

# THE POWER OF AUTHENTICITY:

## Selecting Authentic Representations of Immigration Stories from Children's Literature to Enrich Teaching, Learning, & Living

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# Overview of Our Time Together

## 1. Framing Our Talk on Immigration Stories

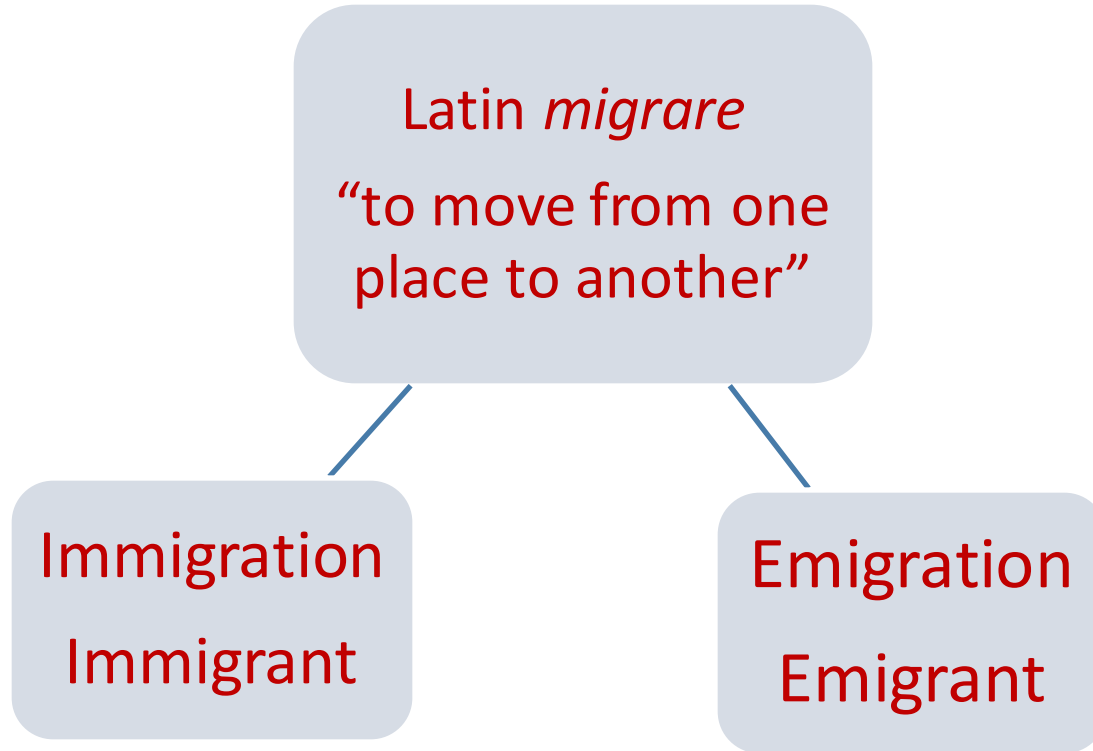
- Understanding the sociopolitical context that shapes our interpretations
- A false dichotomy that creates competing narratives—Good vs. Bad Immigrants
- What constitutes authentic storytelling & why does it matter?

## 2. Children's Literature Examples

- Books we love & why

## 3. Implications for Teaching, Learning, & Living

# Immigration & Emigration



# Refugee

- ref·u·gee | \ ,re-fyü-'jē , 're-fyü-,jē \

- **Definition of refugee**

: one that flees

AB

especially : a person who flees to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution

# Immigrants & Refugees

- Literal definitions matter less than socially constructed meaning.
  - Words are symbolic—Letters form words and words take on meaning when they are used in context.
  - The word “immigrant” holds different meanings for different users.
  - **The stories we share and the language we use to talk about the immigrant experience shapes meaning & interpretation.**
    - This is, in part, why AUTHENTICITY matters so much.
    - Who gets to shape the narrative?

# Two Competing Immigrant Stories

View image here: Italian family looking for lost baggage, Ellis Island  
<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-a95a-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Heroic Ellis Island arrival

View images from CBS  
**Border Patrol agents on horseback used "unnecessary" force against Haitian migrants last year, investigators find** <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/border-patrol-agents-on-horseback-used-unnecessary-force-against-haitian-migrants-last-year-investigators-find/>

Illegal invasion

## Why is This Important?

Because White supremacy shapes the experience of schooling in the United States & White supremacy privileges this immigrant narrative:



