



The Booklist Project



Focus: Culture-Specific Booklist
Polish

Developed by: Jennifer Hayden
Fall, 2011

A List of Books Representing the Polish Culture

Grades 3-6



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This booklist was created as a resource for teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) of Polish descent. Teachers could use some of the suggested books for lessons, homework or to simply broaden their own background knowledge. The list is geared towards students in grades three through six. Some are excellent for read-alouds and others would be better suited for individual or partner reading. Many of the books are collections of Polish fairy and folk tales and, therefore, contain many short stories that could be used both in the classroom and for homework. Below are a few websites that may be helpful for students in learning more about Poland and its rich culture and history.

- <http://info-poland.buffalo.edu/classroom/index.html>
 - This website is a vast resource for American educators wishing to teach about Poland and the Polish. It has separate sections for K-6 teachers and those in 7-12. For the elementary grades there is information on the history, geography, important cities, important contributions, legends and the food and folk customs of the Polish People.
- <http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212302/poland.html>
 - This website includes an informational letter written by a Polish girl about what it's like to live in and be from Poland. It is written by and for kids and would be an interesting way for ELLs to connect and good introduction for the non-ELLs.
- <http://www.kidskonnnect.com/subject-index/26-countriesplaces/329-poland.html>
 - This site has some fast facts about Poland written in student-friendly language. There are also a number of useful links included at the bottom.
- <http://www.mamalisa.com/?p=664&t=ec&c=70>
 - This website is dedicated to international music and culture and has an extensive list of traditional Polish nursery rhymes, lullabies, finger plays and carols. The lyrics are available in Polish and English as well as some videos and recordings of the songs being sung. This site may be of interest if you wanted to bring more examples of the Polish culture and language into your classroom.
- <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/places/find/poland/>
 - The national geographic kids site has a lot of interesting information on Poland and it's culture and people. Students can get some quick information or confirm things they already know.

Books:

1. Byrd, Elsie (translator) & Kadar, Lidia (illustrator). (1925). *The Polish fairy book*. New York, NY: Frederick A. Stokes Company. [ISBN none available]

Summary: *The Polish Fairy Book* is a collection of twenty-three traditional Polish fairy tales. The tales were adapted from their original Polish into English, with some minor changes being made to account for cultural and language differences. The author summarized the book best on the dedication page. "I hope you will like these stories as much as the little Polish children do. They love them, and have many books of fairy tales. I have tried to pick out the nicest for you."

THE POLISH FAIRY
BOOK *Translated and adapted from
the Polish by ELSIE BYRDE · Polish
Illustrations in Color by LIDIA KADAR*

NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

This book would be relevant to English language learners (ELLs) of Polish decent because of the strong tie between fairy tales and the Polish culture. It may be particularly interesting to those who grew up in Poland.

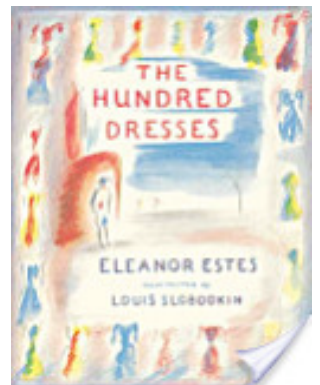
Grade level: 6

WIDA level: Expanding to Bridging

Book formats: Hardcover- from local libraries

2. Estes, Eleanor (author) & Slobodkin, Louis (illustrator). (1944). *The hundred dresses*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company. [ISBN 978-015205-260-7]

Summary: Wanda Petronski has just moved to a new town and is going to a new school. She has a 'funny' Polish name and her classmates tease her about her speech, her name and the faded blue dress she wears everyday. Wanda talks about having one hundred dresses at home and the girls tease her about them. One day, Wanda disappears and the teacher tells the class that Wanda moved because she was teased so much.



Later on the teacher announces that the winner of a dress design contest was Wanda. Wanda writes to them and they realize how mean they were to her.

The main character in the story is a Polish immigrant growing up in a strange community that does not accept her and her family. Polish ELLs would likely find parallels to their own stories. The book also provides the opportunity for classes to discuss culture differences, teasing and the effect that they can have on students.

Grade level: 3 to 6

WIDA level: Expanding to Bridging

Online resources: The following website includes lesson plans designed to help teach the book. It also includes ready-made worksheets specifically developed for the book (e.g., character trait map, character comparison map, vocabulary words, vocabulary puzzle, comprehension quiz).

http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collateral.jsp?id=38456_type=Book_typeId=786

Book formats: Audio book, hardcover, paperback, preview on Google Books

3. Kuniczak, W.S. (author) & Bargielski, Pat (illustrator). (1992). *The glass mountain: twenty-eight Ancient Polish folktales and fables*. New York, NY: Hippocrene Books. [ISBN 0-7818-0552-X]

Summary: *The Glass Mountain: Twenty-Eight Ancient Polish Folktales and Fables*

is a collection of twenty-eight ancient Polish folktales and fables. It presents retellings of traditional Polish tales including "How the princess learned to laugh," "Pan Twardowski," "Where devils are helpless," and "The sorcerer's apprentice." According to the author, "Its purpose is to stir the

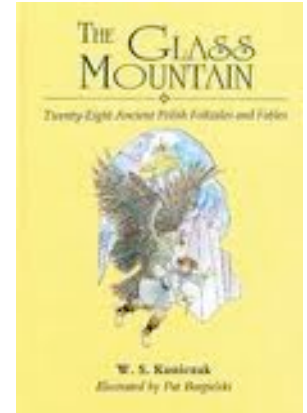
imagination and arouse curiosity about this enchanted and enchanting world of simple moral lessons, broad wit, sly allegory and an abiding faith in the betterment of our lot."

