

# The Booklist Project



Focus: Culturally- Responsive Author Study  
Booklist

Janet S. Wong

Developed by: Jenna Pierson

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## **Author Study:**



**Janet S. Wong**

Grade Levels- PreK-6th

Jenna Pierson

TESL 507

Dr. Cloud

### **Biography:**

Janet S. Wong was born in Los Angeles, California in 1962 where she lived with her two immigrant parents. Her mother emigrated from Korea and her father came from Korea. Janet currently lives in New Jersey with her husband and children.

Janet attended college where she received a degree in history and also in law. Janet worked for four years as a lawyer until she realized that she was unhappy with the line of

work that she chose. Janet soon quit her job after she realized that she would rather write books for children. She started taking writing classes, where she realized that she enjoyed writing poetry and that specific genre might be the most popular for her to write. It took many rejection letters and 18-months before Wong was finally able to sell one of her poetry books to a publisher. Wong's first book of poems that was published was titled, *Good Luck Gold*. Since her time of first being published, Wong has written six picture books and five poetry books.

Visit Janet Wong's Official Website:

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

### **Book List:**



**Me and Rolly Maloo**

[ISBN: 978-1-58089-158-5]

Wong, J. (2010). *Me and Rolly Maloo*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.

**Levels:**

Interest Level: Grade 3-4

Grade Level Equivalent: 4.3

DRA: 40

Guided Reading: Q-R

Lexile: 740L

WIDA: Bridging-Reaching

**Available Formats:** hardcover  
English

**Summary:**

Jenna is in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, but she isn't the most popular girl. One day, Rolly Maloo, who is popular, calls Jenna on the telephone to come over. Rolly is not very good at math and she wants Jenna's help to try and get a top score on the upcoming math test. Jenna is not sure if it is such a good idea to help Rolly to cheat on the test. Jenna was right; she ends up getting caught cheating on the test by her teacher Mrs. Pie and getting into quite a bit of trouble.

This book can be used in the classroom to show students that cheating is not the way to get smarter. The concept of cheating is a big thing in US schools, so ELL children may not be aware of what cheating is and this book shows it. This book can also lead into a discussion about consequences that can occur if a person is caught cheating in school. Also, this book can be used to teach about peer pressure. Children can be taught that if they believe something is not right they do not have to do it just because someone else is telling them to.

**Teacher Resources:**

Academic Cheating Fact Sheet:

[www.glass-castle.com.clients/www-nocheating-org/adccouncil/research/cheatingfactsheet.html](http://www.glass-castle.com.clients/www-nocheating-org/adccouncil/research/cheatingfactsheet.html)

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)

[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)



**Buzz**

[ISBN-13 978-0152163235]

Wong, J. (2000). *Buzz*. New York: Harcourt, Inc.

**Levels:**

Interest Level: Kindergarten

Grade Level Equivalent: 2.7

DRA: 9-10

Guided Reading: F

Lexile: 400L

WIDA: Beginning and up

**Available Formats:** paperback  
hardcover  
English

**Summary:**

In this book a little boy talks about all of the sights and sounds that he sees in the morning while getting ready with his parents. The sounds that the boy hears around the house in the morning are centered around the word BUZZ.

This book would be good for ELL children because they can think about the sounds that they hear during their own morning routine at home. They can go through what they do every morning as they prepare for school and talk about the sounds that they hear. Sounds are different in each culture, so it will be interesting for students to share the sounds that they hear and what makes those sounds. If a student says a sound that is different the teacher and students are able to have a discussion about how in each language things make different noises. The class can then generate a list of sounds that the same thing makes. For example, the class can come up with the different sounds that a dog makes across languages and culture.

**Teacher Resources:**

Animal Sound of the World:

[www.laits.utexas.edu/hebrew/personal/languages/animals/sounds.html](http://www.laits.utexas.edu/hebrew/personal/languages/animals/sounds.html)

Animal sounds- ESL Language studies abroad

[www.esl-languages.com/en/animal-sounds.htm](http://www.esl-languages.com/en/animal-sounds.htm)

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)

[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)



**The Trip Back Home**

[ISBN: 0-15-200784-9]

Wong, J. (2000). *The Trip Back Home*. New York: Harcourt, Inc.

