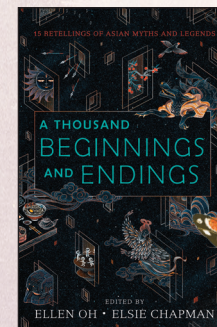
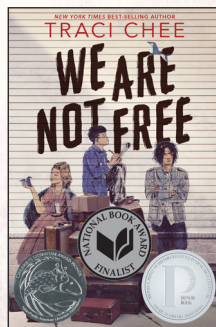
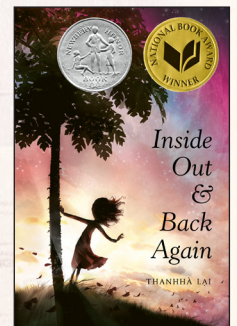
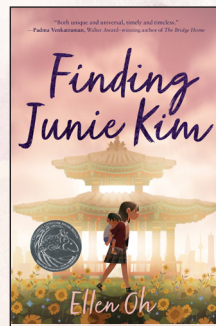
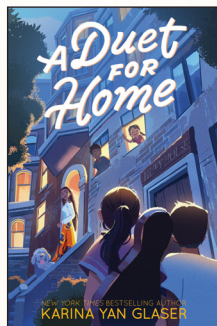
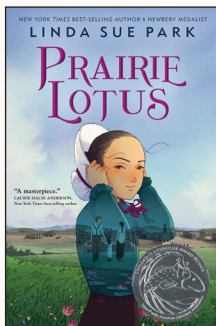
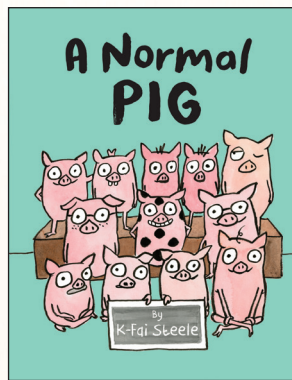
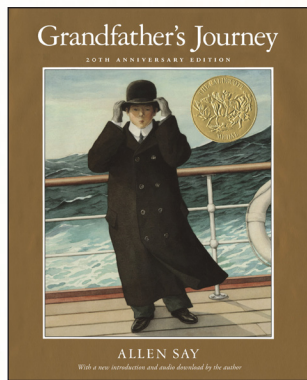
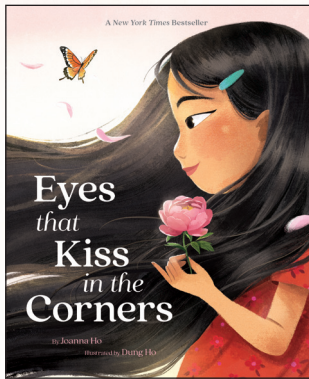




SHAKE UP YOUR SHELVES

ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Educators' guide to building an inclusive bookshelf representing AAPI voices



Why the inclusion of Asian American and Pacific Islander books for youth is important and how to make it happen

Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the U.S., but as the most recent survey from the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has found, less than 10% of books for youth published depict a character that is Asian. While the Pacific Islander population grew by about 30% between 2010 and 2020, less than 1% of books for youth published in 2020 depict a character that is Pacific Islander. **The Asian American and Pacific Islander populations residing in the United States are very diverse, representing different languages, cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities.**

The term "Asian American" was coined in 1968 by Yuji Ichioka and Emma Gee, two University of California Berkeley graduate students who needed a name for their student organization, which was aimed at increasing the visibility of activists of Asian descent. **They wanted to come up with a term that would bring together all the different groups of people of Asian descent under one, larger umbrella.** By the 1980s, the U.S. Census Bureau grouped persons of Asian ancestry together and created the category "Asian Pacific Islander," which continued in the 1990s census. In the 2000 census, "Asian" and "Pacific Islander" became two separate racial categories, with "Asian American" including persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, and with "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander" including Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Guamanian or Chamorro, Fijian, Tongan, or Marshallese peoples, and the people within the United States jurisdictions of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

The majority of Asian American and Pacific Islander people living in the United States are U.S. citizens, whether naturalized or U.S.-born. There are also Asian American and Pacific Islander people who do not speak an additional language other than English. **This means that in the classroom you must bring in an array of children's books to ensure you move beyond the "single story" (Adichie, 2009).**

A good place to begin thinking about the books you want to bring into your classroom or library is with the Asian American and Pacific Islander populations that are represented in your school community. When students don't see themselves, their families, or their communities represented in the literature shared, they can begin to think something is wrong with them or that their experiences do not matter.

