

2008 Edition

# APPRECIATING AMERICA'S HERITAGE

Immigration Resource  
Guide for K-12  
Educators

American  
Immigration  
Law Foundation

Immigration  
Curriculum  
Center



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## Introduction

The American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF) is pleased to present the 2008 edition of “Appreciating America’s Heritage” Teacher Resource Guide. First and foremost, this latest edition continues to keep the needs of classroom teachers in mind by providing new and innovative lesson plans, which can be implemented in any classroom, and book reviews for literature-based lessons and research support. All materials included in these pages have been created by fellow educators who either serve as members of our Curriculum Advisory Board, have presented at an AILF symposium or have been awarded AILF classroom grants.

Each lesson plan has been written and successfully field-tested in classrooms throughout the country. Keep in mind that these lessons have been selected to introduce students, especially those who may not be directly exposed to ethnically diverse populations, to the important topic of immigration.

In this resource guide, AILF has chosen to provide one lesson plan for each grade level category—Primary, Middle and High School. Book reviews for each level can also be found within these pages. Additionally, you may want to check out our expanded lesson plans and other materials online at <http://www.ailf.org/teach/resources.shtml>.

Finally, AILF has included information about its resources and programming available to you, the educator. If you have any questions or specific needs, please feel free to contact us at [teacher@ailf.org](mailto:teacher@ailf.org).

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# PRIMARY SCHOOL LESSON PLAN

People In Motion: Exploring  
Immigration and Migration  
(K–3rd grade)

## People In Motion: Exploring Immigration and Migration (K–3rd grade)

### GOAL:

Students will discover that people who were part of the Great Migration and people who immigrated to America had similar reasons for moving and faced similar hardships.

### OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Define immigration and migration through literature and song
- Compare and contrast the Great Migration and immigration to the US
- Research family history through interviews and photos
- Write a family story based on an old family photo
- Create a “Family Story Quilt”

### MATERIALS:

Assorted construction paper and cardstock, access to CD player and photo copier. Ziefert, Harriet illustrated by Simms Taback. *When I First Came to This Land*. PaperStar Book 2003. Holliday, Billie, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. *God Bless the Child*. Amistad 2003.

### PROCEDURE:

- Ask students to respond to the journal prompt “Describe a time when you and your family had to move to a new place.” Share responses and list places students mention. Discuss any hardships involved in moving.
- Read aloud: *When I First Came to This Land*. Allow the children to enjoy the language and join in the repetition. Discuss the literary elements of the story such as characters, setting and events. Discuss the rhyming names used for the farm, horse, plow, etc. If possible, listen to a recording of the song and sing along. Discuss the concept of immigration as it relates to the story. What clues do we have about the place the immigrant came from? Why did he come to the US? When did he come? What hardships did he face?

- Take a “picture walk” through *God Bless the Child* by Billie Holiday. Discuss the realistic nature of the illustrations by Jerry Pinkney. Tell the children that they were based on old photographs that the illustrator collected. Ask the children to predict what the story is about. Read the book aloud and listen to the CD included with the book. Discuss the narrative literary elements of the story. Discuss the time period and the Great Migration. Discuss the reasons the family migrated to Chicago. Why does the story end in the classroom? Who was Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable?
- Compare the two books. How are the themes alike? How are the causes of immigration and migration similar? What similar challenges did the characters face?
- Explore family history. Assign the “What Story Does the Picture Tell?” worksheet. Have each child bring in the oldest family photo he or she can find and have a family member help with information for the worksheet. Photocopy the family picture and have students write family stories using information from the worksheets. Mount photocopies and stories on squared cardstock. Frame each picture and story on a larger piece of construction paper and have children illustrate the frames. Create a large class quilt with all the pictures.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

#### WORDPLAY:

Explore the rich language of the stories.

#### When I First Came to This Land

**With the students create a “T” chart and list the things the main character acquires on one side and his name for them on the other. Discuss the reasons for the name choices as well as the rhymes.**

Farm~Muscle-in-my-arm	plow~Don't-know-how
horse~I'm-the-boss	shack~Break-my-back
cow~No-milk-now	pig~Too-darn-big
wife~Spice-of-my-life	son~So-much-fun

#### God Bless The Child

Discuss meanings of the following idiomatic phrases in the songs to help the students better understand their meanings and how they relate to the time period of the Great Depression.

empty pockets	weak ones fade
make the grade	rich relations
crust of bread	got his own

# PRIMARY SCHOOL LESSON PLAN

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## ASSESSMENT:

Have children use a Venn diagram or a "T" chart to compare the two books that were read focusing on the concepts of immigration and migration.