ELLs with a Polish background have probably heard many of these folktales before. Being familiar with some of the tales may ease some of the stress of reading in English.

Grade level: 6

WIDA level: Bridging to Reaching

Book formats: Hardcover



4. Malinowski, Michael & Pellowski, Anne (retold by). (2009). *Polish folktales and folklore*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

[ISBN 978-59158-723-1]

Summary: *Polish Folktales and Folklore* is a collection that would best be used in parts and pieces, as well as for a cultural reference for the teacher. The book contains more than 50 traditional Polish tales that range from local legends, animal tales, and magic tales to religious legends, stories of demons and supernatural creatures, humorous tales, and how and why. The book also contains Polish historical background and directions for traditional Polish games, crafts, and recipes. There are color photographs that show the people, the land, and country.



There are games and short stories, folk tales and historical background in this book. Polish ELLs would enjoy reading them as well as reading about and participating in the traditional games and crafts.

Grade level: 4 to 6

WIDA level: Developing to Reaching

Book formats: Hardcover, preview on Amazon

5. Monte, Richard (author) & Hess, Paul (illustrator). (2008). *The dragon of Krakow and other Polish stories*. London, England: Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

[ISBN 978-84507-752-5]

Summary: These seven short folk stories come from all around Poland and are known to every Polish child. The retellings are sparkling and accessible to all children. There are humorous tales, gruesome passages and scenes of great beauty and interest. The stories are short and manageable for students to read on their own or aloud with a group.



This is another collection of stories that would be familiar to many Polish ELLs. They would be able to make connections between the translated versions and the versions they grew up with.

Grade level: 4 to 6

WIDA level: Expanding to Reaching

Book formats: Hardcover, Kindle, paperback, preview on Google Books

6. Mrówczyńska, Agnieszka (author) and Das, Prodeпта (photographer). (2008). *P is for Poland*. Frances Lincoln Children's Books: London, England.

[ISBN: 978-1-84507-917-8]

Summary: The author summed up the book best on the front flap. “From Amber to Chopin, from Borch to Vistula, this photographic alphabet celebrates everything we Pole love best about Poland. Set in the heart of Europe and full of lakes, forests and mountains, our country has wild animals, which have disappeared from the rest of Europe. Our history and folk traditions, our storytelling and cooking all combine to make a special way of life that we take with us wherever we go.”



Our history and folk traditions, our storytelling and cooking all combine to make a special way of life that we take with us wherever we go.”

This book may be of interest to Polish ELLs because it shows a cross-section of the important and noteworthy things about Poland as compiled by a Pole. They would also be able to make connections between where words fall in the English alphabet and where they would fall in the Polish.

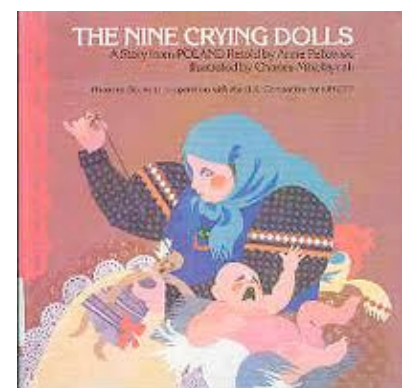
Grade level: 6

WIDA level: Expanding

Book formats: Hardcover, preview on Amazon

7. Pellowski, Anne (retold by) & Mikolaycak, Charles (illustrator). (1980). *The nine crying dolls: a story from Poland*. New York, NY: Philomel Books in cooperation with the U.S. Committee for UNICEF. [ISBN 0-399-20752-X]

Summary: When baby Anatolek won't stop crying, his beleaguered mother seeks advice of an old woman known for her wisdom. She follows the old woman's counsel exactly, and sure enough, Anatolek is soon quiet, but then the rest of the town's babies start wailing!



Here is another traditional and familiar Polish tale for ELLs to remember and enjoy. They may connect to the Polish names and traditional look of the characters in the illustrations.

