



# The Booklist Project



Focus: Culture-Specific Booklist  
Cambodia

Developed by: Ponreay Chek  
Fall, 2011

Booklist on:

# Cambodian Culture



[sacredsites.com](http://sacredsites.com)

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TESL 507  
Fall 2011

## Booklist Grades 3-8

1. Alcraft, R. (1999). *A visit to Cambodia*. Chicago, Illinois: Heinemann Library.  
[ISBN 157572845-1]

A nonfiction informational book geared towards early readers with its easy read text and beautiful real-life photos. The text provides an array of vital information conducive to the culture. It covers topics about Cambodia's landmarks, homes, work, school, language and many other important facets in the culture. The book also presents everyday Khmer words that one can learn such as hello [joom reab suro], please [suom], thank you [ar kun], etc. A glossary of key terms from the book is also provided. This book provides accurate and great visuals for ELLs to learn about the people and country of Cambodia.

WIDA level: Developing & up  
Standard level (grade-level readability): 540L  
Interest level: 2-6  
Book Available: hardcover

2. Coburn, J. (1998). *Angat: The Cambodian Cinderella*. Fremont, California: Shen's Books. [ISBN: 1-885008-09-0]

An ancient folktale that was written by a French folklorist who lived in Cambodia in the 1800's named Adhemard Leclere, Angat is a Cambodian version of Cinderella that dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Angat goes through the loss of her mother, endures cruelty by her stepmother and stepsister, but eventually, marries a prince with the guidance of the Spirit. However, with a twist of fate, Angat's life ends by the hands of her resentful family. Despite all odds, through Angat's virtue, she comes back to life and becomes queen. This book shows ELLs that Cinderellas exist in every culture, including Cambodia.

WIDA level: Bridging & up  
Standard level (grade-level readability): reading level 4.7 or 660L  
Interest level: K-2  
Book Availability: hardcover

A good website on a few suggested lessons for the book:  
<http://www.uen.org/Lessonplan/preview?LPid=13868>

3. Crew, L. (1991). *Children of the river*. New York, New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell books for Young Readers.  
[ISBN 9780440210224]

Sundara, a thirteen year old Cambodian girl, embarks on a 'new life' in America. She is leaving behind her family as she leaves to Oregon with her aunt's family after fleeing Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge. She struggles to live harmoniously in two distinct and contrasting cultures. On the one hand, she tries to fit in at school and assimilates to the American culture. But at home, she tries to maintain her Cambodian culture and traditions. This is a chapter book that represents ones' struggles and triumphs living in a bicultural world. It is also great for ELLs who completely understand the struggles as well as the beauty of growing up in two different cultures.

WIDA level: Bridging & up

Standard level (grade-level readability): reading level 5.6 or 700L

Interest level: 6-8

Book Available: paperback, audio cassette, CD, School & Library binding, Kindle edition

View parts of book online:

<http://search2.barnesandnoble.com/BookViewer/?ean=9780440210221>

This website provides 5 useful links for the book. One link is to the author's homepage and the other 4 links are different lesson plans and discussion questions that can be used for the book.

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/lcrew.html>

4. DeSilva, D. (2000). *Countries of the world: Cambodia*. Wisconsin: Gareth Stevens Publishing. [ISBN 0-8368-2322-2]

This book is a factual book that goes in depth with Cambodia. The text covers the geography, history, government, celebrations, cities, and many more topics on Cambodia. The book includes captions for pictures, side notes, and a few maps to further the knowledge on the culture. It has a variety of photos that capture the life of many everyday Cambodians. This is another great book for ELLs to discover the beauty of and facts about Cambodia.

WIDA level: Reaching

Standard level (grade-level readability): Flesch-Kincaid grade level 9.5

Interest level: 4-8

Book Available: library binding, hard-cover

5. Ho, M. (1991). *The clay marble*. Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. [ISBN 0-374-41229-4]

As a result of the Khmer Rouge, Dara and her family (mother and brother Sarun) flee to a Thai refugee camp. At the camp, she meets another Cambodian girl named Jantu and becomes close to her. Jantu has a magical touch in creating toys from mud or scraps of fabrics. Their friendship doesn't last long because of the bombs made by guerrilla groups. They are no longer safe in camp and another journey begins. This is a wonderful

chapter book that is full of emotions, authentic settings and human determination despite the devastation of war. It provides ELLs with an understanding of what the Cambodian culture went through. War exists in many places including Cambodia.