## WORKSHEET:

What Story Does The Picture Tell? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who is in the picture? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When was the picture taken? \_\_\_\_\_

Where was the picture taken? \_\_\_\_\_

How are the people in the picture related to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who took the photo? \_\_\_\_\_

Who kept the photo? \_\_\_\_\_

Why was the photo saved? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is it special to your family? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What other information do you have about this photo? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## VOCABULARY:

**immigration:** to enter and settle in a country or region to which one is not native

### migration:

- the movement of persons from one country or locality to another
- the periodic passage of groups of animals (especially birds or fishes) from one region to another

**Great Migration:** the movement of more than 1.5 million African Americans out of the rural Southern United States from 1914 to 1940

**Depression:** a period during the 1930s when there was a worldwide economic slump and mass unemployment

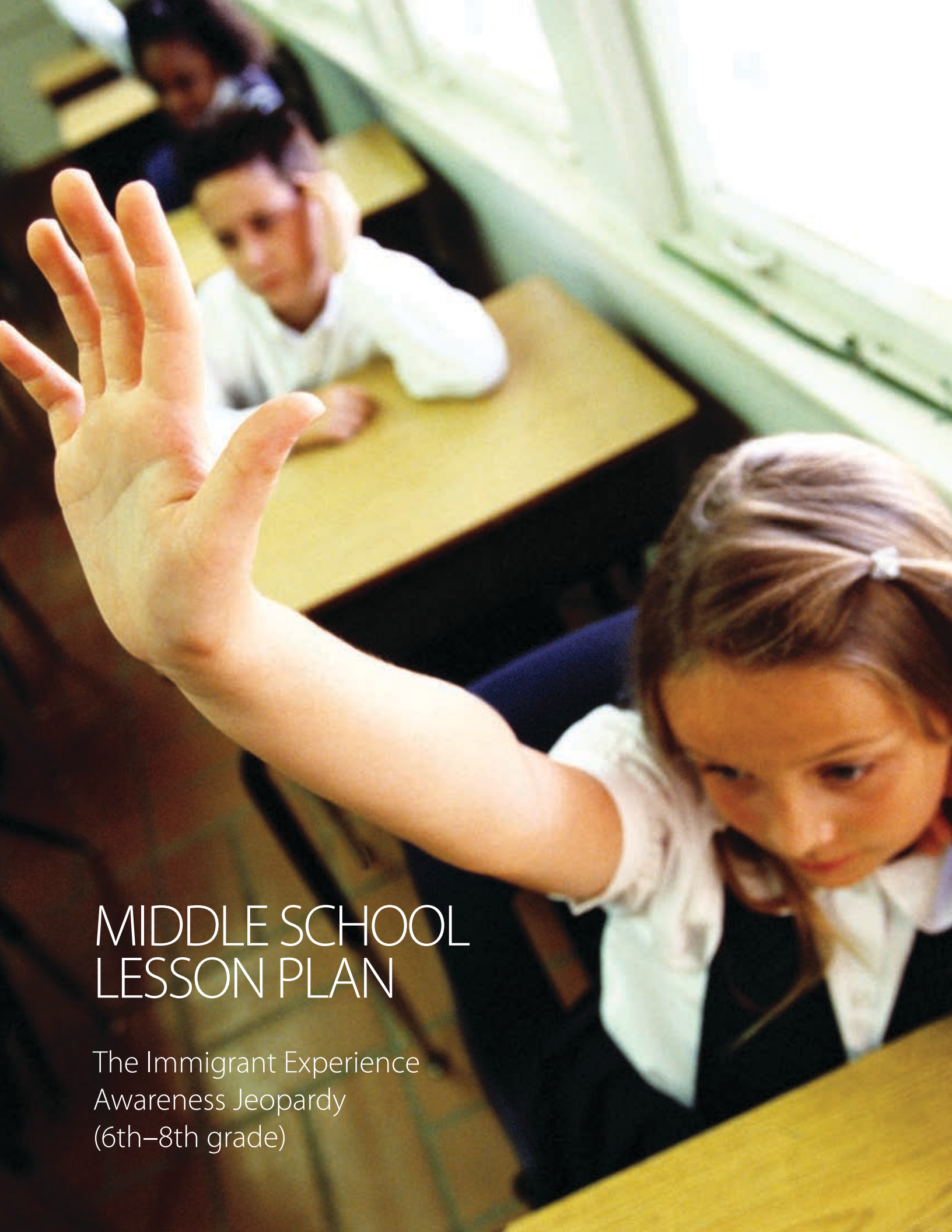
**sharecroppers:** a farmer who gives a share of the crops raised to the landlord instead of rent

**segregation:** a social system that provides separate facilities for minority groups

**wealthy:** the quality of having a great quantity or store of money, valuable possessions, property, or other riches

## NCSS STANDARDS:

Time, continuity and change  
People, places and environments  
Power, authority and governance  
Global connections  
Civic ideals and practices



# MIDDLE SCHOOL LESSON PLAN

The Immigrant Experience  
Awareness Jeopardy  
(6th–8th grade)

## The Immigrant Experience Awareness Jeopardy (6th–8th grade)

### GOAL:

This lesson will promote student interaction and sportsmanship (verbal, task distribution) in a competitive activity as well as provide an informal hands-on assessment of acquired knowledge on the immigrant experience.

### OBJECTIVE:

This activity can be used as an informal assessment using an open book format (with class readings, notebooks, materials available during activity) or as a formal assessment (quiz, oral test) without access to support materials. In either format, the teacher will observe and assess student's level of participation/collaboration, oral communication/presentation, written skills, recall, comprehension of information presented previously in class and math computation skills.

