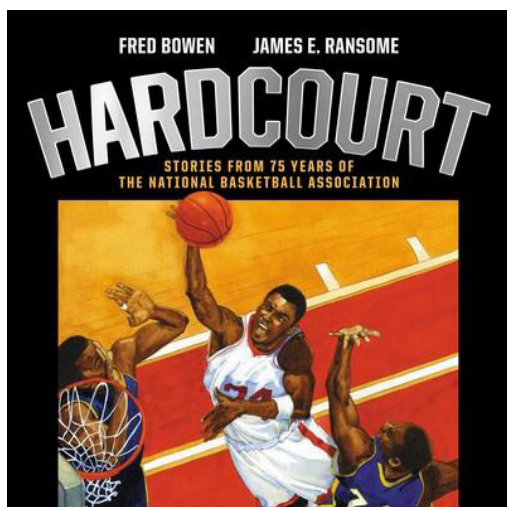
didn't match Dreyfus's, but perfectly matched that of Major Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy. Zola knew he had a duty to act when a jury ignored Esterhazy's crime and found him not guilty. Zola wrote a scathing letter to the president of France accusing all involved. Zola's indictment, "J'Accuse!" circulated widely, leading to a new trial. *Reviewed by Julia Hillman*

### Teaching Suggestions

- Listen to a "Meet-the-Author Recording" ([https://www.teachingbooks.net/book\\_reading.cgi?id=29102&a=1](https://www.teachingbooks.net/book_reading.cgi?id=29102&a=1)) and then discuss why Heather Camlot wrote *The Prisoner and the Writer*.
- Read the author's note on pages 58 to 61 and have students complete the suggested activity—to think about or research a news story where someone was blamed for a crime because of their religion, gender, or skin color. Then, have them rewrite Dreyfus's quote, "My only crime is to have been born a Jew," with a word or phrase to fit that story.
- Read the connecting book *The Sun Does Shine* and use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the stories of Anthony Ray Hinton and Alfred Dreyfus.

### Related Books

- Crowder, M. (2019). *An uninterrupted view of the sky*. Viking Books for Young Readers.
- Goldstyn, J. (2017). *Letters to a prisoner* (A. Keenlyside, Trans.). Owlkids.
- Hinton, A. R., Hardin, L. L., & Rhuday-Perkovich, O. (2022). *The sun does shine (Young readers edition): An innocent man, a wrongful conviction, and the long path to justice*. Feiwel & Friends.



**Bowen, Fred. (2022). *Hardcourt: Stories From 75 Years of the National Basketball Association* (James E. Ransome, Illus.). Margaret K. McElderry Books. 112 pp. GR 3–7. Nonfiction picturebook.**

Fred Bowen, a known veteran sportswriter, takes readers into the beginnings of the National Basketball Association. In stark contrast to today's household names and flashy players, basketball did not always have huge fan bases and prestigious stadiums. This book highlights memorable and beloved players across the years and describes the origin of the game. Basketball initially emerged with 13 rules created by James Naismith in 1891 and moved to the then-empty arenas after World War II. James E. Ransome's illustrations are dynamic and vibrant and readers (even if not NBA fans yet) will marvel at the likenesses of the legends of the game. Back matter includes a list of NBA Finals champions through 2021, current NBA franchises, and a list of NBA/ABA career scoring leaders. The extensive bibliography includes books, articles, websites, and documentaries.

*Reviewed by Jeanne Gilliam Fain*

### Teaching Suggestions

- Watch a webcast (<https://www.loc.gov/item/webcast-10611/?loclr=blognbf>) that shows the author and illustrator. What did students notice about the author and illustrator? Discuss the webcast and compare it with the picturebook.
- Check out the websites in the back of the book. Have students choose one website and explore the highlights. What new facts might they discover? How does the site compare with the book?
- Have students choose a basketball player from the book to learn more about. Why does this player inspire them?

### Related Books

- Alexander, K. (2019). *Undefeated* (K. Nelson, Illus.). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Coy, J. (2015). *Game changer: John McClendon and the secret game* (R. DuBurke, Illus.). Carolrhoda Books.
- Yang, G. L. (2020). *Dragon hoops* (L. Pien, Color). First Second.



**Elliott, Zetta, and Miller-Lachmann, Lyn. (2022). *Moonwalking*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers. 224 pp. GR 7–9. Historical fiction novel in verse.**

*Moonwalking* captures the dual voices of two middle-school-aged boys. JJ is an American-born Polish and Catholic student who moves to a new school where he is one of the few white students, a drastic change from his former school. Pi, a Puerto Rican and Congolese graffiti artist, spends his days channeling his hero, Jean-Michel Basquiat. When the two boys meet in an honors class, they form a cross-racial friendship. They both love art and find they have plenty to talk about, from JJ's dad's experience with the 1981 air traffic strike to police violence and Pi's family's struggles with mental illness. Historical events and the tumultuous emotions of middle school adolescents are expertly expressed with authentic voices. This book is great for teaching history, art, and contemporary topics. *Reviewed by Tracey Hodges*

#### Teaching Suggestions

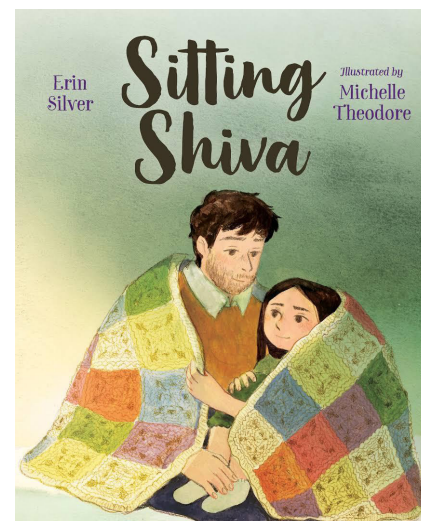
- This novel is full of historical references to art, such as that of Jean-Michel Basquiat, and music, as in the title, *Moonwalking*. Allow students to create a list of these references as they encounter them. After reading, split the list among the class and allow students to research the ideas in pairs and share back with the entire class to deepen their knowledge of historical popular culture.
- Pull several example poems from the novel. Have students read them, guiding them to notice the rhythm

and poetic features. Allow students time to write their own poems in similar formats about topics important to them.

- Allow students to research historical events discussed in the text. Consider providing short articles or complementary texts to teach students about those topics as well. Lead students in discussing the events and how they relate to the novel, considering what is accurate and what may be different.

#### Related Books

- Levinson, C. (2021). *The people's painter: How Ben Shahn fought for justice with art* (E. Turk, Illus.). Harry N. Abrams.
- Kelly, E. E. (2020). *We dream of space*. Greenwillow Books.
- Steptoe, J. (2016). *Radiant child: The story of young artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.



