

## **Text Set Title:** Asset-Based Perspectives on Modern Day Immigrants and Refugees

**Creators:** Sache Crouch and Sabrina Nargiz

**Overview of Text:** This text-set aims to provide resources that showcase the diversity of modern day immigrants in the US through a focus on immigrants and refugees throughout the US and particularly communities in Memphis, TN. The text-set challenges preconceptions and stereotypes of immigrants from East Africa, Central America, and the Middle East to not only deepen understanding of the immigrant populations and the refugee experience, but also to help create more inclusive classrooms for these modern day populations to be viewed by teachers and students alike beyond their stereotypes.

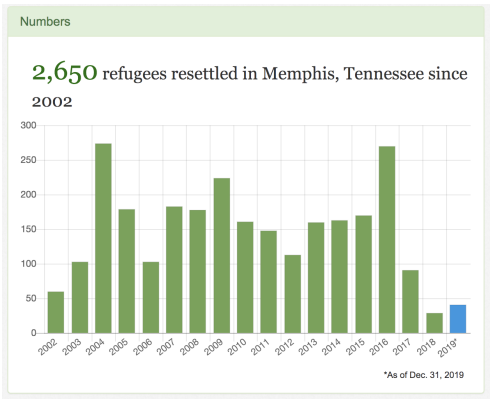
**Note on Terminology:** According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.” In this text-set we refer to people matching this definition, regardless of their country of origin, as refugees.

**Essential Question:** How do the representations of immigrants and refugees in this text-set counteract common stereotypes perpetuated by the United States’ educational and political systems?

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. **The American Dream:** How do immigrants and refugees (from past periods in history to modern day) view the American Dream narrative and is it aligned with their goals and motivations for immigrating to the USA? Is it attainable?
2. **Language/Culture as a Monolith:** What different languages, religions, and cultures do you see represented in this text-set? How do these representations complicate preconceptions of one type of immigrant representing many diverse cultures?
3. **Criminalization/Implied Danger:** How do people’s motivations for migration to the USA depicted in this text-set counteract narratives of them being uneducated, dangerous, and bringing crime?
4. **Disenfranchisement of Women:** How do portrayals of women having agency and independence in this text-set exist in conjunction/alongside devotion to culture, religion, gender norms, and motherhood?
5. **Resource Intensive/Drains:** How do immigrants and refugees contribute to American society? In what ways do they strengthen our communities and develop relationships among each other and their neighbors?

# Memphis and Tennessee



## Refugees Among Us: Memphis, Tennessee

By Commercial Appeal  
Interactive Map and Timeline (all grades)

Filter the map and timeline by year or country of origin to uncover the waves of refugee resettlement in Memphis, TN between 2002-2019.

<https://data.commercialappeal.com/refugee/tennessee-memphis/all/all/>



## Refugee Waves in Memphis, TN

By Sache Crouch and Sabrina Nargiz

This timeline spans 2002-2016 and highlights some of the largest refugee populations currently living in Memphis, TN. The timeline showcases massive waves of refugees from particular countries resettling in Memphis during select years and includes what was happening in the country of origin at the time of the wave.

<https://my.visme.co/view/q6xpgv7e-refugee-waves-in-memphis-tn>

## Tennessee's largest county to keep welcoming refugees

ADRIAN SAINZ January 3, 2020

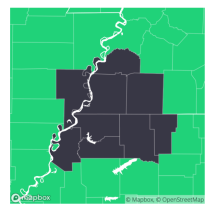


## Tennessee's largest county to keep welcoming refugees (2020)

By Adrian Sainz  
News Article (grades 6-up)

Read and learn about how Memphis, TN responded in 2020 when President Trump lowered the national refugee cap.

<https://apnews.com/article/9b5f32638c656eacafcabb7b96a10a8b>



## Immigrants and the economy in: Memphis Metro Area

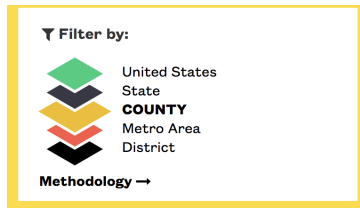
Immigrant Residents	Immigrant Share of Population	Immigrant Taxes Paid
<b>69,729</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>\$682.5M</b>
Immigrant Spending Power	Immigrant Entrepreneurs	Data Year
<b>\$1.9B</b>	<b>9,900</b>	<b>2019</b>

## Immigrants and the economy in: Memphis Metro Area (2019)

By New American Economy  
Data and Research (grades 8 - up)

**Statistics Breakdown**- Learn how immigrants contribute to the economy in Memphis, TN by looking at the numbers!

<https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/memphis/>



**Interactive Map** - Use this map to filter by state, city, county and more, and make comparisons between the demographics and economic contributions of immigrants in different places.

