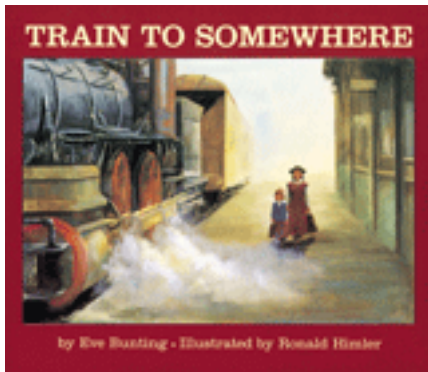
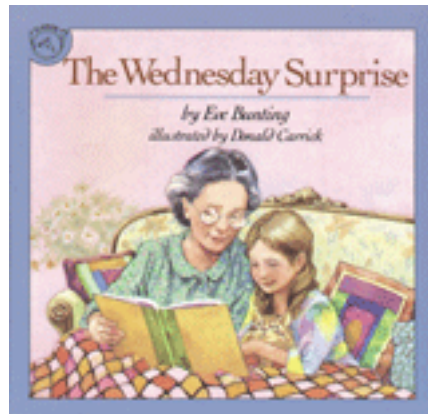


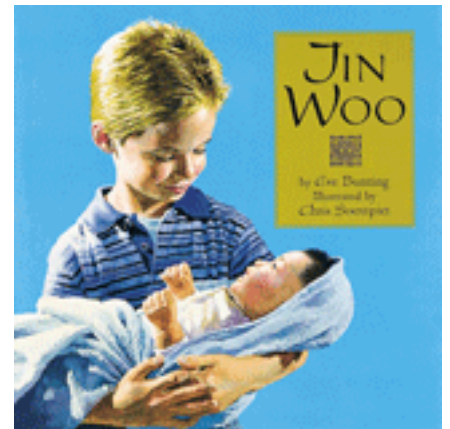
A Teacher's Guide to Books by Eve Bunting



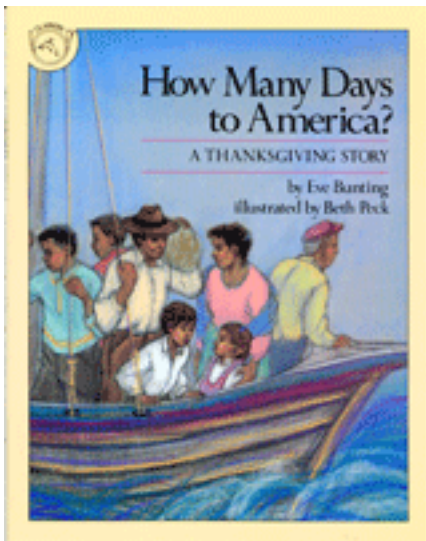
[Train to Somewhere](#)



[The Wednesday Surprise](#)



[Jin Woo](#)



[How Many Days to America?](#)



[The Memory String](#)

Eve Bunting is a wonderful writer to introduce to your second-, third-, or fourth-grade class. Her picture books have the emotional depth and richness of much longer fiction, giving children all the satisfactions that come with the best literature.

The language in Eve Bunting's picture books is simple, but absolutely precise. As readers, we get a sense of the care with which each word was chosen: for its meaning, its sound, and its rhythm. The stories Eve Bunting tells, whether historical or contemporary, are easy to follow and understand. They are rich in emotional impact. Whatever the subject, she colors her stories with warmth and humor. The details in her books make everything real — almost tangible — to young readers. Her characters are people we know. They come alive for us and invite us to see ourselves or others we love in them.

Whether you select Eve Bunting for an author study or use her books individually to enrich

curriculum, you and your students will find satisfying, heartwarming, and unforgettable experiences.

Throughout her career, Eve Bunting has written books that span the ages of childhood. The five picture books covered in this guide have been selected to work independently and together in second- through fourth-grade classrooms. The books will fit into reading and writing programs, literature, social studies units, American history, thematic studies, and art.