**Levels:**

Interest Level: PreK

Grade Level Equivalent: 4.1

DRA: 30-34

Guided Reading: N

Lexile: 1190L

WIDA: Developing and up

**Available Formats:** hardcover  
English

**Summary:**

This story is about a little girl who goes to visit her mother's homeland in Korea. The little girl brings presents to share with her family in Korea. The family in Korea shares a lot with the little girl about their culture and how they live their everyday lives. When the little girl and her mother leave Korea, the family gave them small presents that represent Korea to take back home to America.

ELL students in the classroom may be able to share different parts of their lives back in their home country. If ELL children were born in America but have traveled back to their parent's country they will be able to relate to the little girl in the book.

**Teacher Resources:**

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)

[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)

**Minn and Jake**

[ISBN: 0-374-34987-8]

Wong, J. (2003). *Minn and Jake*. New York: Frances Foster Books.

**Levels:**

Interest Levels: Grades 2-5

Grade Level Equivalent: 4.7

DRA: 38

Guided Reading: P  
WIDA Level- Expanding and up

**Available Formats:** paperback  
hardcover  
English

### **Summary:**

In this book two children feel very lonely, Minn lost her best friend and Jake just moved into town. Both children are opposites from each other and they think they cannot be friends because of their differences. The two children become friends because their parents force them to spend time together. After spending some time together the children become best friends. The children are very different, but even through their differences they became friends.

This book is good for ELL children because it demonstrates that just because two people may look different it does not mean that they cannot be friends. It is difficult to make friends especially if a student is new in the school. This book shows that it is not easy to make friends, but you should always give people a chance.

### **Teacher Resources:**

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)  
[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)



### **Minn and Jake's Almost Terrible Summer**

[ISBN-13: 978-0-374-34977-6]

Wong, J. (2008). *Minn and Jake's Almost Terrible Summer*. New York: Frances Foster Books.

### **Levels:**

Interest Level: Grades 2-5  
Grade Level Equivalent: 3.9  
DRA: 40  
Guided Reading: Q-R  
Lexile: 740L  
WIDA Level- Expanding and Up

**Available Formats:** hardcover  
English

## Summary:

In this book Minn and Jake go on another adventure where they learn more about each other. In this story Jake went home to Los Angeles for the summer to see family and friends. Minn goes and visits Jake during the summer and learns a lot about Jake that he had never told her before. This causes trouble between Minn and Jake.

This book is good to use with students because it teaches about using words and talking out problems instead of just remaining mad at someone. This book shows that it is better to communicate about a situation than to let it just simmer and end up getting worse. This book would be good for ELLs because it shows that there is more than one way to resolve and issue. There are many different strategies that can be used in order to solve problems. This book gives the class an opportunity to discuss different strategies that can be used to solve problems.

## Teacher Resources:

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)

[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)



## This Next New Year

[ISBN: 0-374-35503-7]

Wong, J. (2000). *This Next New Year*. New York: Frances Foster Books.

## Levels:

Interest Level: PreK

Grade Level Equivalent: 3.9

WIDA: High Beginning and up

**Available Formats:** hardcover  
English

## Summary:

The Chinese New Year is about to be celebrated by more than people of the Chinese culture. The children in the book are from different ethnic backgrounds yet they all celebrate the Chinese New Year. Each family in the book has a different tradition that they have while the Chinese New Year is going on. Even though everyone may celebrate the New Year differently there is a common meaning to every family, it is a time of hope, a fresh start, and a second chance.



This book is good to use with ELL children because it talks about a holiday that every culture celebrates, even though everyone is different. The teacher can have an opportunity to talk to the ELL children about how they celebrate different holidays. The students will be able to show pride in the holidays that they celebrate and how they celebrate them.

**Teacher Resources:**

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)

[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)



**Apple Pie 4<sup>th</sup> of July**

[ISBN: 0-15-202543-x]

Wong, J. (2002). *Apple Pie 4<sup>th</sup> of July*. New York: Harcourt, Inc.

