



AAPI Book Recommendations

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May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, and as my Indy K12 colleague previously stated, heritage and history months are an opportunity to raise awareness but this awareness should be happening throughout the year.

A few years ago, I was an elementary librarian. During AAPI month, I put out a book display to highlight various groups. A student asked, "Why are these books about India and Indian people out?" I quickly realized this student had a monolithic view of what an Asian person looked like. I was intentional about having those books out because I knew there were siblings with Indian heritage. I wanted them to feel seen and amplified during the month.

This encounter also let me know there is much work to do. Not only should students be exposed to books written by AAPI authors and including AAPI characters during the month of May, but they should also come across these books in their classroom or library throughout the year.

In my personal home library, I own eight books written by an Asian author and/or about Asian people:

- "The Art of War" by Sun Tzu
- "A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations" by Conrad Schirokauer
- "Early Korean Literature" by David R. McCann
- "Goldy Luck and the Three Pandas" by Natasha Yim & illustrated by Grace Zong
- "kira-kira" by Cynthia Kahohata
- "Mieko and the Fifth Treasure" by Eleanor Coerr
- "Sumo Joe" by Mia Wenjen & illustrated by Nat Iwata
- "Tikki Tikki Tembo" retold by Arlene Mosel

Although I know this might be more books than some, I'm still not satisfied. The list above focuses on Asians. I have the book "American Heroes" by Marfé Ferguson Delano which features Pacific Islander Queen Lili'uokalani, but I do not have any other books about or featuring Pacific Islanders. Unfortunately, too many people, including myself, stop at Asian Americans and forget about Pacific Islanders.

I am Black, so in my personal library, I have many books about Black people and/or written by Black people. This is okay, but I know my children will interact with all people, and I want them to have a full picture. Below, I have included resources that can help readers of this piece easily find books to add to their home and/or school to make sure our children with Asian

heritage or Pacific Islander heritage are seen and that students who don't have that heritage have plenty of exposure.

Resources

- [13 Books by Pacific Islanders](#)
- [15 Books by Pacific Islanders That Tell Incredible Stories About Their Culture](#)
- [36 Science Fiction And Fantasy Books From AAPI Authors That Are Impossible To Put Down](#)
- [39 YA Books to Celebrate Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month](#)
- [AAPI Heritage Month: NPR Staff Share Book Recommendations](#)
- [Asian American Book Lists for Kids](#)
- [Eight books that celebrate AAPI joy](#)
- [Must-Read Books for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month](#)