### MATERIALS:

Readings about immigrant experiences, Teacher-prepared poster board with themes (Historical Dates, Historical Events, Myths/Reality and Statistics), color-coded/valued cards

### PROCEDURES:

- Prepare poster board in advance with four (4) categories (Historical Dates, Historical Events, Myths/Reality and Statistics). Write a question on each card. Assign a value (100, 200, 300, 400 and Double Jeopardy) with each card/question increasing in level of complexity (easier to hardest).
- Divide student group evenly into four (4) small groups ensuring representation of ESL and special needs students. If the total number of students in the group is uneven, teacher calls for volunteers interested in keeping score and selects one. Then, the teacher divides group into even subgroups. If the total number of students in the group is even, students are given the option of volunteering to keep score with the understanding that one group will have an uneven number of members. In this case, the large group is allowed to select the scorekeeper.

- The teacher explains that teams are expected to assign a reporter to select or answer questions in each round. (Students can choose one individual, take turns, etc.). If an ESL or special needs reporter is chosen, other team members can assist by writing the team's answer on paper or having a member translate group response from the group to the audience.
- The order of participation is established by the teacher.
- In each turn, the group selects a category and value question from the board.
- If group's response is correct, the team is awarded the value of the question. If the group's response is incorrect, the next group (in order of participation) is given the opportunity to answer. This continues until all groups had opportunity to answer or until correct response is elicited by a group.
- Score is kept according to the value on each question card. Score keeper(s) add-up scores as groups respond correctly/incorrectly to questions.
- A random "Double Jeopardy" question card is included amongst the value cards on the board. The group that correctly answers the question is awarded double the value on the question card.
- Teacher can provide students with tangible or intangible rewards (i.e., snacks, extra-free time/computer use, hallway pass, homework pass, etc.).



# MIDDLE SCHOOL LESSON PLAN

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## SAMPLE QUESTIONS/CATEGORIES

### HISTORICAL DATES:

**100**

In which year did Ellis Island (N.Y.) open to receive immigrants?

- A) 1892
- B) 1902
- C) 1904
- D) 1924

**200**

Which years were considered “The Dark Chapter” of immigration in the US?

- A) 1900-1920
- B) 1930-1950
- C) 1960-1980
- D) 1990-2000

**300**

In what decade was the highest influx of German Catholics and Irish immigrants in the US?

- A) 1820’s
- B) 1840’s
- C) 1900’s
- D) 1940’s

**400**

In which year did Congress eliminate racial criteria from immigration laws?

- A) 1945
- B) 1955
- C) 1965
- D) 1975

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### HISTORICAL EVENTS

**100**

True/False

The legislation “Dream Act” would have provided a path to legal status for undocumented college students.

**200**

Which group of immigrants was restricted based on the first restrictionist immigration law in 1882?

- A) Russian
- B) Japanese
- C) Chinese
- D) Korean

**300**

Which law prohibits any employer from hiring any person who is not legally authorized to work in the United States and requires that employers verify the employment eligibility of all new employees?

- A) The Refugee Act of 1980
- B) The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
- C) The Immigration Act of 1990
- D) The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996

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### CATEGORY: STATISTICS

**100**

What country produced the second largest percent of the legal immigrant population in the United States from 1971-1980?

- A) Europe and Canada
- B) Asia
- C) Mexico
- D) Other Latin American Countries
- E) All other countries

**200**

According to the data from the 2000 U.S. Census, 12.8% of the foreign-born immigrants in the country were unauthorized aliens.

- A) True
- B) False

**300**

What was the percent of foreign-born Asian immigrants in the United States in 2005?

- A) 10%
- B) 15%
- C) 23%
- D) 26%



The entrance to the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, NY.

**400**

During fiscal year 2005-06, what was the number of Legal Permanent Residents (also known as LPR's) entering the United States through ports of entry?

- A) 9-10 million
- B) 11-12 million
- C) 13-14 million
- D) 15-16 million

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**CATEGORY: MYTHS AND REALITY**

**100**

In the year 2000, what was the 26% of full-time immigrant workers that were limited English proficient?

- A) True
- B) False

**200**

Immigrants come to the United States to:

- A) Take jobs from the US citizens, send the US money to their countries,
- B) Get a better education, live a better life, freedom, have more and better opportunities, security
- C) Join gangs, engage in criminal acts, not work, drop out of school
- D) To join the American pop-culture industry

**300**

The federal agency that carries out "deportation raids" amongst immigrants is:

**VALUE: DOUBLE JEOPARDY**

**400**

The most concentrated occupations/professions of unauthorized immigrants in the United States in 2005 were:

- A) Auto repair, accounting, hotel services, plumbing, electrical
- B) Construction worker, transportation, farming, production, cleaning and food preparation
- C) medicine, human resources, architecture, law enforcement, education
- D) mechanics, housekeeping, installation & repair, sales & administration

**NCSS STANDARDS:**

Time, continuity and change  
 People, places and environments  
 Power, authority and governance  
 Civic ideals and practices  
 Individuals, Groups and Institutions



# HIGH SCHOOL LESSON PLAN

Understanding the Relationship  
of Migration to US Nation-State  
and Citizenship  
(9th–12th grade)

## Understanding the Relationship of Migration To US Nation-State and Citizenship (9th–12th grade)

### GOAL:

This lesson will encourage thoughtful discussion on the naturalization process and reflect on the role citizenship and naturalization plays in the lives of immigrants and U.S. citizens.