<https://data.newamericaneconomy.org/map-the-impact/>



### Biggest sources of immigrants to Memphis (2021)

By Nicole Caldwell

Article/List/Statistics (all grades)

Scroll through the pictures and statistics to discover the top 50 largest immigrant populations in Memphis, TN as of 2021.

<https://stacker.com/stories/6416/biggest-sources-immigrants-memphis>



### Life Across Borders: A World Relief Mini-Series Rebuilding Welcome in Memphis

Podcast (grades 8 - up)

This podcast highlights World Relief Memphis, which is in charge of refugee resettlement in Memphis, TN. It highlights refugee resettlement specialists, one of whom is a refugee himself from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The podcast also discusses the religious aspect of organizations who aid refugees in Memphis.

<https://life-across-borders-a-world-relief-mini-series.cantos.com/podcasts/24989/episodes/rebuilding-welcome-in-memphis>



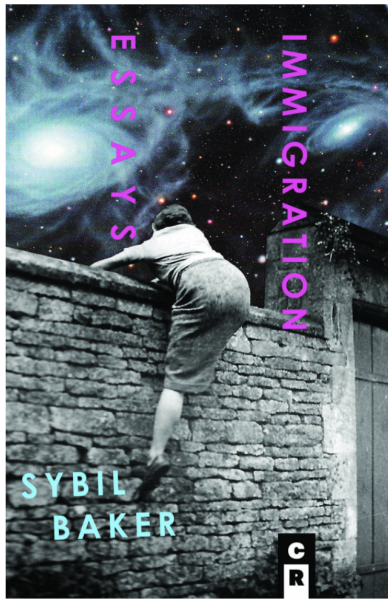
### 'Refugees Are People': Six Stories of Refugees in Nashville (2017)

By Jennifer Justus

Article (grades 9 - up)

Memphis, TN isn't the only place in TN with a large concentration of refugees. Nashville, TN also resettles many refugees from the same countries. Read this article to learn more about the process of becoming a refugee from the perspective of six different individuals resettled in Nashville.

[https://www.nashvillescene.com/news/coverstory/refugees-are-people-six-stories-of-refugees-in-nashville/article\\_05872ad3-d6a3-5811-bcb7-f6b1263aac6e.html](https://www.nashvillescene.com/news/coverstory/refugees-are-people-six-stories-of-refugees-in-nashville/article_05872ad3-d6a3-5811-bcb7-f6b1263aac6e.html)



## **Chattanooga Refugee Stories & A Reverse Migration in 'Immigration Essays' (2017)**

By Micheal Edward Miller

Podcast (grades 9 - up)

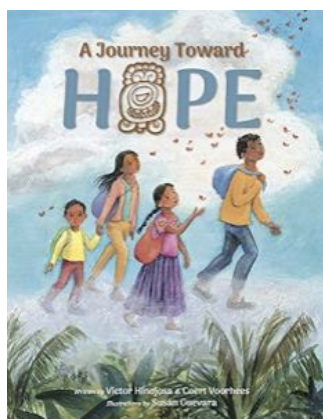
In this podcast, the author of a book about refugees in Chattanooga, TN offers information about the refugee resettlement process and how gentrification affects how refugees begin their lives in TN. The author also speaks more generally about refugees in Chattanooga, as well as about her own experiences with migration.

<https://www.wutc.org/post/chattanooga-refugee-stories-reverse-migration-immigration-essays#stream/0>

## Central America



### Map of Central America



### A Journey Toward Hope(2020)

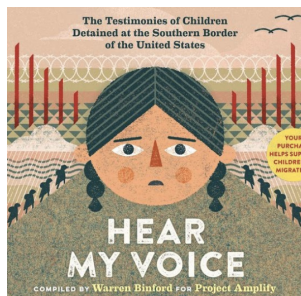
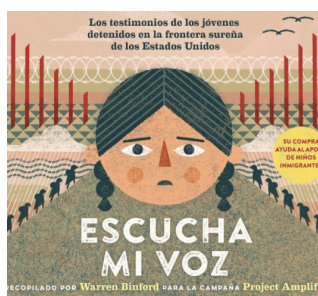
By Victor Hinojosa

Illustrated by Susan Guevara

Picture Book (grades 1-3)

Focus Countries: Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador

Four unaccompanied children from Central America come together as they travel north through Mexico toward the U.S., each with their own reasons for their perilous journeys.



### Eschucha mi voz: Los testimonios de los jóvenes detenidos en la frontera sureña de los Estados Unidos / Hear My Voice: The Testimonies of Children Detained at the Mexican-American Border in Their Own Words

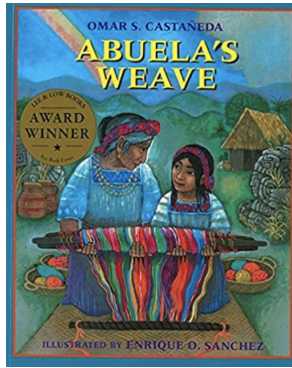
Compiled by: Warren Binford for Project Amplify

Picture Book (grades 3-7)

Focus Region: Mexico & Central American countries

First-person accounts from 61 migrant children, ages 5-17, based on interviews with children in detention centers on the border between the U.S. and Mexico.

