

## Lesson 9: *Who Belongs Here - An American Story*

**Note to teacher:** There is extra information that accompanies the story about Nary. “More About Who Belongs Here” at the end of the story is more appropriate for older students. The important part of this book that pertains to the ABC program is Nary’s story as a refugee and how he was treated by other children when he started school in the United States. His classmates treated him unkindly because he came from another country, spoke a different language, and he looked different.

**THEMES:** Appreciate Diversity, Choose Kind(ness)

**BOOK:** *Who Belongs Here – An American Story* Written by Margy Burns Knight & illustrated by Anne Sibley O’ Brien

### **MATERIALS:**

- **\*Laminated Poster 1:** Include titles, authors, & illustrator of books

Include underlined vocabulary words:

**Vocabulary Words:** protagonist - the main character in a story, drama, movie

immigrant - a person who comes to a country to live there

refugees - someone who has been forced to leave a country because of war or for religious or political reasons

asylum – protection given by a government to someone who has left another country in order to escape being harmed

refuse – noun(formal) something (such as paper or food waste) that has been thrown away: trash or garbage

teem – to be busy with, or heavy with to come down heavily

tempest-tossed – tossed about or agitated violently; thrown into confusion overwhelmed

- **World Map**
- **Poem**
- **Writing Activity Worksheet**

**BEFORE READING OF BOOK/DISCUSSION:** Show students the book cover and read title, author, and Illustrator’s name. *It is interesting that the title is a question. I’ll read the story and let’s see if we can answer the question. Maybe we will not all have the same answer. Maybe there are many answers and different opinions. As I read the story, think about what the author’s purpose was in writing this book. I would also like you to know that the author taught English to children who were immigrants and refugees.*

Go over the first three vocabulary words as you are introducing story. *Do any of you know what “Immigrant” means? Yes, an immigrant is a person who was not born in a country in which he comes to live. We live in the United States (Show on the map) This story is about a young boy who is an immigrant, but he is a special kind of immigrant. He is a “refugee”. Can anyone tell me what a refugee is? A refugee is someone who has been forced to leave a country because of war or for religious or political reasons. (Since 1980 the United States has admitted more than 3.1 million refugees.) Have you*

*ever heard of the word “protagonist”? Protagonist is another word that can be used for the main or central character in a story, drama or literary work. The protagonist or main character in this book is Nary. He was born in Cambodia. (Show on map) He is a refugee, and here is his story.*

**READ STORY:** My thoughts - I would leave a “Note From Margy” at the beginning of the book to read before the writing activity. There is pertinent information that accompanies Nary’s story on several pages. I would read the story and read the extra information on each page and discuss while you are reading.

### **AFTER READING: Main Part of book:**

**QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK /DISCUSS:** *What do you think the author’s purpose was? How should we feel about refugees? Do refugees really want to leave their homeland and come to a country in which they do not speak the language and in which they do not know the people or food---or do not know where they will live or how they will live? How do you think Nary felt as he was coming to the United States? How do you think Nary felt when he was called names and told to go back to his home? Can we answer the question: Who Belongs Here? People do have different opinions about this. You all have to think about what your answer would be...but it is unkind to tell people/ children who have come here to escape dangerous situations to “go back to where you came from” - You do not belong here”. Sometimes we do not know the dangers the refugees faced, but we should try to put ourselves in their place, to try and understand what they have gone through and are going through. We should try and be empathetic and be kind.*

### **WRITING ACTIVITY:**

Read the note from Margy at the beginning of the book.  
Before writing Activity, you may want to generate a list of useful words with children for their writing activity.

**Choose one of the Writing Activity Sheets.** There are three questions on one of the sheets. Children can choose one of the three or two to answer.

Read part of, “The New Colossus”, the poem on the Statue of Liberty that is written on the writing activity sheet, and talk about its meaning and what the Statue of Liberty meant to new immigrants coming into the United States through New York

**Some questions you might ask:**

**What does it mean that The United States is a nation of immigrants?**

**Does anyone actually want to be a refugee? Why or why not?**

**What kind of hardships do refugee children have to face?**