Train to Somewhere

Illustrated in full color by Ronald Himler

"Inspired by a little-known chapter of American history, this characteristically incisive collaboration from Bunting and Himler imagines a journey on one of the many 'Orphan Trains' that, between the mid-1850s and the late 1920s brought children from New York City orphanages to adoptive families in the West. . . . Himler's watercolor and gouache paintings offer polished portraits of the period as they convey the plot's considerable emotion. Like Bunting's text, his art is at once sobering and uplifting — and assuredly memorable." — *Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Beyond this gentle story lie the social issues of our day." — *School Library Journal*, starred review

- An ALA *Booklist* Editor's Choice
- A Jefferson Cup Honor Book

The Wednesday Surprise

Illustrated in full color by Donald Carrick

"With the groundswell of attention on literacy, this book is the perfect manifesto to the cause. The first-person account tells of the special gift that seven-year-old Anna and her grandmother have planned for dad's birthday: secretly, the two read books together until finally the grandmother has learned to read . . . This is an enriching account of new literacy among older Americans that will be enjoyed by all readers." — *School Library Journal*, starred review

"A gentle charmer." — *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

- A *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year
- An *American Bookseller* "Pick of the Lists"
- An ALA Notable Children's Book

Jin Woo

Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet

"Jin Woo's story is told in the present tense from the viewpoint of the baby's older brother, a six- or seven-year-old named David, who is also adopted. He is alternately sad, hopeful, unbelieving, and excited at this change in his life. . . . David's parents are understandably thrilled, with their joyous emotions captured in both Bunting's text and in Soentpiet's detailed, realistic paintings." — *Kirkus Reviews*

"A solid choice for adoption shelves, especially for those looking for material on international

adoption." — *ALA Booklist*

How Many Days to America?: A Thanksgiving Story

Illustrated in full color by Beth Peck

"Eloquently told, with lush, affecting illustrations, here is a Thanksgiving story that knows no season or race, but is for everyone all 'round." — *Publishers Weekly*

"A compassionate depiction of the plight of our recent would-be immigrants." — *Kirkus Reviews*

- *An American Bookseller* "Pick of the Lists"
- An Association of Children's Booksellers Children's Choice

The Memory String

Illustrated in full color by Ted Rand

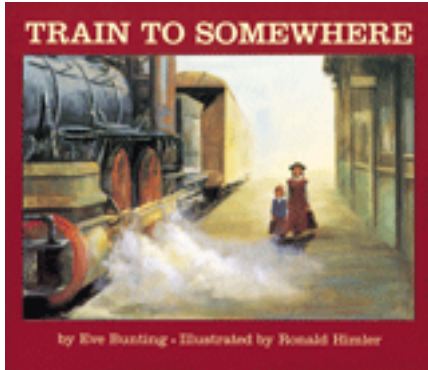
"A string of treasured buttons becomes a metaphor for a young girl's struggle to accept her new stepmother in this poignant exploration of love and loss. . . . Bunting has found an original way to tell an old story about making room for new memories." — *Kirkus Reviews*

"Bunting trusts readers to interpret behavior and understand complex emotions without her having to provide a moral or dramatic ending. Instead, the story offers a hopeful beginning and invites readers to think about ways to remember family history." — *School Library Journal*

- *An American Bookseller* "Pick of the Lists"

For Further Discussion

A Discussion Guide



Train to Somewhere

by Eve Bunting

illustrated by Ronald Himler

- Activities
- Standards
 - Language Arts
 - Social Studies
 - Writing-Research Skills
 - Theater Arts

Activities

In the introduction to *Train to Somewhere*, Eve Bunting tells the reader that while the names of the towns and the route the train takes are fictional, the Orphan Train was indeed real. From the 1850s to the 1920s, thousands of homeless children were sent from New York City by train to families in the Midwest in the hope they would be adopted. Many of the experiences and recollections of these children have been documented and can be found on the Internet. Have your fourth-grade class do a research project on Orphan Trains. Things to discover are:

- What are the names of real Orphan Train children?
- Why were children placed on Orphan Trains?
- When did they ride the train?
- What were the real routes Orphan Trains took?
- What cities did they pass through?
- Did children get adopted by loving families, or were they just a source of cheap labor?
- Were they happy with their new families? Why or why not?
- Are there any Orphan Train children still alive today?
- How have foster child programs changed?

The most extensive source for material can be found on the Web site of the Orphan Train Society: www.orphantrainriders.com. After reading the introduction, scroll down and click on the the subject menu. Links that will be particularly useful are:

Orphan Train Movement
Individual Rider Stories

Documents: Announcements, Arrivals, Reports, Legal
Charles Loring Brace
How Did It Feel?
Frequently Asked Questions

If your students do not have access to the Internet, they can write to the Orphan Train Heritage Society. The address is:

Orphan Train Heritage Society of America, Inc.
614 East Emma Drive, #115
Springdale, AR 72764

Once they have gathered their information, children can write traditional reports or create a newspaper of the times featuring human-interest stories about the individual children and the families who adopted them. Or they can host a mock television interview show with some children acting the roles of specific Orphan Train riders, and others being contemporary interviewers.

