

Great Journeys

• Keep 'em Reading •

Grades
K-2, 3-5

by | Jennifer Ward

Humans and wild animals have been journeying across the earth for thousands upon thousands of years. An understanding of the reasons such migrations occur will give students a better perspective on global patterns of survival, both among human cultures and within nature. Let's get a move on and explore children's literature that sheds light on the concept of migration.

Animals on the Move

Grades 1-5

Animal migration is the long-distance movement of a species from one place to another. It is often triggered by season and necessary for survival. Animal migration is an amazing and wondrous event, and continues to be the subject of much research as scientists seek to understand animal behavior related to this natural cycle.

How do homing pigeons find their way home across hundreds of miles? How are sea turtles able to travel over eight thousand miles to lay their eggs on the very beach where they hatched?

As readers uncover the mysteries and methods of migration—including migrating animals' remarkable navigating abilities—they will be able to compare ways in which animals use the environment to meet specific needs. They will also be able to describe ways in which animals adapt to the environment in order to survive.

Below are titles and related activities to share with students that explore how and why migrating animals do what they do.



Migration: Animals moving from one region to another, often covering thousands of miles, in order to survive.

Migration: KWL

Begin your classroom study about migration with a KWL chart-based discussion.

K: What Do We Know About Migration?

W: What Do We Want to Know About Migration?

L: What Have We Learned About Migration?

In *Amazing Animal Journeys* by Liam O'Donnell (DK Children, 2008), readers discover that as environments change with the seasons, certain animals must move to new locations in order to survive. Whether they walk, fly, or swim, each animal has its own individual migration route, and each journey poses risks and dangers. This book chronicles the caribou, the monarch butterfly, the gray whale, and the snow goose.

After sharing the story with students, refer back to the KWL chart and list concepts and elements about migration that were covered in the book. Then, create a graph to depict and compare how animals move as they migrate. Graph the animals depicted in *Amazing Animal Journeys*, and as additional books and resources about migration are shared, add other animals accordingly. A wonderful addition to the discussion of migrating animals is the book *The Journey: Stories of Migration* by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Lambert Davis (Blue Sky Press, 2006). In this book, Rylant details the journeys of locusts, gray whales, American silver eels, monarch butterflies, caribou, and terns.

Invite students to take turns adding to the graph. Older students may write on the graph directly, or on 3 x 5 "word" cards that can be taped to the graph. Younger students may supply dictation that an adult writes in, or they may place picture cards (images of different migrating animals) directly on the graph.

Migration: Humans traveling across continents and foreign lands for better opportunities and a better life





| <i>How Animals Migrate</i> | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| By Foot (Land) | By Wing (Sky) | By Fin (Water) |
| Caribou | Monarch butterfly | Gray whale |
| | Snow Goose | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

A Long, Dangerous Journey: How We Can Help Migrating Birds

Grades K–3

In *Flute's Journey: The Life of a Wood Thrush* by Lynn Cherry (Harcourt, 1997), readers learn about a young bird's first migration across thousands of miles, and the dangers and hardships it encounters along the way. After reading and discussing the story, readers will be able to describe ways in which humans can help or harm other living things, and they will be able to demonstrate an understanding of what some small animals, such as the wood thrush, need to survive.

Prior to reading the book aloud, invite children to pore over the illustrations and make predictions and inferences about the book's content based on visual clues. The book's endpapers show the migratory route of the wood thrush. Might this be the path the main character takes? Document responses, and then read the story aloud. Were reader prediction and inferences correct?

Visit the author's Web site, <http://www.lynncherry.com>, where students can listen to the sound of the wood thrush, participate in activities, and learn about additional ways to help protect birds in their community, such as:

- Locating a bird habitat in your community
- Restoring or naturalizing habitat in your backyard or school yard in order to make a haven for migrating birds

- Learning about additional ways to protect migrating and nesting birds, including keeping cats indoors, reducing the use of pesticides, and planting berry-producing bushes that can nourish birds on their routes.