WIDA level: Bridging & up

Standard level (grade-level readability): reading level 6.8 or 860L

Interest level: 5-8

Book Available: paperback, hardcover, audio cassette, CD, audiobook

View parts of book online:

[http://www.amazon.com/Clay-Marble-Minfong-Ho/dp/0374412294#reader\\_0374412294](http://www.amazon.com/Clay-Marble-Minfong-Ho/dp/0374412294#reader_0374412294)

This link captures the wonderful essence of the book by providing in depth information on the author Ming Fo, background knowledge of Cambodia and its arts, charts, webs, discussion questions, and many more that teachers can pick and tweak from.

[http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/pdf/clay\\_marble.pdf](http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/pdf/clay_marble.pdf)

Other Cambodian books by Mingfo Ho: *Brother Rabbit: A Cambodian Tale* and *The Two Brothers*.

6. Lee, J. (1991). *Silent lotus*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. [ISBN 0-374-36911-9]

In a small village, a young couple gives birth to a deaf and mute girl named Lotus. Unable to hear or speak, Lotus is often ignored by neighborhood children. However, she finds happiness and beauty among the herons, cranes, and egrets and would mimic their moves. Her life changes when she goes to the city and witnesses temple dancers at the palace. She decides to imitate their dance moves. The queen takes notice and invites Lotus to dance for the palace. She then becomes the most famous dancer in the kingdom. This book is good for ELLs to understand that people go through many obstacles in life, including being deaf and mute.

WIDA level: Expanding & up

Standard level (grade-level readability): reading level 3.5 or 680L

Interest level: 3-5

Book Available: hardcover

A great video created by Reading Rainbow. The book takes a look-in at deaf culture. They also provide more books on that topic.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuc0IECq--4>

7. Lipp, F. (2007). *Running shoes*. Massachusetts: Charlesbridge. [ISBN 978-1-58089-175-2]

Sophy lives with her mom in a poor isolated village with no nearby hospital or school. Being a recent widow, Sophy's mom is struggling to provide. Despite the dismal



situation, Sophy only has one wish and that wish is to be able to go to school. With the help of a man who comes to Sophy's village annually to do the census, Sophy is able to make that wish come true by receiving a pair of sneakers or running shoes from the complete stranger. A story about passion, gratitude and an unwillingness to give up, Sophy depicts the difference a pair of shoes can make in a third world country. Some ELLs might understand how it feels to have only a pair of shoes so they can share the feelings with the main character Sophy.

WIDA level: Expanding & up

Standard level (grade-level readability): Flesch-Kincaid grade level 3.2

Interest level: 2-4

Book Available: hardcover, paperback

View parts of book online:

[http://books.google.com/books?id=oGwdcUy6pT0C&pg=PT29&source=gbs\\_selected\\_pages&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=oGwdcUy6pT0C&pg=PT29&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false)

Another Cambodian book by Frederick Lipp: *The Caged Birds of Phnom Penh*.

He has his own website with information on his works, scheduling a meeting with him through Skype, and many more: <http://www.fredericklipp.com/>

This website gives a brief description of how one person decided to start collecting shoes as part of a lesson. Click on the links and see how donating shoes can change someone's life, similar to Sophy. Get inspired and start your own collection and class blogs!

<http://www.westga.edu/ucmassets/news/1676.php>

8. Lord, M. (2008). *A song for Cambodia*. New York, New York: Lee & Low Books. [ISBN 978-1-60060-139-2]

A true story about a boy named Arn Chorn-Pond who loses everything including his parents, grandparents, and eleven siblings during the Khmer Rouge in 1975 but manages to survive the war through his music. A completely heart-wrenching story with an inspirational ending, Arn surpasses all odds and in turn, decides to change his life by his work in reviving Cambodia's art and music. Arn Chorn-Pond won many awards such as the Reebok Human Rights Award, the Spirit of Anne Frank Award, and many others for his humanitarian work. A documentary, *The Flute Player*, was created based on his role in saving traditional Khmer music and art. "When Arn was a young boy, music saved his life. Now, it is Arn's mission to save the music." This book is not only about a local Cambodian man but also a world hero. ELLs would love to hear about the triumph of a boy despite many obstacles.

WIDA level: Expanding & up

Standard level (grade-level readability): reading level 5.5 or 840AD

Interest level: 3-8

Book Available: hardcover

Another Cambodian book by Michelle Lord: *Little Sap and Monsieur Rodin*.

