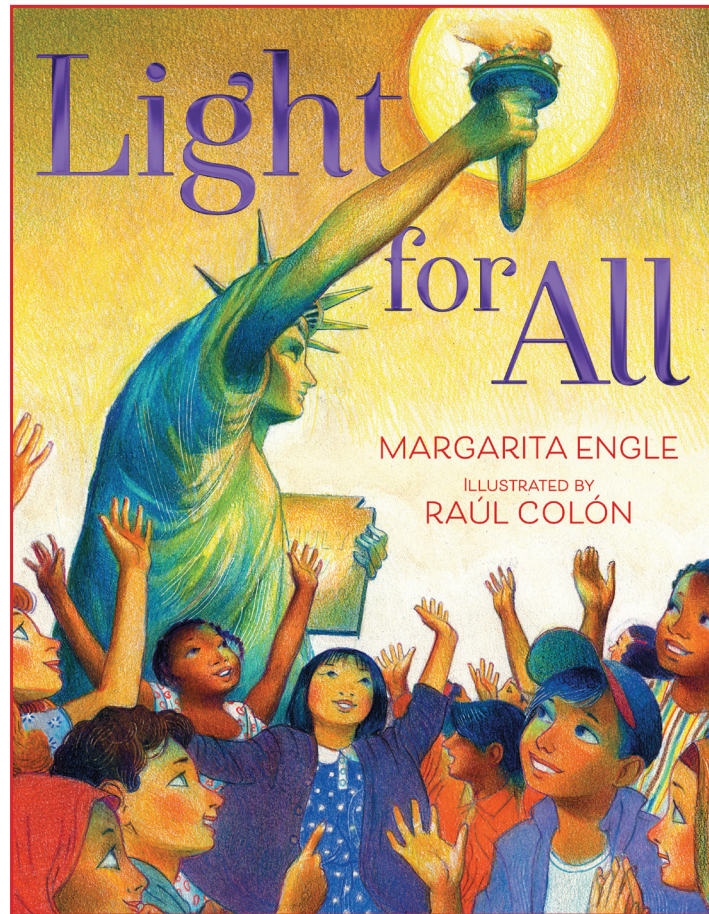


# A COMMON CORE CURRICULUM GUIDE TO



HC: 9781534457270 • EB: 9781534457287 • Ages 4–8

## BACKGROUND / SUMMARY

Margarita Engle will inspire readers of all ages with *Light for All*, a hopeful story of immigration to the United States. Engle's poetry gets to the heart of why people emigrate and beautifully narrates the shared experiences of living in a new place and adopting a new home. The Statue of Liberty looms large literally and figuratively throughout the book as the promise of freedom and opportunity: "The powerful light of a mighty lamp shines for all!" Raúl Colón's powerful illustrations of "War, storms, earthquakes, hunger . . ." vividly depict why people leave their homelands. Engle eloquently reminds us that although immigrants arrive with skills, trades, and professions, they also learn to speak English and study the history of the United States. The connection immigrants have to their homelands is portrayed with inviting pages of iconic landmarks; students will love guessing the locations of each one.

Primarily a story of immigration, Engle also addresses the fact that not everyone who lives in the United States emigrated here. She writes that the "long, bitter story of the US, a history that began with cruel invasions, stealing land from Native people, and bringing enslaved captives all the way from Africa, then seizing a huge part of Mexico . . ." which elevates the story and secures its place as an inclusive and relevant component to any unit on US immigration. The author's note explains that Engle wishes to portray the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of freedom and equality for all people in the United States. *Light for All* is a compelling story that inspires young readers to achieve a deeper understanding of the power behind Lady Liberty's "radiant flame" that continues to serve as a "shared hope for all."



## PREREADING

1. This activity will set the stage for *Light for All* by activating prior knowledge about the Statue of Liberty. Create a K-W-L chart to track what students know and want to know. Then have them return to the chart and fill out what they've learned after reading the book. Use this re-source to help answer your students' questions: [https://www.ducksters.com/history/us\\_1800s/statue\\_of\\_liberty.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/us_1800s/statue_of_liberty.php)

KNOW	WANT TO KNOW	LEARNED

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The discussion questions and activities below draw on Common Core State Standards for Reading Literature (RL) that ask children to ask and answer questions about key details in a text (RL.K.1-RL.2.1), retell stories, demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson (RL.K.2-RL.2.2), and describe characters, settings, and major events in a story (RL.K.3-RL.2.3).

