

Text Set: Young Refugees and Finding Acceptance in the United States

Summary:

This text set examines why young people have to leave their home countries and migrate to the United States. But it focuses on the acceptance or the lack thereof that those refugees may find once they arrive in the United States. For example, queer migrations with a focus on identity. Additionally, how being identified as an “other” can lead to further ostracization for people migrating to the United States. Also looking at the push/pull factors of why people may have or want to leave their home countries. And does coming to the United States actually improve anything?

Guiding Questions:

-What are the consequences of identifying people as “others” and how does this affect self-identification?

-Do individuals that identify as LGBTQ+ find more or less acceptance in the United States when they migrate here after facing persecution for their lifestyle in their home countries?

-Do individuals that are considered refugees find acceptance once they come to the United States, or are they disappointed once they arrive here and don't find the freedoms and acceptance into society that they expected?

Novels:

1) *Hurricane Child* by Kacen Callender

- Caroline Murphy, a girl that lives on an island near Saint Thomas, believes herself to be cursed. She was born during a hurricane, a sign of bad luck, and is haunted by the spirit of an unknown woman. Murphy goes to a Catholic school, where she is bullied by students and faculty alike, due to the color of her skin. Her mother also abandoned the family without apparent reason and disappeared. A new girl named Kalinda comes to her school, and Caroline slowly realizes she has a crush on Kalinda.

2) *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang

- Mia Tang's parents told her that America would be this great place where they could live in a house with a dog, do whatever they want, and eat

hamburgers all the time. She is finding it difficult to adjust however and fit in. Additionally, she faces scrutiny from her own parents about the expectations of an Asian living in the United States.

3) *Efrén Divided* by Ernesto Cisneros

- Efrén Nava's Amá is his Superwoman—or Soperwoman, named after the delicious Mexican sopes his mother often prepares. But Efrén worries about his parents; although he's American-born, his parents are undocumented. His worst nightmare comes true one day when Amá doesn't return from work and is deported across the border to Tijuana, México. Now more than ever, Efrén must channel his inner Soperboy to help take care of and try to reunite his family.

4) *Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga

- *Other Words From Home* follows the story of Jude, a little girl from Syria who moves away from Home with her pregnant mother, leaving her father and revolutionary older brother behind. It follows Jude as she tries to keep her Muslim values under the racist pressure of an America post-terrorism.

5) *Invisible: A Graphic Novel* by Christina Diaz Gonzalez

- Can five overlooked kids ever be seen for who they really are? There's George, the brain; Sara, the loner; Dayara, the tough kid; Nico, the rich kid; and Miguel, the athlete. Their paths cross when they're forced to complete community service hours at school. These teens are sure they have *nothing* in common—even though most people see them as exactly the same: just five Spanish-speaking kids. But when they meet someone who truly needs their help, they must decide: Are they brave enough to expose their individual secrets? Or will they remain invisible to survive middle school?

6) *In Limbo* by Deb JJ Lee

- Ever since Deborah (Jung-Jin) Lee emigrated from South Korea to the United States, she's felt her otherness. For a while, her English wasn't perfect. Her teachers can't pronounce her Korean name. Her face and her eyes—especially her eyes—feel wrong. In high school, everything gets harder. Friendships change and end, she falls behind in classes and fights with her mom escalate. Caught in limbo, with nowhere safe to go, Deb finds her mental health plummeting, resulting in a suicide attempt. But Deb is resilient and slowly heals with the help of art and self-care, guiding her to a deeper understanding of her heritage and herself.

Short “Children’s” Picture Book:

7) *Room on Our Rock* by Kate and Jol Temple. Illustrated by Terri Rose Baynton

- *Room on Our Rock* celebrates the truth that there are two sides to every story. This clever picture book has one story that can be read two different ways. When read from left to right, the seals believe there is definitely no room on their rock for others. But when the book is turned around and read from right to left, the seals welcome others to shelter on their rock.

Non-Fiction:

8) *We Are Here To Stay* by Susan Kuklin

- A conversation with nine courageous young adults who speak about being undocumented, seeking education, fleeing violence, and escaping poverty. Additionally, these individuals are uncertain about the acceptance, opportunities, and self-identification that they adhere to once they arrive in the United States.