<https://youtu.be/wS7fsjNxPfQ>

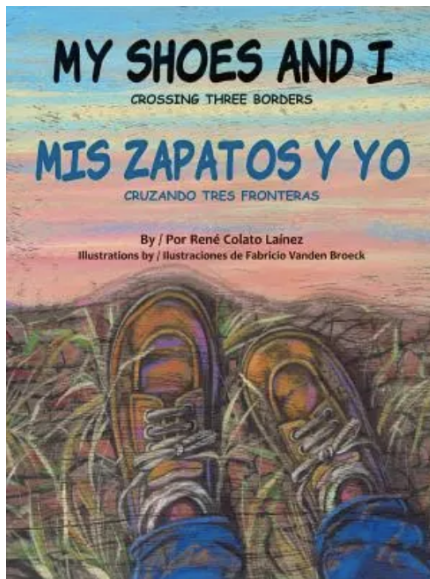


### **Abuela's Weave (1995)**

By Omar S. Castaneda  
Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez  
Picture Book (grades K-4)  
Focus Country: Guatemala

This story is about the importance of family pride and personal endurance. It introduces children to the culture of Guatemala through the eyes of little Esperanza, who works with her abuela on weavings to sell at the public market.

<https://youtu.be/vYRtaaLxFPO>



### **My Shoes and I:**

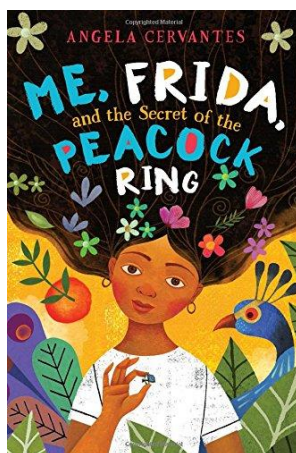
#### **Crossing Three Borders**

#### **Mis Zapatos Y Yo: Cruzando Tres Fronteras**

By Rene Colato Lainez  
Illustrated by Fabricio Vanden Broeck  
Picture Book (grades K-5)  
Focus Country: EL Salvador

Mario is leaving his home in El Salvador. With his dad by his side, they both head north to reunite with their mother who is already living in the United States. She sent Mario a pair of new shoes which he will need to get there as they cross the borders of three countries. How far will his shoes take him? Will they be the key to reunite Mario and his family forever?

<https://youtu.be/xkSI dh867lw>



### **Me, Frida, and the Secret of the Peacock Ring (2018)**

By Angela Cervantes  
Novel (grades 3-7)  
Focus Country: Mexico

Paloma Marquez travels to México feeling confident that she will find Frida Kahlo's ring with the help of her new friends Gael and Lizzie. She is happy to be in México as she reminisces about where her family comes from and the beautiful culture that México holds. Will she be able to find Frida Kahlo's ring and what will Paloma learn about herself in this journey?



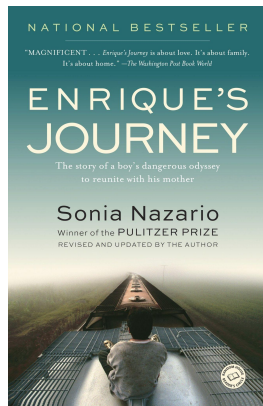
### **Land of the Cranes (2020)**

By Aida Salazar

Free-Verse Poetry/Illustrated Novel (grades 3-7)

Focus Country: Mexico

Betita's beloved father is arrested by Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) and deported to Mexico. Betita and her pregnant mother are left behind on their own, but soon they too are detained and must learn to survive in a family detention camp outside of Los Angeles. Even in cruel and inhumane conditions, Betita finds heart in her own poetry and in the community she and her mother find in the camp. The voices of her fellow asylum seekers fly above the hatred keeping them caged, but each day threatens to tear them down lower than they ever thought they could be.



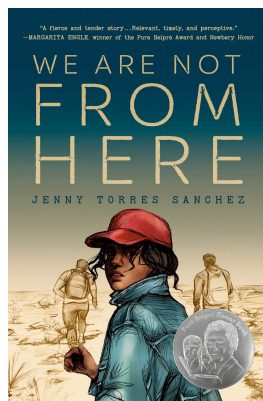
### **Enrique's Journey (2007)**

By Sonia Nazario

Novel (grades 6-up)

Focus Country: Honduras

A teen's dangerous journey from Honduras through Mexico to the U.S. in search of his mother.