**The Ellis Island bootstrap narrative that frames America as the land of opportunity for [white] immigrants.**

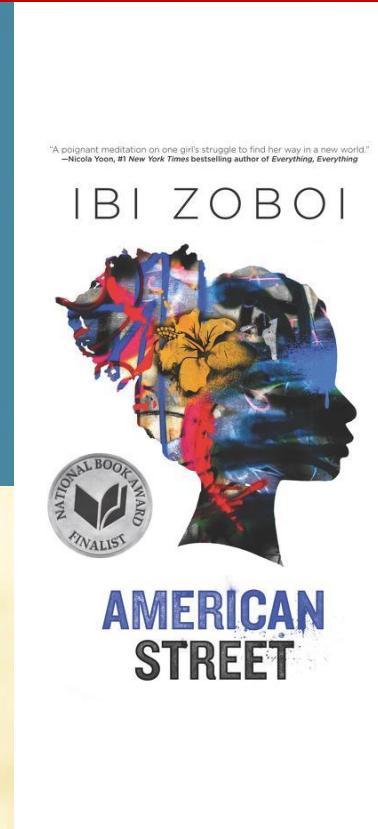
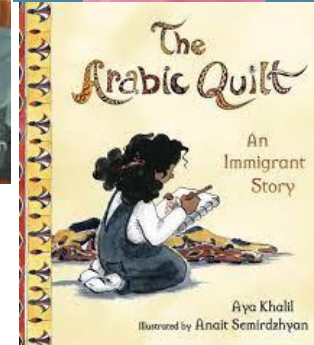
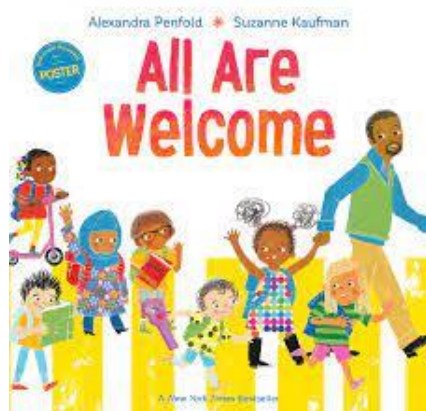
# What About Counternarratives?

PEN America categorized the types of stories — themes, characters, topics — that have been banned. Many of the categories overlap.

- Identities
  - Titles that deal explicitly with LGBTQ+ topics, or have LGBTQ+ protagonists or prominent secondary characters have been a major target in the current wave of book bans. This is reflected in the Index, with 379 such titles (33%), including a distinct subset of 84 titles that deal with transgender characters and topics (7%).
  - Fiction novels and non-fiction books with **protagonists of color** also made up a significant part of banned books in the Index, including 467 titles (41%).
  - Books dealing with **Jewish and Muslim characters** and religious/ethnic themes have also been targeted, with 18 titles listed in the Index.



# Books About Immigrants that Have Been Challenged or Banned



# Immigration as a Villain Story

# KIP! HURRAH!

## CHINESE EXCLUDED

Democratic Chinese Exclusion Bill

Has Been Signed by

### OUR DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT

Stop! Hurrah! The White Man is on Top. Let every DEMOCRAT and all other GOOD Citizens turn out and Ratify this

#### DEMOCRATIC MEASURE

At 8 o'clock

## HORTON HOUSE PLAZA

This Wednesday Evening at 8 O'clock.

# To-Night

Speeches will be made by Leading Democratic Orators.

### COME OUT AND RATIFY!

Come Everybody!

## NO MORE CHINESE!

By Order of  
Democratic County Central Committee

## NOTICE TO ALL JAPANESE PERSONS AND PERSONS OF JAPANESE RACIAL ORIGIN

TAKE NOTICE that under Orders Nos. 21, 22, 23 and 24 of the British Columbia Security Commission, the following areas were made prohibited areas to all persons of the Japanese race:—

LULU ISLAND (Including Steveston)	SAPPERTON
SEA ISLAND	BURQUITLAM
EBURNE	FORT MOODY
MARPOLE	IOCO
DISTRICT OF QUEENSBOROUGH	FORT COQUITLAM
CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER	MAILLARDVILLE
	FRASER MILLS

AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that any person of the Japanese race found within any of the said prohibited areas without a written permit from the British Columbia Security Commission or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police shall be liable to the penalties provided under Order in Council P.C. 1665.