**Levels:**

Interest Level: PreK

Grade Level Equivalent: 2.6

DRA: 18-20

Guided Reading: J

Lexile: 730L

WIDA: Beginning and up

**Available Formats:** paperback

hardcover

English

**Summary**

In this story a young Chinese girl who's family owns a store, which is open seven days a week, fifty-two weeks, and three hundred sixty four days a year. In her family's store they make Chinese food. Yet today is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July so no one is going to want Chinese food. Throughout the day people do come into the store but it is just to buy chips, soda, and ice cream not Chinese food. The little girl feels that her family does not understand the American culture that they are living in because they are not acting like everyone else is on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

ELL students will be able to relate to the story because they may be trying to meld their native culture with the American culture. They are able to see that other people are struggling with the idea of two different cultures coming together. This book can be used to teach children about the different holidays that occur in the United States. It shows that everyone celebrates a little differently.

**Teacher Resources:**

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)

[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)



**Homegrown House**

[ISBN-13: 978-0-689-84718-9]

Wong, J. (2009). *Homegrown House*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books.

**Levels**

Interest Level: PreK-3

Grade Level Equivalent: 4.2

Guided Reading: K

Lexile: 1060L

WIDA: Developing and up

**Available Formats:** hardcover  
English

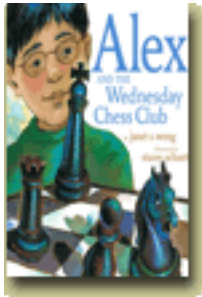
**Summary:**

This story is about a little 8-year-old girl who has move multiple times in her short lifetime. The little girl tells about all the different struggles that she has faced while moving around to different houses. The young girl in the book just wants to stay in one house and not move anymore. The little girls dreams about living in her grandmother’s house, and her dream comes true in the end. Her family moves to grandmothers and that is now their homegrown home to stay in.

The ELL students in the classroom may be able to relate to the little girl in the story because they may have moved multiple times. They will understand the difficulties that the little girl in the story is facing each time she moves into a new home.

**Teacher Resources:**

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)  
[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)



## **Alex and the Wednesday Chess Club**

[ISBN: 0-689-85890-6]

Wong, J. (2004). *Alex and the Wednesday Chess Club*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books.

### **Levels:**

Interest Levels: PreK-2

Grade Level Equivalent: 4.1

WIDA: Expanding-Bridging

**Available Formats:** hardcover  
English

### **Summary:**

Alex had been playing chess since he was four years old, but one game against Uncle Hooya and the love that Alex had for the game was over. When Alex is in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade he decides to take up the game of chess again and joins the Wednesday Chess Club. Once again Alex's love for chess is ignited. Alex began to play chess all the time. Soon Alex is entered into a Chess tournament where he has to face his cousin Little Hooya. Alex is nervous to face his cousin because he remembers the outcome against his uncle, but in the end Alex plays against his cousin and is victorious.

This book is great to use with ELL children because they are able to witness that the more you practice the better you get at something. This can connect to them learning the English Language. Also, this book demonstrates that something may be scary, but a person should not give up just because they are afraid.

### **Teacher Resources:**

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)

[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)

Chess Kids Academy

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



## **The Dumpster Diver**

[ISBN: 978-0-7636-2380-7]

Wong, J. (2007). *The Dumpster Diver*. Massachusetts: Candlewick Press.

### **Levels**

Interest Level: Kindergarten

Grade Level Equivalent: 3.9

Lexile: 920L

WIDA: Developing-Expanding

**Available Formats:** hardcover  
English

### **Summary:**

Steve the Electrician goes dumpster diving in the back alley once a month. The kids that live in the alley help out Steve on his dumpster diving adventures. The kids are given the treasures that Steve finds in the dumpster and tells them to use their imaginations and turn the garbage into treasure.

This book can be used to teach the ELL children in the class about the idea of dumpster diving. In the United States, dumpster diving is usually looked down upon because it is seen as dirty and gross. Yet, there are actually clubs that meet throughout the country that go dumpster diving for a living.

### **Teacher Resources:**

Teaching Books (need to get a subscription free trial is available)

[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)

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## The Booklist Project

A Project of the  
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