

TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

Calling the Water Drum

written by LaTisha Redding

illustrated by Aaron Boyd

About the Book

Genre: Realistic Fiction

***Reading Level:** Grade 3

Interest Level: Grades PreK–5

Guided Reading Level: P

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes: Childhood Experiences and Memories, Home, Immigration and Asylum/Refugees, Grief and Coping with Death, Families, Orphans, Empathy and Compassion, Overcoming Obstacles, Courage, Identity, New York City, Haitian/Haitian American Interest, Caribbean/African American Interest

SYNOPSIS

Henri and his parents leave their homeland, Haiti, after they receive an invitation from an uncle to come to New York City. Only able to afford a small, rickety boat, the family sets out in the middle of the night in search of a better life. Out at sea Henri dreams of what life will be like “across the great waters” and dreams of his new home. Will he make friends? Will he like going to school?

But then tragedy strikes. The small boat overturns, and Henri is placed on top of the boat as his parents drift further out at sea. Overcome with grief, Henri retreats into himself and is no longer able to speak once he reaches land. Encouraged by his uncle and neighbor, Henri takes a bucket and plays on it like a drum. *Tat-tat-tat-tat*. The drumming becomes a link to his past and a conduit for his emotions. The drum’s rhythm moves through him, from his heart through his hands, calling out his love to everything lost. *Tat-tat-tat-tat*. Slowly, through his drumming and the kindness of his uncle and friend, Henri learns to navigate this new and foreign world without his parents.

Calling the Water Drum is a tender look at the courage of those who have faced danger in the search to improve their lives. Readers will be touched by Henri’s quiet resilience as he finds a healing path back to hope and happiness.



BACKGROUND

From the author's note: I am from the South. When I was a child, my parents left the South with my siblings and me, and we moved to New York City. There we discovered that being Southern meant we were different. We spoke with accents and didn't sound like the other children in our new neighborhood.

Luckily, I quickly made friends with the kids in my elementary school. And to my surprise, some of my classmates had accents too and spoke other languages as well as English. I learned that they had arrived recently from other parts of the world: Haiti, Sweden, and Puerto Rico. I was surrounded by children whose families, like mine, had journeyed to New York for better opportunities. Later, other classmates were from Barbados, China, Germany, Jamaica, Russia, Trinidad, and Spain.

My friends and I exchanged stories often, and their stories have stayed with me. But the hushed stories some of my Haitian friends told of how they arrived in the United States were vastly different from the stories of other friends. It wasn't just the culture shock and feelings of not belonging that frightened them. The journey to the United States was dangerous, and this has not changed much in the decades since I first heard my friends' stories. According to US Coast Guard statistics, the greatest number of Haitians rescued at sea was more than 37,500 in 1992. The number in 2015 was still more than 400. These numbers do not include Haitians who were not rescued because they either drowned or made it safely to Florida's shores without being detected.

Haitians are not alone. People in many other parts of the world are crossing oceans in battered boats, and some are crossing deserts in scorching heat. They are holding tightly to a vision of life beyond mere survival for themselves.

It is these unsettling memories, images, and facts that spurred me to write this story. I want readers of *Calling the Water Drum* to know that I formed Henri's story to reflect both the uncertainty and the hope that exists side by side with sacrifice and courage in forging a new life.—LaTisha Redding

Immigrant vs. Refugee: An immigrant is someone who has been granted the right by United States

Citizenship and Immigrations Services (USCIS) to reside permanently in the United States. Such a person is also known as a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR). Eventually all immigrants are issued a Green Card, which is the evidence of his or her LPR status. Learn more here: <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/immigration-terms-and-definitions-involving-aliens>. According to the United Nations, a refugee is a person who has been forced to leave his or her country in order to escape war, persecution, or violence. A refugee may fear persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political belief or membership. Refugees cannot return to their country or are afraid to do so, and seek protection, or asylum, in a new country. For more information from the United Nations on refugees, check out <http://www.unrefugees.org/what-is-a-refugee/>.

Haitian immigrants: According to the Migration Policy Institute, the Haitian immigrant population in the United States is the fourth largest immigrant group from the Caribbean, with the highest concentration of foreign-born Haitians residing in Florida and New York (<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/haitian-immigrants-united-states>). These states are home to more than 70 percent of Haitian immigrants.