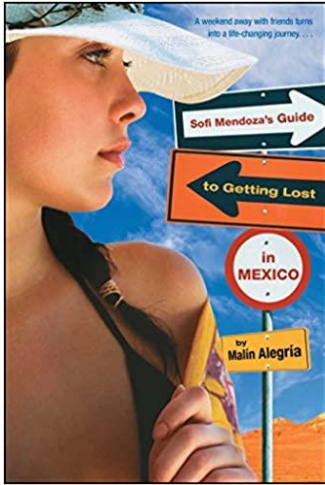
### **We Are Not From Here (2020)**

By Jenny Torres Sanchez

Novel (grades 7-9)

Focus Country: Guatemala

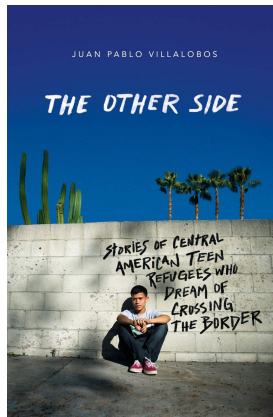
Three Guatemalan teens run from violence in a desperate journey through Mexico to reach the U.S. border.



### **Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico (2007)**

By: Malin Alegria  
Novel (grades 7-12)  
Focus Country: Mexico

Sofi was born in México but has been living in California all her life. She takes a trip to Tijuana, but wanting to reenter the United States she is denied entry due to her citizenship status. Waiting at her relatives' home, she learns more about her native land and its people. Will Sofi learn to live and stay in Tijuana or will she be able to return to a home she's known most of her life in California?



### **The Other Side: Stories of Central American Teen Refugees Who Dream of Crossing the Border (2019)**

By Juan Pablo Villalobos  
Nonfiction (grades 7-up)  
Focus Region: Central America

Collection of first hand narratives stories from teens forced to flee from Central America to the U.S.



### **Modern Immigrant: Walking to the USA from Honduras with Luis Rosales (2021)**

Podcast (grades 9-12)  
Focus Country: Honduras

Luis shares his story of coming to the USA as an undocumented migrant from Honduras. He discusses his experiences in the LA school system, his sexuality, mental health, and his life as an entrepreneur with four businesses and a nonprofit foundation.

<https://modernimmigrant.buzzsprout.com/706212/8568191-walking-to-the-usa-from-honduras-with-luis-rosales>



I Learn America - Personal Narratives from High School Students

### **Joni Lopez - Mi historia, mi creacion (2019)** (Bilingual) Narrative (grades 6-12)

Focus Country: Mexico  
<https://ilearnamerica.com/mi-historia-mi-creacion/>





**Leslie Roman - What's Your Story? (2020)**

Narrative (grades 6-12)

Focus Country: El Salvador

<https://ilearnamerica.com/whats-your-story/>

**We're Contreras! From: Guatemala/Honduras/El Salvador (2019)**

(Bilingual) Spoken Poetry (grades 3-12)

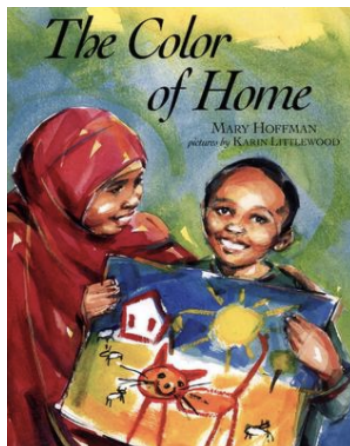
Focus Countries: Guatemala/Honduras/El Salvador

<https://ilearnamerica.com/were-contreras/>

## East Africa



### Map of Africa



### **The Color of Home (1992)**

By Mary Hoffman

Illustrated by Karen Littlewood

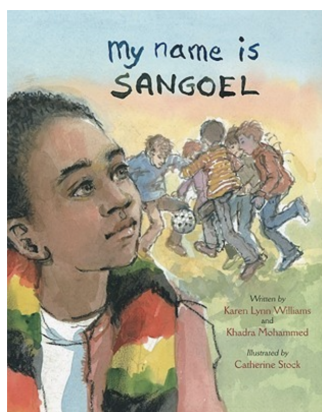
Picture Book

(grades K-2)

Focus Country: Somalia

A struggling refugee boy shares his story through drawing a picture of his old home in Somalia.