Book-to-Book Connection

Extend this reading experience by pairing *Flute's Journey* with *Welcome, Brown Bird*, by Mary Lyn Ray, illustrated by Peter Sylvada (Harcourt, 2004). In this story, a wood thrush migrates between New England to Central America. In each location, there is a young boy who watches and waits for the bird's arrival, protecting its nesting site until it returns. Invite children to form discussion groups in order to compare and contrast the two stories. Be sure to emphasize the need to demonstrate respectful listening when one is not speaking.

Journey to the Top of the World

Grades 3–5

The Arctic is a barren land in the winter. But in the summertime, it is busy and brimming with animals from all over the world that journey north to summer on the lush Arctic tundra.

Locate the Arctic on a globe or world map. Read the book, *North: the Amazing Story of Arctic Migration* by Nick Dowson, illustrated by Patrick Bensen (Candlewick, 2011).

After reading the story, invite students to select an animal depicted in the book and conduct further research about it. Questions to consider include:

- Does this animal make its home in the Arctic year-round?
- Does this animal migrate in a group? If so, does the group have a special name, such as *flock* or *herd*?
- Does this animal migrate solely (alone)?
- How is this animal physically equipped to make the journey?
- Which animal travels the longest distance to get the Arctic? What is the distance? If this is not your animal, how much less does your animal travel?
- Which animal travels the shortest distance to get to the Arctic? What is the distance? If this is not your animal, how much more does your animal travel?

Invite readers to work in pairs and compare the migrating animals each has researched. Have readers organize their data using a Venn Diagram. Note and compare similarities and differences of each animal and its migration pattern and behavior. Remember to refer back to the KWL chart so you can add content as new information is obtained.

Further Questions to Explore

- Do all animals migrate?
- How do non-migrating animals survive seasonal changes, such as winter?
- What animal migrates the longest distance on Earth?
- What animal migrates the shortest distance on Earth?

People on the Move

Since the dawn of human civilization, people have been on the move, emigrating from their homelands to somewhere new. The journeys often take them across entire seas and continents.

The reasons people move from one land to another vary. It may be that people travel because they need more food or better shelter. It may be that people are seeking a better life or a new job in a new land. It may be because their homelands are no longer safe.

Discuss immigration with your readers. What is an immigrant? Why do people immigrate to new countries, often leaving behind family, friends and, sometimes, many personal possessions? What difficulties might an immigrant face along the journey, and in the new land? How have immigrants shaped the names, food, customs and celebrations that take place in North America?

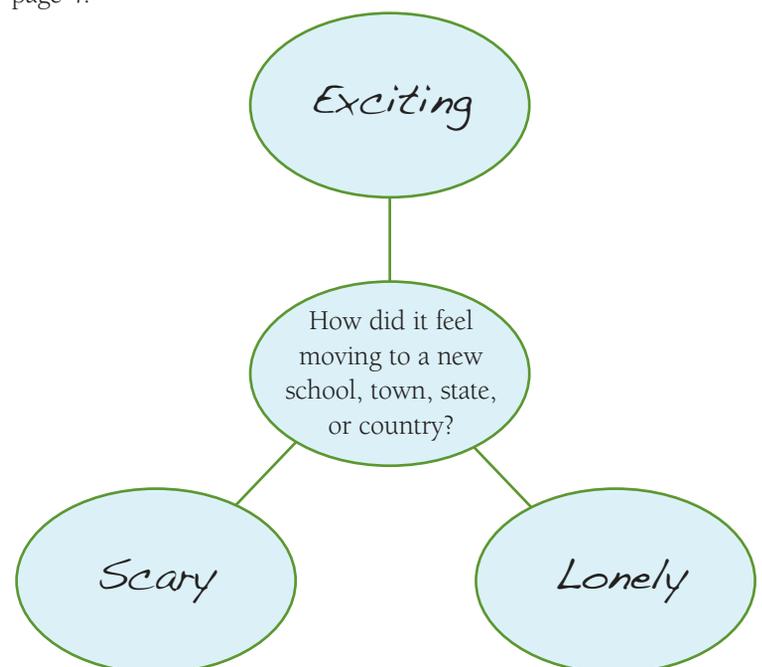
These are just a few questions that can be explored with readers while sharing the following literature collection below. The selections cover historic immigration stories, as well as titles covering current trends.