**Silver, Erin. (2022). *Sitting Shiva* (Michelle Theodore, Illus.). Orca Book Publishers. 32 pp. GR K–2. Contemporary fiction picturebook.**

This compassionate story of “sitting shiva,” the Jewish custom of mourning, is told from the perspective of a girl who has lost her mother. Rituals include the covering of mirrors, the father's lack of shaving, and the removal of couch cushions. Friends and relatives gather to mourn with the family and the girl finds solace with her cousins. Then she finds her father, alone, wrapped in a blanket made by the mother. After huddling together, crying, she reminds her father that now is not the time to be alone as they make their way back to the gathering. Erin Silver's words



convey the grief of the pair who find comfort and support with the sharing of memories. Michelle Theodore's illustrations portray the grief with the use of downcast eyes, slumped shoulders, and muted colors. *Reviewed by Sharryn Larsen Walker*

### Teaching Suggestions

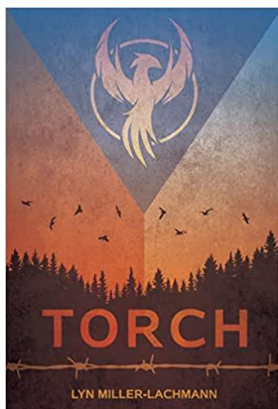
- Use this book to create a global perspective on grief. What are other ways that people grieve globally? What can we learn from the multiple ways of grieving?
- Research the Jewish custom of shiva (<https://www.kveller.com/6-things-to-do-for-a-friend-whos-sitting-shiva/>). Consider how these guidelines give readers insight into the characters in this story.
- Students can examine other Jewish traditions and observances, such as Passover. What is the significance of this observance? What is the significance of unleavened food during this observance? Have students research recipes that are not leavened. Create a class cookbook with those recipes to share with families.

### Related Books

Churnin, E. (2021). *A queen to the rescue: The story of Henrietta Szold, founder of Hadassah* (Y. Nyberg, Illus.). Creston Books.

Samuel, S. (2021). *Osnat and her dove: The true story of the world's first female rabbi* (V. Mintzi, Illus.). Levine Querido.

Yacowitz, C. (2022). *Shoshi's Shabbat* (K. Hawkes, Illus.). Candlewick Press.



**Miller-Lachmann, Lyn. (2022). *Torch*. Carolrhoda Lab. 318 pp. GR 8–12. Historical fiction.**

Set in Czechoslovakia in 1969, in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's invasion, this story centers around the lives of three teenagers struggling to establish their futures in an oppressive regime.

One character, Pavol, engages in a fatal act of protest against the authoritarian government by setting himself on fire in public. His actions lead to a brutal investigation of his three closest friends: Štěpán, a gay hockey star; Tomáš, neurodiverse and withdrawn; and Lída, Pavol's newly pregnant girlfriend. Each character faces their own unique challenges as the story examines the impact of Pavol's death and how they cope with their grief, individually and collectively. Told in four alternating perspectives, the narrative explores the choices they make on whether to continue fighting for survival within their country or attempt escape in search of a better life. *Reviewed by Bethany Scullin*

### Teaching Suggestions

- Have students research the 1968 Czechoslovakian reform movement called the Prague Spring and watch a 20-minute documentary of the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLrXCW-bS7Y>). Then, organize students into small groups to create an infographic timeline detailing the events and reasoning behind the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact members invading Czechoslovakia.
- The author of *Torch*, Lyn Miller-Lachmann, is neurodiverse, as is one of the main characters in the story, Tomáš. Under the Soviet Union's communist regime, neurodiversity and mental illness were stigmatized and associated with shame that extended to the individual's family. The authorities often punished the affected person and their family, as they believed these conditions were hereditary. Hold a class discussion surrounding this line of thinking toward neurodiverse individuals compared to our current understanding of mental illness and neurodiversity.
- The University of Michigan Special Collections Library hosts an online exhibit of the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (<https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/117511/Index.html>) that features many primary sources such as propaganda posters, political cartoons, newspapers, and other publications. Choose several propaganda posters and political cartoons for students to analyze for symbolism, hidden meanings, and references.

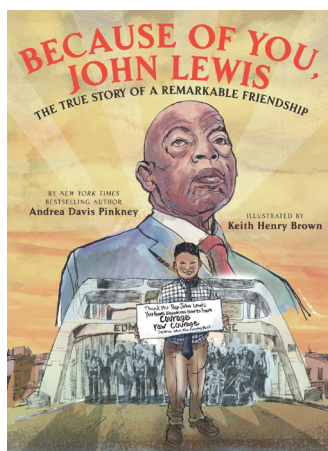
### Related Books

Nielsen, J. A. (2015). *A night divided*. Scholastic Press.

Davies, N. (2018). *The day the war came* (R. Cobb, Illus.). Candlewick Press.

Sepetys, R. (2011). *Between shades of gray*. Philomel Books.





**Pinkney, Andrea Davis. (2022). *Because of You, John Lewis: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship* (Keith Henry Brown, Illus.). Scholastic Press. 40 pp. GR 2–5. Nonfiction picturebook.**

The cycle of activism continues when the next generation meets their heroes. Tybre Faw is 10 years old when he convinces his grandmothers to drive from their home in Tennessee to Selma, Alabama, for the annual memorial walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. He wants to meet his hero, John Lewis. Holding his handmade sign reading “Thank you Rep. Lewis. You have shown me how to have courage,” Tybre is able to shake the hand of “Good Trouble” and walk beside him on the bridge. Thus begins their brief but amazing friendship. Author Andrea Davis Pinkney also weaves in the similar relationship between a younger John Lewis and Martin Luther King Jr. Back matter includes a detailed account and timeline of Lewis’s life, photographs, and the poem “Invictus,” which Tybre was asked to recite at Lewis’s funeral in 2020. *Reviewed by Mary Ellen Oslick*

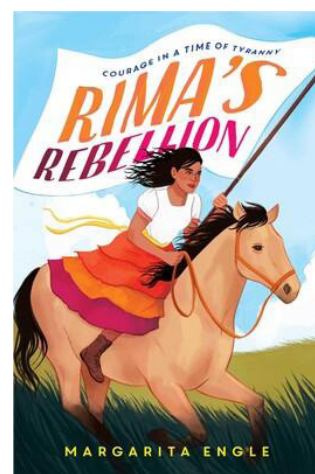
#### Teaching Suggestions

- Learn more about the Selma Marches via the National Archives website (<https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/vote/selma-marches>). Resources include photographs, maps, and an original newsreel from 1965.
- Tybre Faw is currently in high school; learn more about his interests and John Lewis’s lasting impact on his activism with a recent news story ([https://www.johnsoncitypress.com/living/family/tybre-faw-wanting-to-make-a-change/article\\_82e44e66-8e07-11ed-87b5-7b8653cc0234.html](https://www.johnsoncitypress.com/living/family/tybre-faw-wanting-to-make-a-change/article_82e44e66-8e07-11ed-87b5-7b8653cc0234.html)).
- The Anti-Defamation League offers 10 ways for young

people to become activists (<https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-activism>). Share the list with students and have them brainstorm independent and class-wide ways to make a difference.