Additional titles to teach about grief and loss:

The Three Lucys written by Hayan Charara, illustrated by Sara Kahn
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2935>

A Song for Cambodia written by Michelle Lord, illustrated by Shino Arihara
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2510>

Bird written by Zetta Elliott, illustrated by Shadra Strickland
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2516>

A House by the River written by William Miller, illustrated by Ying-Hwa Hu, Cornelius Van Wright
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2932>

Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan written by Mary Williams, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2368>



VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Content Specific

rhythm, sè (sister), Manman, Papa, Haiti, Uncle Jaques, Karrine, New York, village, market, fisherman, pe (scared), sea, waves, shore, rice and beans, Creole, water bucket, water drum, hurricane, Louisiana, wi (yes)

Academic

pound, bang, pulsing, strike, noisy, thump, rocked, gently, paddled, tapped, drifted, splashed, calmer, scooped, rough, overturned, swirled, foamy, nearby, thumped, crick, flung, pounding, frosty, softly, rises, spills, taps

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. How would you define courage? What does courage look like?
2. What do you know about Haiti? Where is Haiti? Can you find it on a map? What is the closest US state to Haiti?
3. Have you ever been on a boat? How does it feel? How long does it take to travel somewhere by boat?
4. Why might someone want to or need to leave their home and country? Why do people from other countries immigrate to the United States?
5. What do you know about refugees? What is a refugee? How is a refugee different from an immigrant?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think the title, *Calling the Water Drum*, means. Then ask them what and whom they think this book will most likely be about. What places or situations might be talked about in the text? What do you think might happen? What information do you think you might learn? What makes you think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, dedications, illustrations, author's note, and author and illustrator bios.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how Henri arrives in the United States
- what happens to Henri's family
- how Henri copes with tragedy and grief

Encourage students to consider why the author, LaTisha Redding, would want to share this story with young people.



AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3 and Craft & Structure, Strand 4)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strand 4)

1. From whose point of view is the story told? Who is the narrator?
2. Where is Henri and his family from?
3. Who is Karrine? How does she know Henri?
4. What does the word *sè* mean?
5. What is Henri's drum? Where is it from?
6. Why does Uncle Jacques send a letter to Manman and Papa? What does it say?
7. Why is Henri excited about crossing the water?
8. How do Henri and his family leave Haiti? When do they leave?
9. Why is Henri scared on the boat?
10. What happens to the boat during the night? Why?
11. What sacrifice do Manman and Papa make? Why do you think they made this decision?
12. What happens to Manman and Papa? Why don't they answer Henri?
13. Why does the water pull Manman and Papa away from the boat but not Henri?
14. What does Henri find in the morning?
15. Why can't Henri speak to the people on the boat?
16. How do the people on the boat find Henri's uncle?

17. What language does Henri speak?
18. How does Henri use his water drum to communicate?
19. How does Henri's water drum provide a connection to his parents?
20. Where does Henri like to play his drum?
21. Why doesn't Karrine like crowds?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–6, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

1. Why does Henri need to carry water in a bucket in his village in Haiti?
2. Why does Uncle Jaques want Henri and his family to leave Haiti and stay with him in New York? How do you think Uncle Jaques understands what Haiti is like?
3. What can you infer about Uncle Jaques' character from the story? Why?
4. Why do Manman and Papa want to leave Haiti and go to the United States? What are they hoping or looking for? What are they trying to escape?
5. Why is Henri not allowed to tell anyone in his village about the letter or money from Uncle Jaques?
6. Why do you think Henri and his family have to leave Haiti by boat in the middle of the night? Why do they paddle away from the bigger boat?
7. What factors or conditions do you think motivate Henri's family and the other Haitians to risk a dangerous journey across the ocean?
8. Why do Manman and Papa put Henri on top of the overturned boat? Why don't they all climb on top of the boat?
9. Would you describe Manman and Papa as selfless? Why or why not?
10. How do you think Henri felt alone on the boat? How do you think he felt when the other people on a boat from Haiti found him?



★“A powerful story of loss and survival, human connection and hope. . . Redding’s distinguished text sensitively portrays the tragedies young Henri and Karrine have faced. . .”

–*Kirkus Reviews*

“Redding tells the heartbreaking story of one Haitian boy’s survival. . . The story highlights the realities faced by children all over the world whose lives are uprooted by calamity. . .”