New Places, New Faces

Grades 1–4

In the picture book, *My Diary from Here to There, Mi diario de aquiie hasta alla* by Amada Irma Perez and illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez (Children's Book Press, 2009), a young girl chronicles her experiences and emotions as her family journeys north from Mexico to the United States for a better life.

Prior to reading the story, ask whether any of your students has ever moved, started a new school, or had to learn a new language in a new country. If so, ask them what that experience felt like. Organize student responses in a word web, which students may refer to when they embark on their own writing in the Write About It activity on page 4.



Keep 'em Reading

Allow students to share responses, noting key terminology in the web (moving felt exciting, scary, lonely, etc.)

Explain to readers that the book *My Diary from Here to There* is an autobiography—a true story about events that the author personally experienced when she moved from one country to another. Read the story, and then compare students' moving experiences to Amada's experiences in the book. Discuss the similarities and differences.

Write About It

Grades 1–5

In *My Diary from Here to There*, Amada used a diary to express her feelings, to document her experiences, and to gain a better understanding about herself during her family's move.

Provide a journal for each student in your class, and explain that they will be given a set amount of time each day to write in it. Explain that the journal will be private, and that they may write about experiences they have each day and each week. Provide a ten-minute time slot for students to write in their journals each day.

Map & Explore It

Grades 4–5

Provide a map that depicts the United States and Mexico for visual reference. Use this map, along with the map in *My Diary from Here to There* to retrace Amada's journey north.

Invite students to discuss the similarities and differences between Mexico and the United States in terms of categories such as geography, language, size, climate, etc.



| MEXICO | UNITED STATES |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Language: | Language: |
| Food: | Food: |
| Climate: | Climate: |
| Size: | Size: |
| Population: | Population: |
| Largest City: | Largest City: |
| Notable Geographical Features: | Notable Geographical Features: |

Book-to-Book Connection

Grades 1–3

Compare *My Diary from Here to There* to the picture book *My Shoes and I* by Rene Colato Lainez, illustrated by Fabricio Vanden Broeck (Boyd's Mills Press, 2010). In *My Shoes and I*, a young boy travels North from El Salvador to the United States with his father. How are the two stories similar? How are they different?

Traveling Back Through Time

Grades 1–3

In the story *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel* by Leslie Connor, illustrated by Mary Azarian (Houghton Mifflin, 2004), the year is 1853, and Miss Bridie is a young lady embarking on a journey to America. She will travel by ship, and she chose one item to take aboard with her to begin her life in a new land. Readers will develop an appreciation for the difficulties one faces when moving to a new place, as well as the importance of certain possessions.

Recalling and Interpreting Details: One Item of Choice

Grades 1–3

After reading *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel*, recall details and discuss the many ways the shovel helped Miss Bridie throughout her life. Document student responses. Possible discussion points include:

- How did Miss Bridie's shovel help her in her garden?
- How did Miss Bridie's shovel help her in the winter?
- How did Miss Bridie's shovel help her in the kitchen?
- How does the shovel help Miss Bridie's grandchildren?
- In what other ways did the shovel help Miss Bridie?

- What might the story have been like if Miss Bridie had chosen to take something else with her on her journey to America, instead, such as the figurine? How might a different choice have helped or hindered her in her new land?
- Ask students what they would bring with them on a move if they could only bring one item, and why. Allow them to draw and write about the item of choice.

