



The Booklist Project



Focus: Culturally- Responsive Author Study
Booklist

Grace Lin

Developed by: Marcia Tellini

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Grade Level PreK-2

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Grace Lin was raised in Upstate New York with both her parents and two sisters. Writing children's books was not Grace's first career choice. She originally wanted to be a professional ice skater however she did not have the coordination it took to do so. Nonetheless, Grace would draw pictures of herself skating and realized she was very good at drawing.

Grace attended the Rhode Island School of Design and set out to create and illustrate children's books. Her first book was "*The Ugly Vegetables*" which was published in 1999. Grace had a huge response to this book and earned a starred review in Kirkus Reviews.

Although many of Grace's books highlight her family not all do, some are from Asian inspired fantasies or books she read when she was a child, such as "*Snipp, Snapp and Snurr*" and "*Flicka, Ricka and Dicka*." Grace admits that one of her favorite things about book signings is the fact that she gets to meet so many children who love her books and the feeling is very rewarding.

There was a quote said by Grace Lin that I found very interesting and wanted to share it. "I grew up as a Twinkie—yellow on the outside, white on the inside. Where I grew up in upstate New York there were no other minorities, so I kind of forgot that I was Asian.

Lin, Grace (1999). *The Ugly Vegetables*. Watertown, MA: Talewinds A Charlesbridge Imprint.

[0-88106-336-3]

Theme: Diversity and Community **Format:** Hardcover, Paperback, E-Book, also written as a Play **WIDA:** Level 2 **Interest:** Ages 6-9 **Book Availability:** Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, Youtube, **Reading Level:** Ages 4-8

Useful Websites: <http://kernelsoftruth.pbworks.com> <http://treasures.macmillanmh.com>
<http://just4teachers.blogspot.com> <http://www.mrnale.com> <http://www.mcelmeel.com>

This book tells about a Chinese family that lives in a community in New York. As the young girl's neighbors are all planting flowerbeds and beautiful gardens, her mother is planting Chinese vegetables. As the gardens begin to grow, the young girl notices that the neighbors' gardens are pretty and hers is quit ugly. She asks her mother several times why they cannot plant flowers and have a beautiful garden like everybody else but the mother just keeps saying "out garden is better, wait and see." Finally, after she and her mother pick the vegetables from the garden and the mother makes a soup out of them, the young girl realizes why they are "better". All the neighbors follow the wonderful smell of Chinese soup and come to the house with picked flowers from their gardens in hopes for soup in return. Of course in the following years the young girl and her mother plant not only Chinese vegetables but also flowers, whereas, the neighbors plant not only flowers but also Chinese vegetables.

I think this is a good book for ELL's because not only does it talk of another culture but also of the American culture and the student can compare what their own cultures do and what others are like.

Lin, Grace (1999). *Thanking the Moon*. New York, NY: Random House Children's Books.
[978-0375-96101-4]

Theme: Celebrations and being thankful **Format:** Hardcover, Kindle, Amazon,

WIDA: Level 2 **Interest:** Ages 6-9 **Book Availability:** Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, **Reading Level:** Ages 4-8

Useful websites: www.gracelin.com www.brighthubeducation.com www.papertigers.org
www.squidoo.com

This story is about a Chinese family, and other Chinese families celebrate during the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival. Each family member contributes something different to the event, but each is special. Families have a picnic and eat “mooncakes”. It marked a time when the farmers had finished gathering their crops and is now celebrated as a time to give thanks for a good year and to come together with family. It is one of the most important Holidays for Chinese people and is celebrated every year.

This book is good for ELL students because it teaches them how important it is to keep tradition going.

Lin, Grace (2007). *Lissy's Friends*. New York, NY: Penguin Young Readers Group.