–*Booklist*

“For penning a tale that will no doubt be a comfort and a beacon for children experiencing their own situations of heartache and sorrow, we celebrate LaTisha Redding. . .”

–*The Brown Bookshelf*

11. Why do you think the other people on the boat are leaving Haiti? What are they seeking or hoping for?
12. Where do Henri and the people on the boat land? What clues do the illustrations provide that tells you this?
13. How do you think Henri feels moving to a foreign country? What challenges or obstacles does Henri face?
14. What types of challenges does Henri face being a refugee in a new country? How does the refugee experience compare to the immigrant experience?
15. Why does Henri keep the water bucket? Why is the water bucket significant to Henri?
16. How does Henri’s grief over losing his parents affect him?
17. How does Henri’s water drum help him cope with his grief? What does his drum provide for him?
18. Compare Henri’s apartment in New York City to where he lived in his village in Haiti. What is similar? What is different?
19. Why do you think Henri doesn’t like the quiet?
20. Do you think Henri is resilient? Why or why not?
21. What do you think would have happened to Henri if he could not contact Uncle Jaques in New York City?
22. How are Henri and Karrine similar?
23. How does the story’s perspective help convey intense emotion?

24. What message does this story send about courage and hope?

Reader’s Response

*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4 and 6)*

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader’s response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. It can be very difficult when close family members or friends pass away, and people experience grief differently and react in different ways. What do you do to cope with or manage your feelings when you are missing someone and feeling sad? What advice can you give someone who might have lost a friend or family member?
2. Henri uses his water drum to share his emotions. Do you have an activity or hobby that you use to express or manage your emotions? How does the activity/hobby help you? How does it compare to Henri’s water drum?
3. Henri emigrates from Haiti to the United States and must start a new life in New York City. Have you or someone you know ever moved to another state or country? How did he or she feel? What was exciting or difficult? What motivated him or her to move? How does his or her experience compare to Henri’s?



4. Henri and his family had to leave behind their home, community, and everything they knew. Have you ever been away from home? If so, for how long? How does it feel to be away from your home, friends, and family? How would you feel if you were forced to leave your home and community? What would you bring with you? What would you leave behind? What would you miss most about your home?
5. Revisit the author's note in the back of the book. Why do you think the author, LaTisha Redding, feels it is important to tell this story? How is this story sad? How is this story hopeful? What significance does this story have today?

ELL/ESL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about what they admire about Henri or what courage means to them.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students.

Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection

English Language Arts

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)
(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–2, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. Ask students to read and write an analysis of the sonnet, “The New Colossus,” engraved on the Statue of Liberty (<https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/colossus.htm>). What does the poem mean? What do the lines, “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door” mean? What ideas does this poem contain? To whom is the poem addressed? What message do these words send to Americans? To immigrants and refugees? Do you think this sonnet is relevant and/or meaningful today? Why or why not? Challenge: have students



write their own poem to engrave on the *Statue of Liberty*. What messages or ideas do you want your poem to capture?

2. Have students engage in a class debate about whether America is a land of refuge, refusal, or both? Students should prepare written statements explaining their opinions.
3. Ask students to write a persuasive essay about whether they do or do not support the admission of refugees into the US. Do you think the US should welcome and resettle refugees from other countries? Should the US limit the admission of refugees or ban refugees from specific countries? Why or why not? With parental consent, encourage students to submit their essays to their local newspaper.
4. Invite an adult or student who is proficient in a language other than English to read a poem or short story in that language to the class. After the guest has read the poem or story, have the guest give the students instructions for a follow-up writing activity. Then have the class share their results of the activity and engage in a class discussion. How did you feel when you couldn't understand the language? What did you want to do? Did you understand anything despite not knowing the language? If so, how? What did you rely on? What could the guest have done to help you understand?
5. Encourage students to write a diary from the perspective of Henri. Students should include multiple dates and passages as Henri chronicles his feelings about leaving Haiti, his journey from Haiti to the US, and his new life in the US. How does Henri feel about having to leave his home and all of the new changes he experiences? How does Henri cope with his feelings? What does Henri hope or wish for?
6. Ask students to imagine Henri is a new student in their class and have them write a friendly letter to Henri after he arrives in the US. What words of encouragement do you have for Henri? What do you want him to know about life in the US? How is life in the US different than life in Haiti? What

questions do you have for Henri and about his life in Haiti?

