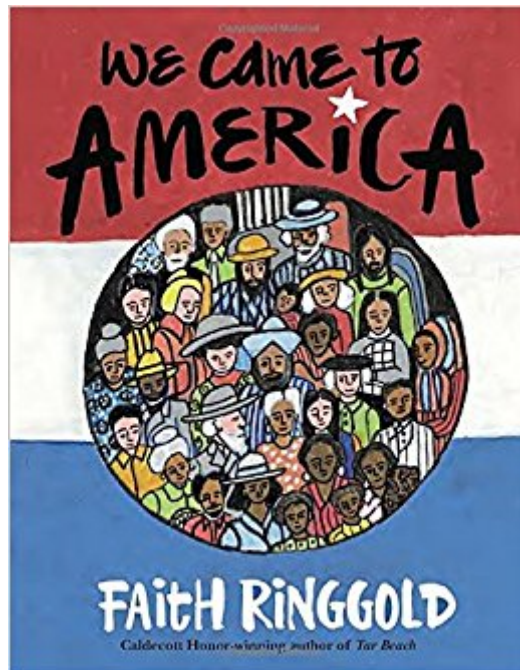




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We Came To America



Synopsis

A timely and beautiful look at America's rich history of immigration and diversity, from Faith Ringgold, the Coretta Scott King and Caldecot Honor winning creator of *Tar Beach* — From the Native Americans who first called this land their home, to the millions of people who have flocked to its shores ever since, America is a country rich in diversity. Some of our ancestors were driven by dreams and hope. Others came in chains, or were escaping poverty or persecution. No matter what brought them here, each person embodied a unique gift — their art and music, their determination and grit, their stories and their culture. And together they forever shaped the country we all call home. Vividly expressed in Faith Ringgold's sumptuous colors and patterns, *We Came to America* is an ode to every American who came before us, and a tribute to each child who will carry its proud message of diversity into our nation's future. — **PRAISE FOR WE CAME TO AMERICA:** **A 2017 Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People** — “As Americans wrestle with the moral and legal aspects of immigration, Ringgold offers a reminder of the country's multifaceted lineage — and of the beauty to be discovered at cultural crossroads. The simplicity of Ringgold's text, combined with the captivating designs, makes this a compelling, must-have narrative for a wide audience. — *School Library Journal*, starred review — “Using a broad brush and folk style familiar from her story quilts, Ringgold pictures families of diverse heritage — her powerful voice emphasizes unity and mutual appreciation. — *Publishers Weekly* — “[A] timely look at the diverse makeup and backgrounds of the American people. — *Booklist*

Book Information

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Knopf Books for Young Readers (May 10, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0517709473

ISBN-13: 978-0517709474

Product Dimensions: 8.9 x 0.4 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #71,849 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #153 in Books > Children's

Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > United States #180 in
Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction #270 in
Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Stories In Verse
Age Range: 5 - 8 years
Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

Customer Reviews

K-Gr 3 •As Americans wrestle with the moral and legal aspects of immigration, Ringgold offers a reminder of the country's multifaceted lineage and of the beauty to be discovered at cultural crossroads. The artist has repurposed a title she applied in 1997 to a story quilt; it featured a revolt on a slave ship whose beacon was a black Statue of Liberty. Here she broadens her scope. After she acknowledges that "some of us were already here" and "some of us were brought in chains," her free verse unfolds with a line or two on each page touching on reasons for immigration and the solace and joy found in sharing "our food, our fashion, and our art." A refrain emphasizing the country's ethnic and religious plurality punctuates the occasionally rhyming stanzas. The poem is paired with tableaux of families from various time periods and places, as if their portraits were captured the moment they stepped on American soil. Vibrant paint on canvas provides a changing, high contrast backdrop for the parade of patterns and styles, from the bold geometrics of African cloth and the pinstriped suits and fedoras of Europe to the decorative tunics and elaborate headdresses of Eastern communities. A final scene depicting a gathering of diverse children concludes that despite differences, "we are ALL Americans,/Just the same." While the message is a time-honored one, it clearly needs to be foregrounded. VERDICT The simplicity of Ringgold's text, combined with the captivating designs, makes this a compelling, must-have narrative for a wide audience. •Wendy Lukehart, District of Columbia Public Library

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"[A] timely look at the diverse makeup and backgrounds of the American people. •Booklist

A refrain repeats throughout the picture book *We Came to America* : "We came to America, every color, race, and religion, from every country in the world." Written by Faith Ringgold and illustrated in her signature style, this timely book reminds us that unless we are Native American all of our family lines began elsewhere. We are grafted into the dream of this country. Each of us yearns for the fruits of education, opportunity, upward mobility, and religious freedom. "In spite of where we come from...We are all Americans." This is a good reminder to all readers, youth and adult, that we must stand up for the American ideal "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Each of us must work to ensure that all Americans enjoy equal freedoms. Equality is a group endeavor.

Adoption-attuned Lens: Kids who have been adopted internationally may especially appreciate this retelling of the universality of our nation's immigrant roots. Starting a conversation on this topic would be easy.

•Gayle H. Swift, *ABC, Adoption & Me, A Multicultural Picture Book*

A beautifully written book. This book has an outstanding theme and amazing illustrations.

A quick book, suitable for young audiences, about immigration and the forming of the American people. Ringgold's poem and art highlights the various cultures that make up the American population, and the reasons they moved from other countries. Freedom, opportunities, avoiding oppression and death. It doesn't get very heavy when covering the injustices of the world at large (and, after all, modern America is certainly proving we are bad at avoiding injustice here at home. :/), but it doesn't hide and say everything was cool for the people arriving. The book doesn't really cover what happens once the immigrants arrive, however, which feels a little disingenuous, but I suppose the book would have to be a fair bit longer to add in that tough information. I've really only got two main complaints here. First the book starts off with a stumble, as Ringgold says that "we came to America, every color, race, and religion," and then points out the native tribes, noting "some of us were already here." It feels a bit like the story of the native tribes is being washed away a bit, there. Also, the book ends with a single-page reprinting of the story's text as a poem. I'm not sure why this was necessary, except for length padding? I'd have much preferred a little page or two on the immigration process through the ages. Overall, okay. Good for a school unit on diversity, but not one I'd really insist needs to be in such a unit. There's plenty of books out there that cover the subject of moving to a new country, and this one merely looks at things from a broad view, which might be hard for younger kids to understand. I'd far and ahead recommend books focusing on individuals, rather than the entire concept of immigration.

The most succinct and diplomatic book out there showing who Americans are. Written and illustrated by Faith Ringgold, published by Alfred A Knopf. Vibrant and telling illustrations adorn this book.#mustread #diversity #Americans #meltingpot #PB #rhyme

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