### OBJECTIVES:

Students will articulate their own sense of national identity by taking a portion of the Naturalization Exam.

Specifically, students will:

- Define Citizenship and Nationality
- Discuss the implications of words such as “Naturalization,” “Aliens” and “Borders”
- Explore the role of state
- Review essential civics, requirements for naturalization and lawful permanent resident (LRP)

### MATERIALS:

U.S. Naturalization Exam, Teacher Prepared Quiz, USCIS Citizenship and Immigration Cards, MacGruder’s American Government Textbook: Ch. 21, Section 4 “American Citizenship,” Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. Verso, 1991. Kymlicka, Will. *Multicultural Citizenship*. Oxford, 1995. PBS *The New Americans: Supporting Families*. “The ABC’s of Immigration” from *The New Americans: Supporting Families* Module Discussion Guide (available from AILF).

### PROCEDURES:

- Start class by announcing a pop quiz. The quiz should consist of nine questions from the USCIS naturalization exam. There should be no marking on the quiz to indicate where the questions come from, and question number 10 should be “These are sample questions from a very real, very high-stakes exam which thousands of people take each year. Name the exam.” The students ideally should not know in advance the theme of the lesson.

- Selected questions should fall into two categories: 1) very easy questions (“What colors are the stars on the American flag”) and more difficult questions which some students may not be able to answer (“Name your state’s two senators.”)
- After the quiz, elicit or reveal that these are questions from the US Naturalization Exam. Produce copies of the exam itself and pass them around the class.
- Register impressions: how is this test easier/harder/different than the kinds of exams taken in their own civics class? If students express that the exam is easy, ask them whether they believe that they could pass it in a foreign language.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Divide the class into two teams and play a quiz game involving USCIS Civics Flash Cards.

### CULMINATING ACTIVITY:

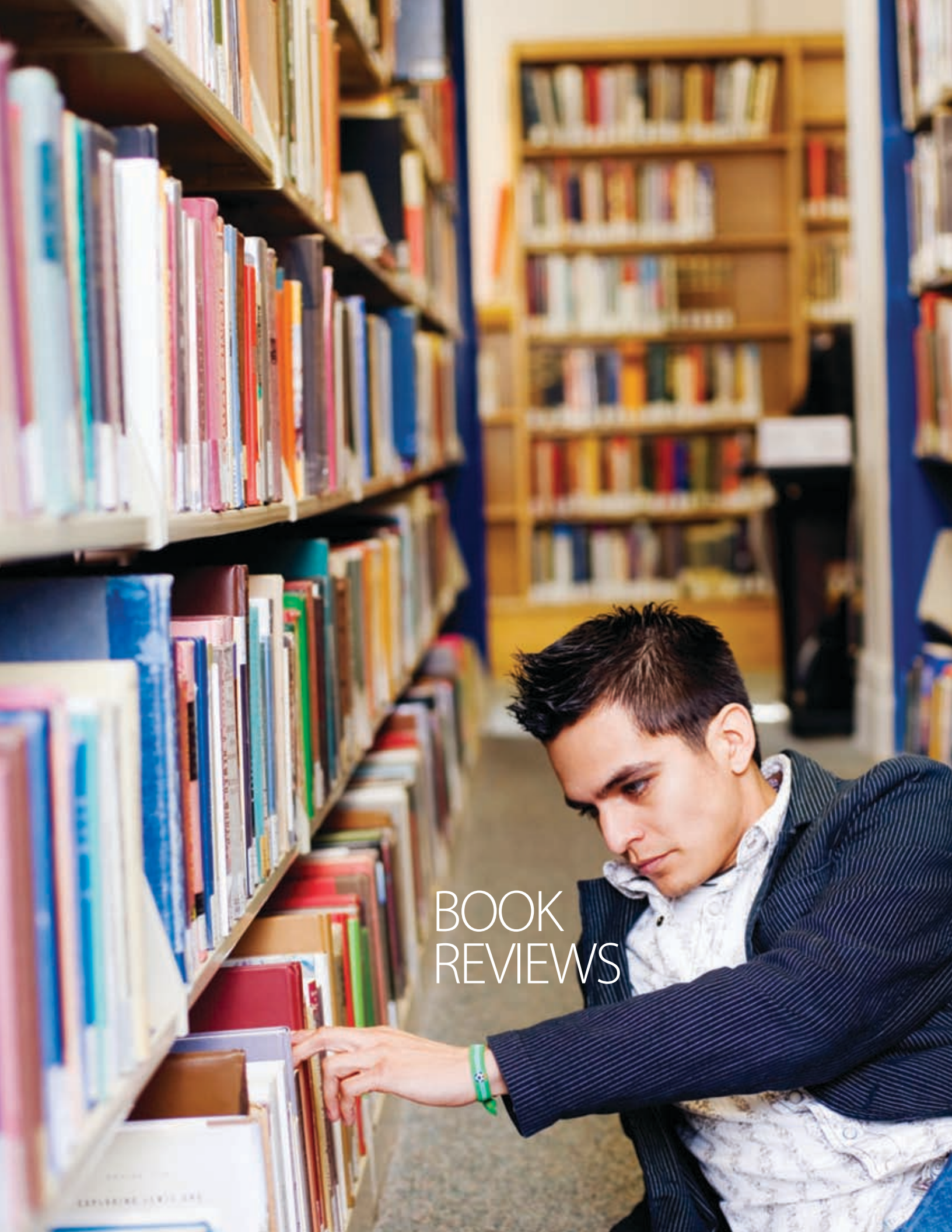
Discussion and explain the requirements and steps of the naturalization process. Ask whether any student or their immediate family members have undergone naturalization, and invite their input. Elicit the concept of citizenship by asking what the goal of naturalization is. Highlight the curious implications of the word “naturalization” and related terms such as “alien.” Point out that many American citizens have received the death penalty, but that almost no crime can cause an American-born citizen to be “de-naturalized.” Is citizenship then the “natural” state of human life? What is so important about citizenship? What rights come with it and why do people work so hard to achieve it?

