

Tip Sheet #15

READING ABOUT LIFE IN A NEW COUNTRY

Moving to a new home is often difficult. Moving to a new country can be even harder. When children leave the only home they've known, even if it's a place that's no longer safe for them and their families, a sense of loss follows.

Caring adults can help by allowing children to tell their story: in words, in writing, through art and dance and other forms. Reading stories about how other children handle big moves—across boundaries, cultures, and even to new families—can help them gain a healthy understanding of where they've been and where they're going.

Try These Great Books!

Here are some thoughtful books and story collections about children from a variety of cultures and settings. See how the children adjust to new friends, schools, foods, clothing, homes, and a new language. Your growing reader will find comfort, hope, and helpful ideas in these pages.

For readers age 5 and above.

AFRICA

Crabs for Dinner by Adwoa Badoe (Sister Vision Press, 1998).

In this delightful book, a young girl learns to adjust to lots of change: new food, new clothing, and new friends. She also comes to appreciate her grandmother's stories of her native homeland.



CHINA

The Day I Became a Canadian by Jo Bannatyne-Cugnet (Tundra Books, 2008).

On a snowy morning, Xiao Ling Li and her parents are about to become Canadian citizens. Xiao's mother is going to have a baby, and Xiao decides to keep a scrapbook for her new brother or sister. This book contains helpful information about becoming a new citizen.

INDIA

Lights for Gita by Rachna Gilmore (Second Story Press, 1994).

In this story, a young girl from India celebrates the Hindu holiday of Divali in her new home. Gita misses her relatives back in India and struggles to adjust to cold weather. But as she observes familiar rituals, Gita feels less homesick, and her disappointment eases as she finds reasons to feel hopeful.



For readers age 10 and above.

CROATIA

The Onlyhouse by Teresa Toten (Red Deer Press, 2003).

Lucija and her mother settle into their first “onlyhouse,” a single family home in suburban Toronto away from their immigrant Croatian neighbours downtown. A new school, new friends, and new pressures are issues Lucija must handle. It isn’t easy, but she finds true friends along the way.

FIRST NATIONS, RUSSIA, SOUTH AMERICA

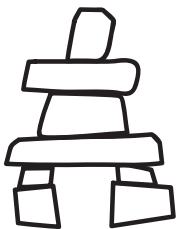
Out of the Everywhere by Jan Andrews (House of Anansi, 2000).

This story collection looks at the familiar child’s question, “Where did I come from?” from the immigrant point of view. Boys and girls face difficult situations and become problem solvers in their new homes.

SOUTH ASIA

Camels Make You Homesick by Nazneen Sadiq (Lorimer, 1985).

This story collection looks at what life is like for five boys and girls from five diverse cultures who move to new homes. They find themselves living in two worlds—the world of the home and the world outside. They learn various lessons about how to keep their heritage but become a part of their new culture too.



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