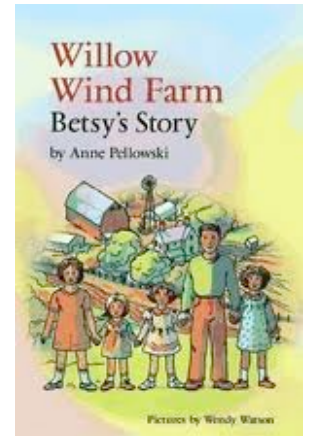
Grade level: 6

WIDA level: Expanding

Book formats: Hardcover

8. Pellowski, Anne (author) & Watson, Wendy (illustrator). (1981). *Willow wind farm: Betsy's story*. New York, NY: Philomel Books. [ISBN 0-399-20781-3]

Summary: On the farm where Betsy lives, all ten children must help with numerous chores. But they still find time for fun, and even everyday happenings can turn out to be unexpectedly exciting-like the day the pigs get tipsy from gobbling up fermented blackberry preserves Betsy and her sister unknowingly give them, or the Sunday morning Betsy's mischievous cousin, Rob, decides to speed up the doughnut making machine with far-flung results!



Polish ELLs may enjoy these books because they are about a family of Polish Immigrant family living and thriving in America. They may be able to draw parallels between their lives and those in the books. The author also uses a number of words from Polish, which may make the book more fun and interesting for them to read.

Willow Wind Farm: Betsy's Story is part of the Polish American Girls Series by Anne Pellowski. Other titles in the series are *First Farm in the Valley: Annie's Story*, *Winding Valley Farm: Annie's Story*, *Stairstep Farm: Anna Rose's Story* and *Betsy's Up-and-Down Year*.

Grade level: 3 to 6

WIDA level: Developing (with support) to Expanding

Online resources: The following website contains information on the Polish author Anne Pellowski. It could be useful for a small author study in a school with a large Polish community. www.usbby.org/AnnePellowski.pdf

Book formats: Hardcover, paperback

9. Porazińska, Janina (author), Smith, Bożena (translator) & Brett, Jan (illustrator). (1987). *The enchanted book: A tale from Krakow*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers. [ISBN 0-15-225950-3]

Summary: The miller has three daughters, each of them beautiful, and each one wanted different things in life the two older ones have frivolous wishes, while the youngest desires only to work hard and help her parents. When an old beggar woman



is treated kindly by the family and teaches the daughters to read, only the youngest works hard at it. An evil enchanter hears of the daughters and decides to marry one of them. He tricks each of them into going to his castle, and the youngest daughter, with her ability to read, saves all three.

As another traditional Polish folk tale, some Polish ELLs will be familiar with the story. This familiarity will help them as they read and allow them to make connections with the texts. The illustrations are bold and colorful and depict scenes of old Poland and traditional costumes which may hold some meaning for some Polish ELLs.

Grade level: 2 to 5

WIDA level: Bridging

Book formats: Hardcover, paperback

10. Turska, Kristina. (1972). *The woodcutter's duck*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company. [ISBN 978-02410-224-74]

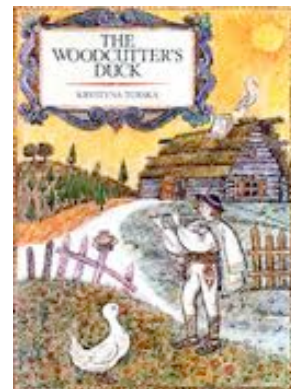
Summary: When Bartek the woodcutter saves the King of the Frogs, his kindness is rewarded with the ability to summon storms. But what use does a simple woodcutter have for wild winds and rain? Quite a bit, as Bartek discovers when his beloved pet duck is threatened.

The interesting, large and detailed illustrations and relatively small number of words on each page may make it easier for a Polish ELL to connect to this book. It is a traditional tale and includes scenes from old-world Poland. These facts may make it more interesting for Polish ELLs to read and easier to connect to.

Grade level: 6

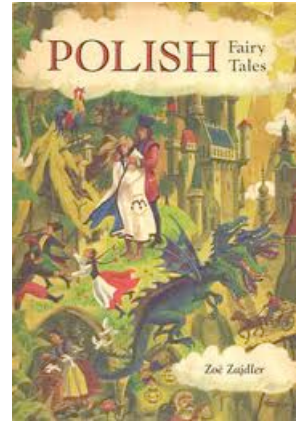
WIDA level: Developing

Book formats: Hardcover, library binding, paperback



11. Sadler, Zoë (author) & Cook, Hazel (illustrator). (1959). *Polish Fairy Tales*. Chicago IL: Follett Publishing Company. [ISBN none available]

Summary: *Polish Fairy Tales* is a collection of seventeen traditional Polish tales retold by the author, who grew up in Poland listening to them. The stories within have been passed down through the generations to astonish and delight as well as warn. The stories include one of a rooster and his family, of Jan, a traditional hero who becomes Snake King and of a stepmother so terrible she makes Cinderella's look lovely.



Polish ELLs would enjoy the tales that may be familiar to themselves or their families. The stories could start conversations about the differences between the Polish and American cultures and the fairy tales told in each.

Grade level: 6

WIDA level: Developing to Reaching

Book formats: Hardcover- from local libraries

REACH. INSPIRE. CONNECT.



The Booklist Project

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



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