

Immigration is an incredibly important topic to study, perhaps right now more than ever. The titles included here can be used for learning about the modern immigrant experience in America, the reasons modern immigrants leave their homes, the ways in which we can empathize with modern immigrants, and even the ways in which the United States is responsible for the living conditions immigrants flee. Not meant to be exhaustive, this book list simply includes all of the relevant titles currently found within the Dirigo Learning library.

Key

Genre

F = Fiction

N = Nonfiction

Book Style

P = picture book

C = chapter book

Age Range

Y = young children, ages 0-5

C = children, ages 6-10

Tw = tweens, ages 11-13

T = teens, ages 14-18

A = adult, ages 19+

All books are marked with genre, book style, and age range within parenthesis.

IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA (Modern)

A Day's Work, Eve Bunting (F, P, Y + C)

A young boy helps his abuelo, a recent Mexican immigrant, find work in his new community despite language barriers.

A Handful of Stars, Cynthia Lord (F, C, C + Tw)

A small-town girl from Downeast Maine befriends a migrant worker's daughter, which leads to learning hard lessons about belonging.

Home of the Brave, Katherine Applegate (F, C, Tw + T)

Sudanese refugee Kek has witnessed his father and brother's murders and was separated from his mother in a refugee camp; now, he's resettling in Minnesota with distant family members.

Save Me A Seat, Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan (F, C, Tw + T)

Ravi's family has just moved to the United States from India, and he has much to learn about his new community, American culture, and himself.

Return to Sender, Julia Alvarez (F, C, Tw + T)

Tyler's family is forced to hire migrant labor to keep their Vermont dairy farm afloat, and Tyler grapples with ethical and moral dilemmas upon learning that the farm's workers are undocumented immigrants.

Among Schoolchildren, Tracy Kidder (N, C, T + A)

Written after the author spent nine months in a public school classroom in Holyoke, MA, this book sheds light on the shortcomings of the American public school system - especially where linguistic and cultural differences are present. Published in the 1980's, Holyoke's schools still struggle with the same challenges today. While most of the students are Puerto Rican and therefore not immigrants, it is easy to imagine how true immigrants might have similar experiences.

With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today, Daniel Rothenberg (N, C, T + A)

Filled with true stories about migrant workers on a variety of farms across the United States, this book sheds light on the conditions endured by modern migrant laborers.

IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA (Past)

Shy Mama's Halloween, Anne Broyles (F, P, Y + C)

A Russian family experiences their first Halloween together, learning not to be afraid to participate in the culture of their new home.

Elisabeth, Claire Nivola (F, P, C)

A Jewish mother tells her story of fleeing Nazi Germany for the United States - leaving behind her beloved doll.

Molly's Pilgrim, Barbara Cohen (F, P, C)

A Russian immigrant helps her classmates learn an alternate meaning to the word "pilgrim" during her first American Thanksgiving.

Hannah's Journal, Marissa Moss (F, P, C + Tw)

Hannah convinces her eastern European family to allow her to go to America with an aunt; will leaving her family behind be worth it?

Dash, Kirby Larson (F, C, C + Tw)

Mitsi and her Japanese immigrant parents are forced into an internment camp in the United States during World War II, despite being productive and responsible members of their community.

Tracks, Diane Lee Wilson (F, C, Tw + T)

Malachy, son of Irish immigrants, leaves New York for California, determined to work on the Transcontinental Railroad. Once there, Malachy sees the discrimination and violence that Chinese workers are subjected to while working for the railroad.

Letters from Rifka, Karen Hesse (F, C, Tw + T)

Russian Jew Rifka endures storms at sea, deadly typhus, humiliating examinations by American doctors, and detainment at Ellis Island - all to escape persecution (and worse) in her home country.

REASONS IMMIGRANTS LEAVE HOME (Modern)

What the Moon Saw, Laura Resau (F, C, Tw + T)

Clara has grown up in Connecticut, but her father is an undocumented Mexican immigrant. A summer trip to see her grandparents in Mexico helps her understand why her father left his home in the first place and allows her to connect with her Mexican heritage.

Shooting Kabul, NH Senzai (F, C, Tw + T)

Fadi's family flee Taliban-run Afghanistan in secret, but are forced to leave behind Fadi's youngest sibling, Mariam. Will they ever find Mariam, despite the violence in Afghanistan and being thousands of miles away?

The Red Pencil, Andrea Davis Pinkney (F, C, Tw + T)

Amira longs to leave her small village in Sudan and attend school in the city, but when the Janjaweed attack, she and her remaining family must flee to a refugee camp. With the help of a small red pencil and some aid workers, Amira begins to imagine her way to all that she ever wanted.

Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees, Mary Beth Leatherdale (N, P, Tw + T)

Filled with tales of boat refugees from around the world, this book highlights the conditions that cause refugees to flee and the treacherous journeys they're willing to make for the chance of survival.

Children Growing Up With War, Jenny Matthews (N, P, Tw + T)

Using images taken by a photojournalist working primarily in refugee camps, this text shares facts and data alongside anecdotal information to explain the impact that war has on its youngest victims - children.

EMPATHIZING WITH MODERN IMMIGRANTS

A Somali Alphabet, Nadifo Ayanle (N, P, all ages)

A traditional alphabet book, this text pairs Somali letters with Somali words representative of aspects of Somali culture in both English and Somali.

The Arrival, Shaun Tan (F, P, all ages)

This wordless book follows a man as he attempts to navigate an unfamiliar world filled with unfamiliar technology, language, and culture.

Children Just Like Me, Barnabas and Anabel Kindersley (N, P, Y + C)

Published in collaboration with UNICEF, this book for young readers spotlights the similarities found amongst children from all around the world.

Everybody Bakes Bread, Norah Dooley (F, P, Y + C)

Travel around a diverse neighborhood at dinner time to see what form bread takes in meals from a handful of cultures.

If the World Were a Village: A Book About the World's People, David J. Smith (N, P, C + Tw)

Imagine the world were just 100 people - what would they be like? This book breaks down the hypothetical group of 100 people by the languages they would speak, the places they would come from, and more.

US INVOLVEMENT IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES LEADING TO IMMIGRATION

A People's History of American Empire, Howard Zinn, graphic adaptation Mike Konopacki and Paul Buhle (N, P, T + A)

Sometimes viewed as an honest version of US history, Howard Zinn's work takes a bottom-up approach to telling history, avoiding the "great men in great places" lens that is generally used when teaching history.