#### Related Books

- Henderson, L. (2021). *Together we march: 25 protest movements that marched into history* (T. Feder, Illus.). Atheneum.
- Kirkwood, K. J. (2022). *Ain’t gonna let nobody turn me ’round: My story of the making of Martin Luther King Day* (S. Walthall, Illus.). Versify.
- Lewis, J., & Aydin, A. (2016). *March* (N. Powell, Illus.). Top Shelf Productions.



**Engle, Margarita. (2022). *Rima’s Rebellion: Courage in a Time of Tyranny*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 208 pp. GR 7–9. Historical fiction novel in verse.**

Written in verse, Margarita Engle’s novel is set in 1920s Cuba and features Las Mambisas, the feminist horse riders who are fighting for the common goal of suffrage and equality for women. Young Rima joins her abuela’s bold organization of women who also served in the wars for independence from Spain. Rima faces additional cruelties of being an illegitimate child as her wealthy father shuns her and her half-sister (a legitimate daughter) bullies her. Against a background of social injustice and abusive patriarchal power, the young heroine joins forces with women of every shade of brown, black, and white to battle against President Gerardo Machado’s despotic policies. Ultimately, Rima finds her strength in bold writing, love with

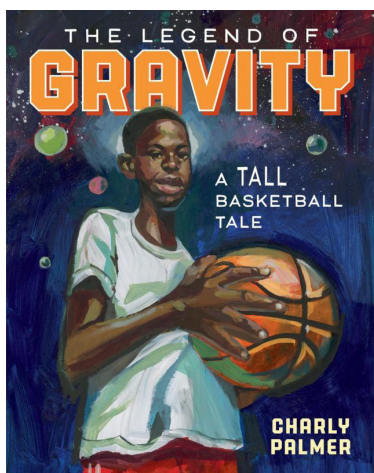
a stained-glass artist named Maceo, and peace in her reunion with her half-sister. *Reviewed by María Teresa Manteo*

### Teaching Suggestions

- Draw attention to how Rima's voice resounds with Margarita Engel's poetic choice of words. Students can keep a log of phrases portraying intense emotions and craft them into their own stories or poetry.
- Research the horse as a symbol of power and inner drive (<https://www.uniguide.com/horse-meaning-symbolism-spirit-animal-guide>). Connect these findings to the Mambisas' willpower and determination.
- In the novel there is mention of "quiet acts of kindness" as a form of passive resistance. Have students consider similar acts to right a wrong in your community.

### Related Books

- Attah, A. H. (2022). *The deep blue between*. Carolrhoda Lab.
- Engle, M. (2021). *Your heart, my sky: Love in a time of hunger*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.
- Weatherford, C. B. (2022). *Call me Miss Hamilton: One woman's case for equality and respect* (J. B. Weatherford, Illus.). Millbrook Press.



**Palmer, Charly. (2022). *The Legend of Gravity: A Tall Basketball Tale*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers. 40 pp. GR K–3. Contemporary fiction picturebook.**

This modern-day tall tale is author and illustrator Charly Palmer's tribute to the unacclaimed talented streetball players who were legends in their own time. The main character,

Gravity, is inspired by Jordan Smith, a streetball player in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As in all tall tales, the hyperbole makes the character's achievements fantastical, like Gravity getting his name because as he went up to take a shot, he cleared another player called Sky High. Throughout the story, readers learn the street names and the abilities of all players on the Eagles team as they play hard to move up the ranks to the championship game. Although the team depends on Gravity to win the game, Gravity encourages all the players to showcase their talents and work together, making the victory a true team effort. *Reviewed by Jane Kelley*

### Teaching Suggestions

- Read current-day original folk literature (<https://www.toledolibrary.org/blog/modern-folktale-adaptations-for-kids>) and have students create their own tales.
- Students can write about an experience (e.g., personal, friend, or relative) when the combination of perseverance and friendship contributed to a successful outcome.
- Learn more about Charly Palmer (<https://www.charlypalmer.com/>) and study his artwork, which spotlights African American experiences.

### Related Books

- Hurston, Z. N., & Kendi, I. X. (2022). *Magnolia Flower* (L. Wise, Illus.). Amistad Books for Young Readers.
- Katstaller, R. (2022). *Skater Cielo*. Orchard Books
- Moore, D. B. (2022). *Carrimebac: The town that walked* (J. Holyfield, Illus.). Candlewick.



**Brown, Waka T. (2022). *Dream, Annie, Dream*. Quill Tree Books. 352 pp. GR 3–7. Contemporary fiction.**

In 1980s Kansas, Annie is a hopeful seventh grader and daughter of Japanese immigrants who came to the United States with dreams of a better life. An aspiring actress, she immediately sets her sights on earning a role in the school production of *The King and I*. Unfortunately, Annie must deal with bullying and racism when classmates belittle her talent and see her casting as a result of her race. She is also frustrated by the relationships with her quickly maturing best friend, her sexist math teacher, and her mother, who is also dealing with racism. With the support of her college professor father and secret crush, Annie's tenacity serves her well. Annie is relatable for those who are looking to find themselves on the page of a book. Themes of microaggression, bullying, and conflict are evident. *Reviewed by Sharryn Larsen Walker*

### Teaching Suggestions

- After reading *Dream, Annie, Dream*, read another book in which the protagonist has a dream or goal. Compare and contrast the dreams of each of the main characters on a T-chart.
- Discuss the connotation of a “dreamer” as it relates to immigration. Possible questions include: What does “dreamer” mean? How has this concept affected American history? What contributions do dreamers make? What struggles do they face? Assign pairs a decade. Ask them to research the dreamers who immigrated during that time. Discuss how those ideas relate to contemporary events.
- Using the findings of the research about dreamers, have the pairs write a poem from the perspective of those who immigrated during their assigned decade. Suggest different poetry forms to write, such as free verse, haiku, or cinquains. The poems could be shared in a two-voice poetry café.

### Related Books

- Jamieson, V., & Mohamed, O. (2020). *When stars are scattered* (I. Geddy, Illus.). Dial Books.
- LaRocca, R. (2021). *Red, white, and whole*. Quill tree Books.
- Shang, W. W., & Rosenberg, M. (2020). *Not your all-American girl*. Scholastic Press.