<https://youtu.be/m5DmJ6sA0nc>



### **My Name is Sangoel (2009)**

By Karen Lynn Williams & Khadra Mohammed,

Illustrated by Catherine Stock

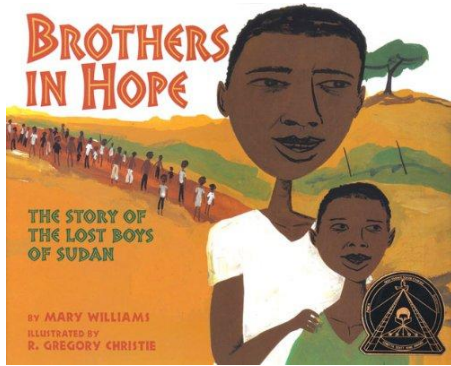
Picture Book

(grade level 1-3)

Focus Country: Sudan

Sangoel is proud of his Sudanese name, but no one in his school in the U.S. can correctly pronounce it.

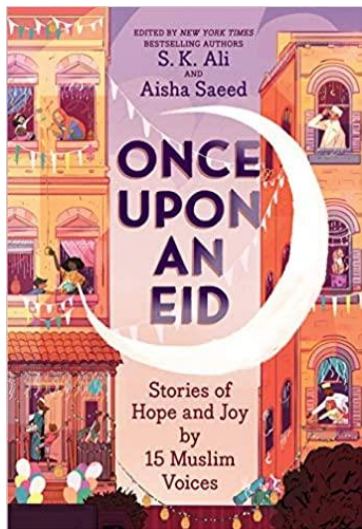
<https://youtu.be/vnbkBkA7cDg>



**Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan (2005)**

By Mary Williams  
Picture Book (grades 2-4)  
Focus Country: Sudan

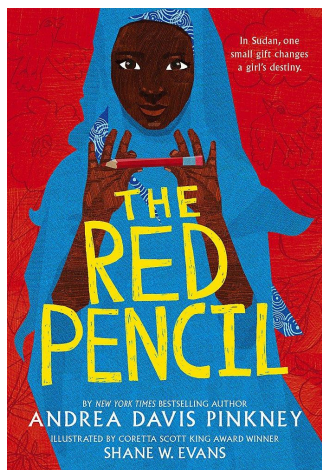
Orphaned by the Sudanese civil war, a boy leads other “lost” boys on a long walk to Ethiopia and Kenya.



**Once Upon an Eid: Stories of Hope and Joy by 15 Muslim Voices (2021)**

By S K Ali, Aisha Saeed  
Short Stories (grades 3-7)  
Focus: African Culture/Religion

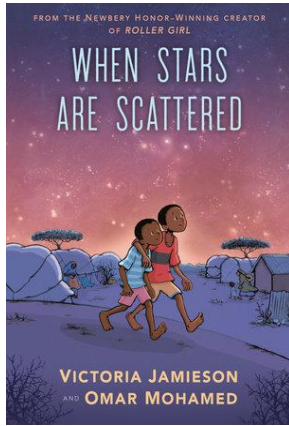
Eid! The short, single syllable word conjures up a variety of feelings and memories for Muslims. Maybe it’s waking up to the sound of frying samosas or the comfort of bean pie, maybe it’s the pleasure of putting on a new outfit for Eid prayers, or maybe it’s the gift giving and the holiday parties, or carnival rides to come that day. Whatever it may be, for those who cherish this day of celebration, the emotional responses may be summed up in another short and sweet word: joy.



**The Red Pencil (2014)**

By Andrea Davis Pinkney  
Novel (grades 4-Up)  
Focus Country: Sudan

Amira’s Sudanese village is attacked, and she flees to a refugee camp, expressing her dreams in drawings.



### **When Stars are Scattered (2020)**

By Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed  
Graphic Novel (grades: 4-8)  
Focus Country: Somalia

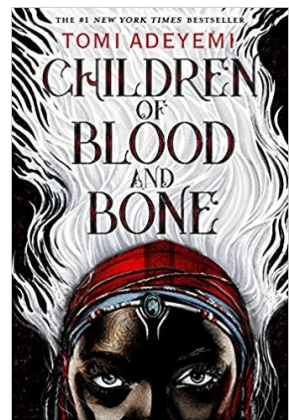
Somali refugee, who has spent most of his life in a refugee camp in Kenya, gets an opportunity for an education, but that would mean a separation from his nonverbal brother.



### **Cold White Sun (2019)**

By Sue Farrell Holler  
Novel (grades 9-12)  
Focus Country: Ethiopia

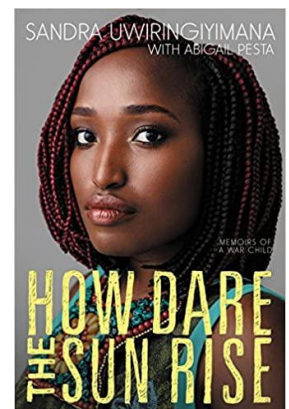
A teen is forced to flee to Canada and survive by himself when his father is arrested in Ethiopia.



### **Children of Blood and Bone (2018)**

By Tomi Adeyemi  
Fantasy (grades 9-12)  
Focus Region: Africa

Zélie embarks on an adventure of danger, magic, spirits, resistance, revenge and self-control in fictional Africa with the help of a rogue princess.



