

Stories and literary resources by and about refugees



© United Nations Photo. Photo ID 468142. March 27, 2011. Rounyn, Sudan. UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran. Darfur village abandoned after heavy clashes. CC license. <www.unmultimedia.org/photo/>.

This section provides a selected bibliography of some of the literature and biographies that are available and may be of interest to teachers. It also provides information on a few bibliographies that are more detailed as well as other resources.

Bibliographies

- Mason, E. (2009). *Collecting children's refugee literature: A bibliography*. This bibliography was created to help primary school teachers who work with refugee children and to suggest relevant documents. Retrieved from <[http://forcedmigrationguide.pbworks.com/w/page/7447744/CollectingChildren%27s Refugee Literature](http://forcedmigrationguide.pbworks.com/w/page/7447744/CollectingChildren%27s%20Refugee%20Literature)>.
- Gangi, J. M., Ph.D. (2006). *Annotated children's literature bibliography on the refugee experience*. The bibliography was prepared for "Refugees in Recent Children's and Young Adult Literature: Sociocultural Considerations", a presentation for "Transformations" Children's Literature Association's 33rd Annual Conference, Claremont, California; June 8 to 11, 2006. Retrieved from <<http://faculty.mville.edu/gangij/refugee.htm>>.
- The Refugee Council of the United Kingdom provides information on books and resources pertaining to refugee experiences. There are many resources including autobiographies, novels, anthologies, non-fiction, children's books, and alternatives. See <www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/practice/basics/books>.

Individual Titles

- Akpan, U. (2008). *Say you're one of them*. New York, N.Y: Back Bay Books/ Little, Brown and Company. Short stories that show the resilience of children in horrible situations.
- Ali, A. H. (2007). *Infidel*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster. The autobiography of Ayaan Hirsi Ali details how she escaped oppression in Somalia by immigrating. She became a member of Parliament in the Netherlands and then became a political activist and founded the AHA Foundation in the United States.
- Ali, A. H. (2010). *Nomad: From Islam to America: A personal journey through the clash of civilizations*. New York, NY: Free Press, a division of Simon and Schuster. This is another Ayaan book. This one tells the story of her journey from pre-modern nomadic Somali life to modern life in the western world.
- Armstrong, S. (2002). *Veiled threat: The hidden power of the women of Afghanistan*. Toronto, ON: Penguin Books a division of Pearson Canada. Author Sally Armstrong tells the story of several women of Afghanistan who rebelled against the Taliban under whose regime they struggled to survive.

- Asgedom, M. (2002). *Of beetles and angels: A boy's remarkable journey from a refugee camp to Harvard*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company. This is the true story of a boy's journey from civil war in east Africa to a refugee camp in Sudan, to a childhood on welfare in an affluent American suburb, and eventually to a full-tuition scholarship at Harvard University.
- Bashir, H., & Lewis, D. (2008). *Tears of the desert: A memoir of survival in Darfur*. Toronto, ON: Harper Collins Publishers Limited. A woman caught up in the war in Darfur tells her story and the story of her people.
- Beah, I. (2007). *A long way gone: Memoirs of a boy soldier*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas and McIntyre. Ishmael Beah tells his story of becoming a child soldier and then being rehabilitated.
- Campano, G. (2007). *Immigrant students and literacy: Reading, writing, and remembering*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University. This book demonstrates how incorporating refugee students' own cultural resources, narratives, and identities into the curriculum can facilitate their learning.
- Eggers, D. (2006). *What is the what: The autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng*. Toronto, ON: Vintage Canada, a division of Random House. This is the story of Valentino Achak Deng's life as told to Dave Eggers. Deng was one of the lost boys, forced to leave his village at the age of seven, who travelled hundreds of miles by foot while being chased by militias, government bombers, and wild animals. Deng and his companions finally found freedom after crossing the deserts of three countries.
- Ellis, D. (Various) Deborah Ellis is an internationally acclaimed Canadian author who writes about the lives of children in less developed countries. Her novels include the following:
 - Ellis, D. (2001). *The breadwinner*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books. This is the story of Parvana, an 11-year-old Afghani. Her parents are well-educated, prosperous people who have been forced to live in near poverty. Parvana dresses as a boy and goes out and makes money to feed her family after her father is arrested because he was educated overseas.
 - Ellis, D. (2002). *Parvana's journey*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books. After Parvana's father's death, she once again dresses as a boy and tries to find her mother and siblings. While travelling through a war-torn, Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, she learns much about life and about herself as she meets and befriends others who have been affected by war.
 - Ellis, D. (2003). *Mud city*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books. This is the story of fourteen-year-old Shauzia, Parvana's new friend, who wishes to leave the Afghan refugee camp where she lives and make a new life in France. Forced to leave because of the camp's leader, Shauzia does as Parvana did before her and dresses like a boy in order to earn money and escape. She's forced to beg and to pick through garbage, and she eventually ends up in jail where she is seemingly rescued by a well-meaning American family.
 - Ellis, D. (2006) *I am a taxi*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books. With both of his parents in a Bolivian prison, and hoping to make a lot of money, twelve-year-old Diego and his best friend are tricked into making coca paste that will later be made into cocaine.
 - Ellis, D. (2007). *Sacred leaf*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books. A sequel to *I am a taxi*. After being saved from slavery on an illegal cocaine operation, Diego is taken in by the Ricardo family. His recovery abruptly ends when the army moves in and destroys the family's coca crop (their livelihood). This story clearly shows how the war on drugs is having serious consequences on the people in Bolivia who have grown coca for legitimate purposes for hundreds of years.