**Nolen, Jerdine. (2022). *On Her Wings: The Story of Toni Morrison* (James E. Ransome, Illus.). A Paula Wiseman Book/Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. 48 pp. GR K–3. Biography picturebook.**

This beautiful and inspirational book tells the story of Toni Morrison, or Chloe Ardelia Wofford, from Ohio. She grew up with a rich family heritage in storytelling, myths, legends, and Bible stories. This led her to become the internationally known charismatic listener, proficient reader, and riveting writer that she is ultimately known as in the United States. Her grandfather's stories and her mother's songs initially inspired her own literary journey. She reviewed stories and moved to establishing her own voice as a well-known and incredibly talented writer. She created literary works that highlighted Black history, motherhood, race, and skin color. Ransome's illustrations are vibrant and colorful. Each page includes vivid imagery that powerfully enhances Morrison's story. Back matter includes Toni Morrison's website, important quotes, and an extensive book list. *Reviewed by Jeanne Gilliam Fain*

### Teaching Suggestions

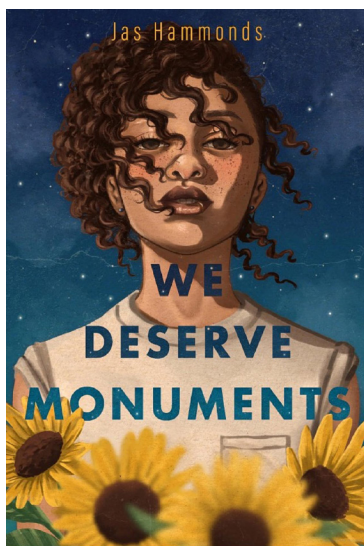
- Explore the Toni Morrison Society website (<https://www.tonimorrisonssociety.org/>). Read about the elements of an ending. Students can choose a book by Toni Morrison to explore and think about the craft of writing that she used in the ending of the book.
- Have students choose a quote from one of the pages of the books. What does it make them think about? Invite them to create their own quote using Morrison's quote for inspiration. Select a golden line, a line that makes them think or reflect upon something, from the text. Share the golden lines and discuss why students selected them.



- Watch the *Crash Course Black American History* video about Toni Morrison: ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbzLFgW\\_Wgc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbzLFgW_Wgc)). How do students think Toni Morrison added to the canon of American literature?

### Related Books

- Bryant, J. (2019). *Feed your mind: A story of August Wilson* (C. Chapman, Illus.). Abrams Books for Young Readers.
- Cline-Ransome, L. (2020). *The power of her pen: The story of groundbreaking journalist Ethel L. Payne* (J. Parra, Illus.). Simon & Schuster.
- Denise, A. A. (2019). *Planting stories: The life of librarian and storyteller Pura Belpré* (P. Escobar, Illus.). Harper.



Hammonds, Jas. (2022). *We Deserve Monuments*. Roaring Brook Press. 375 pp. GR 10–12. Contemporary fiction.

Historical racism impacts the current generations. In this debut novel, author Jas Hammonds explores how Avery, a modern teenager, reckons with the impact of racial trauma her family has endured for decades. Avery and her family move from Washington, DC, to her mother's small hometown to care for Avery's aging grandmother. Avery, who identifies as a lesbian, wears a nose ring, and speaks her opinions, thinks she will be an outcast in this town. As she forms friendships with two local girls, she learns about her grandfather's mysterious disappearance years ago and the sudden murder of a woman from the town's wealthiest family. Avery also bonds with her grandmother, who suggests these two events may be related in

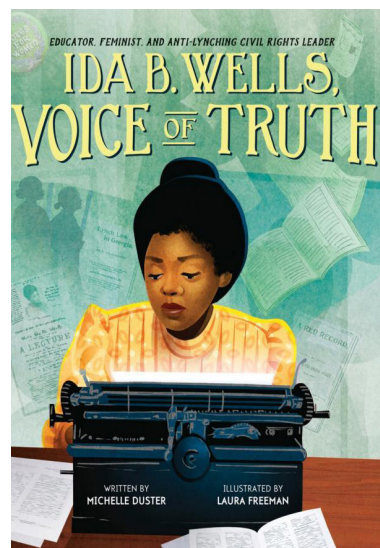
unexpected ways. This novel is suspenseful, discussable, and relatable for teen readers. *Reviewed by Tracey Hodges*

### Teaching Suggestions

- As students finish reading the text, ask them to research an individual they would like to see honored, not through a monument, but through a more temporary means. Invite students to write a persuasive letter or essay about why that individual deserves recognition.
- Ask students to research news outlets and document when they see themes presented in *We Deserve Monuments* in the current news. Allow students time to discuss in small groups what they learned about those current events through the book.
- To deepen students' reading and writing skills, discuss the genre of mystery. Ask students to create criteria, as they read, of what constitutes a mystery novel. In future book reading, ask students which criteria hold up and which need to be revised.

### Related Books

- Àbíké-Íyímídé, F. (2021). *Ace of spades*. Feiwel & Friends.
- Boulley, A. (2021). *Firekeeper's daughter*. Henry Holt and Company.
- Tirado, V. (2022). *Burn down, rise up*. Sourcebooks Fire.



Duster, Michelle. (2022). *Ida B. Wells, Voice of Truth: Educator, Feminist, and Anti-Lynching Civil Rights Leader* (Laura Freeman, Illus.). Godwin Books/Henry Holt and Company. 40 pp. GR K–2. Biography picturebook.

This biographical picturebook tells the remarkable life story of Ida B. Wells and is written by her great-granddaughter. Wells was a powerhouse who refused to be silenced in the face of racism, sexism, and injustice. She was born into slavery, lost her parents and younger brother to yellow fever, and became responsible for five siblings. After beginning her career as an educator in Mississippi, she then took up journalism to expose the inequity of segregation, and the horrible act of lynching. Wells received death threats and her printing press was destroyed, but she continued to fight for justice. Wells cofounded the NAACP, established the first kindergarten for Black children in Chicago, started the Negro Fellowship League and the Alpha Suffrage Club, and ran for Illinois state senate. Back matter includes a timeline of Wells's many accomplishments and an author's note.

Reviewed by Julia Hillman

### Teaching Suggestions

- Record questions students have about Ida B. Wells's life. Watch the documentary *Ida B. Wells: A Chicago Stories Special Documentary* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ML8XiKVSstWQ>) to develop new understandings and wonderings.
- Ida B. Wells was one of the founders of the NAACP. Learn more about issues the NAACP tackles every day to dismantle racism and build Black political, social, and economic power (<https://naacp.org/know-issues>).
- Read the connecting picturebooks *Seeking Freedom, Evicted!*, and *Choosing Brave*. Have students create a graphic organizer to record three or more of the following: their questions, the settings, events, characters' important actions throughout the story, and common themes across the texts.