A useful website that shows Arn Chorn-Pond's documentary trailer "The Flute Player," his interviews, suggested lesson plans, blogs, interactive Khmer instruments and many more.

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/thefluteplayer/>

This PDF document has a long list of discussion questions for students to think about as they read or listen to the book.

[http://www.hmd.org.uk/assets/downloads/A\\_Song\\_For\\_Cambodia.pdf](http://www.hmd.org.uk/assets/downloads/A_Song_For_Cambodia.pdf)

9. Roland, D. (1984). *Grandfather's stories from Cambodia*. California: Open My World. [ISBN 0-941996-05-0]

This story is about a boy named Bona and his sister named Nary who enjoys listening to their Grandpa tell stories about their homeland, Cambodia. From the stories, they learn about Cambodia's calendar readings, days of the week, history, and especially, searching for the truth. This book is great for ELLs at the Beginning WIDA level who would like to read independently.

WIDA level: Beginning & up

Standard level (grade-level readability): Flesch-Kincaid grade level 6.3

Interest level: K-2

Book Available: print format

10. Wall, L. (1991). *Judge Rabbit and the Tree Spirit: A folktale from Cambodia*. California: Children's Book Press. [ISBN 0-89239-071-9]

One popular Cambodian folktale involves a rabbit and its ability to outsmart larger more powerful animals. *Judge Rabbit and the Tree Spirit* is one of many rabbit folktale stories. It is a bilingual book in English and Khmer that tells the story about a young couple that gets separated by the order of the King for all young men to fight. The tree spirit sees the wretchedness of the separation and decides to ease the wife's pain by taking form of her husband. The spirit becomes invested in the act that when the 'real' husband comes back, the spirit refuses to give in. But with the help of Judge Rabbit, the wife finds her true husband. ELLs who are fluent in Khmer/Cambodian would love this book because it is also written in their native language.

WIDA level: Developing & up

Standard level (grade-level readability): reading level 2.7 or 350L

Interest level: K-2

Book Available: hardcover

View the whole book online:

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookReader?bookid=wlljdr\\_00030012&twoPage=true&route=text&size=0&fullscreen=false&pnum1=1&lang=English&ilang=English](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookReader?bookid=wlljdr_00030012&twoPage=true&route=text&size=0&fullscreen=false&pnum1=1&lang=English&ilang=English)

A helpful video that gives a brief synopsis of the story as well as vocabulary instruction that is enhanced with videos for each word that is provided. This can be very useful to ELLs.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KTXKy9VxoM>

This website provides how to teach an inference lesson based on this book.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=OPTfcJ-Rc90C&pg=PA84&lpg=PA84&dq=lessons+for+judge+rabbit+and+the+tree+spirit&source=bl&ots=jKyKJ7KAJE&sig=pyMSMTgeR4p5PMpncaM8FQ2IGMU&hl=en&ei=y46xTouaE4Hx0gGntZjTAQ&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAQ#](http://books.google.com/books?id=OPTfcJ-Rc90C&pg=PA84&lpg=PA84&dq=lessons+for+judge+rabbit+and+the+tree+spirit&source=bl&ots=jKyKJ7KAJE&sig=pyMSMTgeR4p5PMpncaM8FQ2IGMU&hl=en&ei=y46xTouaE4Hx0gGntZjTAQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAQ#)

This website provides book reviews created by children from all over the world. Click on the book and you can read the whole book online.

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=wlljdr\\_00030012&summary=true&route=text&lang=English&msg=](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=wlljdr_00030012&summary=true&route=text&lang=English&msg=)

Listed below are some useful links to learn about the country of Cambodia:

This website provides a wealth of information on the any topic that involves with Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge. It is useful to understand the genocide that many Cambodians that made a tremendous impact on the culture.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khmer\\_Rouge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khmer_Rouge)

This website gives information on the geography, history and culture of Cambodia. There are tons of photos and maps. It is a great website that provides some background knowledge to the culture.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html>

This website supplies current news and information that occurs in Cambodia. It gives a daily update on the headline news in the country.

<http://www.cambodia.org/>

This PDF document delivers a multitude of Cambodian websites that touch upon the Cambodian genocide. They also provide a list of books and essays that deals with the culture of Cambodia. It is a great document/resource to utilize.

[http://www.pbs.org/pov/film-files/fp\\_delveeper\\_reading\\_list\\_0.pdf](http://www.pbs.org/pov/film-files/fp_delveeper_reading_list_0.pdf)



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# The Booklist Project

A Project of the  
M.Ed. In TESL Program,



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