- Ellis, D. (2010). *No safe place*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books. This is the story of an orphaned fifteen-year old, Abdul, who travels from his war-torn home in Baghdad only to end up in “The Jungle,” a poor migrant community in Calais. After the accidental stabbing of a police officer, Abdul heads to England in a small boat with other refugees and forms close bonds with three others on the boat: a young Romani girl who has escaped from the white slave trade; a young person who is away without leave from a Russian military school; and the ten-year-old nephew of the boat’s pilot. About to be captured, the four young friends hijack a yacht and find refuge in a child's secret cave on the English coast.
- Ellis, D. (2009). *Children of war: Voices of Iraqi refugees*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books. This non-fiction work details, through interviews, the lives of Iraqi children, victims of war. While most of these children live as refugees in Jordan, there are a few who are trying to build new lives in North America.
- Fadiman, A. (1997). *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors and the collision of two cultures*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. This book shows how a lack of understanding between a refugee family from Laos and American doctors led to tragedy.
- Hari, D. (2008). *The translator*. Canada: Doubleday, a division of Random House of Canada Limited. This memoir shows how Daoud Hari has helped inform the world about Darfur.
- Kamara, M. with McClelland, S. (2008). *The bite of the mango*. Buffalo, NY: Annick Press Ltd. This is the story of how a 12-year-old girl became a victim of one of the most brutal wars of the 20th century and overcame extraordinary odds.
- Mortenson, G. and Relin, D.O. (2006). *Three cups of tea*. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books. In 1993, Greg Mortenson came to an impoverished Pakistan village in the Karakoram Mountains after failing to successfully climb K2. Touched by the villagers’ kindness, he promised that he would return and build a school.
- Mortenson, G. (2009). *Stones into schools: Promoting peace with books, not bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan*. New York, N.Y: Viking published by the Penguin Group. This is the story of the men of the Central Asia Institute (CAI) who recognize the importance of girls’ education and of having schools to accommodate them, and the successes of the young women who are now completing their studies at these schools.
- Naidoo, B. (2004). *Making it home: Real-life stories from children forced to flee*. NY: Dial Books. Each chapter of this book describes the conflict in a given country followed by the testimony of a refugee child or youth from that country, forced to flee because of that particular conflict. Countries referenced in this book are Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sudan, and Burundi.
- Nemat, M. (2008). *Prisoner of Tehran: A memoir*. Toronto, ON: Penguin Canada. This is the author’s story of being falsely arrested in 1982 at the age of 16 by Iranian Revolutionary Guards and tortured in Tehran’s Evin prison. Condemned to die, one of the guards pleaded for her life. The price Ali exacted: she would have to marry him.
- Phan, Z. with Lewis, D. (2009). *Little daughter*. Toronto, ON: Penguin Group Canada. This is the true story of Zoya Phan who was born in the jungles of Burma and whose life was forever changed because of Burma’s military junta. She is now a champion of the Burmese people’s fight for freedom.
- Walters, E., & Bradbury, A. (2008). *When elephants fight: The lives of children in conflict in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda*. Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers. This is the story of five children living in conflict in five different countries.