### Related Books

- Castrovilla, S. (2022). *Seeking freedom: The untold story of Fortress Monroe and the ending of slavery in America* (E. B. Lewis, Illus.). Calkins Creek.
- Duncan, A. F. (2022). *Evicted!: The struggle for the right to vote* (C. Palmer, Illus.). Calkins Creek.
- Joy, A. (2022). *Choosing brave: How Mamie Till-Mobley and Emmett Till sparked the civil rights movement* (J. Washington, Illus.). Roaring Brook Press.



**Castellanos, Alexis. (2022). *Isla to Island*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 192 pp. GR 7–9. Historical fiction graphic novel.**

When Castro's regime overtook the Cuban government in 1959, no one was safe, especially the children who might be punished for their parents' political beliefs. Marisol, a 12-year-old Cuban girl, does not want to leave her parents or her home, but in desperation, Marisol's parents decide her leaving is the only choice for her safety. With the help of Operation Peter Pan (aka Pedro Pan), a Catholic initiative funded by the United States government, Marisol secretly escapes Cuba to live with loving foster parents in New York City. In this wordless graphic novel, with a mix of colorful illustrations and grayscale graphics, readers sense the ups and downs Marisol experiences as she struggles to adjust to American life in the 1960s, learns a new language, and longs to be reunited with her parents. Reviewed by Jane Kelley

### Teaching Suggestions

- Read a Q&A with author Alexis Castellanos (<https://diversebooks.org/qa-with-alexis-castellanos-islatoisland/>). She states that she would love to see more books about the Latin American experience that don't deal with immigration. Have students brainstorm stories from Lat-

in American culture that they might like to see.

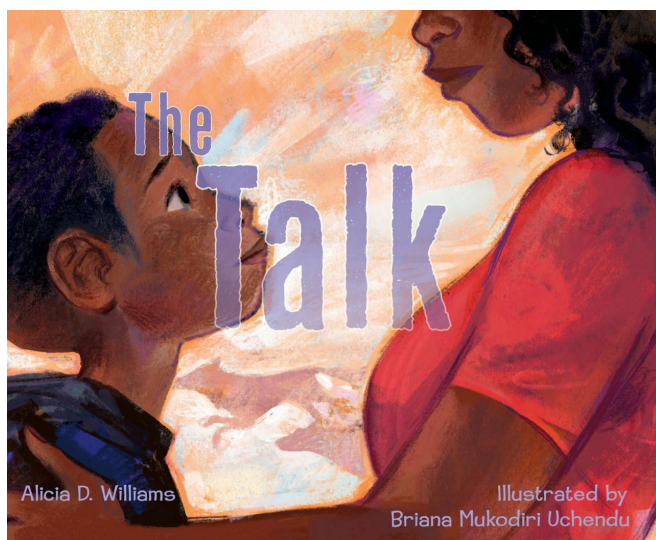
- Learn about Operation Peter Pan from the HistoryMiami Museum's five-series videos (<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-6bEPO8PMxiEpOeDgN2tiwnpUNa1d3Kr>). See the Smithsonian's website (<https://www.si.edu/stories/pedro-pan-childrens-exodus-cuba>) for pictures and artifacts.
- Marisol has to adjust to new surroundings. Brainstorm words of encouragement and kindness to help friends adjust to a new environment. Consider how to use these words with classmates as well.

### Related Books

Gao, L. (2022). *Messy roots: A graphic memoir of a Wuhanese-American*. Balzer + Bray.

Marwan, Z. (2022). *Where butterflies fill the sky: A story of immigration, family, and finding home*. Bloomsbury Children's Books.

Willis, M. E. (2022). *Smaller sister*. Roaring Brook Press.



**Williams, Alicia D. (2022). *The Talk* (Briana Mukodiri Uchendu, Illus.). Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books. 40 pp. GR K–3. Contemporary fiction picturebook.**

*The Talk* explores the difficult but essential conversations that Black and Brown families have with their children as they grow older and become more vulnerable to cultural preconceptions. Walking us through the past, present, and future, Jay, a young boy who wants to run races with his friends

and listen to his grandpa's stories, grows taller as his mom worries: "They won't see you as a young boy anymore." Jay's family gives him advice on how to navigate a racist world and stay safe, providing readers with a window into the harsh reality of growing up Black. Filled with insightful illustrations that bring Jay's experiences to life, *The Talk* provides a thought-provoking starting point for further discussion and a deeper understanding of the impact of race and stereotypes in our society. *Reviewed by Bethany Scullin*

### Teaching Suggestions

- Jay's grandpa compares Jay and his friends to resolute historical figures of past generations as he explains that they might be the next Bessie Coleman, Wilma Rudolph, or Thurgood Marshall. After learning more about these groundbreaking figures, break students into small groups where they construct Venn diagrams comparing and contrasting the noted figures with Jay and his friends. Finally, have a class conversation about why Jay's grandpa shared these comparisons with Jay and his friends.
- One literary theme portrayed through the text and vibrant illustrations is character change over time. Have students analyze Jay's character growth and change over time by searching for specific textual evidence and visual cues in the illustrations. Record student findings on a T-chart using large chart paper, with one side of the chart listing the three ways characters change (change in internal characteristics, attitude or behavior change, and physical change) and the other side documenting what students found as evidence of character change from the text and illustrations.
- Discussing race can be a difficult classroom conversation. To help students think about and discuss race, read aloud *Let's Talk About Race* by Julius Lester (2008), as it invites students to explore and contemplate their own thoughts about race and prejudice by asking direct questions for readers to consider.

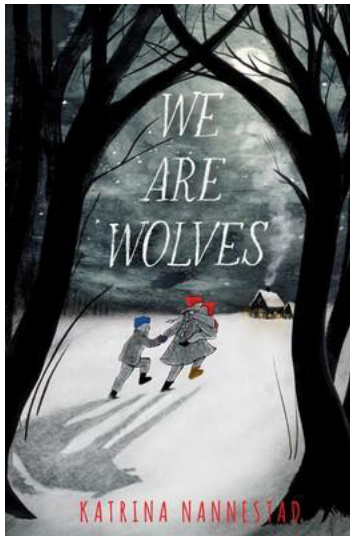
### Related Books

Rhodes, J. P. (2018). *Ghost boys*. Little, Brown and Company.

Charles, T. (2020). *All because you matter* (B. Collier, Illus.). Orchard Books.

Joy, A. (2022). *Choosing brave: How Mamie Till-Mobley and Emmett Till sparked the civil rights movement* (J. Washington, Illus.). Roaring Brook Press.