AUSTIN C. TAYLOR,  
Chairman,  
British Columbia Security Commission

**THE Sun** 40  
SPECTRE  
Back to back  
Back to back  
Back to back

**Boatloads at Cyprus RAF base seek back door to UK**

**ILLEGALS HAVE LANDED**

Years for ID Learn over gig  
Watson sorry for pervs



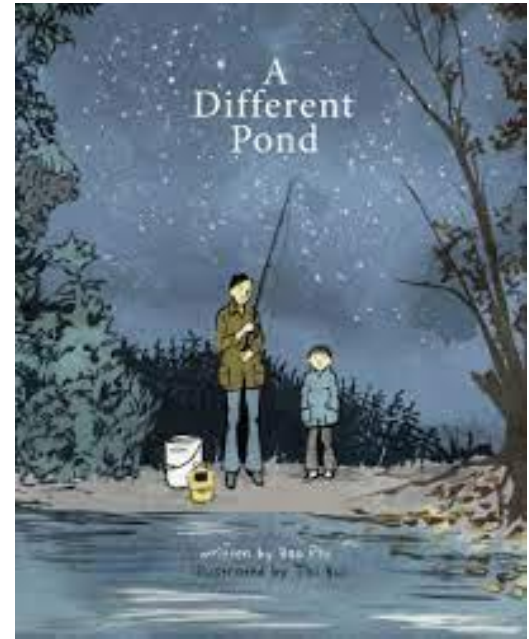
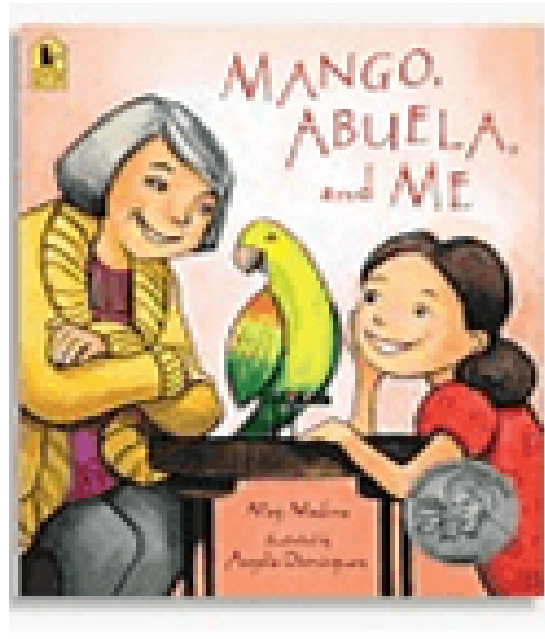
# Books Create Opportunities

# Where to Begin in Classrooms

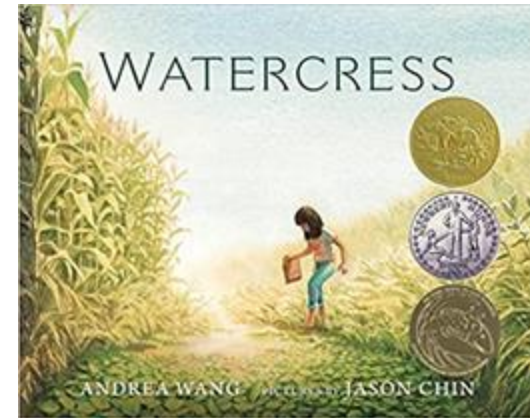
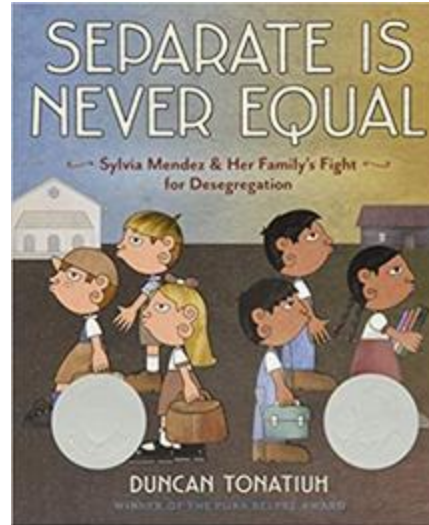