### **How Dare the Sun Rise (2017)**

By Sandra Uwiringiyimana  
Memoir (grades 8-12)  
Focus Country: Democratic Republic of the Congo

A memoir of a Congolese teen who survived a massacre to come to the U.S. as an activist and artist.

By: Mohamed Abamoor | From: Somalia | School: Horace Mann School for the Deaf



*the Boston Police Department handled the aftermath of the Marathon bombing.*

## Mohamed Abamoor, What I've Seen Lead Me to Where I Want To Be (2021)

Oral History from I Learn America (grades 9-12)

Focus Country: Somalia

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ush8yaiu84&ab\\_channel=ILEARNAMERICA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ush8yaiu84&ab_channel=ILEARNAMERICA)

## Middle East



### Map of Middle East

### حصى الطرقات STEPPING STONES A Refugee Family's Journey



### Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey (2016)

By Margriet Ruurs

Illustrated by Nizar Ali Badr

Picture Book (grades K-2)

Focus Country: Syria

A young girl and her family flee from the civil war in Syria toward Europe.

<https://youtu.be/UmoPKZHdVV0>



### Nasreen's Secret School (2009)

By Jeanette Winter

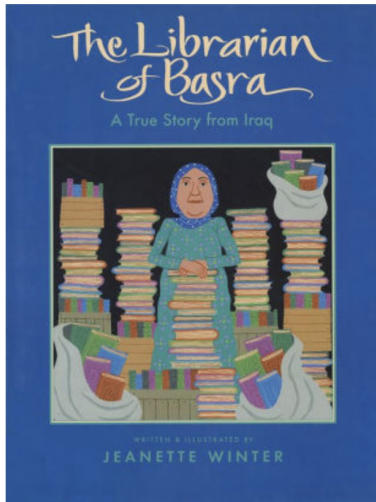
Picture Book (grades 1-4)

Focus Country: Afghanistan

Young Nasreen has not spoken a word to anyone since her parents disappeared. In despair, her grandmother risks everything to enroll Nasreen in a secret school for girls. Will a devoted teacher, a new friend, and the worlds she discovers in books be enough to draw Nasreen out of her shell of sadness?

Based on a true story from Afghanistan.

<https://youtu.be/ynqQTxx0VXk>



### **The Librarian of Basra (2019)**

By Jeanette Winter  
Picture Book (grades K-3)  
Focus Country: Iraq

When war comes to Iraq, librarian Alia Muhammad Baker takes matters into her own hands to protect the books from being destroyed. Every day she packs her car with books and takes them home, thus saving 70% of the 30,000 books in her library. The Librarian of Basra is a true story about an inspiring woman's love of literature and respect for knowledge.

<https://youtu.be/c8OHjvuaw5M>



**Malala: Activist for Girls' Education**

### **Malala: Activist for Girls' Education - video**

(grades 4-7)  
Focus Country: Pakistan

Despite an attempt on her life by the Taliban, Malala Yousafzai has continued to fight for the rights of children to become educated.

[https://www.getepic.com/video/78361054/malala-activist-for-girls-education?utm\\_source=t2t&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_campaign=content&share=6618679179](https://www.getepic.com/video/78361054/malala-activist-for-girls-education?utm_source=t2t&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=content&share=6618679179)



Syrian refugee children: A story in 23 ph...  
If you could see through eyes of a Syrian...  
world vision

### **Syrian Refugee Children**

A photo essay. A story of Syrian refugee children in 23 photos.

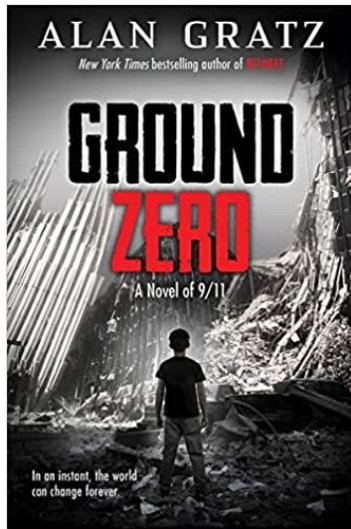
<https://www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/photos-syrian-refugee-children>



### **Boy, Everywhere (2021)**

By A. M. Dassu  
Novel (grades 3-7)  
Focus Country: Syria

Sami loves his life in Damascus, Syria. He hangs out with his best friend playing video games; he's trying out for the football team; he adores his family and gets annoyed by them in equal measure. But his comfortable life gets sidetracked abruptly after a bombing in a nearby shopping mall. Knowing that the violence will only get worse, Sami's parents decide they must flee their home for the safety of the UK.