**Nannestad, Katrina. (2022). *We Are Wolves* (Martina Heiduczek, Illus.). Atheneum Books for Young Readers/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books. 304 pp. GR 5–9. Historical fiction.**

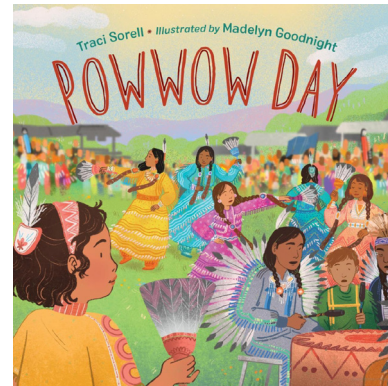
Katrina Nannestad, an award-winning author, creates a powerful story of three German siblings and their journey to survive in East Prussia during World War II. After the Russian army breaks through the German lines, the children become separated from their mother while trying to flee their home. Eleven-year-old Liesl quickly takes on the adult role of caring for her 7-year-old brother, Otto, and toddler sister, Mia, as they shelter in the Baltic forests and Lithuanian farms. Her promise to her mother to keep her siblings by her side follows her in this powerful survival story. The children's journeys are based upon real events of *Wolfkinder* (wolf children) as they face physical and emotional challenges in the middle of war. The art by Martina Heiduczek adds distinct emotion to this thought-provoking historical fiction. *Reviewed by María Teresa Manteo*

#### Teaching Suggestions

- Have students engage in collaborative work and make a mural of the forest tracing all the landmarks on Liesl and her siblings' journey. Little illustrations as well as short remarks will personalize the presentation.
- Choose at least three characters with different nationalities the siblings came across. Explain what life lessons they learned or could have learned from these encounters.
- Animals provide Liesl with support and hope. Refer to some of these episodes, and have students explain their personal responses to these special moments.

#### Related Books

- Hood, S. (2022). *Alias Anna: A true story of outwitting the Nazis* (G. Dawson, Illus.). HarperCollins.
- Trebinčević, K., & Shapiro, S. (2021). *World in between: Based on a true refugee story*. Clarion Books.
- Sepešty, R. (2016). *Salt to the sea*. Philomel Books.



**Sorell, Traci. (2022). *Powwow Day* (Madelyn Goodnight, Illus.). Charlesbridge. 32 pp. GR K–3. Contemporary fiction picturebook.**

Every year, River looks forward to the Jingle Dress dance at the tribal powwow: “The dance is for the Creator, the ancestors, their families, and everyone’s health.” However, this year River cannot join in the dance because she is still too weak after recovering from an illness. At the powwow, River tries to participate in the intertribal dance but must rest. When it comes time for the Jingle Dress dance, River sits with the audience and watches as her sister, friends, relatives, and other girls dance for everyone’s health, including River. Soon River feels the drums; she stands up and knows she will soon dance again. Traci Sorrell’s text and Madelyn Goodnight’s illustrations portray and celebrate the unique atmosphere of a powwow experience; their message is that hope and healing can come from community. *Reviewed by Jane Kelley*

#### Teaching Suggestions

- Learn the history of the Jingle Dress dance and how its origins date back to the flu pandemic of 1918–1919 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F-1S71fHKs>). Have students reflect on how the tradition represents both healing and pride.
- Read other books that present Indigenous cultures and traditions, such as those listed in the Related Books, and

learn how some traditions, although similar, are unique and special to each group of people. Students can share their family and cultural traditions by writing a story, drawing a picture, or showing artifacts associated with the tradition.

- Explore [IllumiNative.org](https://illuminative.org). The website has activity guides for Native Now teaching resources that confront Native people's issues of invisibility, stereotypes, and misinformation (<https://illuminative.org/resources/>).

### Related Books

Davidson, S. F., & Davidson, R. (2022). *Dancing with our ancestors* (J. Gibbons, Illus.). HighWater Press.

Goodluck, L. (2022). *Forever cousins* (J. Nelson, Illus.). Charlesbridge.

Sainte-Marie, B. (2022). *Still this love goes on* (J. Flett, Illus.). Greystone Kids.



**Gonzalez, Christina Diaz. (2022). Invisible (Gabriela Epstein, Illus.; Lark Pien, Color). Graphix/Scholastic. 208 pp. GR 3–7. Contemporary fiction graphic novel.**

Five middle school bilingual kids are thrown together to complete community service for their graduation requirement in this graphic novel. Lumped together because they are all perceived to be Spanish-speaking kids, they are actually very different, with various ranges of knowledge in Spanish. They are struggling to find their voices as they create their own identities. In an effort to help someone who needs some assistance, they ultimately put aside their differences and secrets to work together. This story powerfully integrates language and iden-

tity and explores the important idea of diversity within the Latin community, including ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Characters hail from Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and Mexico. The speech bubbles have Spanish and English, which is incredibly powerful in a graphic novel. *Reviewed by Jeanne Gilliam Fain*

### Teaching Suggestions

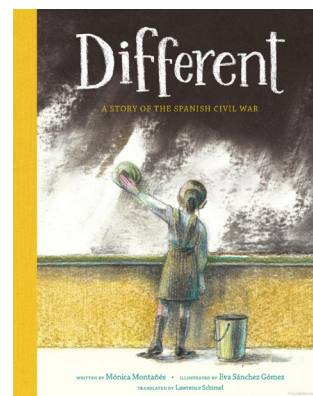
- Students can create their own digital journals using penzu (<https://penzu.com/>) to demonstrate their responses to the text.
- Use graphic novel frames for students to take an event from the text and write their own spin on the event. Students can create a bilingual novel frame by using multiple languages.
- Create a short video of the big ideas from the book with captions in multiple languages, using a bilingual dictionary. Try to use the words in context, or they can be a concise translation.

### Related Books

Craft, J. (2019). *New kid* (J. Callahan, Color). Quill Tree Books.

Sell, C. (2018). *The cardboard kingdom*. Alfred A. Knopf.

Warga, J. (2019). *Other words for home*. Balzer + Bray.



**Montañés, Mónica. (2022). Different: A Story of the Spanish Civil War (Eva Sánchez Gómez, Illus.; Lawrence Schimel, Trans.). Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. 88 pp. GR 4–6. Historical fiction.**

Beginning in Spain in the 1930s, brief chapters alternate between Paco, age 9, and his sister Socorro, age 7. Spanning eight years through the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the children's eventual new lives in Venezuela, selected events emphasize how

war was the tragic impetus for everything to be *different*. Their father left the family for political reasons, and Paco became responsible for his mother and sister. Hunger, lack of money, and political identities are presented from the children's perspectives. The writing is limited yet impactful, along with full-page art in each chapter and two double-page spreads at the end emphasizing a hopeful conclusion. A publisher's note precedes this fictional account, and the appended historical information, glossary, and resources are essential. The book was originally published in Spain, and the author and illustrator have family connections to the Spanish Civil War. *Reviewed by Brenda Dales*

### Teaching Suggestions

- The back matter in *Different* explains that parents sometimes evacuated children to less dangerous countries, often resulting in permanent separation. Several books and resources are included. Have students discuss why the Spanish Civil War was described as a war against children.
- On Google Maps, plot the trip from Valencia to the port of Cádiz, to Cuba, then to Venezuela. Conduct research to compare the climate, environment, and other aspects of Spain and Venezuela.

