

Annotated Bibliography of Children's and Adolescent Books: Mexico

Compiled by Kitty Reeve and L. Nicole Russell

We have focused our selection on books that appeal to a variety of children in both age and interest. Thus, we include picture books, fiction, and true first-person stories from Mexican teenagers. We tried to select books, when possible, whose author or illustrator (or both) are from Mexico or who live/have lived in Mexico.

Beatty, Patricia. **Lupita Manana**. New York: Harper Trophy, 1981. ISBN 0-03-054636-2. 185 p. Juvenile historical fiction (9-12).

After their father dies in an accident, the Torres children (Lupita and Salvador) must make the perilous journey to the United States, in order to get jobs and send money home. Unfortunately all is not well once they reach the United States. The children encounter many barriers (language, hard labor, unscrupulous people, and the constant threat of deportation). Although Patricia Beatty is not of Mexican descent, her books are well researched and she does a great job capturing the immigrant experience. The characters are exceptionally realistic, and middle school students will enjoy the plots fast pace.

Borton de Treviño, Elizabeth. **Leona: A Love Story**. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994. ISBN 0-374-34382-9. 151 p. Juvenile historical fiction. (12 up).

Sixteen-year-old Leona Vicario turns her back on her wealthy Spanish family to join her Mexican lover Andrés Quintana Roo, a leader in the revolution to free Mexico from Spanish rule. Facing danger and hardship, enduring imprisonment and the confiscation of her wealth, Leona becomes a heroine of the revolution. Leona and Andres are real historical figures who played important roles in Mexico's War of Independence from Spain (1810-1821). The author who lives in Mexico and is a Newbery Award winner, weaves history, politics, religion and Yucatan Indian culture into this well-written, fast-moving novel.

Gollub, Matthew. **The Moon Was at a Fiesta**. Illustrations by Leovigildo Martinez. New York: Tambourine Books, 1994. ISBN 0-688-11637-X. 30 p. Picture book.

"For hundreds of years, the sun and the moon stayed in their separate skies," begins this highly creative story. Alas, the moon wants to have fun like the sun does—so the moon has an all-night fiesta. Trouble follows: the corn was not ground and the fields were not plowed. Children will love the uncommon illustrations, their wit and fun, and they'll respond to the occasional Spanish words in the clever text. The writer visits Oaxaca frequently, and the illustrator lives there.

Gusti. **Half of an Elephant**. La Jolla: Kane Miller Publishers Inc., 2006. ISBN-10: 1-933605-09-X. 32 p. Picture book.

One night the world unexpectedly splits. In the morning a young elephant finds himself split in half and he's unsure where his other half has gone. So he goes on a quest to redefine himself. This book is a great way to spark creativity amongst young students, and to get them to see things through different perspectives.

Hadden, Gerry. **In Their Own Voices: Teenage Refugees from Mexico Speak Out**. New York: Rosen Publishing, 1997. ISBN 0-8239-2331-6. 62 p. Juvenile literature.

Six teenagers—Diego, Patricia, Arturo, Jorge, Ana and Dulce-- tell the story of why they immigrated to the United States and how the cross-border move has affected their lives. The stories give an insider's view of the problems the teenagers face, the difficulty of getting work and cultural and language differences. The author includes a 10-page text-and-photo introduction to Mexico, the Mexico/United States relationship, and immigration. A teacher in Mexico gave the book high marks for reflecting "the real situations of many Mexicans."

Johnston, Tony. **The Iguana Brothers: A Tale of Two Lizards**. Illustrated by Mark Teague. New York: Blue Sky Press, 1995. ISBN 0-590-47468-5. 30 p. Picture book. Two iguana brothers, Tom and Dom, experiment with eating flowers instead of bugs, meet toucans and tarantulas, pretend to be dinosaurs and learn that they are each other's best friends. Children will quickly learn Spanish phrases as Tom and Dom repeat the words. The illustrations portray the animals as stuffed animals familiar to young children.

Kimmel, Eric A. **The Witch's Face: A Mexican Tale** Illustrated by Fabricio Vanden Broeck. New York: Holiday House, 1993. ISBN 0-8234-1038-2. 30 p. Picture book. On a journey to Mexico City, Don Aurelio stops at a house occupied by three women. He falls in love with the youngest woman, who turns out to be a witch, but the tale turns tragic, when Don Aurelio fails to follow her instructions. This book would be great to include in a study of folk tales in upper elementary through middle school.

Madrigal, Antonio Hernandez. **Erandi's Braids**. Illustrated by Tomie dePaola. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1999. 31 p. ISBN 0-399-23212-5. Picture book. This book was inspired by the historic custom of buying the Tarascan Women's hair in Mexico. It's beautifully illustrated and highlights Erandi's selflessness.

Munoz-Ryan, Pam. **Esperanza Rising**. New York: Scholastic Press 2000. ISBN 0-439-57617-2. 262 p. Juvenile Historical fiction. (9-13). Esperanza Ortega lives a life of pampered luxury in Aguascalientes, Mexico, on her father's ranch (Rancho de las Rosas). A sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and her mother to flee Mexico. They find work in a Southern California labor camp. Munoz-Ryan gives a very realistic portrayal of what it's like to have to leave your home, and survive in a country that is not necessarily welcoming. She also does a great job of portraying the hardships that many migrant laborers experienced, during the Great Depression. Esperanza Rising is a favorite amongst middle school students. It has also received numerous awards including the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Publisher's Weekly Best Children's Books 2000, and the Pura Belpre award.

Resau, Laura. **What the Moon Saw**. New York: Delacorte Press, 2006. ISBN 0-385-73343-7. 258 p. Novel. (10 up).

