



# The Booklist Project



Focus: Culture-Specific Booklist  
Puerto Rican Culture  
Developed by: Kelly Bairos- Pereira  
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**Puerto Rican Themed Books  
For Ages 8-12**

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## Book List

1. Martel, C. (1976). *Yagua days*. New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers.  
[ISBN 0-8037-0457-7]

The book *Yagua Days* is about a boy living in New York who spends time at his parents' bodega or Spanish market. One day he is saddened by the rain but is consoled quickly when he finds out he will be traveling to Puerto Rico with his parents to visit relatives. While in Puerto Rico he realizes that fruits are not grown in trucks as he had been told in New York but rather in plantations, like the ones his family owns. He also discovers the beauty and excitement of a Yagua Day when he is taken on an adventure involving a mountainside, a palm frond and the rain.

In this book there are many Spanish words but to help with pronunciation and meaning, you will find a Spanish word list in the back of the book. This book is part of the Reading Rainbow Series.

This book is appropriate for grades 3-5 or ages 8-11.

The **WIDA** reading level is *High Developing*.

2. Ambert, A. (1997). *Why the wild wind blow*. Crystal Lake, IL: Rigby, a Division of Reed Elsevier. [ISBN 0-7635-3271-1]

This book is about two gods, Yukayu and Huracan, and their power over the indigenous people of Puerto Rico known as the Tainos. Yukayu is highly worshipped for all of the good he does while Huracan, whose name lead to the word hurricane, is evil and jealous. See how the

Tainos face the challenges set forth by Huracan in this book. This book reveals how Tainos help themselves understand natural disasters.

This book is available in Spanish; its title translates to:

*Por que soplan los vientos salvajes*

This book is appropriate for grades 3-5 or ages 8-11, it could also serve middle school aged children.

The WIDA reading level is ***Developing/Expanding***.

3. Winter, J. (2009). *Sonia Sotomayor: a judge grows in the Bronx*. New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers. [ISBN 978-1-4424-0303-1]

The book *Sonia Sotomayor: A judge grows in the Bronx* is a biography of Sonia Sotomayor, the first Puerto Rican woman to become a Supreme Court justice. It is the story of her upbringing in the South Bronx of New York, where she lived with her mother and brother. Her family was originally from Puerto Rico and her mother held on to her traditions and culture very strongly passing on the values of hard work, determination, and perseverance. This story uses a metaphor that compares human lives to flowers; both need love and attention to grow and prosper. It is a great story told for children, an inspiration to all who feel they want to become someone.

This is a bilingual book, aimed at children ages 4-8 or grades 3-5 for independent readers.

The WIDA reading level for this book would be ***Expanding***.

Other teacher resources include discussion questions and follow-up activities for guided reading at the following website:

[http://books.simonandschuster.com/Sonia-Sotomayor/Jonah-Winter/9781442403031/reading\\_group\\_guide](http://books.simonandschuster.com/Sonia-Sotomayor/Jonah-Winter/9781442403031/reading_group_guide)

This website is about the Supreme Court; it even includes a You Tube clip of Sonia Sotomayor's speech after being sworn into her new office.

<http://www.squidoo.com/supreme-court-nominee#module61461592>

A biography of Sonia Sotomayor can be found on Wikipedia.com.

4. Montes, M. (2000). *Juan Bobo goes to work: a Puerto Rican folktale*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers. [ISBN 0-688-16233-9]

Juan Bobo translated into English means silly John or foolish John. This story is about a boy named Juan who wants to help his mother but no matter what he does, he can't do anything right. This book was originally written in Spanish and has been translated and retold many times. In the English version of this book, there are many Spanish words or short phrases. To help with pronunciation and meaning a glossary can be found in the back of the book. This is a cute story with a happy ending; it will even make you laugh. This book is intended for ages 4-9, grades 3-5, maybe even earlier depending on child's reading level.

The WIDA reading level for this book is ***Beginning/Developing..***

This book is available in Spanish and won the 2002 Pura Belpré Honor Book Award for its illustrations and the ALA Notable Children's Book Award.

Another resource that teachers may find helpful can be located on [www.marisamontes.com](http://www.marisamontes.com), where the author tells about herself and her stories.

5. Pereira, A.Z. (2009). *Lilly & Milly: Amigas 4 life!*. Springfield, MA: Orgullo Publishing. [ISBN 978-0-9818390-4-2]

This story is about a girl named Lilly who moves from Puerto Rico to America, leaving behind her home, her friends and everything she knows. Meanwhile in America, a girl named Milly has just moved into a new neighborhood where she knows no one. Both girls meet while facing the challenges of having to adjust to a new place, new school and new people. Needless to say Lilly and Milly will become friends. This is a short chapter book sure to grab the attention of young girls, especially those who can relate to moving to a new city.