[3-1656-00330-6109]

Theme: Making new friends **Format:** Hardcover, Paperback, Amazon **WIDA:** Level 2
Interest: Ages 6-9 **Book Availability:** Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, Google books, **Reading Level:** Ages 3 and up

Useful websites: www.childrenshospital.vanderbilt.org

This book tells a story of a little girl named Lissy. Lissy is the new girl in school and seems to be quite shy. She has a hard time making friends on her first day of school. When her mother asks her if she made any friends she says “yes” referring to the paper crane she had made earlier

in the day. Lissy makes her own friends out of paper, cranes, cats, and so on. Taking her friends everywhere she goes Lissy feels a little happier. One day at the playground, Lissy puts all her paper friends on the merry-go-round. When a huge gust of wind takes all the paper animals away, a little girl named Paige comes up to her carrying one of the animals. Paige asks her if it belongs to Lissy. They become friends and everything is downhill from there for Lissy. All the children like the animals she can make and she becomes friends with all of them.

This book is excellent for any ELL student because it is so hard to come to a new school in a new country to begin with. To make friends in this new school is just as hard and scary sometimes. Maybe this book will be helpful.

Lin, Grace (2010). *Ling & Ting, Not Exactly the Same!* New York, NY: Hachett Book Group.
[3-1656-00330-6109]

Theme: Uniqueness and personality **Format:** Hardcover, Paperback, Amazon, Audio CD

WIDA: Level 2 **Interest:** Ages 5-8 **Book Availability:** Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, Youtube **Reading Level:** Ages 5-8

Useful websites: <http://texas2x2readinglist.pbworks.com>

In this book, there are different stories however they a continuance from the last. In the first story, the twins look exactly alike and everybody says they are “exactly the same”. The girls try to explain they are not “exactly the same”. The girls get a hair cut in the first chapter and Ling sits very still whereas Ting cannot. Ting’s hair winds up a little bit “butchered” and from there on the reader can tell the girls apart. In the next five chapters, the girls do the same things only how they do it are quite different. Such as Ting can use chopstick and Ling cannot use them.

The entire story shows the differences between each twin in a very entertaining way. In the end each girl is very unique yet the same.

This is good for ELL students because it teaches how everybody is different and even though others may not see it, you should always be aware of it yourself and let it show how you are unique.

Lin, Grace (2007). *The Red Thread* Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Company.

[978-0-8075-6922-1]

Theme: Adoption **Format:** Hardcover **WIDA:** Level 3 **Interest:** Ages 3-8 **Book**

Availability: Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, **Reading Level:** Ages 4-8

Useful websites: <http://bonniesbooks.blogspot.com>

This book is a fairy tale about adoption. Ancient Chinese belief is that there is an invisible, unbreakable, red thread that connects all who are destined to be together. The story talks about a King and Queen who are without a child. They each feel pain and emptiness because of this. After consulting Doctors, Scientists, and so on the King and Queen begin to lose hope. Soon they encounter a peddler who offers them magic spectacles to see a red thread coming from their hearts. The King and Queen are told to follow it and it will lead them to what is hurting them. As they journey far away and across the sea the King and Queen start to feel better as they grow closer to what is tugging at the thread. When they finally reach their destination the King and Queen find a baby girl with the thread wrapped around her ankles and ask who she belongs to. An old woman comes out from the crowd of people and notices the thread, she tells them the baby belongs to them. The King and Queen take the baby home and never feel the pain or emptiness again.

The reason this is a good book for ELL students is because it shows how each of us are connected to each other and it's okay to be different than those around you.

Lin, Grace (2001). *Dim Sum for Everyone!* New York, NY: Random House Inc.

[0-375-91082-4]

Theme: Chinese restaurants and food (Cultural custom) **Format:** Hardcover, paperback, public library, Barnes and Noble **WIDA:** Level 1 **Interest:** Ages 3-8 **Book Availability:** Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, Google books, Youtube (read in Chinese) **Reading Level:** Ages 3 and up.

Useful websites: <http://www.mcelmeel.com> <http://mrslodgeslibrary.blogspot.com>

In English, dim sum means “little hearts,” however, in this book to this little girl, dim sum means delicious little plates of food. On a visit to a very busy Chinese dim sum restaurant, a family picks their favorite little dishes from the tables, carts, and trolleys filled with dumplings, cakes, buns, tarts, and other foods. As it is traditional and fun for the entire family, they share their food with each other so that everyone gets a bite of everything.

This is especially good for ELL students because it talks about different foods. As a teacher you could talk to your student about the different types of dishes that are prepared in their own homes.