### ASSESSMENT:

Assign the chapter from your American Government textbook on American Citizenship to re-enforce basic concepts. Students may also interview anyone they know who has passed through the naturalization process.

### NCSS STANDARDS:

People, Places and Environments  
Power, Authority and Governance  
Global Connections  
Civic Ideals and Practices



BOOK  
REVIEWS

# BOOK REVIEWS

## WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THIS LAND

*Based on a song by Oscar Brand.*

*Retold by Harriet Ziefert, illustrated by Simms Taback.  
G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1998. 32 pgs.*

### Grades K-3

Many baby boomers will remember joyfully singing Oscar Brand's folksong, "When I First Came to this Land," in primary school. Harriet Ziefert's story version, paired with Caldecott Award Winner Simms Taback's lively illustrations, introduces this simple immigration story to another generation of children. The repetitive language and humorous illustrations should appeal to students as they follow the adventures of a typical nineteenth century immigrant pursuing the American dream. Aimed at primary students, this imaginative book could serve as an introduction to American immigration history for students at any grade level.

## HANNAH IS MY NAME

*By Belle Yang. Candlewick Press, 2004. 40 pgs.*

### Grades K-6

Based on author's first year in America as an immigrant from Taiwan, *Hannah Is My Name* captures the emotions of a little girl adjusting to a new life. The narrative and illustrations show how much she missed her old school, friends, and customs yet felt privileged to be in America. Na Li's family wants to make her fit in by giving her an "American sounding name." They choose "Hannah" because it is spelled the same backward and they think it will be easy for her because she doesn't know English yet. The illustrations in this book are charming and have an Asian influence and the story is told from the voice of a child. "This book celebrates our shared history of hope by telling the story of a little girl who is waiting for her green card." The book discusses the family looking for an apartment, her family filling out forms with an immigration lawyer, her father hiding from immigration, Hannah's best friend at school being deported, and the arrival of the green cards and her reaction to the blue color of the document her family has been waiting for. This book is essential for any early childhood classroom and it would be appropriate for upper-grades as well. Everyone, whether they are recent immigrants or celebrating diversity, will enjoy this little girl's quest for equal opportunity.

## NO ENGLISH

*By Jacqueline Jules, illustrated by Amy Huntington.  
Ann Arbor Media Group, 2007. 29 pgs.*

### Grades 1-2

*No English* is a colorfully illustrated picture book that tells the story of Blanca, a new girl from Argentina, who struggles to adjust and acclimate to her second grade American classroom. Blanca's story is told from the perspective of her classmate, Diane, who initially has trouble dealing with the fact that they don't speak the same language. Early on, "No English," is all that Spanish speaker, Blanca, can say—thus making her misunderstood by her classmates. However, with the help of her teacher, Mrs. Bertram, the students are able to better understand Blanca by learning about her homeland. This is a lovely story that could be read aloud to students of all ages and will make a lovely addition to any classroom library.

## ONE GREEN APPLE

*By Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ted Lewin. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006. 32 pgs.*

### Grades 1-4

Farah, a young Muslim girl, begins her story on her second day in a new school in a new country. She listens and nods but doesn't speak. So many things are strange to her, including the clothes and language. Her class is going on a field trip to an apple orchard where they will each pick an apple to be made into cider. When she puts a green apple into the cider press instead of a ripe red one, as her classmates have done, they symbolically protest. But the cider from all the apples they have mixed together is a beautiful metaphor for the benefits of intermingling different people. Farah begins to make friends. She even learns a new word "App-ell." Her simple story helps us understand the feelings of the many immigrant children striving to make their way in our American world. Tee Lewin's gorgeous full-page watercolors depict the apple picking adventure. This is a great picture book for early primary and ESL classrooms.