This book is for ages 8-12, or grades 3-5.

The WIDA reading level is ***Bridging***.

A helpful website that includes follow-up activities for children and also a teacher's corner still under development is:

<http://www.lillyandmilly.com>

To read about the book and to preview its pages go to

<http://www.freado.com/book/5679/lilly-milly-amigas-4-life>.

Lilly and Milly are on facebook too!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lilly-Milly/305117985740>.

6. Montes, M. (2000). *Something wicked's in those woods*. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc. [ISBN 0-15-202391-7]

This book is about two boys who lose their parents in a car accident and have to leave Puerto Rico to live with an aunt in California. While there the youngest boy has an imaginary friend and his older brother Javi believes this friend is evil, strange things begin to happen in this story that have both boys scared and wondering what wicked thing must be in the woods. This is a mystery book.

This book is intended for ages 8-12 or grades 3-6.

The WIDA reading level is ***Reaching***.

This book is a Junior Library Guild Selection.

Another resource that teachers may find helpful can be located on [www.marisamontes.com](http://www.marisamontes.com), where the author tells about herself and her stories.

7. Walker, P.R. (1988). *Pride of Puerto Rico: The life of Roberto Clemente*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company. [ISBN 0-15-263420-7]

This is a biography of a famous baseball player named Roberto Clemente, who made it into the Hall of Fame. He grew up in Puerto Rico before he played for a major league team; the Pittsburgh Pirates. He was known as a great baseball player but also a great man. He died tragically in the 70's in a plane but people remember him for the man he was on and off the field. This is an inspirational story for all baseball fans.

This book is intended for ages 9-12 or grades 4-6.

The WIDA level for this book is ***Expanding/Bridging***.

Other resources include the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, for a biography of Roberto Clemente. For another biography, one that compares R. Clemente to other major league players, see:[http://www.prwbooks.com/pride\\_of\\_puerto\\_rico\\_the\\_life\\_of\\_roberto\\_clemente\\_5414.htm](http://www.prwbooks.com/pride_of_puerto_rico_the_life_of_roberto_clemente_5414.htm)

This book is on google books, for a preview go to:

<http://books.google.com> and type in the book title.

There is a traveling exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum that includes Roberto Clemente, to view details:

[http://www.sites.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibits/roberto\\_clemente/main.htm](http://www.sites.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibits/roberto_clemente/main.htm)

8. Urbain, C. (2008). *Manuel and the lobsterman*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, Inc. [ISBN-10: 1590785169]

This book is about a 13 year old, Puerto Rican boy who goes to Maine for the summer with his mom and stepfather. He hates it there and decides he is going to work on a lobster boat with a tough old man to make money to return to Connecticut. He learns a lot that summer.

This book is intended for ages 9-11 or grades 4-6.

The WIDA reading level for this book is ***Bridging/Reaching***.

9. Padilla, R. (2000). *Cuentitos de mami amor*. Long Beach, NY: Libros: Estimulando la Capacidad Cultural. [516-889-6077]

This book shares with its readers the importance and tradition of oral history in the Puerto Rican culture. It is a narrative told about a woman who was made to leave her native island to seek better

opportunities in America. She tells of her struggles with this and her love of Puerto Rico. This book is written in Spanish.

This book is intended for grades 3-5.

The WIDA reading level for this book seems to be *Developing*.

10. Padilla, F. (2000). *Mis dos luces*. Long Island, NY: LIBROS: Estimulando La Capacidad Cultural. [ISBN 516-889-6077]

This story is about a boy who use to live in Puerto Rico and who is not fluent in Spanish but who remembers something about his native island. He meets a woman who teaches him about cultural pride. This book is written in Spanish.

This book is intended for grades 3-5.

The WIDA reading level for this book seems to be *Developing*.

## Other Teacher References

[www.newhorizons.org](http://www.newhorizons.org)

by Jennifer Johnson Higgins

This website includes evaluation tools for urban educators, including a checklist of things to watch out for when choosing multicultural literature.

[www.elboricua.com](http://www.elboricua.com)

This is a monthly online, cultural, and bilingual publication for Puerto Ricans and those who want to share in their culture. It includes books written and illustrated by Puerto Ricans for all ages.

Other websites to learn about the Puerto Rican culture go to the following sites:

[www.topuertorico.org/culture](http://www.topuertorico.org/culture)

[www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Puerto-Rico.html](http://www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Puerto-Rico.html)

[www.puertorico.com/culture](http://www.puertorico.com/culture)

[www.prfdance.org](http://www.prfdance.org)

[www.iprac.org](http://www.iprac.org)

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## The Booklist Project

A Project of the  
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