

The Narrative of Migration: Book Club Activity #5

Teacher Instructions

1. Overview & Learning Objectives

Format: Book Club Discussion (small groups or whole class, depending on group size).

Estimated Time: 90 - 120 minutes (dedicated discussion time after reading).

Context: This assignment uses fiction (novels, memoirs) to explore migration themes, allowing students to analyze topics like identity, integration, belonging, and cultural adaptation through a personal narrative lens. This complements the theoretical and policy-focused activities.

Learning Objectives (LOs): Upon completion, students will be able to:

- Analyze how fictional characters experience and embody migration theories and policies.
- Discuss complex themes such as the maintenance of transnational identity, racialization, and the concept of "home."
- Compare the fictional experiences to the real-world case studies previously discussed.

2. Materials and Preparation

- **Required Resources:** Students must read **one** full-length novel or memoir selected by the teacher.
- **Pre-work:** Students must read the entire book and prepare detailed notes for the discussion questions. They must be prepared to cite specific passages.
- **Setup:** The instructor can choose to assign the same book to the entire class for a deep, shared discussion.

3. Suggested Reading List

Book Title	Author	Theme Focus
Americanah	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	Race, Identity, Transnationalism, Skilled Migration (US/Nigeria).
The Year I Flew Away	Marie Arnold	Childhood Migration, Cultural Adaptation, Integration, Fantasy/Magical Realism.
Exit West	Mohsin Hamid	Forced Migration, Borders/Mobility, Identity, Displacement (Magical Realism).
The Ungrateful Refugee (Memoir)	Dina Nayeri	Asylum Seeking, Bureaucracy, Gratitude, Belonging (Iran/US/Europe).
Všetko, čo nás spája (Everything that connects us) <i>in Slovak, only</i>	Kvet Nguyen	Integration, Identity, Second-Generation Immigrant Experience, Cultural Heritage (Slovak/Vietnamese context).

4. Discussion Question Guidance

The seminar discussion should move from personal reaction to critical and theoretical analysis. Encourage students to apply the books' narratives to migration theories. The questions posed in the seminar activity can be adapted by the instructor to reflect the specificities of the chosen book.

- **Identity & Belonging (Q2):** Focus on the concept of **hybridity**, the combination of cultures, and how the main character manages being "in-between."
- **Theories in Action (Q3):** Ask students if the migration in the book is best explained by **Neoclassical** (individual gain), **NELM** (family strategy), or **Network Theory** (social ties).
- **Policy Connection (Q5):** How did the policies (e.g.: visa rules, naturalization laws, refugee acceptance) of the destination country directly impact the character's life and choices?

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Student Materials

Preparation: Read the assigned book and prepare answers for the following questions. Your participation grade will be based on your ability to contribute to the discussion and cite specific evidence (passages, characters, events) from the text.

Discussion Questions

- 1. First Impressions and The Narrative Voice:** What was your immediate reaction to the book? Who is the narrator, and how does the author's choice of perspective (first-person, third-person) shape your understanding of the migration experience?
- 2. Identity and the Concept of "Home":** Discuss how the main character's sense of **identity** or **self-perception** changes during the migration and integration process. Where does the character ultimately feel "at home," or is the concept of home redefined?
- 3. Theories in Narrative:** Which of the migration theories we studied (e.g.: Neoclassical, Network, NELM) do you feel best explains the *reasons* for the migration in the novel? Cite a specific decision or passage that supports your theoretical choice.
- 4. Barriers and Integration:** What were the most significant **barriers** – both visible (e.g.: language, housing, visa status) and invisible (e.g.: racialization, microaggressions, cultural norms) – to the character's integration?
- 5. Policy and Fate:** How did the **legal status** or specific **policies** of the destination country fundamentally shape the main character's fate or trajectory? For example, how did bureaucracy, waiting periods, or visa types affect them?
- 6. Transnational Ties:** In what ways does the character maintain **transnational ties** to their country of origin (e.g.: through remittances, communication, return visits, or cultural practices)? How do these ties impact their life in the new country?



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