



# Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

**About the Book of the Month:** This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

## Amazing Places

Poems Selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins,  
Chris Soentpiet (Illustrator), Christy Hale  
(Illustrator)

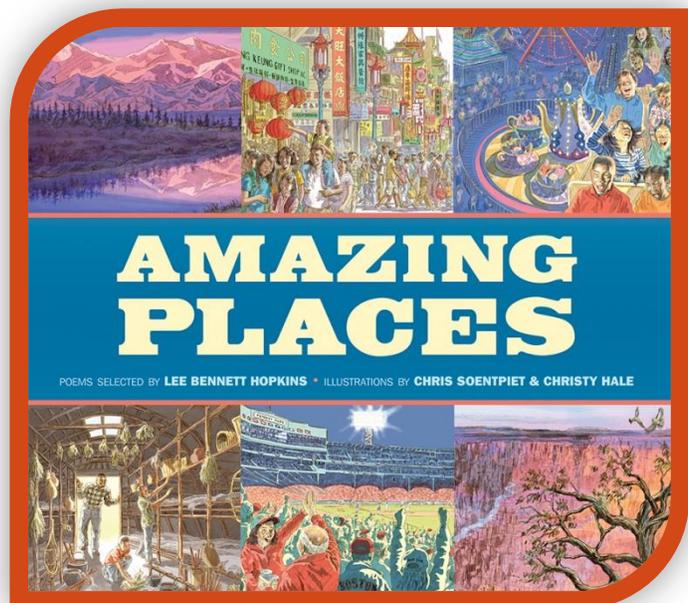
This collection of original poems brings together fourteen selections that celebrate through poetic imagery some of the amazingly diverse people and places in our nation. The poems take readers on an exciting multiethnic travelogue around the United States and encourage a positive appreciation of our country's historical, environmental and cultural heritage. The inspiring and insightful poems were created by some of the best-known authors writing for children.

ISBN: 978-1600606533

Publisher: Lee & Low Books

Year Published: 2015

Age Range: 7–10



## Book Themes

Diversity, Culture, Sense of place, Poetry

## Key Words

Discuss and define these words with children prior to reading the book. Do not focus on students' retention of all the words; instead make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind children of their meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and point

out to students when they appear in the story. See also ADL's [Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying for Elementary Age Children](#).

- |             |                |               |               |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| ▪ admiring  | ▪ dim sum      | ▪ moccasins   | ▪ spirit      |
| ▪ adventure | ▪ display      | ▪ protect     | ▪ treacherous |
| ▪ ancestral | ▪ door-to-door | ▪ quinceañera | ▪ upriver     |
| ▪ battle    | ▪ lonely       | ▪ reams       | ▪ veneer      |
| ▪ becalmed  | ▪ longhouse    | ▪ respite     | ▪ witness     |
| ▪ cascading | ▪ luscious     | ▪ sentinel    |               |
| ▪ centuries | ▪ majestic     | ▪ shoals      |               |
| ▪ deters    | ▪ memoried     | ▪ statehouse  |               |

### Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask these questions:

- What is the title of the book? What do you think it means?
- What comes to mind when you think about amazing places?
- Who and what do you see on the cover of the book?
- What do you think the book might be about?
- Look at the map of the U.S. on the front or back cover of the book. Can you find your state? What other states have you visited or would like to visit?

If you choose to read just *one or a few* poems, use the following discussion questions for each individual poem:

- How did you feel while listening to the poem?
- What words and images stood out for you?
- What place is being described?
- By reading or listening to the poem, what did you learn about the place and the people?
- Does the poem use any poetry elements (see below extension activity #1 for poetry elements)?
- What message, mood, feeling or theme is conveyed through the poem?
- Why do you think the author considers this an “amazing place?”

If you choose to read *all* of the poems aloud, use some or all of the following discussion questions:

- What do all of the poems have in common?
- How do the poems differ?
- Are any of the places familiar to you?

- What poem(s) stood out for you? Please explain why.
- What did you learn about different places, people and culture by reading/listening to the collection of poems?
- As you listened to the different poems about amazing places, what places in your life came to mind?
- What are the most compelling or exciting images to you and why?
- Why do you think the title, *Amazing Places*, was chosen for the book?
- What do you think is the overall message of the book?"

### Extension Activities

Below are activities you can do with students to extend their learning from the book.

#### 1. Elements of Poetry Identification

April is [National Poetry Month](#) and many teachers focus on poetry in English Language Arts (ELA) during April. If you have not already done so, discuss with students the elements of poetry, which include some or all of the following: alliteration, metaphor, personification, repetition, rhyme, rhythm, simile and symbols. Read aloud one of the poems from the book and ask students to listen carefully while you read and have them identify the elements of poetry included in the poem. You can also give them a copy of the poem to follow along. Instruct students to form pairs or small groups. Give each pair/group a copy of one of the poems in the book. Have students read their assigned poem and identify the different elements of poetry that are included in that poem and share anything else they notice and like about it. If time permits, have students select one of the elements of poetry and write a short poem that includes their chosen element. Invite students to share their poem with the class and put them together in a poetry collection.