Lin, Grace (2008). *Bringing In the New Year*, New York, NY: Random House Children's Books

[0-375-93745-3]

[978- **Theme:** Lunar New Year **Format:** Hardcover, paperback, public library, Barnes and Noble, The Teacher Store **WIDA:** Level 2 **Interest:** Ages 3-8 **Book Availability:** Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, **Reading Level:** Ages 3 and up.

Useful websites: www.pinterest.com <http://springborofplibrary.wikispaces.com>

This fabulously joyous story is about a Chinese American family who prepare for the Lunar New Year (Chinese New Year). Each member of the family lends a hand as they sweep out the dust of the old year, hang decorations, make dumplings, and so on. Then it's time to put on new clothes and celebrate with family and friends. There will be fireworks and lion dancers, shining lanterns, and a great, long dragon parade to help bring in the Lunar New Year. And the dragon parade in the book is extra-long—on a surprise fold-out page at the end of the story, your students will love it.

This book is a good read for ELL students as it talks about tradition and culture. ELL students can relate and speak about their own cultures.

Lin, Grace (2004). *Robert's Snow* New York, NY: A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group

[0-0670-05911-0]

Theme: Holidays and the Spirit of Believing **Format:** Hardcover, public library, Barnes and Noble **WIDA:** Level 3 **Interest:** Ages 4-8 **Book Availability:** Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, Google books **Reading Level:** Ages 4-8.

Useful websites: <http://www.gracelin.com>

This is a really cute book about a mouse and his family who live in an old broken down boot. As they prepare themselves for winter by storing food and sealing up the house (boot) the family explains to Robert that small animals do not like winter snow because they can get lost in it. They say only the big animals can stomp through. This saddens Robert as he looks out his window at all of the snow and all of a sudden a big gust of wind comes and breaks the seal on the window. Robert falls out into the snow and starts to play and have a wonderful time in the snow until he realizes...he's lost! Next he sees a person walking towards him (he calls it a big animal) all in red. This "animal" picks Robert up and puts him back into his window. When spring comes again and the family finally goes back outside, there is a brand new house (boot) for them to live in. None of the little mice know where it came from but Robert does...Santa!

This is a good book for ELL's because they can learn about the American version of Santa Clause and teach other students about their own version of him.

Lin, Grace (2004). *Fortune Cookie Fortunes* New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

[0-375-81521-X]

Theme: Believing **Format:** Hardcover, public library, Youtube **WIDA:** Level 3 **Interest:**

Ages 4-8 **Book Availability:** Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, Google books

Reading Level: Ages 4-8.

Useful websites: <http://www.gracelin.com> <http://crafts.kaboose.com>

www.reallygoodstuff.com

This story starts and ends in a Chinese restaurant. It is about how one of the best things in Chinese restaurants is getting that fortune cookie at the end of your meal. One little girl believes they come true and another does not. In the story the narrator shows how each fortune really is

true in its own way whether it is big or small. All depending on how you look at your life and the world around you. The story shows each family members fortune and how that particular fortune relates to them.

Another good book for ELL students to talk about the foods they prepare at home and this could lead to many other books regarding foods.

Lin, Grace (2004). *Olvinia Swims* New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co.

[9-78080-507661-5]

Theme: **Format:** Hardcover, public library, Youtube, Kindle **WIDA:** Level 3 **Interest:**

Ages 4-8 **Book Availability:** Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, **Reading Level:**

Ages 4-8.

Useful websites: www.google.com/swim

Very cute story about a chicken named Olvinia who cannot swim. While on vacationing with a friend in Hawaii Olvinia learns a lesson. Her friend continuously invites Olvinia to go for a swim, however she always answers no. Finally, when the friend asks why she does not want to go with her Olvinia replies “I’m a chicken, I cannot swim”. Her friend does not see how or why that should stop Olvinia from learning and decides to teach her friend how to swim. Eventually Olvinia does learn. A lot of fun in this book.

I think this is a great book for ELL students as it teaches something that all children need to learn no matter who they are or where they are from...how to swim and not be afraid to try something new.

REACH. INSPIRE. CONNECT.



The Booklist Project

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