Clara, 14, leaves her Maryland home to spend the summer with grandparents she has never met in a tiny, remote mountain village in Mexico, where she lives in a small shack among indigenous people. She meets Pedro, who becomes her companion in adventure. Clara's story alternates with that of her grandmother, a healer. This lyrical coming of age story will intrigue readers with its adventure and insights into the lives of indigenous people. The author, an anthropologist and ESL teacher, is fluent in Spanish and has lived in Oaxaca. Author website: <http://www.lauraresau.com/>.

Soros, Barbara. **Grandmother's Song**. Illus. Jackie Morris. New York: Barefoot Books, 1998. ISBN 1-902283-02-3. 29 p. Picture Book. This book is beautifully written and illustrated. Soros celebrates the power of touch, and demonstrates how wisdom, courage, and generosity can be passed down from one generation to the next. The illustrations accurately portray the rich wild life of Mexico, all though there is an over abundance of flowers.

Annotated Bibliography of Children's and Adolescent Literature Related to the U.S./Mexico Border.

Prepared by Sara Curtin-Mosher
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This is a collection of books that I studied for my inquiry project in order to better understand the Children's and Adolescent literature that is available related to border regions. The picture books generally focus on the division of families created by the border, however they all have happy endings. The novels are more focused on children crossing, mostly without documents, from Mexico into the U.S.

Adolescent Novels

- Beatty, Patricia, (1981) Lupita Mañana 190 p. New York : HarperTrophy
To help her poverty-stricken family, 13-year-old Lupita enters California as an illegal alien and starts to work while constantly on the watch for "la migra."
- Buss, F. Leeper (1991) Journey of the Sparrows 155p. New York: Puffin Books
Teen from El Salvador crosses the border nailed in a crate with her pregnant sister and younger brother. The children struggle to survive and avoid deportation.
- Hobbs, Will. (2006) Crossing the wire . 216 p. New York: HarperCollins/
Fifteen-year-old Victor Flores journeys north in a desperate attempt to cross the Arizona border and find work in the United States to support his family in central Mexico. He rides the train and goes through the desert. Action packed!
- Paulsen, Gary. (1990) The Crossing 114p. New York: Random House.
Manny, an orphan living in Mexico and trying to cross the Rio Grande into the U.S. continually crosses paths with a Vietnam vet and Sergeant trying to forget his harrowing war experiences through alcohol and women obtained in Mexico.
- Munoz Ryan, Pam (2000) Esperanza Rising 261p. New York: Scholastic.
A story of "Riches to Rags" Esperanza, the daughter of a wealthy Mexican landowner loses everything and moves to the US to work as a migrant farm worker. She struggles and grows. An enchanting novel. Couldn't put it down.
- Gould, Marilyn (1998) Xavier's Promise 181p New Port Beach, CA: Allied Crafts Press..
Xavier crosses the border to live with his mother and the family she works for. He befriends Zane and Vonny through his experience with racing pigeons, symbols.

Picture Books on the Border

Azaldúla (1993) Friends from the other side II: Consuelo Mendez San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press

Prietita lives in Texas near Rio Grande where people cross. She befriends Joaquin after defending him from boys calling him a "mojado". She helps Joaquin and his mother hide when La Migra come to town looking for undocumented people.

Bustamante A., Norma (2001) Naty en la Frontera II: Franco Méndez Calvillo Tijuana, MX: Norma Bustamante A.

Naty, an elephant, escapes from the San Diego Zoo and goes to Tijuana where he makes friends with a Donkey. Naty gets caught and taken back to CA but Donkey saves his money and gets a passport to come and see his friend. Some stereotypes.

Bunting, Eve (1993) Going Home II: David Diaz. New York, NY: Joanna Cotler Books. The children of migrant farm workers are nervous about returning to their parents village in Mexico for a Christmas visit, but they soon realize why their parents love the village so much, because it is home. Fabulous Illustrations.

Herrera, Juan Felipe (2003) Super Cilantro Girl II: Honorio Robledo. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.

Eight-year-old Esmeralda is transformed into a superhero and flies off to rescue her mother, who visited Mexico without her green-card and is not being permitted to return to the United States.

Garza, Carmen Lomas (1990) Family Pictures San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press

Garza, Carmen Lomas (1996) In My Family San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press
The artist illustrated and narrated two books of paintings depicting her life growing up in Southern Texas in the . Wonderful depictions of "everyday life".

Lainez, René Colato (2005) La Lotería II: Jill Arena; Flagstaff, AZ: Luna Rising.

Boy goes to Mexico to visit his grandmother and struggles because he doesn't speak much Spanish and his grandmother doesn't speak much English, but through playing Loteria they both learn. Simplistic but sweet storyline.

Lainez, René Colato (2004) Waiting for Papá II: Anthony Accardo; Houston, TX: Pinata Books

Beto is sad because his father stayed in El Salvador, waiting for his green card, while Beto and his mother immigrated to the US. The family is reunited in end.

Pérez, Amada Irma. (2002) My diary from here to there II: Maya Christina Gonzalez p.31 San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.

Prietita moves from Juarez, México to Mexicali and than to California as her dad searches for work. They wait in Mexicali while dad works to get green cards for all of them and than they shove and push across the border to California.

Saenz. B.A. (1989) A gift from Papá Diego II: Geronimo Garcia; p. 39 El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press.

Little Diegito lives in the El Paso and misses his grandfather who lives in Mexico. Diego dreams of being superman and flying to visit his Papá Diego, but in the end Papá surprises him with a visit for his birthday. Clay animation illustrations.