#### 2. Culture and Places: Descriptive Exercise

Remind students about the title and focus of the book. Ask students: *Why do you think the book is called Amazing Places?* Discuss with students the images, words, memories and metaphors the author of each poem uses to convey something about that place. For further inspiration about places, read some of the descriptions of the places on pages 30-32 of the book. In addition, discuss with students what words, images and concepts reflect something about culture (e.g., quinceañera, moccasins, dim sum, state fair, African bazaar). Elicit/explain that **culture** refers to the patterns of daily life that can be seen in language, arts, customs, holiday celebrations, food, religion, beliefs/values, music, clothing and more that a group of people share. Ask students to think about a place that is important to them. This place can be a room (e.g., their bedroom), a place they have visited, a place where something special takes place, a place that has special meaning, a relative's home/community or somewhere special to them and their family. Ask students to close their eyes and picture that place, asking the following questions: *What big things do you see? What small details do you notice? What do you hear? Are there any smells? How do you feel when you are there? Who else is there?* Have students open their eyes and take out a piece of paper and record the words and images that came to mind. Have them draw a picture of their special place and give it a title or caption. Hang the pictures around the room and have each student explain their drawing to their classmates.

### 3. Reader's Response Writing Activities

- **Write about where you want to visit**

Have students consider the different places described in the poems in the book. Ask students: *If you could visit one place described in the poems, which place would it be and why?* Have students write a short essay about that place. Tell them to describe what they imagine the place to be like, state why they want to visit and what they hope to experience when they visit.

- **Send the author a letter or email**

Have students choose a poem that particularly interested or excited them or one with which they felt a strong connection. Have them think about the poem and consider what they want to say to the author, which can include: (1) their own reflections about the poem, (2) how they felt as they read it, and (3) questions for the author including how they came up with the idea for the poem and how long it took for them to write it. You can brainstorm additional ideas for the letters as a class. Have students gather all their thoughts and write an email or letter to the author of the poem.

- **Write your own "amazing place" poem**

Discuss with students the different types of poetry (e.g., acrostic, haiku, narrative, limerick, free verse) and the elements of poetry (see Extension Activity #1). Have students write their own "amazing place" poem. This can include several drafts where they conference with other students and you to develop a final version for which they are proud. They can also use their images and words from Extension Activity #2. Share the poems aloud and consider having a Poetry Month event in your school or classroom and invite parents/family members to attend.

### ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and other educational resources on diversity, culture, sense of place, poetry.

#### Curriculum Resources

Diverse Books Matter, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/diverse-books-matter](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/diverse-books-matter).

Social Justice Poetry, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/social-justice-poetry](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/social-justice-poetry)

Who Am I? Identity Poems, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems)

#### Websites

Anti-Bias Education

[www.adl.org/what-we-do/promote-respect/anti-bias](http://www.adl.org/what-we-do/promote-respect/anti-bias)

Provides training program offerings for pre-K through 12th grade school communities—educators, administrators, youth and families—which focus on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate by addressing issues of bias and bullying.

Anti-Bias Education: The Power of Social-Emotional Learning

[www.adl.org/news/op-ed/anti-bias-education-the-power-of-social-emotional-learning](http://www.adl.org/news/op-ed/anti-bias-education-the-power-of-social-emotional-learning)

This op-ed discusses the power of integrating anti-bias education and social and emotional learning to help young people understand bias and work on social justice.

**Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment**

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/creating-an-anti-bias-learning-environment](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/creating-an-anti-bias-learning-environment)

Provides tips for educators to create an anti-bias learning environment.

**Dos and Don'ts with Special Diversity Events**

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/dos-and-donts-with-special-diversity-events](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/dos-and-donts-with-special-diversity-events)

Dos and don'ts to help schools host special diversity events that are thoughtful and create environments that are inclusive and safe for all multicultural students.

**Children's Books**

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

People, Identity & Culture, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[201\]=201&tid\[202\]=202&tid\[203\]=203&tid\[204\]=204&tid\[205\]=205&tid\[206\]=206&tid\[207\]=207&tid\[208\]=208&tid\[209\]=209&tid\[210\]=210&tid\[211\]=211&tid\[212\]=212&tid\[213\]=213&tid\[214\]=214&tid\[215\]=215](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[201]=201&tid[202]=202&tid[203]=203&tid[204]=204&tid[205]=205&tid[206]=206&tid[207]=207&tid[208]=208&tid[209]=209&tid[210]=210&tid[211]=211&tid[212]=212&tid[213]=213&tid[214]=214&tid[215]=215)

Social Justice, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[231\]=231&tid\[232\]=232&tid\[233\]=233&tid\[234\]=234&tid\[235\]=235&tid\[236\]=236&tid\[237\]=237](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[231]=231&tid[232]=232&tid[233]=233&tid[234]=234&tid[235]=235&tid[236]=236&tid[237]=237)