



# The Booklist Project



Focus: Culture-Specific Booklist

Puerto Rican

Developed by: Meaghan Brunelle

Fall, 2010

# Book List Project

Recommended ESL Books:

Puerto Rico

(Gr. 6-8)

Meaghan Brunelle

TESL 507

Professor Cloud

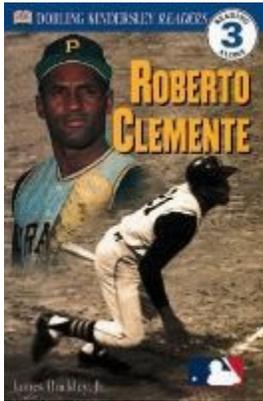
September 29, 2010

## **Recommended ESL Books: Puerto Rico**

This list is compiled of books primarily from Puerto Rican authors with Puerto Rican themes and settings.

It is targeted for students in grades 6-8.

Buckley, J. (2001) *Roberto Clemente*. New York, NY: Dorling Kindersley Publishing.  
[ISBN: 0789473429] 48 pages.  
Available in: Paperback and Hardcover.  
WIDA: High Beginning and up.

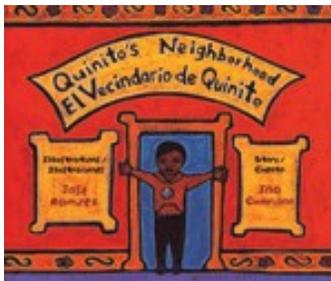


*Roberto Clemente* is a non-fiction book, and is about a baseball player who was born in Puerto Rico. He was a great player between the 1950's to 1970's and paved the way for many great baseball players from Latin America. He was the first Latin American player to be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. This book is about his success in baseball.

The text is very simple and would be appropriate for high beginning students and up. Students would be interested in this text because many of the male Puerto Rican students are interested in sports and therefore may be interested to learn about a great player they may or may not be familiar with.

\*Available in Spanish translation, titled: *Roberto Clemente (DK Reader Spanish)*  
[ISBN: 0613458192]

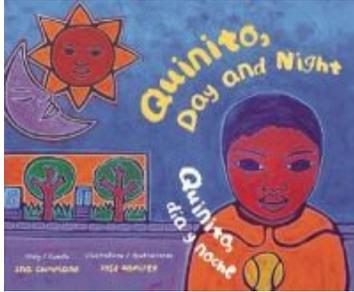
Cumpiano, I. (2005) *Quinito's neighborhood*. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.  
[ISBN: 0892392096] 24 pages  
Available in: Hardcover, Paperback and a downloadable audio format.  
WIDA: Beginning (Possibly Entering)



This book is about the neighborhood and about the jobs that certain people have in Quinito's Neighborhood. There are Spanish words used to describe his family, such as mami, papi, abuela and abuelo. This book would be appropriate for beginning students, and could be used in teaching about the community and jobs within a community. The text is very simple, and also has Spanish translation on each page. With this translation, it could be accessible for Spanish speaking students at the entering level, depending on their ability to

read in their native language.

Cumpiano, I. (2008) *Quinito day and night*. Hong Kong: Marwin Productions.  
[ISBN: 0892392266] 24 Pages  
Available in: Hardcover.  
WIDA: Beginning (Possibly Entering)



*Quinito Day and Night* is about Quinito's family. In the story Quinito describes his family using different vocabulary words. This story would be good to reinforce adjectives. It would also be good in teaching antonyms. Quinito describes his family using adjectives such as tall and short, young and old, etc. There are also other antonyms used such as early and late. This would be appropriate in teaching entering and beginning students basic vocabulary. This book has Spanish translation on each page, making it accessible for Spanish speaking students at the entering level.

Delacre, L. (2000) *Salsa stories*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.  
 [ISBN:0590631187] 112 pages  
 Available in: Hardcover and Paperback.  
 WIDA: Expanding/High Expanding and up.



*Salsa Stories* is about a girl named Carmen Teresa who receives a diary as a present. Having never written in a diary, she asks her family and friends (that are gathered for a party on New Years Eve) what she should write in the book. After listening to suggestions, the guests take it upon themselves to fill it with many stories about their cultures. The guests begin sharing many stories from all around Latin America One common theme of each story was food. Finally Carmen speaks out and decides she doesn't want use these stories for her book. Instead she decides to use her book to write down recipes from each of the guests.

This book is appropriate for students at the Expanding or even high Expanding level. Although *Salsa Stories* does not specifically focus on the Puerto Rican culture alone, three of the seven stories are about Puerto Rico. The other four stories are about Peru, Cuba, Mexico and Argentina; all countries in Latin America. These countries do have things in common with Puerto Rico that I think students would find it interesting to learn about.