## DRITA MY HOMEGIRL

*By Jenny Lombard. Putnam Juvenile, 2006. 176 pgs.*

### Grades 3-5

*Drita My Homegirl* is the story of Drita, a Muslim Albanian refugee, who has immigrated to New York City from war-torn Kosovo. Drita longs to make friends in school, but faces difficulty due to her limited English. *Drita My Homegirl* is narrated through alternating chapters told from the

# BOOK REVIEWS

perspective of two fourth graders, Drita and Maxie. As their stories unfold, their unlikely friendship grows against the backdrop of both feeling a bit like outsiders. Drita is trying to deal with immigrating as well as her mother's depression, and at the same time she is also struggling to fit in at school. Maxie, on the other hand, appears to be a fun-loving comedian at school, but she too is struggling outside of school as she attempts to deal with the death of her mother. As these unlikely friends come together, the themes of family, friendship, and love resonate. *Drita My Homegirl* is appropriate for grades 3-5 and, when read aloud, could be used to engage students in group discussions.

## THE IRISH DRESSER

By Cynthia Neale. White Mane Publishing Company, 2003. 100 pgs.

### Grades 2-6

*The Irish Dresser* is fantastic historical fiction which tells the story of Ireland's Potato Famine (1845-1850). Told from the perspective of thirteen year old Nora McCabe, the reader experiences her family's struggle to survive. Nora decides to escape by hiding in her family's dresser aboard the ship. She fantasizes about food and a better life. The reader experiences the difficult journey experienced by more than two million Irish through Nora's touching story. Surely, students will be engaged by the McCabe family's tragic and difficult voyage to America in search of food, as well as Nora's vivid and descriptive voice. *The Irish Dresser* is an exciting story about the reality of taking risks and facing the unknown. This title will make a fantastic read aloud and could be enjoyed by students in grades 2-6.

## LIVING AS A REFUGEE IN AMERICA: MOHAMMED'S STORY

By Helen Howard. World Almanac Library, 2006. 48 pgs.

### Grades 4-9

Now in an American high school, Mohammed, 15, tells the story of how he fled the Taliban in Afghanistan and wandered through Iran and Turkey before coming to the U.S. with his mother, brother and sister. *Living as a Refugee in America* weaves Mohammed's story with facts about Afghanistan's recent history and discusses the plight of refugees, driven by war and famine, across the world. The moving first person narrative, printed in italics, features full-color, captioned photos of Mohammed, his family and friends. It also discusses issues such as discrimination, cultural barriers and maintaining dual identity. This non-fiction book contains a glossary of helpful

vocabulary as well suggestions for how students can take action to help the displaced by providing an annotated list of international human rights organizations to contact.

## THE ARRIVAL

By Shaun Tan. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2007. 128 pgs

### Grades 4-12

In this wordless graphic novel, Tan captures the disorientation immigrants may feel toward their new surroundings. Through magnificent illustrations, *The Arrival* depicts the journey of one man who seems both accepted and rejected by his new country. The only writing is in an invented alphabet, which motivates the viewer to feel confused just like the immigrants must feel when they encounter a strange new language and way of life. A feeling of tolerance and acceptance is presented throughout the story, which transcends race and ethnicity. From the youngest readers to the most sophisticated, many will find this book interesting. This book is an excellent conversation starter in any mainstream or ESL classroom.

## MEMORIES OF SUN, STORIES OF AFRICA AND AMERICA

Edited by Jane Kurtz. Greenwillow Books, 2004. 243 pgs.

### Grades 5-12

In *Memories of Sun*, we hear the stories of children who currently live in various parts of Africa, Americans living in or visiting Africa and Africans living in America. Divided into these three distinct sections, the stories express a variety of cultural experiences as well as the imprint these cultures have on the children who inhabit them both. Some stories are touching, some humorous and some heartbreaking. All are unforgettable.

Jane Kurtz, a self described "third culture kid," was born in the U.S. but raised for most of her childhood in Ethiopia. In *Memories of Sun*, she has created an anthology of twelve stories and three poems that speak in the voices of children who share that duality of culture. The back of the book contains an informative section about the authors. Students will find much to learn and relate to once they read these powerful stories.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## ESCAPE FROM SAIGON: HOW A VIETNAM WAR ORPHAN BECAME AN AMERICAN BOY

By Andrea Warren. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004. 110 pgs.

### Grades 5-12

At the end of the Vietnam War, an eight-year-old “Amerasian” boy named Long flees his country and finds a loving home with his adoptive family in Ohio. The author recounts the story of Long’s life—from his birth and early childhood, shadowed by his father’s abandonment and his mother’s suicide, to boyhood in Saigon with his loving yet struggling grandmother who eventually makes the agonizing decision to put him up for adoption. Long, now age nine, becomes part of *Operation Babylift*, the US- coordinated effort that evacuated more than 2,000 children from Saigon in just three days in 1975. This photo-essay from Long’s emotional point of view is interspersed with just the right amount of history. *Escape* is ideal for middle and upper grade classrooms studying various immigration themes including lost heritage, poverty, separation and family relations.

## AMERICAN BORN CHINESE

By Gene Luen Yan. First Second, 2006. 233 pgs.

### Grades 6 to 12

*American Born Chinese* is a graphic novel that cleverly takes readers through a journey by combining three storylines and three characters into one idea. Three stories merge into a single narrative that looks at stereotype, immigration, and assimilation. The graphic novel blends Chinese mythology with the American Dream. Students are sure to enjoy the images and text through this quick-moving novel. Teachers will find the book surprisingly useful as a springboard for discussions about discrimination, tolerance, stereotyping and immigration.