Graph It

Grades K–3

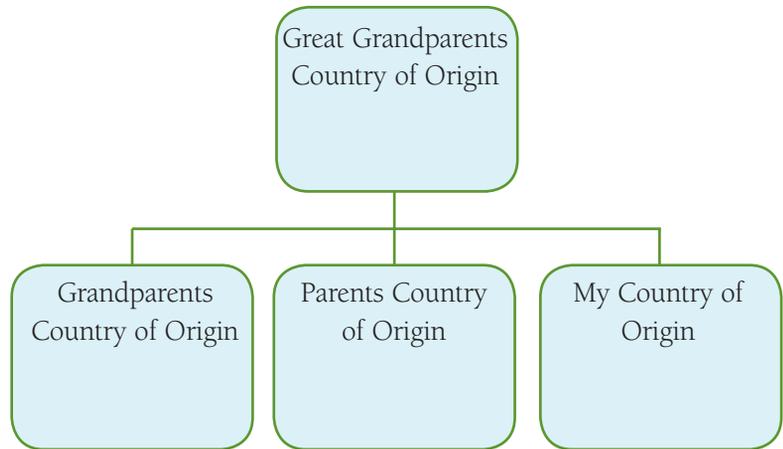
In *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel*, a young lady moves to a new country. Families have moved for many reasons throughout history, and continue to move today. Create a class graph depicting who in class has ever moved to a new school, a new town or city, a new state, or even a new country. After the graph is completed, interpret it. Does your class have more students who have moved, or students who have never moved? Invite students to take turns sharing, orally, about their experiences with moving to a new place.

| Have you ever moved? | |
|----------------------|----|
| Yes | No |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Further Exploration on Family History

Grades 1–3

Invite students to investigate their own family history and heritage through family interviews and conversation with elder family members. Include details and reasons for any moves that might have taken place, either from country to country, state to state, city to city or neighborhood to neighborhood. Invite students to orally share what they learned, or to write about their family's history. Or, invite students to document their family history with simple text by organizing data on a "text tree".



Bibliography and Further Reading

Literature with Animal Migration Themes

Amazing Animal Journeys by Liam O'Donnell. DK Children, 2008. 2+. Whether walking, flying or swimming, every migrating animal has its own, individual route, and each journey is fraught with risks and dangers. This book chronicles the Caribou, the Monarch butterfly, the Gray whale and the Snow goose, in addition to effects of humans on migration.

Animals Migrating by Etta Kaner, illustrated by Pat Stephens. Kids Can Press, 2005. 2+. Army ants move along the jungle floor with millions of their friends, eating everything in sight. Pacific golden plovers fly nonstop for five days across the ocean. Whether it is to relocate, find food, or raise their young, animals migrate in many surprising ways. In this book in the Animal Behavior series, discover how, when, where, and why animals migrate.

Animals on the Move by Allan Fowler. Children's Press, 2000. K+. This Rookie Read-About-Science selection presents the migration of salmon, whales, zebras, caribou, and many different types of birds for the youngest readers.

Do Lobsters Leap Waterfalls?: A Book About Animal Migrations by Laura Purdie Salas, illustrated by Todd Ouren. Picture Window Books, 2006. PK-3. A simple question and answer format introduces young children to the concept of animal migration.

Keep 'em Reading

Flute's Journey: The Life of a Wood Thrush by Lynn Cherry. Harcourt, 1997. PK+. This is a reverent environmental story of a wood thrush's first year and his arduous first migration from his nesting ground in the Belt Woods in Maryland to his winter home in Costa Rica, and back again. During his journey, Flute encounters many perils, including natural predators and devastating habitat loss.

Great Migrations: Whales, Wildebeests, Butterflies, Elephants, and Other Animals on the Move, by Elizabeth Carney. National Geographic, 2010. 3+. Many kinds of animals make annual migrations. Along with the details of their treks, this book highlights their incredible strength and will to survive.