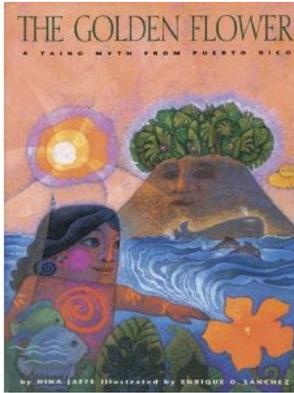
\*Scholastic Reading Counts Quiz available.

\*Available in Spanish translation, titled: *Cuentos con sazon*.

[ISBN: 978-0439226493]

<http://www.luludelacre.com/>

Jaffe, N. (1996) *The golden flower: A Taino myth*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.  
 [ISBN: 0689804695] 32 pages  
 Available in Hardcover.  
 WIDA: Developing and up.



*The Golden Flower* tells how Puerto Rico was formed. The Taino people lived on the top of a mountain in a desert. One day a boy finds many seeds and decides to plant them at the top of the mountain. Soon, plants and flowers begin to sprout from the seeds. From a flower, grows a giant pumpkin. The people were afraid of it because there were sounds coming from inside. Two men begin fighting over the pumpkin because they both want it. After fighting, the pumpkin rolls out of their hands and to the bottom of the mountain where it breaks. The sea comes gushing out of the pumpkin with fish and many sea creatures. The water keeps rising until finally just the top of the mountain isn't

covered, forming the island of Puerto Rico.

The text of this book is relatively simple since it has few words on each page. However, it is still only appropriate for students of the developing level and up. The features of the myth make the language slightly too complex for students at the Beginning level. It may be appropriate for beginning students if used as a read aloud. Puerto Rican students would be interested in this book because it is possible they have heard this story in Spanish before, as the author developed and translated it based on a story she heard as a child.

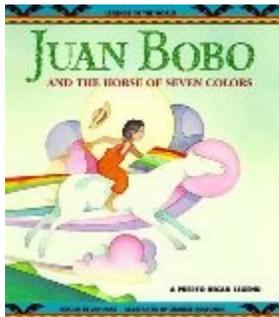
<http://www.ninajaffe.com/>

Mike, J. (1995) *Juan Bobo and the horse of seven colors*. Canada: Troll Associates.

[ISBN: 0816737460] 32 Pages

Available in: Hardcover and Paperback.

WIDA: Developing and up



*Juan Bobo* is about a shepherd who is quite a fool. (As “Bobo” means fool in Spanish) In this story, while Juan is guarding the King’s wheat field, he sees a horse of seven colors. The horse promises to grant Juan seven wishes if he sets the horse free. He agrees and uses the wishes for food, clothing, a horse and a few other things. The King announced that anyone who could make his ill daughter laugh would receive an award. Juan’s brothers decide to take their chance at this. Juan goes to help, and succeeds because of his foolish nature. As a reward Juan gets to live in the castle just for being a “bobo”.

The vocabulary used in this book makes it appropriate for ELL’s starting at the Developing level. It could be used as a read aloud book for ELL’s at the Beginning level, but as an independent reading book it may be best for high-Developing students. When researching books based on the Puerto Rican culture, I came across many based on the character Juan Bobo. Many different Puerto Rican authors have used this foolish character in their retelling of legends. Puerto Rican children may be familiar with this character.

Ortiz Cofer, J. (2004) *Call me Maria*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.

[ISBN: 0439385784] 144 Pages.

Available in: Hardcover and Paperback.

WIDA: Expanding and up.



*Call Me Maria* is a story about a girl who has moved from Puerto Rico, to live with her father in New York. She has left her mother in Puerto Rico, and now lives in a new neighborhood with a culture she knows nothing about. This story is about the struggle Maria faces adapting to this new place. Learning the new language inspires her to write poetry, letters and prose in order to tell her story.

This story is written in the form of letters, poems and prose. Because of this, it makes it a more complex text, which is appropriate for ELL's at the expanding level and up. It may be more appropriate for high-expanding students. Some of the text features include using similes and metaphors which may be difficult for some students to comprehend. Students who were born in Puerto Rico will really be able to relate to this story and the struggle Maria faced.

*Call Me Maria* has won numerous awards including the Pura Belpre Award, Best Book of the Year by *The School Library Journal* and is also a Horn Book Fanfare Book. It has also been recognized by many other organizations.