## OF BEETLES & ANGELS: A BOY’S REMARKABLE JOURNEY FROM A REFUGEE CAMP TO HARVARD

By Mawi Asgedom. Little, Brown & Co, 2002. 192 pgs.

### Grades 6-12

*Of Beetles & Angels* is a contemporary autobiography of a young man’s journey to success. When he was four years old, Asgedom’s family left their war-ravaged home in Ethiopia and spent three years in a Sudanese refugee camp before coming to the U.S. in 1983. He later earned a full scholarship to Harvard, where in 1999 he delivered the commencement address. Told from Asgedom’s point of view as a teenager, he describes the conditions in Ethiopia, their escape to Sudan’s refugee camp

and finally their emigration to America. Once in the United States, things don’t immediately fall into place. Asgedom is faced with many trials and tribulations, hardships and pain. Nonetheless, he follows his father’s advice to “treat all people – even the most unsightly beetles – as though they were angels sent from heaven,” Asgedom overcomes racial prejudice, language barriers and financial disadvantage, eventually realizing his dream. This is both an inspirational and positive immigration story highly recommended for teens and young adult’s grades 6 – 12. A terrific read aloud as well.

## BENTO BOX IN THE HEARTLAND

By Linda Furiya. Seal Press, 2006. 256 pgs.

### Grades 7-12

*Bento Box in the Heartland* is a coming-of-age memoir which tells the story of a young girl’s struggle to assimilate in her tiny Indiana town as the only Asian student in her school. Each day, as she takes out her lunch, Linda Furiya feels self-conscious about her parents’ insistence on sending their native Japanese cuisine in her lunch box. Looking around, she realizes that her lunches are different from her peers. Yet at the same time, the rice balls that her mother packs, rather than a sandwich like all of the other students, bring much comfort and delight to Furiya. Each chapter closes with a recipe of one of the author’s most treasured meals. *Bento Box in the Heartland* is more than a story about food. It is the story of a young woman trying to find herself as the only Asian in her school during the 1960’s. In addition, it is the story of growing up with immigrant parents and trying to figure out who she is, as well as better understanding her parents’ connection to Japan. Beautifully written, *Bento Box in the Heartland* is a fantastic conflation of stories, recipes, and self-discovery.

## A LONG WAY GONE: MEMOIRS OF A BOY SOLDIER

By Ishmael Beah. Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2007. 229 pgs.

### Grades 7-12

Ishmael Beah led a typical pre-teen life in Sierra Leone— hanging out with friends, going to school, performing American hip-hop songs. But when the civil war reached his village in 1992, he becomes separated from his family and friends and sets off on a harrowing journey of survival through a country ravaged by war and atrocity. Captured by government troops when he is thirteen, this gentle boy is traumatized, hooked on drugs and trained to kill. Beah’s beautifully written memoir tells a riveting story of fear, loss, violence, friendship and redemption. The themes of this book are relevant to adolescents today and would spark fascinating class discussions.

# BOOK REVIEWS

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## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SKY: A MEMOIR

By Farah Ahmedi with Tamim Ansary. *Simon Spotlight Entertainment*, 2005. 249 pgs.

### Grades 9-12

Farah Ahmedi was seven years old when she stepped on a landmine in her neighborhood in Kabul, Afghanistan and lost her left leg. A few years later, most of her family died in a Taliban rocket attack and Farah was forced to flee with her ailing mother across the border to Pakistan. There Farah and her mother trekked precariously from city to city and finally managed to secure admission into the U.S. as refugees—only to find that the struggle to survive, adapt and prosper was far from over. *The Other Side of the Sky* paints a vivid picture of the bewildering and even terrifying experiences refugees undergo in the apparent safety of American suburbs and public high schools. Throughout the memoir, however, Farah's faith, resilience and intellectual curiosity lead her from one inspirational triumph to the next. For all of Farah's suffering at the hands of others, her account persistently underlines that "strangers have been kind when it mattered most." *The Other Side of the Sky* is a refreshingly hopeful, at times humorous, and deeply moving story of a powerful young woman's improbable success.

## CROSSING OVER: A MEXICAN FAMILY ON THE MIGRANT TRAIL

By Ruben Martinez, *Picador*, 2002. 352 pgs.

### Grades 9-12

Ruben Martinez's engaging and authoritative account of the Chavez family's struggle to live in Cheran, Mexico, and work in the U.S. illustrates how the long-time U.S. message, "We have jobs for you" has changed to "We have jobs for you, but you'll have more trouble getting across the line." Three Chavez brothers were killed as victims in a high-speed chase crossing the border. Martinez followed migrant workers to California, Arkansas and even Norwalk, Wisconsin, where he found the Enriquez family working the night shift in a meatpacking plant. Martinez, whose grandfather came to the U.S. as a field hand, brings the readers right into small village life in Southern Mexico—through the treacherous border crossings and into the toxic fields where migrants toil. This is an excellent read for adults, especially with the historical backdrop the author provides.

## WEST OF KABUL, EAST OF NEW YORK: AN AFGHAN AMERICAN STORY

By Tamim Ansary, *Picador*, 2003. 304 pgs.