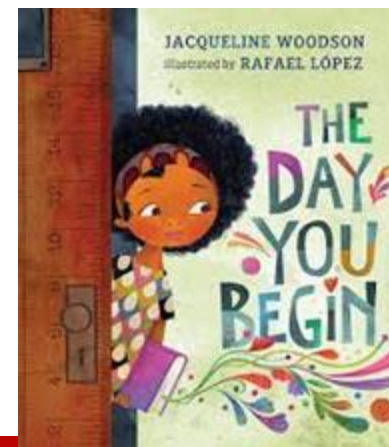
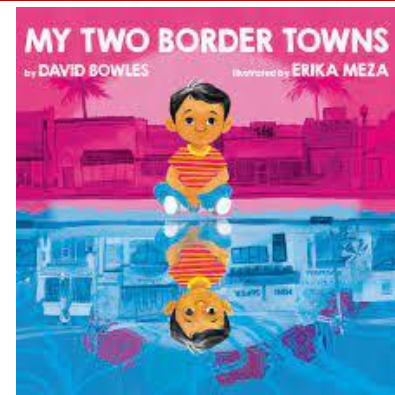
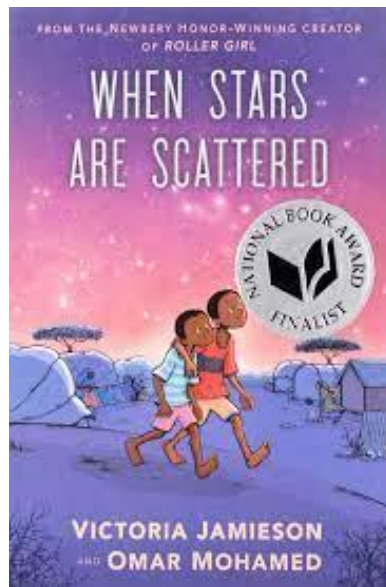
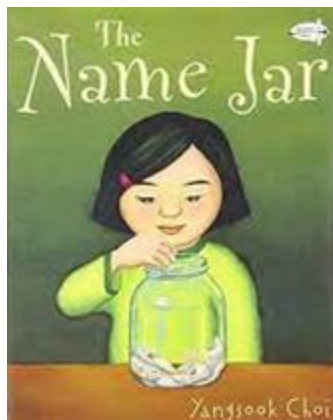
# Children's Literature that Enlightens & Expands



# (Lesser Known) Biographies

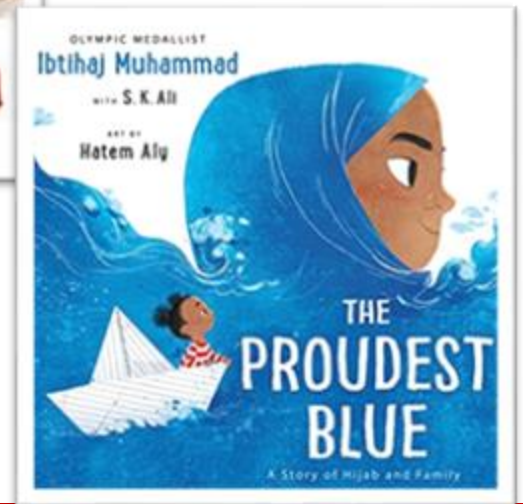
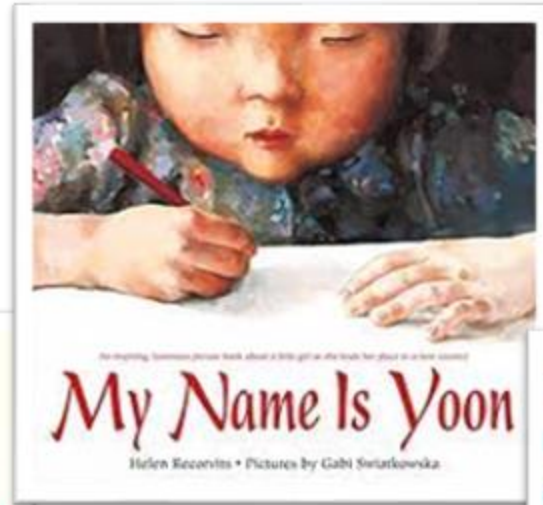
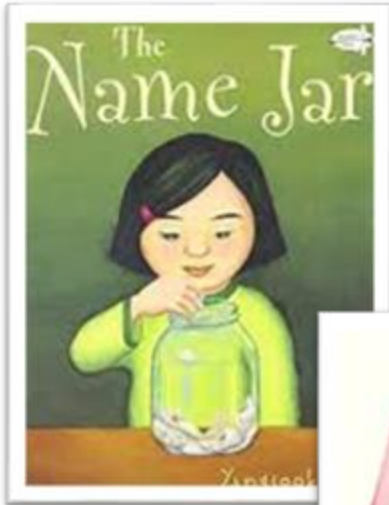


# Windows, Mirrors, & Sliding Doors





# Challenging Assimilationist Views



# Remember the Bootstraps?

We often see stories of assimilation celebrated in classrooms.

This is harmful to young people's identity.

The stories of immigration we share in our classrooms should be not defined by how well a person surrenders their cultural and linguistic practices in exchange for English and Whiteness.



# What Do We Do in the Classroom?

- Learn American History
- Choose books that are age-appropriate counter narratives
- Use those counter narratives to teach
  - skills and strategies
  - standards aligned curriculum
- Engage in the rich discussions that come out of these books
- Value oral stories as counter narratives
- Engage with and promote diverse linguistic and cultural practices

# Stay in Touch

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