The first step is to take the time to learn about your students and their families. Learn and gain an understanding of their cultural practices, linguistic abilities, and funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Once you have that information you can then search for books that are representative of students' lives, experiences, and histories. Of course, **even if you don't have Asian and Pacific Islander students in your classroom, Asian and Pacific Islander books still need to be a part of the curriculum.** Books featuring Asian and Pacific Islander characters can provide students with another perspective to counter false narratives, stereotypes, and monolithic views of the Asian and Pacific Islander communities. It is important that students from all backgrounds learn about the valuable contributions, both historical and contemporary, that the Asian and Pacific Islander communities have made to the United States.

We encourage you to Shake Up Your Shelves by adding titles that are inclusive of Asian American and Pacific Islander experiences both in the United States and abroad. Keep reading for some first steps that you can take to make changes to your collection and your curriculum.



AAPI Ethnicities & Regional Groupings:

- **CENTRAL ASIANS:** Afghan, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek
- **EAST ASIANS:** Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Okinawan, Taiwanese, Tibetan
- **NATIVE HAWAIIANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS:** (in the U.S. Jurisdictions & Territories) Carolinian, Chamorro, Chuukese, Fijian, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Kosraean, Marshallese, Native Hawaiian, Niuean, Palauan, Pohnpeian, Papua New Guinean, Samoan, Tokelauan, Tongan, Yapese
- **SOUTHEAST ASIANS:** Bruneian, Burmese, Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Malaysian, Mien, Singaporean, Timorese, Thai, Vietnamese
- **SOUTH ASIANS:** Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Indian, Maldivians, Nepali, Pakistani, Sri Lankan
- **WEST OR SOUTHWEST ASIANS:** While most people from the region do not self-identify as such, West or Southwest Asia has been increasingly used in lieu of the Britain-centric term "Middle East"; and geographically includes the countries of Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey (straddles Europe and Asia), United Arab Emirates, and Yemen



Questions to consider when selecting Asian American and Pacific Islander books for youth for your shelves:



1. How do the text, illustrations, storyline, and characterizations influence an Asian American or Pacific Islander (AAPI) young person's self-image? What messages about AAPI folks does this book send to non-AAPI readers?

2. Do the AAPI characters actively participate in the story as main characters or are they only secondary characters? Are they depicted as heroes and leaders and as having agency and power, and the ability to solve problems?

3. Does the book avoid AAPI stereotypes in text and illustrations such as exaggerated, othering and/or dehumanizing depictions of model minority, shuffling feet, quiet, nerdy/studious/smart, submissive, accented or broken English, Martial arts, inedible/smelly food, slant-eyes, rice bowl haircuts, long braids, Fu Manchu mustache, yellow skin, large front teeth, or bowing?

4. Are the AAPI characters depicted in culturally stereotyped roles, clothing or decor such as wearing traditional or outdated clothing not appropriate to the occasion, decor not relevant to the occasion, or narrative such as luaus, hula dancing, grass skirts, Tiki novelties, leis, martial arts, paper lanterns, chopsticks, or Shamshir swords?

5. Does the book avoid token symbolism such as orientalist font, fake "Asian" lettering, inclusion of animals (pandas, elephants, snakes, dragons, etc.) not relevant to the story?

6. Do all of the AAPI characters have the same appearance? Or is a diversity of skin tones, hair textures and styles, and body type presented? Not all AAPI people are fair skinned with straight, dark hair and dark eyes.