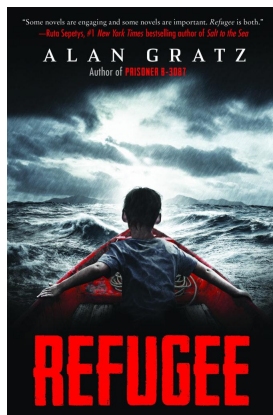
### **Ground Zero (2021)**

By Alan Gratz

Historical Fiction (grades 4-8)

Focus Country: Afghanistan

Brandon is in New York City on September 11, 2001 visiting his dad in the World Trade Center; Reshmina is in Afghanistan on September 11, 2019 and encounters a wounded American soldier.



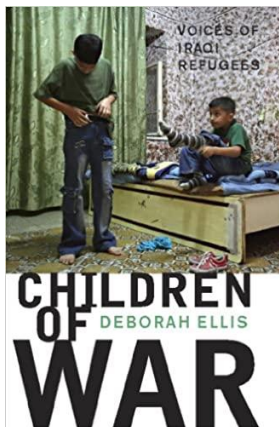
### **Refugee (2018)**

By Alan Gratz

Historical Fiction (grades 4-8)

Focus County: Syria

Three refugee stories connect across time and place in harrowing journeys occurring in 1930s Germany, 1994 Cuba, and 2015 Syria.



### **Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees (2009)**

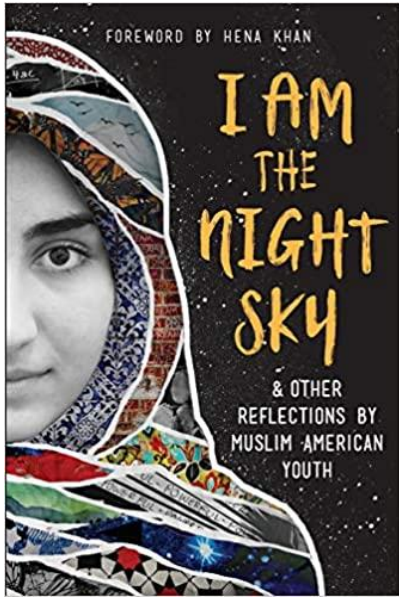
By Deborah Ellis

Nonfiction (grades 6-9)

Focus Country: Iraq

Interviews with 20 Iraqi refugee children about how the U.S. War on Terror affected their lives.





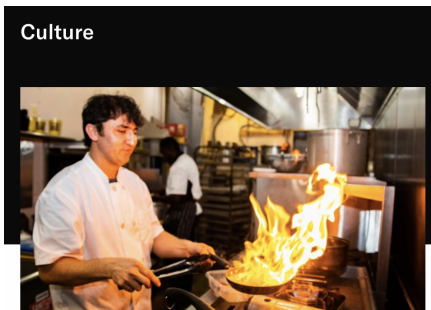
**I Am the Night Sky: ...& Other Reflections (2019)**

By Muslim American Youth

Non-Fiction (grades 7-12)

Focus: Middle Eastern Culture/Religion

During an era characterized by both hijabi fashion models and enduring post-9/11 stereotypes, ten Muslim American teenagers came together to explore what it means to be young and Muslim in America today. These teens represent the tremendous diversity within the American Muslim community, and their book, like them, contains multitudes. Bilal writes about being a Muslim musician. Imaan imagines a dystopian Underground. Samaa creates her own cartoon Kabob Squad. Ayah responds to online hate. Through poems, essays, artwork, and stories, these young people aim to show their true selves, to build connection, and to create more inclusive and welcoming communities for all.



Culture

How do you preserve your culture when integration is a primary focus of resettlement?

**Resettled: Culture (2020)**

By Angela Massino

Podcast (grades 6-12)

Focus County: Afghanistan

Chef Hamidullah Noor finds ways to connect with his Afghan culture after being resettled in the USA through food and poetry.

<https://vpm.org/articles/6334/culture>

**RESPECT OTHER RELIGIONS**

By Noor Alothman | From: Upper Marlboro, MD | School: International High School at Largo

My name is Noor Alothman, and I am from Syria.



**Noor Alothman, Respect Other Religions (2020)**

Focus Country: Syria

Personal Narrative from I Learn America (grades 9-12)

<https://ilearnamerica.com/respect-other-religions/>

## More Resources!



### Their Great Gift

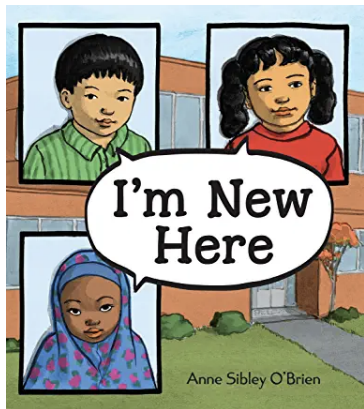


### **Their Greatest Gift: Courage, Sacrifice, and Hope in a New Land (2016)**

By John Coy  
Picture Book (K-3)

Photos explore the experiences of immigrants, celebrating the diversity and hope they bring to the U.S.