Share the questions below with your students, which focus on key components of the story. They can be discussed in partners, small groups, or as a whole class.



2. What is the "powerful light of a mighty lamp" referring to?



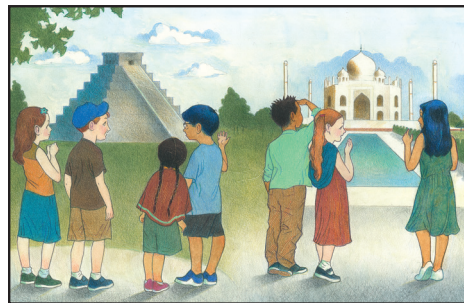
3. Describe what you see in the picture. Why might these people want to escape?



4. Name some reasons immigrants might want to come to the US. Why do you think the illustrator includes children in this picture?



5. Why did the illustrator draw two separate groups of children?



6. Name the structures that you see pictured and its location.



7. What does the author mean by "stealing land from Native people" and "bringing enslaved captives all the way from Africa, and then seizing a huge part of Mexico"? How does it make you feel? Why do you think the author includes these details in the story? What other questions do you have? Where might you look to find the answers?



## CRAFT/STRUCTURE

To learn about craft and structure, the CCSS asks us to help students learn and understand vocabulary words and phrases (RL.K.4-RL.2.4), think about the overall structure of the story (RLK.5-RL2.5), and assess the author's point of view (RLK.6-2.6).

8. Margarita Engle uses figurative language to bring her stories to life in the minds of her readers. Explain to students that figurative language is used to help describe something ordinary in a new, creative way. Metaphors are one example of figurative language. Metaphors compare two different things by saying one thing is the other.

The title of this book is *Light for All*, and light is mentioned many times throughout the book. It refers to the Statue of Liberty torch, but it also has a symbolic or metaphoric meaning. Ask students to think about the various images of light the author uses in each of the following examples. What messages do you think she is trying to share? What does light represent, especially for the people who are near it?



"The powerful light of a mighty lamp shines for all!"



The towering glow from a lifted torch greets all."



"A radiant flame glows for all."



"Her light leaps, loops, weaves, and dances, creating shared hope for all."

Share the following questions with your students to discuss the story structure, point of view, and meaning.

9. Repetition is another kind of literary device. Why do you think the author uses the light metaphor over and over in the story?
10. Who is telling the story? How do you know?
11. Why do you think the author decided to write this book and share this story? Which part was most surprising or interesting to you?
12. What does the word *immigrant* mean? Complete the Frayer model template to explain it in your own words.

DEFINITION	SENTENCE
<b>IMMIGRANT</b>	
VISUAL	SYNONYM

## WRITING

The Common Core State Standards emphasize writing narrative, informative, and explanatory text in the early grades. The writing activities below provide experience writing to give an opinion (W.K-2.1), to inform (W.K-2.2), and to write narratives (W.K-2.3).

### Storytelling Class Project

13. Telling someone's story allows them to share something about their identity that others may not know. Explain to your students that listening to other people's stories helps us develop empathy and connect to each other. Have students either pair up and interview one another about an important moment in their lives, or interview someone they know who has immigrated to the US and is willing to speak about their experiences. Consider publishing the interviews or a few of the most powerful stories as a class book or website.

Sample questions for interviewing someone who has immigrated to the US:

- Why did you or your family decide to leave your home country?
- Why did you choose the United States?
- Who came with you? Did anyone stay behind?
- How did you travel? What was your journey like?
- What was it like when you first arrived?
- What do you miss most about your home country?
- Was there anything about the United States that surprised you? Is living here what you expected it would be?
- What do you like best about living in the United States?
- What advice would you give someone who is considering coming to the United States?

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## EXTENDING THE EXPERIENCE OF READING THE BOOK WITH ACTIVITIES ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Share these questions and activities with your students to help them connect the story with other topics in your curriculum.