Standards

Language Arts

- Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics
- Makes oral and visual presentations to the class
- Writes in response to literature

Social Studies

- Knows how to view the past in terms of the norms and values of the times
- Understands state and national historic events
- Understands that "chance events" had an impact on history
- Understands that specific decisions and events had an impact on history
- Predicts how events might have turned out differently if specific individuals or groups had acted differently

Writing-Research Skills

- Uses electronic media to gather information

Theater Arts

- Demonstrates competence in writing scripts
-

A Discussion Guide



The Wednesday Surprise

by Eve Bunting

illustrated by Donald Carrick

- Activities
- Standards
 - Language Arts — Reading
 - Social Studies

Activities

Using *The Wednesday Surprise* as a starting point, develop a literacy project where your students buddy with children in a kindergarten class to read books, tell stories, and practice early reading skills. Alternatively, students might visit a senior citizen facility and read books with older adults.

For their kindergarten buddies, have each student keep a log of the books read. For each book they and their buddy should record the title, author, illustrator, characters, setting, plot, and their favorite part. If the story read was *The Wednesday Surprise*, the entry might be:

TITLE: *The Wednesday Surprise* by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Donald Carrick

CHARACTERS: Anna, Grandma, Sam, Mom, and Dad

PLOT: Anna reads with Grandma, and secretly teaches Grandma how to read.

FAVORITE PART: When Grandma surprises Dad and reads a book.

Discuss with your class the problems that Anna's grandmother faced because she couldn't read. Include questions such as: How does she make a shopping list? How does she know which bus to get on? What kind of job could she have?

Standards

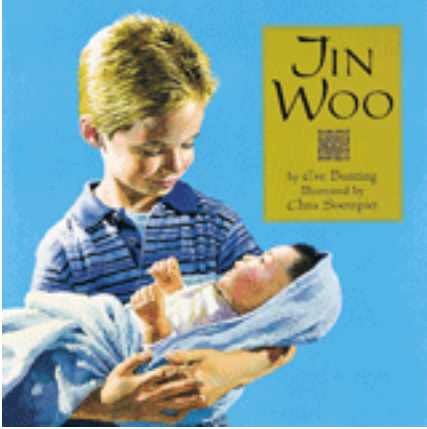
Language Arts — Reading

- Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process
- Establishes a purpose for reading
- Understands level-appropriate reading vocabulary
- Uses personal criteria to select reading material

Social Studies

- Understands that he or she is a member of the community
 - Contributes to the well-being of the community
-

A Discussion Guide



Jin Woo

by Eve Bunting

illustrated by Chris K. Soentpiet

- Activities
- Standards
 - Language Arts — Writing

Activities

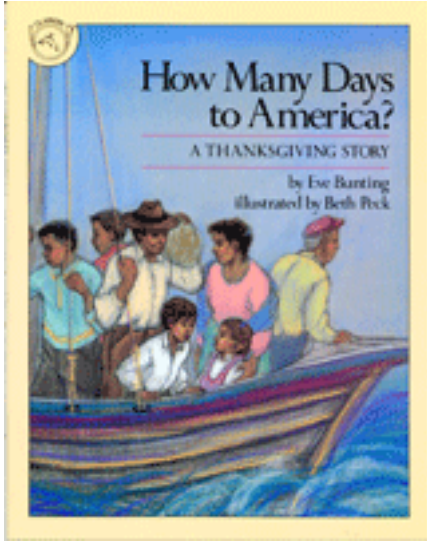
In the story *Jin Woo*, the turning point for Davey is the letter he gets from his new brother — with the help of Mom. Often the written word expresses sentiments and feelings that cannot be expressed orally. Engage your class in a letter-writing exercise to their parents. Have your students imagine that they are the same age as Jin Woo and write to their parents about love, hopes, dreams, fears — whatever is in their hearts. They can then write a follow-up letter in the present time reflecting on what they wrote as infants and how they feel now.

Standards

Language Arts — Writing

- Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process
 - Writes personal letters
 - Writes autobiographical compositions
 - Writes in response to literature
-

A Discussion Guide



How Many Days to America?

by Eve Bunting

illustrated by Beth Peck

- Activities
- Standards
 - Social Studies
 - Communication Skills
 - Language Arts

Activities

Whether your students' families came to America ten days ago, ten months ago, ten years ago, or much longer than that, they, like most Americans, are either immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Have your students do an oral-history project that explores each one's immigrant background. Develop questions such as:

- Who in your family immigrated to America?
- What countries were the original homelands?
- When did they come to the U.S.A.?
- Why did they come?
- How did they get here? Was the journey anything like the one in *How Many Days to America?*
- What language did they originally speak? Is that language still spoken in the home?
- What songs, customs, or traditional clothing can they tell about?