[https://www.getepic.com/book/40320414/their-great-gift-courage-sacrifice-and-hope-in-a-new-land?utm\\_source=t2t&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_campaign=content&share=6618679179](https://www.getepic.com/book/40320414/their-great-gift-courage-sacrifice-and-hope-in-a-new-land?utm_source=t2t&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=content&share=6618679179)

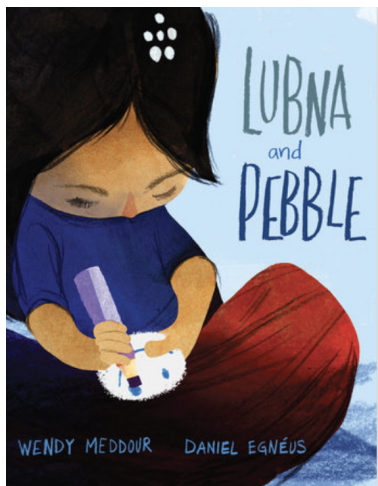


### **I'm New Here (2015)**

By Ellen Levin  
Illustrated by Steven Bjorkman  
Picture Book (K-2)

Three children from Somalia, Guatemala and Korea struggle to adjust to their new home and school.

[https://www.getepic.com/book/66035620/im-new-here?utm\\_source=t2t&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_campaign=content&share=6618679179](https://www.getepic.com/book/66035620/im-new-here?utm_source=t2t&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=content&share=6618679179)

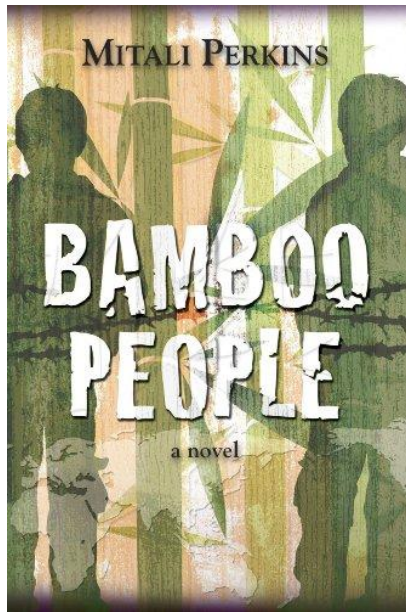


### **Lubna and Pebble (2019)**

By Wendy Meddour  
Illustrated by Daniel Egneus  
Picture Book (grades K-3)

Lubna's best friend in a refugee camp is a pebble who brings her comfort, but someone else needs it.

<https://youtu.be/EYlaGQxHKgY>



## **Bamboo People (2012)**

By Mitali Perkins

Novel (grades 7-9)

Focus Country: Myanmar

Two Myanmar boys on opposite sides of a conflict, one a Karenni refugee and the other the son of a doctor, meet in the jungle and must learn to trust each other to survive.

## **I Learn America a documentary film**

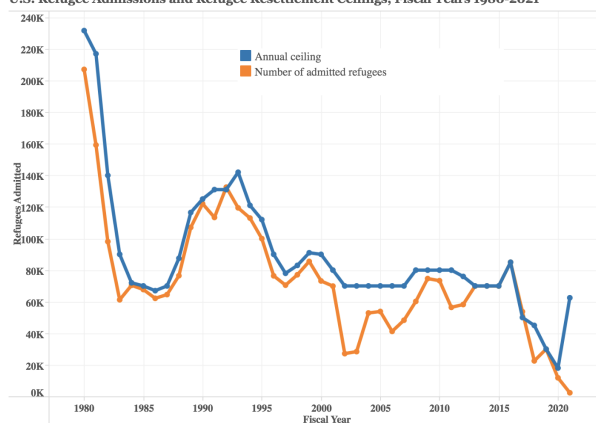
By Jean-Michel Dissard & Gitte Peng

Documentary - Suggested Grades 6-12

At the International High School at Lafayette, a Brooklyn public school dedicated to newly arrived immigrants from all over the world, five teenagers strive to master English, adapt to families they haven't seen in years, and create a future of their own while coming of age in a new land. Through these five vibrant young people, their stories and struggles, and their willingness to open their lives and share them with us, we "learn America."

Link: <https://ilearnamerica.com/watch/>

U.S. Refugee Admissions and Refugee Resettlement Ceilings, Fiscal Years 1980-2021\*



## **U.S. Annual Refugee Resettlement Ceilings and Number of Refugees Admitted, 1980-Present by Migration Policy Institute**

Interactive Chart/Timeline!

Link:

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-annual-refugee-resettlement-ceilings-and-number-refugees-admitted-united>