\*Scholastic Reading Counts Quiz available

Pico, F. (1991) *The red comb*. Santa Rita, Puerto Rico: BridgeWater Books.

[ISBN: 0816735395] 46 Pages

Available in: Hardcover and Paperback.

WIDA: Developing and up.



*The Red Comb* is a fictional story based on true facts and real people who lived in Puerto Rico during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the story, Pedro Calderon received money for capturing runaway slaves. A young girl named Vitita spotted one of the runaways and went to her neighbor Rosa for help. Vitita and Rosa wanted to help the girl, instead of try to catch her. They played tricks on Pedro Calderon so he would be unable to catch the runaway. They were eventually able to pose the young runaway as Rosa's niece, and help

prevent her from being captured.

This story would be best for ELL's at the high-Developing level and up for independent reading. However the illustrations make it possible to use it as a read aloud book for Beginning students and up. The historical significance of the book makes this an excellent selection to include in a unit about slavery. Most historical references to slavery focus on the continental U.S. I think using this book when talking about slavery would help make a personal connection to English Language Learner's from Puerto Rico in order to keep them interested in the topic.

\*Available in Spanish translation, titled: *La Peineta Colorada*

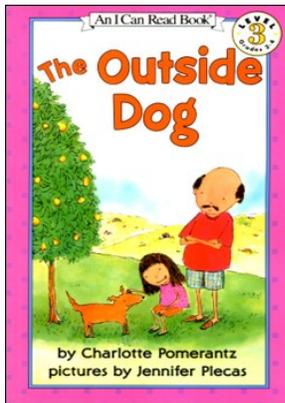
[ISBN: 9802571741]

Pomerantz, C. (1993) *The outside dog*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

[ISBN: 0060247827] 64 Pages.

Available in: Hardcover, Paperback and Audio Cassette/Audiobook.

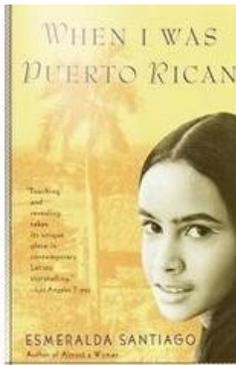
WIDA: Beginning to Developing



*The Outside Dog* is about a young girl named Marisol who lives with her grandfather. Marisol loves dogs, but her grandfather thinks they are dirty and full of fleas. One day a stray dog enters their yard and Marisol wants to keep it. The grandfather says no, but when it continues to come back day after day, the grandfather finally gives in, and allows her to keep it as her “outside dog”.

Although this story is not based on a Puerto Rican theme, the story is set in Puerto Rico and uses Spanish words for some of the characters and the setting. It is a simple text that would be appropriate for ELL’s at the beginning to developing levels. It is a story that a student could read independently, and would be good for practicing reading. Students at higher levels may think this book is babyish.

Santiago, E. (1993) *When I was Puerto Rican*. Cambridge, MA: Merloyd Lawrench Inc.  
 [ISBN: 0306814528] 288 Pages.  
 Available in: Paperback and Kindle.  
 WIDA: Bridging



*When I Was Puerto Rican* is a personal memoir about the author. She was born and raised in Puerto Rico and learned a lot about the culture of her homeland. At the age of thirteen, her parents moved her to New York where she had to learn everything all over again. This story tells about her life in New York and the struggles she faced in order to be accepted into a good high school. She was an excellent student and went on to graduate from Harvard University.

The memoir is a more difficult text, and is best suited for ELL’s at the Bridging Level who are also good readers. This is an inspiring story and would interest many students from Puerto Rico with the success Esmerelda Santiago was able to achieve. Students in middle school would be interested in this book; however it would also be appropriate for students in high school. There are lesson plans and resources available for students in grades 9-12.

<http://www.learner.org/workshops/hslit/session4/lessonplans.html>

\*Available in Spanish translation, titled: *Cuando Era Puertorriquena*  
 [ISBN: 1417642262]

Website to learn more about Puerto Rico:

<http://welcome.topuertorico.org/index.shtml>

<http://www.topuertorico.org/culture/>

<http://www.topuertorico.org/culture/folklore.shtml>

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/puerto-rican-culture.html>

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0113949.html>

<http://iprac.org/>

REACH. INSPIRE. CONNECT.



# The Booklist Project

A Project of the  
M.Ed. In TESL Program,



Feinstein School of Education and Human Development  
Rhode Island College

For Further Information, Contact:

Nancy Cloud, Ed.D., Director

[ncloud@ric.edu](mailto:ncloud@ric.edu)

Rhode Island College

600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue

Providence, RI 02908