Home at Last: A Song of Migration by April Pulley Sayre, illustrated by Alix Berenzy. Henry Holt & Co., 1998. PK+. Some animals have only one home. They may travel just a few inches, yards, or miles from that spot. But others migrate great distances. They spend part of their time in one home and part of it in another. On the journey in between, they may swim, crawl, fly, or walk a mile, a thousand miles, or even halfway around the earth.

National Geographic Readers: Great Migrations Amazing Animal Journeys by Laura Marsh. National Geographic, 2010. 2-5. Every year like clockwork, animals both big and small are driven by a natural instinct to move, in order to survive. On both land and sea, they fight the odds and the forces of nature to breed, feed, or lead and carry on for future generations. This reader is an introduction to the treacherous trek of the zebra, walrus, and Christmas Island red crab to overcome obstacles that include hungry cheetahs, stinging yellow crazy ants, and even members of their own species to make the often-impossible journey of their lives.

North: the Amazing Story of Arctic Migration by Nick Dowson, illustrated by Patrick Bensen. Candlewick Press, 2011. 4-6. At the top of our world is a huge, wild place called the Arctic. In the winter, it is a cold and barren land, where few animals can survive. But when spring comes, it brings with it animals from every corner of the earth. Gray whales, white cranes, wolves, and caribou begin their migrations as the snow melts, gradually making the long journey north. Once they reach their destination, they will raise their young, feast on the lush Arctic tundra, and bask in the sunlight that lasts all summer. Still, this season too must pass, and by the time winter grips the Arctic once again, the visitors have gone

until next year. This lushly illustrated picture book celebrates the cyclical nature of the seasons, showcasing the barren and beautiful landscapes of the Arctic Circle and reminding the reader of the hardships and harmony of life in the wild.

The Journey: Stories of Migration by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Lambert Davis. Blue Sky Press, 2006. 3+. Newbery Medalist Cynthia Rylant joins naturalist painter Lambert Davis to create a vibrant picture book that follows the migratory journeys of locusts, gray whales, American silver eels, monarch butterflies, caribou, and terns. Lively prose and dramatic paintings offer an awe-inspiring look at the animal world and the outstanding tests of endurance and strength that the animals have undergone for centuries.

The Moon of the Monarch Butterflies by Jean Craighead George, illustrated by Kam Mak. HarperCollins, 1993. 3+. Join a female Monarch butterfly on her flight from Arkansas to Michigan to lay the eggs that will hatch and repeat her life cycle.

They Swim the Sea by Seymour Simon, illustrated by Elsa Warnick. Harcourt, 1998. 2+. The oceans of the world are busy highways for creatures on the move, including microscopic plankton, eight-hundred-pound green turtles, and spiny lobsters that walk across the ocean bottom in long lines. Award-winning science writer Seymour Simon and illustrator Elsa Warnick team again in this vivid companion to *Ride the Wind: Airborne Journeys of Animals and Plants*. Fascinating glimpses of the mysterious migration of sea creatures will enthrall and amaze young readers.

They Walk the Earth: The Extraordinary Travels of Animals on Land by Seymour Simon, illustrated by Elsa Warnick. Harcourt, 2000. 2+. Why do lemmings drown by the thousands as they travel to find food? Why do frogs risk death crossing our highways? When polar bears migrate, are they moving across the ice, or is the ice moving them? Seymour Simon and Elsa Warnick bring to life the fascinating behaviors of creatures that endlessly search for food, water, and safety.

Welcome, Brown Bird by Mary Lyn Ray, illustrated by Peter Sylvada. Harcourt, 2004. PK+. Poetic text and stunning paintings tell the story of a wood thrush that makes the long migration between New England and Central America. At each end of the journey is a boy who watches, waits, and protects the bird's nesting place until it returns. Neither boy

knows that his love of the thrush's sweet song links him like a brother to another boy across the world, who doesn't even speak the same language.