9) *Who Are Refugees and Migrants? What Makes People Leave Their Homes? And Other Big Questions.* by Michael Rosen & Annemarie Young

- What does it mean for people to have to leave their homes, and what happens when they seek entry to another country? This book explores the history of refugees and migration around the world and the effects on people of never-ending war and conflict. It compares the effects on society of diversity and interculturalism with historical attempts to create a racially 'pure' culture. It takes an international perspective and offers a range of views from people with personal migration experience. There is also a role-play activity asking readers to imagine themselves in

the situation of having to decide whether to leave their homes and seek refuge in a new country.

Articles:

10) *Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ Identities: Today and Centuries Ago* by HRC Staff

11) *Queer Migrations: A Perspectives Quick Study* by Kritika Agarwal

12) *Do LGBTQ+ Asylum Seekers Have a Future in the United States?*

A. Link:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/13/do-lgbtq-asylum-seekers-have-future-united-states>

B. pic: link above

Art:

13) Link:

<https://bostonspiritmagazine.com/2018/05/north-shore-youth-center-exhibits-powerful-work-by-lgbt-refugee-artists/>



Archival Evidence:

14) Memo re: Halting the Immigration of Jewish People to the United States in 1940

A. Link:

<https://docsteach.org/documents/document/memo-temporary-halt-immigration/788095/1>

B. This activity introduces students to the dispute between U.S. Government agencies over rescuing Europe's Jews from extermination

during the Holocaust. Using memos from the State and Treasury Departments, as well as Presidential proclamations and Congressional legislation.

- 15) *Help Carry Their Burdens* by *The Catholic Times* 3/18/1955
Newspaper advertisement for giving aid to an emergency relief fund for Vietnamese refugees.

Oral Histories:

- 16) Oral History at Home: 5 Easy Steps
- A. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxrkkhLExxw>
 - B. Running Time = 2:15
 - C. An easy-to-watch video of how to conduct an oral history interview. Students will interview someone they know about their family migration or history of movement around the country. Create a skit or piece of art to present to the class.
- 17) Interview for Hayfaa Alruuayyih
- A. Link: <https://www.rfmi.princeton.edu/oral-archive/hayfaa-alruuayyih>
 - B. Running Time = 1:28:25
 - C. Hayfaa details her difficulty transitioning from being a lawyer in Iraq to working a blue-collar factory job in the United States due to her limited English. She resettled in America due to the stronger rule of law and safer lifestyle, and wishes Americans knew Islam to be a peaceful religion, and saw her wearing of hijab to be a personal choice instead of a sign of oppression.

Podcasts:

- 18) *J2U Interview with Huipok Blount*
- A. Link: <http://journey2unity.weebly.com/podcast-interviews.html>
 - B. Running Time = 10:23

- C. This interview is about the life of Huipok Blount, a Korean immigrant who came to America in the 1970s when she married her soon-to-be ex-husband. She talks about good memories like how she is happy to live in Denver because it is not too crowded, but also her worst memories in the United States, how life back home in Korea was, and also her thoughts on immigration happening in the United States.

Videos:

19) The Labels We Carry

- A. Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNS_D-pw8y4
B. Running Time = 2:30
C. Sometimes the negative labels we carry are put on us from things people have said, lies we've believed, or the way we feel about ourselves. However, the only label that we should be carrying is LOVED.

20) Tri-State Man Shares his Refugee Camp Experience

- A. Link: <https://www.fox19.com/video/2022/07/14/tri-state-man-shares-his-refugee-camp-experience/>
B. Running Time = 2:30
C. Enock Sadiki, a Senior at Aiken High School, reading a book to local students about his experience in his home country of Uganda.

Recipes:

21) Tastes from Home: Recipes from the Refugee Community

Link:

<https://www.unhcr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/UNHCR-Canada-Cookbook-TastesFromHome-English5.pdf>

Kinesthetic Activities:

22) Where in the Book are We?

- A. Link: <https://earth.google.com/web/@0,0,0a,22251752.77375655d,35y,oh,ot,or/data=OgMKATE?authuser=1>
B. This is an activity where students will locate the settings from their various books. They will start with the character's country of origin, and then map a layer to the setting of the story that occurs in the United

States. This will provide the students with a fun kinesthetic activity that they can do, while also giving them the visual and spatial knowledge base for the story that they are reading.

23) *Create a Timeline for the Main Events in Your Book*

A. Link: <https://padlet.com/>

B. Students can create padlets, after the instruction of how to create, for the main character in their books, and the timeline of that character's journey.