### Grades 9-12

*West of Kabul, East of New York* is an autobiography about a man entrenched in two cultures—stuck between his Afghan roots and his experience as an American immigrant. Tamim Ansary recalls his boyhood life in Afghanistan, describes his venture into the San Francisco hippie scene of the '70s and his travels throughout the Middle Eastern world of Islam in an effort to define his own spirituality. Ansary's impassioned email, written the day after the 9/11 attacks, reached millions of Americans and the author's own story is an effort to bridge the ever-widening gap between his heritage and his adopted home. Tamim's story is fascinating, at times frightening and always informative.

## WHAT IS THE WHAT: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF VALENTINO ACHAK DENG. A NOVEL

By Dave Eggers, *McSweeney's*, 2006. 475 pgs.

### Grades 12 to adult

This fictionalized autobiography, closely based on the oral history of a Sudanese "Lost Boy," is experimental, ambitious and most suitable for advanced high school, college and adult readers. Tracking back and forth chronologically between the narrator's present day travails in Atlanta and his memories of displacement and refugee camp life in the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya, *What is the What* presents a fascinating web of experience. Far from simply offering one more reiteration of the fairly well-known "Lost Boy" narrative, Eggers' account raises several new and unsettling questions. Does trauma really end when a refugee is resettled in the "first world," or does trauma perhaps increase upon resettlement? What is the fate of a *cause célèbre* after the attention of the media and donors fizzles and when sympathy for a given refugee community wears thin? How and why do transnational communities become burdensome and destructive rather than resourceful and resilient for forced migrants? Conversely, what opportunities for education, love, friendship and creativity become possible in the constrained environs of a refugee camp? Eggers' account is a valuable reminder of the moral ambiguities and experiential complexities of the Sudanese "Lost Boy" story.

# AILF RESOURCES

## CLASSROOM GRANT PROGRAM

The American Immigration Law Foundation bi-annually awards grants to classrooms around the nation. K-12 teachers will be funded up to \$500 to create and implement immigration—related projects. The Foundation funds dozens of activities that are supportive of AILF's mission and promote the benefits of immigrants to our nation.

The grant program is open to educators on public or private, primary, middle and high school levels. AILF encourages dynamic classroom-based lessons and projects that can be easily replicated in other classrooms or schools. Grants are non-renewable. The due dates for the 2008-2009 school year submission are June 1, 2008 and November 28, 2008.

Recipients of the 2008-2009 school year grants will be selected by AILF's Curriculum Advisory Board and funds will be disbursed in August 2008 and January 2009 respectively. Recipients will be selected and announced by AILF's Curriculum Advisory Board. A summary lesson plan and sample materials must be submitted to AILF before the agreed upon due date and will then become the property of AILF for use on the Foundation's website and in print materials.

For more information about this opportunity, please visit <http://www.aifl.org/teach/grants.shtml>.

## TEACHER SYMPOSIA

AILF offers a day-long symposium to area teachers and administrators involved in developing and presenting curricula to children in cities around the nation. The program reviews how the subject of immigration can be taught through many of the major educational disciplines while aligning to school/district prescribed and national standards. Participants obtain the necessary tools essential to engaging students in thoughtful dialogue when immigration issues arise in and out of the classroom. Each symposium features an immigration attorney, who discusses the historical and contemporary aspects of U.S. immigration, and a children's book author, who discusses their immigration related texts.

Symposia have been held in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles and San Francisco. AILF looks forward to expanding the symposia to other areas throughout the country. For updates on this program and to see if it's coming to your area, please visit <http://www.aifl.org/teach/teachingsymposia.shtml>.

## FIFTH GRADE CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

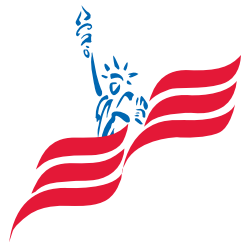
The American Immigration Law Foundation is proud to sponsor the *Celebrate America: Creative Writing Contest* in an ongoing effort to educate the public about the benefits of immigration to our society. Aimed at fifth grade students, this contest encourages our youth, families and surrounding communities to evaluate and appreciate the effects of immigration in their own lives. This, in turn, allows them to see that American is truly a nation of immigrants. Students first compete in a contest arranged by local chapters of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). The winning entry from each Chapter Contest is then submitted to the National competition where entries are reviewed by a distinguished panel of judges, including U.S. Senators, national journalists and federal judges. Winning entries will be printed in *The Congressional Record* and the national winner will receive an all-expenses paid trip for four to the Annual Benefit destination, where the winner will read his/her piece aloud. For more information about the contest or to find your local contest coordinator, please visit <http://www.aifl.org/awards/essaycontest>.



Photo courtesy of teacher Jane Grant of Bell Elementary School, Chicago, IL.

# About the Foundation...

The American Immigration Law Foundation is an IRS designated 501(c)(3) non profit, educational, charitable organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the value of immigration to American society and to advancing fundamental fairness and due process under the law for immigrants.



American Immigration Law Foundation

918 F Street, NW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20004

P: (202) 742-5600 · F: (202) 742-5619

email: [info@ailf.org](mailto:info@ailf.org)

website: [www.ailf.org](http://www.ailf.org)