7. Do the AAPI characters abandon some aspect of their culture and/or language in order to achieve happiness?

8. How are languages and names represented in the text? Is language used in expansive and authentic ways that are aligned to the linguistic practices of AAPI communities? Or do they reproduce negative stereotypes of languages beyond English?

9. How do the creators address racist events or incidents? Is racism acknowledged in a meaningful way, with perpetrators of specific racist behaviors identified (such as using an active voice, rather than a passive voice; avoid "X experienced racism.")? Do characters of different races work thoughtfully toward cultural understanding (i.e. AAPI characters do not exist only to ameliorate white characters' racial anxiety)?

10. Do the books represent both historic and contemporary stories of AAPI communities?

11. Is each AAPI character/culture depicted as distinct from one another and not lumped together as one monolithic Asian culture?

12. Are Asian/Asian American and Pacific Island settings (Korea, Iran, Thailand, Chinatown, Filipinotown, Little Tokyo, Little India, Hawaiian Islands, Samoa, etc.), authentically described and positively support the title's narrative? Are AAPI communities depicted as vibrant and modern? Do stories that take place in the present avoid depicting Asian countries as inferior, backwards, or underdeveloped in relation to the west?

13. Does the author/illustrator have experience with the AAPI subculture that they are representing? Or is the book written/illustrated by someone who has briefly visited Asian or Pacific Island countries or territories? How qualified is the author/illustrator to write the book?



Further Readings and Resources

Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA) Award for Literature

<http://www.apalaweb.org/awards/literature-awards/>

APALA Rubric to Evaluate Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth Literature

<https://bit.ly/APALAYouthLitRubric2021>

Cooperative Children's Book Center Diversity Resources

<https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/literature-resources/diversity-resources-multicultural-literature/>

Social Justice Books

<https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/asian-americans/>

Talk Story Together: a joint project of American Indian Library Association and APALA Resource Page

<https://www.apalaweb.org/talkstorytogether/resources/>

We Need Diverse Books

<https://diversebooks.org>

Aleem, Mahasin Abuwi, & Hussain, Ariana Sani. (2020, October 3). Evaluating Muslims in kidlit: A guide for librarians, educators, and reviewers. *Hijabi librarians*.

<https://hijabilibrarians.com/2020/10/03/evaluating-muslims-in-kidlit-a-guide-for-librarians-educators-and-reviewers/>

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders — a FAQ

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/asian-americans-pacific-islanders-faq-n998661>

Census Data and API Identities

<https://www.api-gbv.org/resources/census-data-api-identities/>

How inclusive is "AAPI"? Pacific Islanders debate the label

<https://www.today.com/news/how-inclusive-aapi-pacific-islanders-debate-label-t218371>

Inside the Diverse and Growing Asian Population in the U.S.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/08/21/us/asians-census-us.html>

Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the U.S.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/09/asian-americans-are-the-fastest-growing-racial-or-ethnic-group-in-the-u-s/>



This guide was created by Candice (Wing-ye) Mack.

Candice (Wing-ye) Mack is the administrator of system-wide Young Adult Services at the Los Angeles Public Library, the third largest municipal library system in the US. She is a Member-at-Large on the Public Library Association's (PLA) Board of Directors and is a past president of both the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA) and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). Candice has been an adjunct professor at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies since 2014, and is a member of San José State University's Youth Services Program Advisory Committee. Online, she may be found on Twitter @tinylibrarian.

