

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

Chapter 5 of cbich

WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE?

- Traditionally, the term has meant books written and originally published in English but from outside the United States
 - Examples: J.K. Rowling, Margaret Mahy, Mitsumasa Anno, Garth Nix
 - Winnie-the-Pooh, Mary Poppins, Heidi, Pippi Longstocking, The Thief Lord, Harry Potter, Pinocchio, etc.
- The United States has had very little literature available for our readers that has originated outside of the country.
 - Why are there so few international books available in the United States? Differences in sensibility of story structure, literary language, and thematic

WHY TAKE THE EFFORT TO FIND INTERNATIONAL BOOKS?

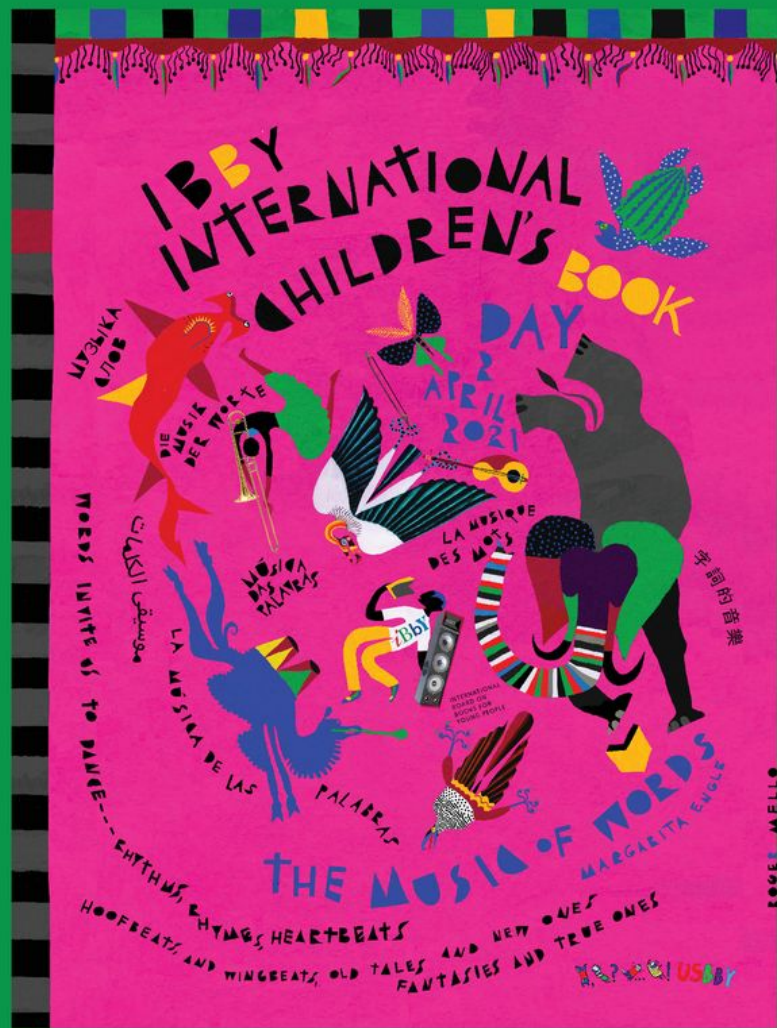
- International books are a sampling of the best books read by children around the world.
- They offer a different perspective or a distinctive portrayal than what might be familiar.
- They exhibit diverse art styles and literary traditions.
- Readers can make connections to what children in other cultures are reading.

MAKING INTERNATIONAL BOOKS MORE ACCESSIBLE

- International books are typically more difficult to obtain.
- One of the challenges is that they go out of print quickly. (See “Out of Print, But Look In your Library” p. 137)
- Internet sellers have made international books more accessible.
- **Interlibrary loans.** Librarians are prepared to request interlibrary loan from outside their libraries.
- [Check out the international children's digital library](#)

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK DAY

- April 2nd is International Children's Book Day, because it was Hans Christian Anderson's birthday.
- [Check out the International Board Books for Young People for more information](#)
- Teaching idea: Readers may not be aware that a book is international. Use a map to simply point to the country, so the reader may visually see the relative location of the country outside their own.



ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

- Accessibility - As mentioned previously, this is the biggest hurdle. There are so few books translated into English, and when they are, relatively few are published in the U.S., and only a rare few make it into children's hands.
- Genre balance - most international books available in English are folklore, historical fiction, and fantasy. They tend to feel "long ago and far away" rather than contemporary.
- Subject balance - certain subjects are more abundant. Ex. Many WWII books available, which creates a wealth of perspectives but skews the number of international books

ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

- Relevance – If details are considered “intriguing” rather than “foreign,” they can be seen as enriching the story and grounding it in a particular setting.
- Comprehensibility – references to details that are “foreign” to young readers may make a book incomprehensible. A book that introduces too many new concepts may make a reader feel overwhelmed and not able to focus on the story.

EVALUATING INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

- How well does the book work for the new audience?
 - When a book travels away from its intended audience, sometimes readers in the new audience need support to help them understand it.
- Do the illustrations communicate as intended in its original context?
 - Images may elicit particular emotions in one culture and entirely different emotions in another culture.
- How well does the translation work?
 - Even when a book is from another English-language country, some differences in language are discernable. Should these be changed? When the comprehension may suffer significantly, the answer is yes.

THIS WEEK'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1) International comparison assignment -

Compare and contrast the books "Make Way for Ducklings" and "Chibi: A True Story from Japan."

[Make Way for Ducklings read aloud](#)

[Chibi: A True Story from Japan read aloud](#)

Explain how the two books are similar and different.

International books are difficult to find and acquire, so why go through the trouble of adding international books to a collection? In what ways do you think it could be valuable for young readers to view international works?

2) Reply to at least 2 peers from last week's discussion