- Communication was slow and often difficult at this time. Find out more about Morse code (<https://morsecode.world/international/translator.html>). Students can try Morse code visually by using a flashlight to simulate a signal light.

### Related Books

- Nagai, M. (2019). *Under the broken sky*. Christy Ottaviano Books/Henry Holt and Company.
- Nielsen, J. A. (2022). *Lines of courage*. Scholastic Press.
- Trebinčević, K., & Shapiro, S. (2021). *World in between: Based on a true refugee story*. Clarion Books.
- Yahya, A. H. (2021). Between particularism and pluralism: Children's literature as a multicultural agent. *Social Identities*, 27(6), pp.660-681. •

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- Newstreet, C., Sarker, A., & Shearer, R. (2018). Teaching empathy: Exploring multiple perspectives to address Islamophobia through children's literature. *The Reading Teacher*, 72(5), 559-568.

## PUBLISHERS AND IMPRINTS SUPPORTING THE 2023 NOTABLE BOOKS FOR A GLOBAL SOCIETY

ABRAMS, Abrams Books	Charlesbridge	Etch	Readers	Simon & Schuster, Atheneum Books
ABRAMS, Abrams ComicArts	Charlesbridge, Charlesbridge Teen	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, HMH Books for Young Readers	Macmillan Publishers, Farrar, Straus and Giroux	Simon & Schuster, Atheneum Books/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books
ABRAMS, Amulet Books	Chronicle Books	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Versify	Macmillan Publishers, Feiwel & Friends	Simon & Schuster, Atheneum Books for Young Readers
ABRAMS, Books for Young Readers	Chronicle Books, Chronicle Kids	Kane Miller	Macmillan Publishers, First Second	Simon & Schuster, Beach Lane Books
ABRAMS, Cameron Kids	Disney, Disney Hyperion	Kids Can Press	Macmillan Publishers, Godwin Books	Simon & Schuster, Denene Millner Books
ABRAMS, Harry N. Abrams	Disney, Rick Riordan Presents	Kids Can Press, Citizen Kid	Macmillan Publishers, Henry Holt and Co	Simon & Schuster, Margaret K. McElderry Books
Amazon Publishing, Amazon Crossing Kids	First Second Books	Lantana Publishing	Macmillan Publishers, Imprint Make Your Mark	Simon & Schuster, Paula Wiseman Books
Amazon Publishing, Two Lions	Greystone Books	Lee & Low Books	Macmillan Publishers, Roaring Brook Press	Simon & Schuster, Salaam Reads
Annick Press	Greystone Books, Grey-stone Kids	Lee & Low Books, Children's Book Press	Orca Book Publishers	Simon & Schuster, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
APA, Magination Press	Groundwood Books, House of Anansi Press	Lee & Low Books, Cinco Puntos Press	Penguin Random House, Alfred A. Knopf	Simon & Schuster, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
Barefoot Publishing	HarperCollins, Balzer + Bray	Lee & Low Books, Tu Books	Penguin Random House, Crown	Simon & Schuster, Simon Spotlight
Bloomsbury, Bloomsbury Children's Books	HarperCollins, Greenwillow Books	Lerner Publishing Group, Carolrhoda Books	Penguin Random House, Crown Books for Young Readers	Sleeping Bear Press
Bloomsbury, YA	HarperCollins, Harper Books	Lerner Publishing Group, Carolrhoda LAB	Scholastic Inc., Graphix	Tilbury House Publishers
Boyd's Mills & Kane, Boyd's Mills Press	HarperCollins, HarperTeen	Lerner Publishing Group, Millbrook Press	Scholastic Inc., Orchard Books	Two Lions
Boyd's Mills & Kane, Calkins Creek	HarperCollins, Heartdrum	Lerner Publishing Group, Twenty-first Century Books	Scholastic Inc., PUSH	Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
Bushel & Peck	HarperCollins, Katherine Tegen Books	Levine Querido, Arthur A. Levine	Scholastic Inc., Scholastic Press	
Candlewick Press	HarperCollins, Quill Tree Books	Little Brown, Little, Brown	Simon & Schuster, Aladdin	
Candlewick Press, Candlewick Studio	HarperCollins, Walden Pond Press	Little Brown, Little, Brown Books for Young		
Candlewick Press, MIT Kids Press	HighWater Press			
Candlewick Press, Walker Books	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Clarion Books			
Capstone, Capstone Editions	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt,			



# THE POET'S CORNER

## What Is a Family?



Janet Wong

IF YOU WERE TO ASK most people to define the word “family,” they would likely answer, “blood relatives.” We opened our book *What Is a Family?* with “Family” by Rajani LaRocca because we wanted to immediately challenge the common idea, especially among children, that being part of a family requires a genetic relationship.

Another popular definition of “family,” especially among children, would be “people you live with.” But we might not consider temporary roommates or visitors to be family. And, by contrast, we likely would think of extended family members as genuine family, even if they don’t live with us. “We” by Alma

Flor Ada and “Joy” by F. Isabel Campoy are poetry exemplars that address these scenarios.

Some children, however, receive most of the love and support in their lives from groups that might not be traditionally considered “families,” such as their coaches and teammates, or members of an orchestra or marching band, or teachers and classmates. Sharing “Together” by Joyce Uglow, “Band” by Janet Clare Fagal, and “Classroom” by April Halprin Wayland will give children permission to think of these groups as families and legitimize their feeling of belonging.

**Family can share DNA,  
chromosomes, and genes.  
But shared genetics is only part  
of what *family* can mean.**

**Family means time together,  
laughter over meals,  
a hug, a kiss, a squeezing hand –  
that's how family feels.**

**Some families all look alike.  
Some share no DNA.  
But all share love through good and bad.  
That's the family way.**

**FAMILY**  
by Rajani LaRocca

Poem © 2023 Rajani LaRocca  
from *What Is a Family?*  
by Sylvia Vardell & Janet Wong

Available at Amazon  
and QEPBooks.com

Learn more at  
[PomeloBooks.com](http://PomeloBooks.com)








Poem © 2023 Alma Flor Ada  
from *What Is a Family?*  
by Sylvia Vardell & Janet Wong

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Tia Maria brought some seedlings.  
Tio Juan helped to plant them.  
My sister and I made sure  
they were always watered.