7. Have students read the interview with author LaTisha Redding (<http://blog.leeandlow.com/2016/11/22/interview-author-latisha-redding-on-immigration-grief-and-the-healing-power-of-art/>). Ask students to imagine that they are going to interview the author and illustrator of *Calling the Water Drum* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2940>). Students should design interview questions they would ask the author and illustrator if they were on a talk show, news show, or radio show. What do students want to learn more about in terms of the writing process, the illustration process, inspiration or research for the story, refugees, immigration, or the immigrant experience?
8. Have students explore the value of diverse experiences in the Exploring Young Immigrant Stories lesson plan from Teaching Tolerance (<http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/exploring-young-immigrant-stories>).
9. Have students explore attitudes and stereotypes towards refugees with the Spot the Refugee teacher's guide (<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/getinvolved/teachingtools/46a755202/lego-poster-teachers-guide.html>) and accompanying posters (<http://capsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/UNHCR-Spot-the-Difference.pdf>) from The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR).
10. Have students read additional books about loss: *The Three Lucys* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2935>) and *Brothers in Hope: The Lost Boys of the Sudan* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2368>). Ask students to compare and contrast each story to *Calling the Water Drum*. What is the central idea of each book? How are the books connected? What themes or ideas do they share?

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Craft and Structure, Strand 4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)
 (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)
 (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)



1. In a chart, have students list and define the following terms: refugee, internally displaced person (IDP), stateless person, asylum seeker, refugee resettlement, and legal permanent resident. Then have students write their own student-friendly definitions, explaining the words in their own words, and list synonyms and antonyms for each word. Students will then illustrate the relationship between these words in a concept map.
2. In a Venn diagram, ask students to compare and contrast immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. How are they similar? How are they different? What are their motivations? How are they viewed or treated? What obstacles or challenges do they experience?
3. On a map, ask students to identify Haiti and trace Henri's journey from Haiti to the United States. Where is Haiti? What bodies of water surround it? What are the surrounding countries? How many miles is it from Haiti to Florida? About how long would it take to travel to Florida from Haiti by boat? By plane?
4. Organize students into small groups and have them research the geography, climate, and culture of Haiti and use this information to create an informational poster. Where is Haiti located? What is the capital? What is the climate like? What type of government do they have? What is the economy like? How big is the population? What language(s) do they speak? Encourage students to include maps, pictures, diagrams, and other nonfiction text features in their posters.
5. Have students research the cause and effect of the US Refugee Act of 1980 in a graphic organizer. What is the US Refugee Act of 1980 and what led to its passing? When did the first refugees arrive in the US? Who were they? When did US refugee resettlement begin? How does the Refugee Act affect or impact refugees? How does the US decide how many refugees to accept each year? For a starting point, check out the Refugee Council USA (<http://www.rcusa.org/history/>).
6. a.) Ask students to research the history of refugee resettlement in the US and create an informational poster and timeline. How many refugees are there in the world? How many refugees has the US resettled? What is the top year for refugee US admission on record? What is the lowest year? What are the top origin countries for refugees coming to the US? How many refugees live in the US and in what states do most refugees resettle? Then have students present their poster to the class. Encourage students to explore the following websites for information and infographics:
 - <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>
 - <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/17/where-refugees-to-the-u-s-come-from/>
 - <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/05/key-facts-about-the-worlds-refugees/>
 - <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/30/key-facts-about-refugees-to-the-u-s/>
 - <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/12/06/just-10-states-resettled-more-than-half-of-recent-refugees-to-u-s/>
- b.) Have students research what refugee groups live in their community or in other refugee resettlement states. Find these origin continents and countries on a world map. Have students note these countries and their town on a world map. Then provide students with a chart graphic organizer and ask them to list important facts and information about each country: location, geography, capital, size, climate, population, language, government, so on.
7. Ask students to find a current events article about US immigration policy or reform to bring in for classroom discussion. Provide students with critical thinking questions to answer about their articles and bring to their discussion groups. One resource for news articles at students' reading levels is <https://newsela.com/>.
8. Have students explore the refugee crisis and map a refugee's journey with the Refugee Stories: Mapping a Crisis lesson plan from Brown University (<http://www.choices.edu/resources/twtn/twtn-refugees.php>).