### Social Studies

14. Pretend you have a pen pal who has just immigrated to the US from another country. Write them a letter describing what it's like living in the US and how you would like to welcome them to their new home.
15. *Light for All* describes the experience of arriving in the US through Ellis Island in New York City. Did you know there was another immigration station in California called Angel Island? Do some research to learn more about both. How are they alike and different?

Consider reading this article to learn more about Angel Island:  
<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Angel-Island/629294>



## Art

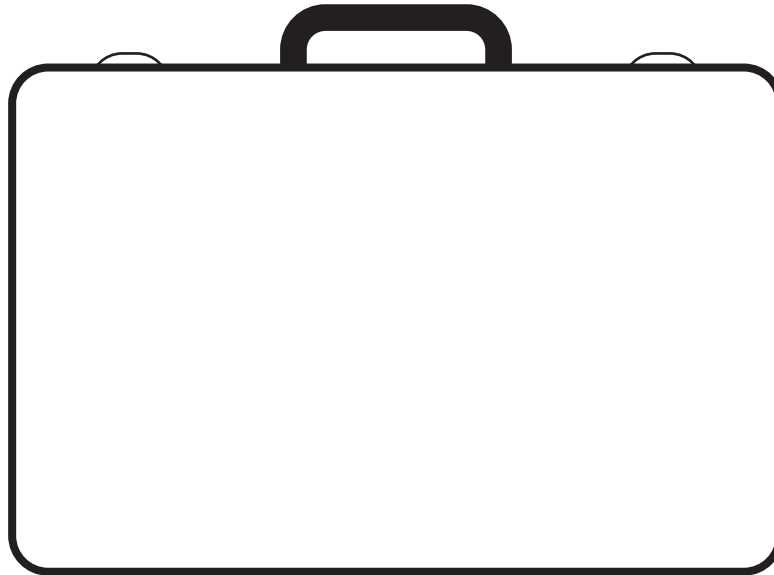
16. Pretend you were recently hired to create a new design for the Statue of Liberty. Work with a partner or small group to create a drawing or model of the new design. Be prepared to answer the following questions:

- What figure or shape is your new statue?
- Why did you choose that design?
- How big is the structure?
- What materials did you use to build it?
- What will people experience if they visit the statue?
- Where will the new statue live? Why?

Be sure to label each part of the statue, including small details like poems, sayings, or any inscriptions.

### “What’s in Your Suitcase?”

17. Imagine you are moving to a new country. Draw or list the items you would bring in your suitcase. Present your suitcase to a friend, being sure to discuss why you chose each item.



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## READ OTHER BOOKS ABOUT IMMIGRATION

*The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi

*Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales

*A Different Pond* by Bao Phi

*All the Way to America* by Dan Yaccarino

*Here I Am* by Patricia Hee Kim

*From North to South/Del Norte al Sur*  
by René Colato Laínez

*Mango Moon* by Diane de Anda

*From Far Away* by Robert Munsch  
and Saoussan Askar

*Islandborn* by Junot Díaz

*The Day War Came* by Nicola Davies

## READ OTHER PICTURE BOOKS BY MARGARITA ENGLE

*A Song of Frutas*

*Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreno Played  
the Piano for President Lincoln*

*All the Way to Havana*

*Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage  
Changed Music*

*The Flying Girl: How Aída de Acosta Learned to Soar*

*Bravol!: Poems About Amazing Hispanics*

*Orangutanka: A Story in Poems*

*A Dog Named Haku:  
A Holiday Story from Nepal*

*Miguel's Brave Knight: Young Cervantes  
and His Dream of Don Quixote*

*The Sky Painter: Louis Fuertes, Bird Artist*

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## READ OTHER BOOKS ILLUSTRATED BY RAÚL COLÓN

*Draw!*

*Imagine!*

*José! Born to Dance* by Susanna Reich

*Angela's Christmas* by Frank McCourt

*Don't Forget, God Bless Our Troops* by Jill Biden

*A Band of Angels* by Deborah Hopkinson

*Counting the Stars: The Story of Katherine Johnson,  
NASA Mathematician* by Lesa Cline-Ransome

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Melissa Cardinali is a literacy teacher and librarian. She lives in New York City with her husband, two young sons, and way too many books to fit in her apartment.

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