

## Guide to:

# Gibberish

Written and illustrated by Young Vo

**Publisher:** Levine Querido

**Publication Date:** 2022

**Language:** English

**ISBN-10:** 1646141105

**ISBN-13:** 978-1646141104

**Genre:** Fiction

**Lexile:** AD480L

**Guided Reading Level:** G

**Grade Level:**

Preschool – Grade 3

**Featured Country of Origin:**

Vietnam

**Themes:** language learning, friendship, newcomer, school, feelings

### Publisher's Synopsis

It's Dat's first day of school in a new country! Dat and his Mah made a long journey to get here, and Dat doesn't know the language. To Dat, everything everybody says, from the school bus driver to his new classmates, sounds like gibberish. How is Dat going to make new friends if they can't understand each other? Luckily there's a friendly girl in Dat's class who knows that there are other ways to communicate, besides just talking. Could she help make sense of the gibberish?

### What we love

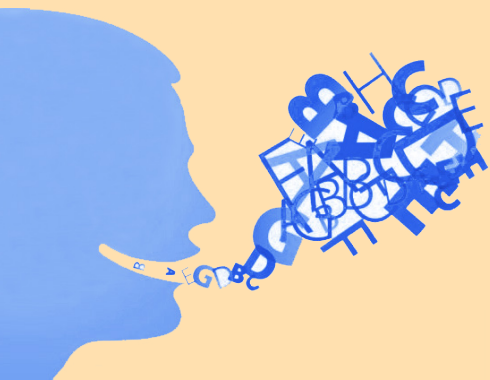
This charming story creatively conveys Dat's confusion and frustration from not understanding the language and the power of a friendly gesture. Even the illustrations go from black and white, outlandish characters to more realistic, color characters as Dat becomes more comfortable in his new home. The story mirrors the author's own experience coming to the United States as a refugee from Vietnam.

### Background

English learners (ELs) are a growing population in U.S. schools, and all students benefit from gaining insight into their experiences. In 2019, approximately 10 percent of public school students in the United States were identified as ELs, although this varied widely from state to state, with Texas having the highest percentage at 19.6 percent and West Virginia the lowest at 0.8 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

### Pronunciation and Vocabulary

- Young Vo: Pronounced "Voh"
- Dat: Pronunciation rhymes with "cat"
- Gibberish: Nonsense sounds or writing
- Nodded: When you nod you bend the head downward or forward (as in bowing or going to sleep) or bending up and down as a way of answering "yes"
- Unexpected: If something is unexpected, it surprises you because you did not think that it would happen



## Gibberish (continued)

### Pre-reading Focus Questions

- What does it mean to communicate?
- Think of a time when you had trouble communicating. How did you feel?
- What are some ways to communicate? (facial expressions, body posture, gestures/hand signals, intonation, pictures/drawings/sketches, labels)

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

- What did the author mean when he described Julie as “something **unexpected?**”
- Do you know of anyone in your classroom or school who might hear gibberish? How do you think they may feel?
- How do you think you or your school might help?
- Have you ever heard gibberish? How did you feel? What did others do to help? What did you do to help yourself?

### About the Book Author/Illustrator (by publisher)

Young Vo learned to draw before he could write. He drew a lot of characters then began to write stories for them. There were not many job choices that he could make, so he decided to be an animator, illustrator and author. Now he writes and draws his stories before the sun rises, then during the day, he animates. Follow him on Instagram @youngvoarte

### After-Reading Discussion Questions

- How did Dat feel at the beginning of the story? Why do you think he felt that way?
- How did he feel at the end of the story? Why did he feel that way?
- What were some ways Julie communicated with Dat?

### Interdisciplinary

This story can be connected to social studies units on community and immigration.

### Additional Resource



#### P&P Live! Young Vo GIBBERISH with Minh Lê:

Young Vo discusses his book with author Minh Lê and addresses the color scheme, use of symbols and inspiration.

### About the Consultant Carolyn McElligott

Carolyn McElligott co-authored and provided guidance for this guide. She is currently a K-5 EL teacher at Melrose Public Schools in Massachusetts. During her tenure in Melrose she has taught second grade, delivered instructional coaching to Pre-K – fifth grade educators and taught adult English learners.

#### About The Immigrant Learning Center

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States. The Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants.

## Guide to:

# Thank You, Omu!

Written and illustrated by Oge Mora

**Publisher:** Little, Brown and Company

**Publication Date:** 2018

**Language:** English

**ISBN-10:** 0316431249

**ISBN-13:** 978-0316431248

**Genre:** Fiction

**Lexile:** AD630L

**Guided Reading Level:** L

**Grade Level:**

Preschool – Grade 3

**Featured Country of Origin:**

Nigeria

**Themes:** food, friendship, gratitude, sharing



### Publisher's Synopsis

Everyone in the neighborhood dreams of a taste of Omu's delicious stew! One by one, they follow their noses toward the scrumptious scent. And one by one, Omu offers a portion of her meal. Soon the pot is empty. Has she been so generous that she has nothing left for herself?

### What we love

Oge Mora grew up in Ohio to Nigerian-born Igbo parents, and *Thank You, Omu!* subtly speaks to her identity as a second generation immigrant. As Mora explains about her book, "...it's not just an American story. And it's not just a Nigerian story. It's that in-between" (*Nigerian Parents*). The repetition in the text, use of expressive sounds ("Mmmm" and "Ahhh") and dialogue from a colorful cast of characters make it a superb read aloud. With eye-catching mixed media collages, a heartwarming message of community and sharing, and diverse characters, *Thank You, Omu!* is a wonderful addition to libraries, homes and classrooms.