Science/STEM

(Reading Standards, Craft and Structure, Strand 4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

Provide students with different sized cups, bottles, or containers. In pairs or small groups, have students fill each container with different amounts of water and investigate how the sound changes when they strike each container. Ask students to create a hypothesis, record their observations, and use their data to form a conclusion. How does the amount of water affect the sound? How does the pitch or frequency change? Check out the Experimenting with a Glass Xylophone activity from PBS for more information (<http://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/phy03.sci.phys.mfe.zxylophone/experimenting-with-a-glass-xylophone/>).

Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. As a class, create a welcome guide and package for students who are new to their school, both refugees and non-refugees. Include helpful and visual information about your school, classroom, students, and teachers. What would a new student need or want to know about your school? About your classroom? What do you want the new student to learn about you? What do you want to learn about the new student? What can you include to help make the new student feel welcome?
2. Ask students to play the Against All Odds online game from The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and reflect on the virtual experience of what it is like to be a refugee (<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/against-all-odds.html>). How did you feel during this experience? What did the different scenarios make you think about? What challenges and obstacles did you face?
3. Have students watch the Kid’s Talk: Stories of Refugee Children (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uoUXIGHWts>) and The Dangerous Boat Ride to Greece Through the Eyes of a Syrian Refugee Girl (<https://www.youtube.com/>

[watch?v=UDy8_8L3soA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDy8_8L3soA)) videos from The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and engage in a class discussion about the refugee experience. What thoughts or feelings do you have after watching these videos? What questions do you have? How would it feel to be a refugee in a new school? What is challenging or difficult? How would you feel if you had to leave your home and everyone you knew?

School–Home Connection

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 4)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–8)

1. If possible, invite someone to your classroom who immigrated to the US. Brainstorm questions with students to ask: What country did you emigrate from? Why did you immigrate to the United States? What was your journey like and how did you travel? How did you feel leaving your home country? How did you feel when you first arrived to the US? What was challenging or difficult? What do you miss about your home country? What objects or traditions do you have that reminds you of your home country? How do you stay in touch with people in your home country? Locate the interviewee’s home country on a world map and point out students’ home town. Students should write thank you letters to the classroom guest.
2. America is a nation of immigrants (<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/immigration-and-migration/essays/history-times-nation-immigrants>). As a class, identify which countries students’ families came from on a world map. For additional activities and ideas, explore the Family Ties and Fabric Tales lesson plan from Teaching Tolerance (<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/family-ties-and-fabric-tales-elementary-grades>).



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LaTisha Redding makes her picture book debut with *Calling the Water Drum*. She was inspired to write this story based on the memories of some of her Haitian friends' stories of how they arrived in the United States and during a trip to New York, where she saw a young boy playing the trumpet with such joy and abandon that it made her stop for several minutes. This book is a tribute to everyone who has courageously set forth with hope to start a new life in a new country. Redding attributes her love of storytelling to her parents, who gifted her with a book every Friday while she was growing up. Redding lives in the sunshine state, Florida. When she's not writing, she likes to go to the movies and read books, of course. Visit her website at www.latisharedding.com/.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Aaron Boyd has illustrated numerous picture books and works for the educational and children's magazine markets, including Lee & Low's *Babu's Song* and *Janna and the Kings*. His picture books have been recognized by the Children's Africana Book Award and International Literacy Association (ILA), and his pop-up book is included among the rare books of the Cooper-Hewitt collection at the Smithsonian. Boyd lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he was born. Visit him online at <http://aaronboydart.blogspot.com/>.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering (general order information)

www.leeandlow.com/books/calling-the-water-drum (secure online ordering)

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

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Book Information for *Calling the Water Drum*



\$17.95, HARDCOVER

978-1-62014-194-6

32 pages, 10-1/8 X 8-1/4

*Reading Level: Grade 3

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades PreK-5

Guided Reading Level: P

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

THEMES: Childhood Experiences and Memories, Home, Immigration and Refugees, Grief and Coping with Death, Families, Orphans, Empathy and Compassion, Overcoming Obstacles, Courage, Identity, New York City, Haitian/Haitian American Interest, Caribbean/African American Interest

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/calling-the-water-drum>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.