Your students should interview and tape-record, if possible, their parents and grandparents, as well as write and talk about their own personal experiences. Keep a world map in the room, and as the reports come, flag countries of origin.

On the day the histories are presented to the class, invite parents and conclude the presentations with an International Food Day.

Standards

Social Studies

- Understands that culture and experience influence our perceptions of places and regions
- Understands the patterns of human settlement and their causes

Communication Skills

- Obtains information about a topic using a variety of oral sources, such as conversations and interviews
- Makes basic oral presentations to class

Language Arts

- Organizes ideas for oral presentations
-

A Discussion Guide



The Memory String

by Eve Bunting

illustrated by Ted Rand

- Activities
- Standards
 - Language Arts — Writing
 - Visual Arts
 - Cooperative Learning

Activities

Just like Laura, the children in your class can store their memories. Create a memory string for the school year. You will need a different button for each week and a long string or thread. On Fridays discuss with the children what was the most memorable event that occurred during the week. String a button onto the thread and associate it with the event. For example: If the event was that everyone in the class passed a math test, pick a pearl button and say, "This Friday as you string a different button onto the thread, repeat the previous weeks' memories, then add the new memory for that week." By the time the end of the school year rolls around, the children should be able to look at the memory string and recite all the memorable events they had during the year. The children can also make individual memory strings.

Before the class breaks for summer vacation, have the children write essays about the school year, drawing on the memories from the string.

Standards

Language Arts — Writing

- Writes autobiographical compositions

Visual Arts

- Uses visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas

Cooperative Learning

- Works with others to produce a common goal
-

For Further Discussion



Eve Bunting

- [Thematic Studies](#)
- [Literature](#)
- [Art](#)

Thematic Studies

Home

Using *How Many Days to America?*, *Train to Somewhere*, and *Jin Woo*, create a study unit about the concept of home.

- What does home mean to your students?
- What does it mean to the family in *How Many Days to America?* What do Marianne and Laura think home means? And how is David's home threatened?
- How does David make a home for Jin Woo?
- How is the concept of home the same in all these books? How is it different? What understanding of home do these characters share with your students?

Set up a "home" corner in your classroom. Have each student bring in something that defines his or her home. You, too, should contribute to this collection. The students should write a paragraph about why this object or photograph is so important to them. You can have each child report to the class about his or her object.

Family

These five picture books feature a variety of families. For example, the family in *The Wednesday Surprise* is an extended family, and *The Memory String* has a stepfamily. Make a graphic organizer that describes the families in each of the books. You might also want to add the families of the children in the class to the organizer.

Literature

Using all five picture books, introduce the elements of literature to your third- and fourth grade- students.

Voice/Style

Who is the narrator? Except for *The Memory String*, all of the books are told in the first person. Why? Why do you think *The Memory String* has a third-person narrator? Talk about the language the author uses to give us information, to convey feelings, and to describe things. If your students are ready, look at the adjectives and sentence structure Eve Bunting employs.

Plot

What is the story? Beginning, middle, and end? What is the conflict? How is it resolved?

Setting

Where and when does the story take place? Without looking at the illustrations, what do we know about the setting?

Theme

What are the themes of the book? What message does the author communicate to us as readers?

Second graders will be introduced to many new words in these five books. On 3" x 5" index cards create a dictionary word box and add the new words as you read through the books. For each book place the words on your word wall so the children can see and refer to them throughout the day. Challenge your students to include these words in their everyday speech and their creative-writing projects.

Standards

Language Arts

- Understands the author's purpose
- Understands the basic concept of plot, elements of character development, and the ways in which language is used in literary texts

Art

Invite your students to be art critics. They should look at the illustrations in the books and compare their styles and media, from the super-realistic watercolor paintings in *Jin Woo*, illustrated by Chris Soentpiet, to the moving pastels by Beth Peck in *How Many Days to America?*

Ask the students:

- How does this art style fit the time and place and mood of the story?
- Do the characters look like the ones the story created in your mind?
- How would the feelings expressed in the story change if the illustrator used a different medium?
- Which illustration is your favorite? Why?
- How do the pictures make you feel?

Standards

Language Arts

- Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
- Knows how different elements help to establish plot, setting, and character in visual material
- Knows different elements that appeal to him or her

Visual Arts

- Knows the differences among visual characteristics
- Understands how different features cause different responses