Now they are on a large basket  
over Grandma's kitchen table.  
A large pumpkin, some string beans,  
red tomatoes and green peppers,  
sweet corn and spicy radishes,  
carrots, lettuce, zucchini.

I shout, "Like a family!"  
and everyone is surprised.  
"Yes," I say, "look at them:  
large and small,  
round and skinny,  
sweet and spicy,  
and all those colors . . .  
each adding a unique flavor.  
Just like our family!"

**WE**

by Alma Flor Ada



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Family is the joy  
of all for one  
and one for all

. . . is a yummy meal  
of secret ingredients  
hidden in grandma's hands

. . . is a song  
learned on summer trips  
in mom's old van

. . . is a smile  
rushing towards you  
if you are sitting lonely and alone

. . . is a place to return to,  
where people I love live,  
and where they love me back.

**JOY**

by F. Isabel Campoy

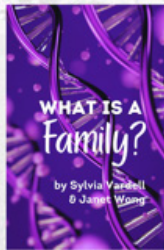




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## TOGETHER

by Joyce Uglow

We gather.  
We huddle.  
We play.  
"One team," Coach says.  
"Let's go!" we cheer.

We look.  
We see.  
We give.  
"Well done!" Coach says.  
"Nice pass!" we cheer.

We plan.  
We act.  
We do.  
"Be there," Coach says.  
"Together!"



Poem © 2023 Janet Clare Fagal  
from *What Is a Family?*  
by Sylvia Vardell & Janet Wong

Available at Amazon  
and QEPBooks.com

Learn more at  
[PomeloBooks.com](https://PomeloBooks.com)



## BAND

by Janet Clare Fagal

Some bands play at ball games,  
others work hard to compete.  
Some perform at concerts,  
some parade down the street.  
We rehearse and we practice  
the songs that we'll play.  
Our tubas and drumline  
add pep right away!  
Our trumpets and trombones  
blare the melody line.  
Our flutes, horns and piccolos  
make all of us shine.  
Each musical note in the score  
needs another –  
our band is a family  
of sisters and brothers!

Let's work together to share expanded definitions of "family." Making sure that each child feels a sense of connection and belonging is a key step in humanizing pedagogy—and poetry is here to help. •

**Janet Wong** is the author of dozens of books for children and the cocreator (with Sylvia Vardell) of *The Poetry Friday Anthology* series, the *Poetry Friday Power Book* series, the *Things We...* series, and the *What Is a...* series, all published by Pomelo Books. Her most recent anthology, with Sylvia Vardell and 31 poets, is *What Is a Family?* (a fundraiser for the IBBY Children in Crisis Fund).

Email: [janet@janetwong.com](mailto:janet@janetwong.com)

## RESOURCES

International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). (n.d.). *IBBY Children in Crisis Fund*. <https://www.ibby.org/awards-activities/ibby-children-in-crisis-fund>

Southern Poverty Law Center. (n.d.). "What is a family?" *Learning for Justice*. Retrieved March 26, 2023, from <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/what-is-a-family>

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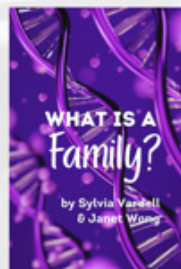
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from *What Is a Family?*  
by Sylvia Vardell & Janet Wong

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and QEPBooks.com

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**Mom had eleven brothers and sisters.  
But me? It's just me.**

**I ache  
for eleven brothers and sisters.  
For our house to be just as  
messy-happy-crowded-loud.**

**After a movie,  
I sit in a circle with my stuffed animals  
and tell them the whole movie,  
from start to finish,  
just like Mom's oldest sister told her family  
because they could only afford one ticket.**

**Today in class we're showing  
how many kids live in our house.  
Today I don't care  
that I'm only raising one finger.**

**Because here, in Ms. Escarra's class,  
I've found  
my messy-happy-crowded-loud  
family.**

**CLASSROOM**  
by April Halprin Wayland





# The Dragon Lode

*The Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group invites interested members to apply to serve on the Notable Books for a Global Society Committee. The NBGS Committee solicits nominations for the award, reads and evaluates submissions, prepares an annotated list of winners for publication in The Dragon Lode and other publications, presents the books during the annual IRA convention, and conducts other activities to promote this award.*

## Call to Serve on the Notable Books for a Global Society Committee

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### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Membership in the Children's Literature and Reading SIG and the International Reading Association
- Interest in international and multicultural issues in children's literature

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### REQUIREMENTS

- Willingness to attend virtual and in-person committee meetings throughout the year
- Attendance for three years at both NBGS Committee meetings, held at IRA and NCTE annual conferences
- Willingness and ability to read and evaluate 300-400 books for children and young adults annually
- Ability and willingness to write annotations for publication in *The Dragon Lode* and to present the annual NBGS book list at the Children's Literature and Reading SIG session at the IRA convention

The committee consists of 10 members, including the chair and the co-chair, who must attend all meetings of the committee as noted above and perform all duties as directed by the chair. Three members are appointed annually in January by the president and the NBGS incoming chair from among candidates who respond to this call.

As far as possible, the committee members shall be representative of the SIG membership in terms of gender, regions of residence, and professions positions (e.g., classroom teachers, teacher educators, and librarians). Preference is given to applicants who have not served previously on the committee.

Interested applicants should submit letters of interest and curriculum vitae by post or email to:

**Sandip LeeAnne Wilson, EdD**  
Chair of the NBGS Committee  
Professor, School of Education  
Husson University  
1 College Circle  
Bangor, ME 04401  
[Wilsonsa@husson.edu](mailto:Wilsonsa@husson.edu)

**Danielle Hartsfield, PhD**  
President, Children's Literature and Reading SIG  
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Daholnga, GA 30597  
[Danielle.Hartsfield@ung.edu](mailto:Danielle.Hartsfield@ung.edu)





## Join the ILA CL/R SIG

The Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group is a community of individuals who have an abiding interest in the development of literacy and in promoting high-quality literature. Our mission is to promote the educational use of children's books by focusing on recently published children's literature, supportive professional books, issues relative to children's literature, and current research findings. Membership typically includes pre-K through 12 teachers, librarians, teacher candidates, administrators, university professors, authors, and publishers.

Membership benefits include:

- Meeting and working with other literacy professionals who share interest in literature for children and young adults.
- Opportunities for national-level involvement and leadership.
- Two issues a year of *The Dragon Lode* journal.

Membership is open to all members of the International Literacy Association. Student members must be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program.

- One-year membership: \$25.00 (U.S.)
- One-year student membership: \$10.00 (U.S.)

**To join, go to the CL/R SIG website:**

**<http://www.clrsig.org/join-now.html>**

The Journal of the Children's Literature and Reading  
Special Interest Group  
International Literacy Association