Suggested Books



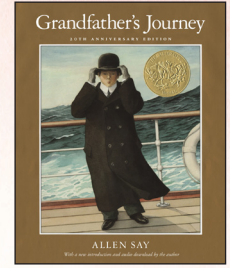
Eyes That Kiss in the Corners
by Joanna Ho;
illustrated by Dung Ho



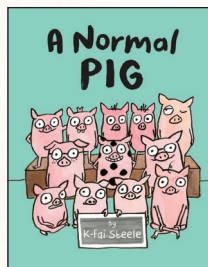
It Began With a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way
by Kyo Maclear;
illustrated by Julie Morstad



When Lola Visits
by Michelle Sterling;
illustrated by Aaron Asis



Grandfather's Journey
by Allen Say



A Normal Pig
by K-Fai Steele



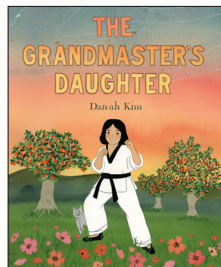
Hundred Years of Happiness
by Thanh Hà Lại;
illustrated by Phung Nguyễn Quang & Huỳnh Kim Liên



Bee-bim Bop!
by Linda Sue Park;
illustrated by Ho Baek Lee



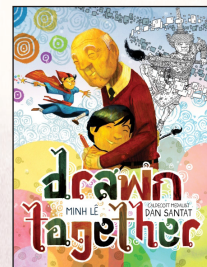
Thank You, Neighbor!
by Ruth Chan



The Grandmaster's Daughter
by Dan-ah Kim



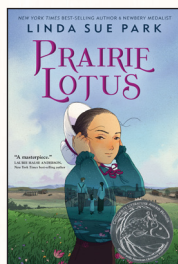
Punky Aloha
by Shar Tuiasoa



Drawn Together
by Minh Lê;
illustrated by Dan Santat



Maybe Maybe Marisol Rainey
by Erin Entrada Kelly



Prairie Lotus
by Linda Sue Park



A Duet for Home
by Karina Yan Glaser



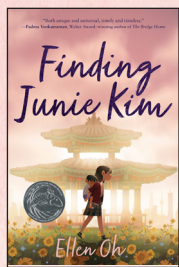
Hello, Universe
by Erin Entrada Kelly



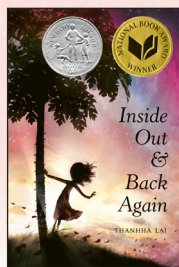
The Best at It
by Maulik Pancholy

Early Reader

Middle Grade



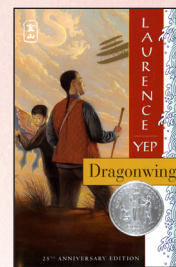
Finding Junie Kim
by Ellen Oh



Inside Out and Back Again
by Thanhha Lai



Red, White, and Whole
by Rajani LaRocca



Dragonwings
by Laurence Yep



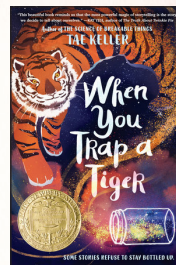
Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero
by Saadia Faruqi



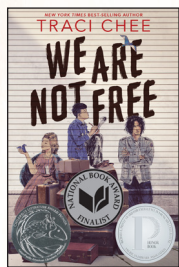
Measuring Up
by Lily LaMotte;
illustrated by Ann Xu



The Vanderbeekers Make a Wish
by Karina Yan Glaser



When You Trap a Tiger
by Tae Keller



We Are Not Free
by Traci Chee



It's Not Like It's a Secret
by Misa Sugiura



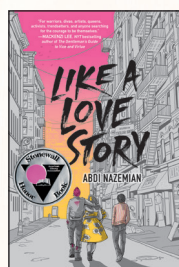
**Messy Roots: A Graphic Memoir of a
Wuhanese American**
by Laura Gao



Almost American Girl
by Robin Ha



Butterfly Yellow
by Thanhha Lai



Like a Love Story
by Abdi Nazemian



This Place is Still Beautiful
by XiXi Tian



The Silence that Binds Us
by Joanna Ho



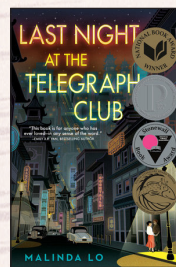
**A Thousand Beginnings
and Endings**
edited by Ellen Oh
& Elsie Chapman



Parachutes
by Kelly Yang



Ichiro
by Ryan Inzana



Last Night at the Telegraph Club
by Malinda Lo