Literature with Immigration Themes

Four Feet, Two Sandals by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2007. K+. Two child refugees waiting to go to America discover that sharing and taking turns with one pair of sandals is better than the alternative, where each wears one.

Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say. Sandpiper Reprint Edition, 2008. K+. Deeply personal yet expressing universally held emotions, this tale by Caldecott medalist Allen Say is of one man's love for two countries, and his constant desire to be in both places.

How Many Days to America? A Thanksgiving Story by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Beth Peck. Sandpiper, 1990. K+. After the police come, a family is forced to flee their Caribbean island and set sail for America in a small fishing boat.

Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel by Leslie Connor, illustrated by Mary Azarian. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. K+. Miss Bridie's journey is one of hope and uncertainty, a journey that will take her to a new land, a new home, and—if she has chosen wisely—a good life. With elegant woodcuts, Caldecott medalist Mary Azarian brings to life Leslie Connor's spare story of a life rich with blessings, yet not without challenges. Here is a lyrical tribute to the millions of immigrants who left their homes to begin anew in America—and an enchanting look at how one woman carves out a life with the help of a common shovel.

My Diary from Here to There, Mi diario de aquiie hasta alla by Amada Irma Perez, illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Children's Book Press, 2009. K+. One night, Amada overhears her parents whisper about moving from Mexico to Los Angeles, where greater opportunity awaits. As she and her family make the journey north, Amada records her fears, hopes, and dreams for their new life in her diary. What if she can't learn English? How can she leave her best friend? Along the way, Amada learns that with her family's love and her belief in herself, she can weather any change. With humor and insight, Pérez recounts the story of her family's immigration to America.

My Name is Yoon, by Helen Recorvits, illustrated by Gabi Swiatkowski. Frances Foster Books, 2003.

PK-3. A young girl learns to find her place in a new country.

My Shoes and I by Rene Colato Lainez, illustrated by Fabricio Vanden Broeck. Boyds Mills Press, 2010. K-3. Mario is leaving his home in El Salvador. With his father by his side, he is going north to join his mother, who lives in the United States. She has sent Mario a new pair of shoes. He will need good shoes because the journey north will be long and hard. He and his father will cross the borders of three countries. They will walk for miles, ride buses, climb mountains, and cross a river. Mario has faith in his shoes. He believes they will take him anywhere. On this day, they will take him to the United States, where his family will be reunited.

One Green Apple by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ted Lewin. Clarion Books, 2006. 1-4. A Muslim girl feels isolated from her American classmates, but a class field trip to an apple orchard helps her to feel a sense of belonging.

Silent Movie by Avi, illustrated by C.B. Mordan. Atheneum, 2003. K-3. Newbery medalist Avi tells the story of an immigrant family alone in a big city.

When Jessie Came Across the Sea by Amy Hest, illustrated by P.J. Lynch. Candlewick, 2003. K-5. When a young girl from a poor eastern European village learns that she must leave her beloved grandmother for a new life—and a new love—in America, they both feel that their hearts will break. The sure and inspired narrative by award-winning author Amy Hest is paired with paintings by P.J. Lynch that glow with warmth and carefully observed detail, creating an unforgettable tribute to the immigrant experience.

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Jennifer Ward is the author of numerous acclaimed children's books and parenting books including the whimsical, fictional picture books, *There Was a Coyote Who Swallowed a Flea* (Cooper Square Publishing, 2007); *There Was an Old Monkey Who Swallowed a Frog* (Marshall Cavendish, 2010), a 2011 IRA/CBC Children's Choice Book; *There Was an Odd Princess Who Swallowed a Pea* (Marshall Cavendish, 2011); and the forthcoming, *There Was an Old Pirate Who Swallowed a Fish* (Marshall Cavendish, fall 2012). A former elementary educator, she now writes full time from her home in Illinois. Visit her on the Web at www.jenniferwardbooks.com.