### Background

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, and it also is very diverse culturally, ethnically and linguistically. There are 371 ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Yoruba, Hausa and the Igbo (EE-bo). While there are 500 distinct languages spoken in Nigeria, the official language is English. Nigerians are one of the most numerous African immigrant groups in the United States, in part due to their high rates of English language proficiency and their long history of immigration to the United States. In Nigeria and in many other African countries, sharing, and in particular sharing food with strangers, is an important cultural value. Additionally, names in Nigeria often have significant meanings.

### Pronunciation and Vocabulary

- Oge Mora: Pronounced "oh-GAY MOR-ah"
- Omu: Pronounced "AH-moo." It's the Igbo term for "queen." Growing up, Mora used it to mean "Grandma"
- Stew: A meal you make by cooking meat and/or vegetables in a liquid for hours
- Scent/smell: To breathe in through the nose. A scent is a specific smell that is usually pleasant
- Delicious: If something is delicious, it tastes very good and pleases you
- Wafted: To float or drift through the air
- Enough: When you have enough, you have as much as you need
- Share: To let someone else have or use something that belongs to you

## Thank You, Omu! (continued)

### Pre-reading Focus Questions

- What is a community? (A place where people live, work and play)
- Who are the people in a community?
- Think about a time someone shared with you. How did it make you feel?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

- What does the author mean when they describe Omu as “sorry and blue?” Why do you think that? (Show students the illustration and note the sad expression on Omu’s face.)
- At the end of the story, Omu’s community friends bring her food. The author says, “That dinner was the best she ever had.” What do you think that means?
- The word “Omu” means “queen” in Igbo, although the author, Oge Mora, used it to mean “grandma” when she was growing up. How does Omu in this story act like a queen? How does she act like a grandma? Why do you think Oge Mora chose to name the character Omu?

### Interdisciplinary

This story can be connected to social studies units on community and helping others.

### About the Book Author/Illustrator (by publisher)

Oge Mora graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design with a BFA in illustration. Her first picture book, *Thank You, Omu!*, was a Caldecott Honor, a Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent illustrator award, an Ezra Jack Keats illustrator award, a New York Times Notable Book and Editors’ Choice, and a Junior Library Guild selection. She lives in Providence, Rhode Island, and invites you to visit her website at <http://www.ogemora.com>.

### After-Reading Discussion Questions

- How did Omu feel when her pot was empty?
- How did she feel when the community shared with her?
- Why is it important to be part of a community?
- What are some ways you can share with someone?

### Additional Resources



[Author Essay: Oge Mora](#)



[Storytime with Bill: Thank You, Omu! video](#)



[Thank You, Omu! Collage Card Craft](#)



[JumpStart Activity Guide for Classrooms](#)



[The Genius of Oge Mora \(Nigerian Parents\)](#)

### About the Consultant Carolyn McElligott

Carolyn McElligott co-authored and provided guidance for this guide. She is currently a K-5 EL teacher at Melrose Public Schools in Massachusetts. During her tenure in Melrose, she has taught second grade, delivered instructional coaching to Pre-K – fifth grade educators and taught adult English learners.

### About The Immigrant Learning Center

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States. The Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants.

## How to use: The ILC Community Across Cultures Book Guides

Whether you are leading a story time for a group of all immigrant children, all U.S.-born children or somewhere in between, The ILC Community Across Cultures Book Guides are for you. A collaboration between pedagogy and content experts, the Guides give you the support you need to feel confident introducing immigration-related themes to children.

### How to choose a book

Choose a book that speaks to the children's interests and experiences, and also your goals for the story time. Would you like the children to learn about a specific country or theme? Are there immigrant children in your group? Consider picking a book related to their country of origin.

**Tip:** remember to choose a variety of genres including fiction, nonfiction and poetry!

In addition to general information about the book and author, the Guide gives you the synopsis from the publisher and a few sentences on "What we love" to help you choose. The "Background" section is designed to give you more information so you can feel confident talking about the topic with children.

### How to prepare

Read your chosen book to yourself a few times. Make sure you can pronounce all the vocabulary (especially foreign language words) and the author's name correctly.

### How to start the read aloud

Show the children the cover of the book and read the title. Depending on the children, you may want to:

- Ask them to predict what the story will be about, based on the front cover.
- Go over any vocabulary words you think they might need.
- Ask them a pre-reading focus question. You could choose just one or ask them all!
- Tell the children why you chose this book.



### During reading

Read with expression! Vary your speed, pacing and volume to keep the children engaged.

Consider telling the children that you will read through the entire book without interruptions so they can become immersed in the story. They should save their questions and comments for the end.

Give children enough time to study the pictures.



### After reading

Ask children all or some of the after-reading discussion questions and extension/higher-level thinking questions.

Give children the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. This could be done as a whole group discussion, as pair work, or children could take a few minutes to write down their thoughts.

Use the “Additional Resources” section if you’d like to learn more. This section may include links to more in-depth activities to go along with the book, more background about the author or book’s subject, and/or videos of the book being read aloud.



### Additional Resources



[Literacy Guide](#)  
(Bank Street Graduate School of Education)



[10 Tips Experienced Teachers Have on Read-Alouds for New Teachers](#)  
(Scholastic)



[10 Tips for Reading Aloud with Children](#)  
(New York Public Library)



[Why we should all be reading aloud to children](#)  
(TEDx talk by Rebecca Bellingham, Columbia University Teachers College)

#### About The Immigrant Learning Center

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States. The Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants.