Re-Imagining MIGRATION

Teaching Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*

A Re-Imagining Migration Educator's Guide

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Educator’s Guide: Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*

Shaun Tan's wordless graphic novel, *The Arrival*, offers a powerful, empathetic, and universally resonant exploration of the immigrant experience. This interdisciplinary guide provides educators with a framework for analyzing the text through the lens of Belonging and Migration, directly linking its conceptual themes to the Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc. This guide also allows students to have agency and choice as they read and analyze the text. (See Student-Choice Inquiry Section).

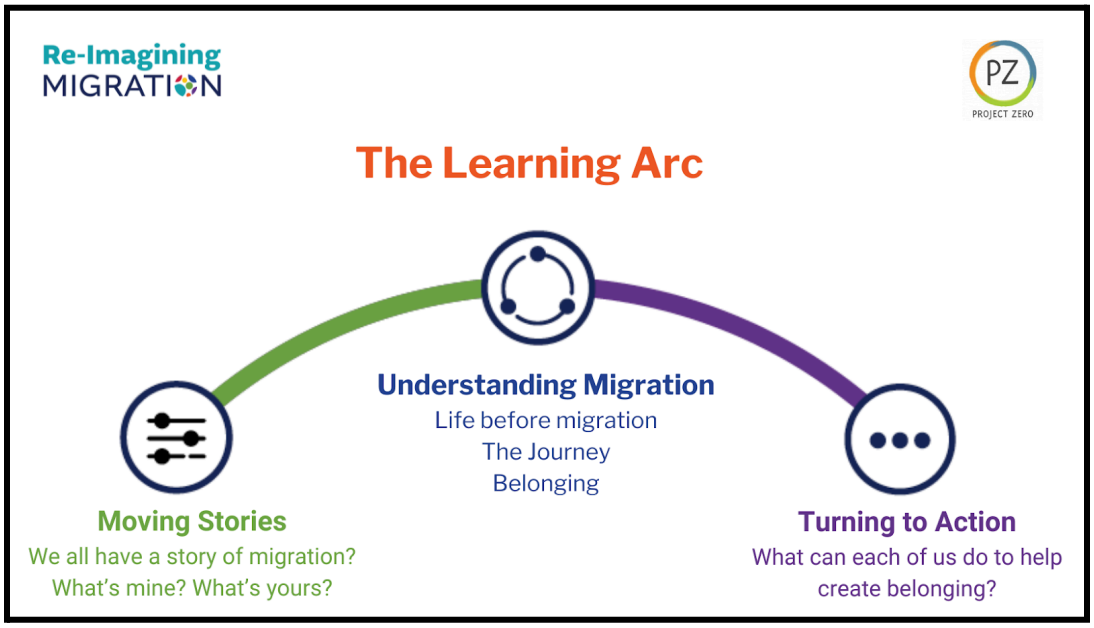
Why Teach *The Arrival*?

The Arrival is an essential text for contemporary classrooms due to its unique format and profound themes:

- **Universal Empathy:** The wordless narrative, executed in a sepia-toned, photorealistic style, bypasses language barriers and encourages deep visual literacy and emotional interpretation. This places all readers—regardless of background—in the vulnerable, observant role of the protagonist, fostering profound empathy for the challenges of cultural and linguistic displacement.
- **Accessibility and Engagement:** The wordless, graphic novel format is highly engaging for diverse learners, including reluctant readers and those with varying language proficiencies. The format allows students to construct meaning collaboratively, infer, determine importance, and synthesize while empowering them as active interpreters of the narrative.
- **Exploration of Complex Themes:** The novel uses surrealism and visual metaphor (strange buildings, peculiar animals, incomprehensible objects) to represent the real confusion, fear, and wonder of arriving in a new, unfamiliar country. This makes abstract concepts like alienation, hope, resilience, and cultural difference tangible and discussable.
- **A Shared Human Story:** *The Arrival* frames migration not as a political debate, but as a shared, deeply human experience spanning all cultures and time periods. It emphasizes the kindness of strangers, the value of shared history (through the stories of other immigrants), and the enduring hope for family and belonging.

Linking to the Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc[1]

The Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc outlines a comprehensive framework for teaching migration as a shared human experience, fostering empathy and civic action through three phases: **Moving Stories, Understanding Migration, and Turning to Action**. *The Arrival* aligns perfectly with this framework, providing a central "text" to anchor the entire arc.



Phase 1: Moving Stories (Empathy & Personal Connection)

This phase invites personal exploration and sharing of migration stories. *The Arrival* serves as a powerful entry point due to its focus on individual emotion.

Learning Arc Questions	Connection to The Arrival	Discussion or Journal Prompts
What is my story? What is yours?	The wordless nature allows students to project their own experiences, memories, or family stories onto the protagonist's journey.	"What specific image on the protagonist's journey best captures a moment when you felt lost or new in a situation?" "What is the most prized possession in your family that would travel with you if you had to move far away, and why?"

[1] The Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc is part of the Re-Imagining Migration framework developed by Veronica Boix-Mansilla at Harvard's Project Zero in collaboration with Carola and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco and Adam Strom as well as educators from around the US and the world.

How can we approach the sharing of stories of migration with understanding and compassion?	The protagonist is helped by strangers who share their own difficult pasts.	"What do the flashback stories of the other immigrants teach the protagonist? What do they teach us about the universal reasons for migration?"

Phase 2: Understanding Migration (Inquiry & Contextualization)

This phase examines the broader historical, political, and cultural context of migration. The book's blend of realism and fantasy offers a unique way to approach complex, real-world concepts.

Learning Arc Questions	Connection to The Arrival	Discussion Prompts
Why do people leave their homes?	The book visually represents the push factors (danger, oppression, poverty) and pull factors (hope, opportunity, safety) without explicit political jargon.	"What do the dark, oppressive visuals of the 'old country' and the hopeful, surreal visuals of the 'new country' symbolize about the motivations for migration?" "How does the story show that migration is a *choice* for some and a *necessity* for others?"
What do people experience as they move? (The Journey)	The long, monotonous voyage and the bureaucratic processes upon arrival are key parts of the story.	"Analyze the sequence of panels showing the protagonist at customs and documentation. What real-life struggles of migrants does this fantastical imagery represent?" "How does the author use the size of the panels to reflect the feeling of waiting, time passing, or an overwhelming moment?"

Adjustment: What are the conditions in the new land?	The story focuses on daily acts of adaptation, from finding housing to operating technology.	"What does the protagonist have to learn or adapt to in the new city? How is his success less about learning a new language and more about finding a new community?"

Phase 3: Turning to Action (Civic Engagement & Building Welcoming Societies)

This phase encourages students to move from understanding to taking informed action.

Learning Arc Questions	Connection to The Arrival	Discussion Prompts
How can we take action toward more inclusive and sustainable societies?	The story culminates with the protagonist's daughter helping a new arrival, completing the cycle of welcome.	"In what ways does the daughter's action in the final pages show that she is a member of a 'welcoming society'? What does this suggest about the responsibility of second-generation immigrants?"
What issues related to migration do we care about and why?	Students can connect the protagonist's emotional journey to local or global migration narratives.	"If you were to create a 'Welcome Guide' for new immigrants in your community, based on the protagonist's struggles, what three key pieces of information would you include?" "What is the *moral* of the story for the people who are already settled in the new land?"

Literary Theme Analysis: Belonging and Migration

This analysis framework focuses on key literary devices and themes within the novel, centering on the umbrella concepts of **Belonging** (the feeling of being accepted and secure) and **Migration** (the movement from one place to another). **See Supplemental Thinking Routines for ways to leverage these questions into complex, collaborative tasks for all students.

Core Theme	Guiding Questions for Discussion or Journal Prompts	Literary/Visual Analysis Focus
Departure and Loss	What visual details convey the necessity and danger of leaving the protagonist's home? What feelings does his farewell with his family evoke? What is represented by the dark, tentacle-like shadow in the original country?	**Visual Metaphor:** The "monsters" or threats in the homeland. **Framing/Close-ups:** The image of the family portrait and the suitcase. **Color/Tone:** The contrast between the initial darkness and the sepia tones of the journey/new land.
Alienation and Confusion	How does the unfamiliarity of the new country (e.g., the strange food, the bizarre machine, the cryptic language symbols) make the reader feel like the protagonist? What does the tiny, lost paper bird motif represent?	**Surrealism:** The fantastical elements (food, transport, animals) as a metaphor for culture shock and a language barrier. **Scale/Perspective:** The protagonist often appearing small against the massive, overwhelming cityscape. **Non-verbal Communication:** The reliance on gestures and facial expressions.

The Kindness of Strangers	In a world without a common language, what are the universal acts of connection shown? How do the stories shared by other immigrants (told in flashbacks) influence the protagonist's journey and sense of hope?	**Visual Narrative:** The sequencing of panels to show acts of aid (directions, a shared meal). **Parallel Storytelling:** The shift in the frame border color during the flashback stories to mark a different trauma/journey. **Motifs:** The shared use of teapots, origami, or a specific object connecting people.
Building a New Home/Belonging	What is the final image that suggests the protagonist has found a sense of belonging? What has changed about the new city for him? How does his family's reunion complete his journey, and what does the final sequence with his daughter imply about the future?	**Resolution/Shift in Tone:** The change in the protagonist's body language and expression. **Circular Narrative:** The daughter's actions at the end mirroring her father's original journey, indicating the cycle of migration continues, but her status is different. **Symbols of Domesticity:** The small, familiar objects (like the repaired photograph or the cooking) that normalize the strange setting.

Socratic Seminar: Essential Questions on Belonging and Humanity

A Socratic Seminar is a student-led discussion built around an open-ended question. These questions encourage students to use the text (*The Arrival*) as evidence to explore the essential questions of the **Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc** (Moving Stories, Understanding Migration, Turning to Action).

Ground Rules for the Seminar:

1. **Refer to the Text:** All claims and interpretations must be supported by **specific panels, images, or motifs** from *The Arrival*.
2. **Ask for Clarity:** Encourage phrases like, "What panel are you referencing?" or "Can you clarify your definition of 'alienation'?"
3. **Listen to Understand:** Build on or respectfully challenge the claims of your peers.

Essential Questions (Connecting to the Learning Arc)

These questions should be posed to the entire group and form the core of the seminar discussion, moving from the individual experience to shared human responsibility.

1. Moving Stories: The Nature of Universal Experience

How does the wordless narrative of *The Arrival* create a *universal* immigrant story, and what are the limitations of this universality?

Supporting Questions:

- By making the city surreal and the characters anonymous, does Tan focus our empathy on the feeling of being an outsider, or does he risk overlooking the unique struggles of specific cultures and historical periods? (Reference the surreal elements vs. the photo-realistic characters).
- If the protagonist could speak, what is the single most important message he would have for the people in his new country?

2. Understanding Migration: Sacrifice and the Price of Hope

In what ways does Tan suggest that a migrant's survival relies not just on resilience, but on the kindness of strangers? What is the ethical responsibility of the "receiving community" represented in the book?

Supporting Questions:

- Analyze the three flashback stories shared by other immigrants. What is the single greatest *loss* or *sacrifice* each person made, and how does that loss inform their act of kindness toward the protagonist?
- How does the visual contrast between the bureaucratic, impersonal processing centers and the small, intimate acts of help (sharing food, drawing a map) reflect the real challenges of navigating a new system?

3. Belonging and Identity: Finding Home

***The Arrival* ends with the protagonist's family reunited and his daughter helping a new arrival. What, precisely, does the book define as "belonging," and when does the protagonist achieve it?**

Supporting Questions:

- Does belonging happen when a migrant finds a job, a home, or when they are finally reunited with their family? Use a specific sequence to argue your answer.
- The family portrait is a critical **motif**. How does the physical state of the portrait (from initial care to its final place on the wall) track the protagonist's journey of forming a new identity in a new land?

4. Turning to Action: The Enduring Cycle

The protagonist's daughter, now a guide for a new arrival, represents the next generation. What does this final, cyclical image suggest about migration as a "shared human condition" (as posited by the Learning Arc) rather than a temporary problem?

Supporting Questions:

- What knowledge or disposition has the daughter gained that her father did not have upon arrival?
- If the central message of *The Arrival* is a call to action, what is the action the reader is implicitly being asked to take? (Look beyond the book to your own community).

Expert Jigsaw Guide: The Four Movements of the Arc

The Four Movements of the Arc is a collaborative learning structure designed to ensure students engage deeply with the full scope of the migration experience as outlined in the Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc. It blends textual analysis with conceptual understanding. Students choose one role to become an expert on the corresponding phase of the Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc.

Core Goal

The primary objective of this Jigsaw activity is for students to become a deep "expert" on one specific phase of the migration experience as represented in the text. They then teach their phase and findings to a final "home group" to collectively piece together a comprehensive analysis of the entire narrative arc.

Structure and Roles

The activity is divided into four distinct roles, each focusing on a specific thematic and conceptual area:

1. Role 1: Stories We Carry (Moving Stories, Phase 1): Focuses on the life *before* migration, identifying the Push Factors that necessitated the move, and analyzing the Motifs and patterns of identity carried forward.
2. Role 2: In Between Worlds (The Journey, Phase 2): Concentrates on the journey itself, examining the role of Borders, bureaucracy, and the figure's precarious Ambiguous Status while in transit.
3. Role 3: Growing Together (Becoming, Phase 3): Analyzes the challenges of Adjustment and cultural encounter upon arrival. The core task is to distinguish between forced Assimilation and achieving authentic Belonging.
4. Role 4: Building Together (Turning to Action, Phase 4): Examines the text's implicit message or call to action, focusing on the generational impact of migration and how the story challenges or reinforces existing Public Stories and Narratives.

Expert Tasks

Each role requires students to perform a Core Analytical Task supported by specific Preparation Tasks. For example, the expert in Role 2 (*The Journey*) is required to find evidence of both a specific border encounter and moments where the figure exhibits Ambiguous Status in the text.

The final product of the Jigsaw is a collective understanding of the entire migration cycle, ensuring all key concepts (like Alienation, Resilience, Marginalization, and Symbolism) are thoroughly addressed through peer instruction.

Role 1: Stories We Carry (Life Before Migration)

Focus: Moving Stories (Phase 1). Analyzing the pre-migration context, identity, and the patterns carried forward.

Expertise Focus	Core Analytical Task	Preparation Tasks (Pre-Group Discussion)
Life Before & Push Factors	Identify the 'why' of the move. Analyze the figure's relationships, routines, and community before migration.	1. Detail three patterns (traditions, habits, objects) the figure carries forward. 2. Identify the specific Push Factor (e.g., war, economic collapse) and its representation in the text.
The New Arc Questions	Stories We Carry	Prepare to discuss: How does the text show what patterns we carry forward (values, fears) versus the patterns we must break to leave?
Literary Focus	Motif, Characterization	Explain how the author characterizes the central figure's relationship to their home and family, using specific literary elements.

Role 2: In Between Worlds (The Journey)

Focus: The Journey (Phase 2). Analyzing the liminal space of travel, the challenges of ambiguous status, and encountering borders.

Expertise Focus	Core Analytical Task	Preparation Tasks (Pre-Group Discussion)
The Journey & Borders	Analyze the nature of the journey. Examine the borders, the bureaucracy, and the loss of control.	1. Detail a specific border (literal or figurative) the figure encounters, and how it is represented (e.g., as a wall, a maze, or a door). 2. Find evidence showing the figure's

		Ambiguous Status (neither belonging nor rejected).
The New Arc Questions	The Journey: In Between Worlds	Prepare to discuss: What does the text reveal about being neither here nor there? How is the figure treated while on the move, and who holds the power over their journey?
Literary Focus	Symbolism, Setting as Character	Explain how the setting (e.g., ocean, detention center, train) functions as a character that creates obstacles or opportunity.

Role 3: Growing Together (Adjustment & Belonging)

Focus: Becoming (Phase 3). Analyzing the process of adjustment, cultural encounters, and achieving belonging.

Expertise Focus	Core Analytical Task	Preparation Tasks (Pre-Group Discussion)
Adjustment & Encounter	Examine cultural fusion. Analyze the dynamic between the central figure and the new community.	1. Identify a key interaction that allows the figure to grow together with the new community. 2. Distinguish the difference between an act of Assimilation and an act of true Belonging in the text.
The New Arc Questions	Becoming: Growing Together	Prepare to discuss: When newcomers arrive, who changes? How might the *receiving community* change as much as the *newcomer*? What is the difference between "fitting in" and truly belonging?
Literary Focus	Conflict, Theme	Analyze the central conflict related to identity. What stays the same about the

		figure even when everything around them changes?

Role 4: Building Together (Action & The Cycle)

Focus: Turning to Action (Phase 4). Analyzing the text's implicit call to action, its connection to the shared human condition, and the larger cycle of migration.

Expertise Focus	Core Analytical Task	Preparation Tasks (Pre-Group Discussion)
Action & The Cycle	Determine the text's message. Analyze the ending and the generational impact of the move.	1. Analyze the final image/scene: What does it teach us about Building Welcoming Societies? 2. Find a moment where the figure (or their descendant) helps a new arrival, completing the cycle of kindness.
The New Arc Questions	Turning to Action: Building Together and Public Stories	Prepare to discuss: What can each of us do to help create belonging based on the text's ending? How does this story challenge or reinforce common Public Stories and Narratives about migration?
Literary Focus	Ending/Resolution, Tone	Explain how the author uses the ending (e.g., cyclical, open, resolved) to create a final tone about the future of migration.

Student-Choice Inquiry Projects: Beyond the Panels

This section provides students with the opportunity to choose a topic of interest and conduct independent research, connecting the themes of *The Arrival* to real-world context, history, and civic action. This activity aligns with the **Understanding Migration** and **Turning to Action** phases of the Learning Arc.

Students should select **one** of the three research tracks below, conduct their research, and prepare to "Go Public" with their findings to a broader audience. "Going Public"can look a variety of ways: Slides, Visual Art, Writing of all forms, Audio/Visual Presentations, Individually Designed & Coded Websites, Performances, or other ideas from students themselves. Alternatively, students who choose Tracks A, B, or C, can choose a format from Track D to Go Public. *Ex: If a student researches current events (Track B), they can choose to write an argumentative essay on what they consider to be major push and pull factors in the current news cycle, or build their research into the question: How should society be structured to embrace a changing world?*

Track A: The Author and the Art of Storytelling ✍️

Goal: To understand how Shaun Tan's background and artistic choices shaped the universal nature of *The Arrival*.

Focus Area	Inquiry Questions	Research Opportunities
Author Background	How did Shaun Tan's own family history of migration (his father is Malaysian Chinese) influence his decision to create a wordless story?	Research interviews and articles featuring Shaun Tan discussing his inspirations, focusing on his comments about **universal human experience** and **sense of belonging**.
The Wordless Choice	Tan based his drawings on archival photographs of migrants. How does the blend of **photorealism** (the characters) and **surrealism** (the city) make the experience relatable yet strange?	Find and analyze reviews of *The Arrival* that discuss the artistic style. Look for examples of the real-world historical photos that inspired Tan's drawings.

Purpose & Impact	What did Tan hope to achieve by removing language from a story about a **language barrier**?	Research the book's reception and awards. How is it used today by organizations that advocate for migrants and refugees?

Track B: Migration in Current Events and Oral History

Goal: To connect the emotional reality of the protagonist to present-day news and the stories of contemporary migrants.

Focus Area	Inquiry Questions	Research Opportunities
Contemporary Journeys	What recent current events illustrate the **Push Factors** (danger, war, oppression) that force people to leave home? What **Pull Factors** are currently driving global migration patterns?	Use news sources (e.g., UNHCR reports, major news outlets) to find two current stories about migration. Identify which parts of the protagonist's journey (Departure, Journey, Arrival) are reflected in the modern story.
Oral Histories	The protagonist hears the stories of other migrants (flashbacks). Where can we find similar oral histories from people who have migrated to **our local community**?	Research local historical societies, community centers, or digital archives (like StoryCorps or museum collections) that feature **oral histories** of immigrants or refugees.
Representation	How does media coverage of migration often differ from the empathetic, individual focus of *The Arrival*?	Compare images from news reports on border crossings or refugee camps to the panels in Tan's book. Discuss how framing and presentation affect the audience's **empathy**.

Track C: Places and Museums of Migration History

Goal: To research institutions that physically collect and share the migration stories that mirror the themes in *The Arrival*.

Focus Area	Inquiry Questions	Research Opportunities
Ellis Island/Angel Island	The new country's immigration processing center is depicted as a maze of bureaucracy. How do real-world sites like **Ellis Island** (US) or **Angel Island** (US) represent this stage of the migration journey?	Research the experiences of migrants arriving at one of these sites. What objects or documents were most critical to their entry, similar to the protagonist's papers?
National Museums	What is the purpose of a dedicated migration museum (e.g., Museum of Australian Migration, Migration Museum in London)? How do they use *objects* to tell a story?	Research the digital collections of a migration museum. Identify an object that tells a story of **Resilience** or **Belonging** similar to the protagonist's suitcase or family photograph.
Memorials & Monuments	How do communities choose to memorialize or celebrate the contributions of immigrant groups?	Find and research a local or national monument dedicated to an immigrant group. What does its design communicate about the group's journey and their eventual **Belonging**?

Track D: Written Projects (Synthesis & Action)

Goal: Synthesize learning from the text and the Learning Arc into sophisticated written arguments or creative responses. (Educator Note: Consider providing mentor texts for students to model their writing.)

Project Type	Focus/Goal	Assignment Details
Creative Writing	**Moving Stories & Personal Response**	**Well-Constructed Creative Piece (Photorealistic Book, Poem, Reflection, Short Story, etc.):** Capture your creative response exploring topics like migration, belonging, or identity in a format that moves you. *Creating a Wordless Text like Tan's book will require a prologue, epilogue, and Author's Note/Further Reading with sources to highlight your research, and to explain your message, story, and choices to the reader.
Literary Analysis Essay	**Understanding Migration & Rhetoric**	**Well-Constructed Essay:** Analyze: How does the author use rhetorical devices to make a social commentary about migration and/or belonging? (Use evidence from the text.)
Argumentative Essay	**Turning to Action & Civic Responsibility**	**Well-Constructed Essay:** Argue using evidence from the text to answer **one** of the following: 1. How should society be structured to embrace a changing world? 2. What is the role of belonging in thriving communities? 3. What are the most important perspectives for a world on the move?

Essential Vocabulary for Conceptual Analysis

**See Supplemental Thinking Routines for ways to leverage vocabulary into complex, collaborative tasks for all students.

I. The Migration Experience

Term	Generic Definition	Application to Text Analysis
Migration	The movement of people across borders or regions for long-term settlement.	Analyze the *type* of movement: voluntary, forced, internal, global.
Emigrant/Immigrant	The distinction between *leaving* one place (Emigrant) and *arriving* in another (Immigrant).	Analyze the change in perspective and status depending on the geographical context.
Push/Pull Factors	**Push:** Conditions that compel people to leave (e.g., war, poverty). **Pull:** Conditions that attract people to a new location (e.g., opportunity, safety).	Identify the specific forces driving the central figure's movement.
Ambiguous Status	The condition of being legally or socially unrecognized during a journey or upon arrival.	Analyze how the central figure is treated when their status is uncertain.

II. Belonging and Identity (Thematic Focus)

Term	Generic Definition	Application to Text Analysis
Alienation	The state of feeling isolated, estranged, or disconnected from a group or environment.	Identify moments where the central figure feels completely foreign or alone.

Resilience	The capacity to recover quickly from setbacks; perseverance.	Analyze the internal strength or external support that allows the figure to continue the journey.
Assimilation	The process of adopting the language, culture, and customs of a dominant group.	Analyze the pressure to change and the cost/benefit of adopting new cultural practices.
Marginalization	The process of being placed or kept in a powerless or unimportant position within society.	Analyze the systematic barriers (social, economic, political) the figure encounters.

III. Literary and Visual Literacy (Text-Specific)

Term	Generic Definition	Application to Text Analysis
Motif	A recurring element, image, or idea that holds symbolic significance throughout the text.	Identify recurring items (e.g., a photograph, a piece of clothing, a letter) that anchor identity.
Symbolism	The use of an object, character, or setting to represent an abstract idea.	Analyze key symbols representing hope, danger, or memory within the text.
Narrative Voice/Style	The method and perspective through which the story is told (e.g., first-person, unreliable narrator, visual/wordless).	Analyze how the *way* the story is told shapes the reader's **empathy** and understanding.
Setting as Character	Analyzing the environment (the old land, the journey, the new land) as an active force that influences events and emotions.	Analyze how the new setting helps or hinders the central figure's adjustment.

Supplemental Thinking Routines from Harvard Project Zero

These flexible Project Zero Thinking Routines can be used at various stages of the analysis to deepen understanding, facilitate group work, and connect the text to real life.

1. See-Think-Wonder (STW)

- **Purpose:** Encourages close observation, inference, and inquiry, excellent for visual texts (images, film clips) or a deep dive into an impactful quote/passage.
- **Application:** Show a key image (or read a key quote) from the text. Students answer: **What do you *see* (or notice)? What do you *think* about what you see? What does it make you *wonder*?** (Use during **In Between Worlds** phase to analyze a moment of *Alienation*.)

2. Connect-Extend-Challenge (C-E-C)

- **Purpose:** Helps students link new information to prior knowledge and challenge assumptions. Ideal for integrating research findings.
- **Application:** After reading the text or conducting a research project (Student-Choice Inquiry), students respond: **How do the new ideas *connect* to what you already know? What new ideas *extended* your thinking? What is still *challenging* or confusing?** (Use during **Growing Together** phase to incorporate learning about *Assimilation*.)

3. Circle of Viewpoints (CoV)

- **Purpose:** Fosters empathy and perspective-taking by asking students to step into the role of different stakeholders.
- **Application:** Students choose a role—the **Central Figure**, a **Receiving Community Member**, a **Customs Agent**, or a **Family Member Left Behind**. They answer: **What does the character *see* or know? What does the character *care* about? What *questions* does the character have?** (Use during **Stories We Carry** or **Building Together** phases.)

4. Headlines

- **Purpose:** Forces students to synthesize the core meaning of a section or the entire text and express it concisely.
- **Application:** After completing the Jigsaw roles or the Socratic Seminar, students create an emotional, compelling newspaper **Headline** that captures the text's central theme about **Migration** or **Belonging**. They then write a two-sentence subhead explaining the headline. (Use as a final synthesis activity for **Building Together**.)

5. Tug-of-War

- **Purpose:** Helps students visualize the complexity of an issue by analyzing competing forces, beliefs, or motivations.

- **Application:** Choose a complex theme (e.g., Assimilation vs. Cultural Preservation). Students draw a line with the theme in the middle. They label competing forces (e.g., **"Desire for Belonging"** vs. **"Pressure to Change"**) and use evidence from the text to show the strength of each side. (Excellent for the **Adjustment/Growing Together** phase.)

6. Chalk Talk

- **Purpose:** A silent, written conversation that promotes equitable participation and non-linear idea generation.
- **Application:** Write a core Socratic Seminar question on the board (e.g., "What is the ethical responsibility of the receiving community?"). Students respond to the question and to each other's ideas in silence using only markers/chalk. This builds a robust, collaborative conversation before speaking. (Ideal for warming up the **Socratic Seminar**.)

7. Color, Symbol, Image (CSI)

- **Purpose:** Encourages students to synthesize a complex idea or text section into non-linguistic representations. Excellent for **visual literacy** and **symbolism**.
- **Application:** After analyzing a key section, students choose a **Color** (representing the feeling or tone), a **Symbol** (representing the core idea or motif), and an **Image** (a simple sketch representing the main insight). They then write a brief caption explaining their choices. (Use for analyzing **Symbolism** in *The Arrival*.)

8. 3-2-1 Bridge

- **Purpose:** Helps students connect previous knowledge to new information and track how their thinking changes over time.
- **Application: Before** starting a new phase (e.g., **The Journey**), students list **3** initial thoughts, **2** questions, and **1** metaphor about the concept (e.g., **Ambiguous Status**). **After** completing the phase, they repeat the routine, using their initial ideas as the "bridge" to see how their understanding has shifted. (Excellent for tracking conceptual change across the Arc phases.)

9. Step Inside

- **Purpose:** Deepens **empathy** by asking students to analyze a critical moment from a character's internal perspective.
- **Application:** Students select a moment of high tension or choice (e.g., the customs hall interview, saying goodbye to family). They write a short reflection on what the character **sees/knows/believes** (internal monologue) and what they **are asked to do/say** (external action). (Ideal for analyzing **The Journey** and moments of **Resilience**.)

Paired Texts & Mentor Resources for *The Arrival* (Organized by Learning Arc)

This list provides complementary texts (poems, stories, graphic novels) to support literary analysis and serve as mentor texts for the Track D Final Written Projects.

Arc Phase Focus	Text Title / Author	Grade Level	Rationale & Mentor Use
I. Moving Stories	**Inside Out & Back Again** by Thanhha Lai	Middle/Early High School	Mentor for Creative Writing (Poem/Verse): The novel-in-verse uses stark, poetic language to explore themes of loss and cultural memory, closely mirroring the emotional compression in Tan's imagery. Excellent for modeling the literary style needed for Track D.
I. Moving Stories	**"Where I'm From" (Poem template)** by George Ella Lyon	Middle School	A scaffolded template that helps students articulate their individual identity and cultural heritage. Directly supports analysis of Stories We Carry and preparing for the Creative Writing prompt.
I. Moving Stories	**"Wavin' Flag" (Original Lyrics) by K'naan**	Middle/High School	A powerful anthem born from conflict, the original lyrics focus on leaving a war-torn home and seeking hope. Excellent for identifying Push/Pull Factors and exploring Resilience (Track D Argumentative Essay).
II. The Journey	**Refugee** by Alan Gratz	Middle/Early High School	Offers three factual refugee narratives across time and geography (historical/current). Provides strong, concrete evidence for the analysis of Push/Pull Factors and the nature of Ambiguous Status at borders.

II. The Journey	**"Home" (Poem Excerpt)** by Warsan Shire	High School	A powerful short poem that uses intense imagery and rhetorical force (Track D Literary Analysis) to convey the extreme conditions that necessitate leaving home.
II. The Journey	**"Refugee Blues"** by W. H. Auden	High School	Uses a simple, stark rhythm and bureaucratic language to highlight the political cruelty and feeling of being legally abandoned. Excellent for analyzing Ambiguous Status and Alienation during transit.
II. The Journey	**Exit West** by Mohsin Hamid	High School	Uses magical realism (instant transport doors) as a central Symbolism (B.2). Pairs well with Tan's surreal imagery to discuss the universality of the journey's feeling of loss of control, rather than its physical reality.
III. Becoming	**The Book of Unknown Americans** by Cristina Henríquez	High School	Uses multiple character voices from an immigrant community to explore the complex, slow process of Adjustment and the difficulty of finding true Belonging in a new place.
III. Becoming	**"Immigrant Picnic"** by Gregory Djanikian	Middle/Early High School	A humorous yet poignant exploration of cultural clash, focusing on food and language. Ideal for discussing the complexity of Assimilation and the struggle for Belonging in a community setting.
III. Becoming	**The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child** by Francisco Jiménez	Middle/Early High School	A series of accessible short stories detailing a migrant farmworker's life. Provides a grounded, realistic contrast to Tan, focusing on intense Alienation and the Setting as Character as a source of physical hardship.

III. Becoming	**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian** by Sherman Alexie	High School	Examines internal migration and balancing identities by focusing on a teenager moving between the reservation and an affluent school. Challenges the definition of "move" while deeply exploring Belonging and Assimilation.
IV. Turning to Action	**They Called Us Enemy** by George Takei	High School	A graphic memoir detailing Japanese American Internment. The visual format and subject matter provide a strong basis for analyzing Marginalization and systemic failures, directly supporting the Argumentative Essay on how society should be structured.

Educator's Guide Template: An Inquiry and Analysis into Texts on Migration and Belonging

Target Use: Adaptable framework for analyzing any novel, film, poem, or historical document that explores themes of migration, identity, and change.

Scaffolding: Blends ELA Literary Analysis with the **Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc**.

Why Teach This Unit? (Rationale & Relevance)

This unit is designed to move beyond political rhetoric and foster global competence by focusing on the shared human experience of migration.

- **Humanizing the Narrative:** The core goal is to cultivate empathy by connecting students to the universal themes of change, loss, and hope inherent in the movement experience.
- **Developing Critical Literacy:** The unit challenges students to critique and analyze dominant public narratives and media stereotypes by examining firsthand accounts and historical context, using the framework to identify systemic issues like Marginalization and Ambiguous Status.
- **Advancing ELA Skills:** It promotes high-level literary analysis, requiring students to interpret Symbolism and Motif, and develop proficiency in analyzing diverse formats, from wordless narratives to verse novels and argumentative essays.

The Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc: Conceptual Framework

This guide is structured around the four phases of the Learning Arc, which provide a conceptual lens for analyzing the movement experience:

1. **Moving Stories (Stories We Carry):** Focuses on the life before migration and the patterns, values, and identities carried forward.
2. **The Journey (In Between Worlds):** Focuses on the liminal space of travel, the challenges of borders, and ambiguous status.
3. **Becoming (Growing Together):** Focuses on the process of adjustment, cultural encounter, and the path to belonging in a new place.
4. **Turning to Action (Building Together):** Focuses on civic responsibility, public narratives, and creating inclusive communities for the future.

Essential Vocabulary for Conceptual Analysis

I. The Migration Experience

Term	Generic Definition	Application to Text Analysis
Migration	The movement of people across borders or regions for long-term settlement.	Analyze the *type* of movement: voluntary, forced, internal, or international.
Emigrant/Immigrant	The distinction between *leaving* one place (Emigrant) and *arriving* in another (Immigrant).	Analyze the change in perspective and status depending on the geographical context.
Push/Pull Factors	**Push:** Conditions that compel people to leave (e.g., war, poverty). **Pull:** Conditions that attract people to a new location (e.g., opportunity, safety).	Identify the specific forces driving the central figure's movement.
Ambiguous Status	The condition of being legally or socially unrecognized during a journey or upon arrival.	Analyze how the central figure is treated when their status is uncertain.

II. Belonging and Identity (Thematic Focus)

Term	Generic Definition	Application to Text Analysis
Alienation	The state of feeling isolated, estranged, or disconnected from a group or environment.	Identify moments where the central figure feels completely foreign or alone.

Resilience	The capacity to recover quickly from setbacks; perseverance.	Analyze the internal strength or external support that allows the figure to continue the journey.
Assimilation	The process of adopting the language, culture, and customs of a dominant group.	Analyze the pressure to change and the cost/benefit of adopting new cultural practices.
Marginalization	The process of being placed or kept in a powerless or unimportant position within society.	Analyze the systematic barriers (social, economic, political) the figure encounters.

III. Literary and Visual Literacy (Text-Specific)

Term	Generic Definition	Application to Text Analysis
Motif	A recurring element, image, or idea that holds symbolic significance throughout the text.	Identify recurring items (e.g., a photograph, a piece of clothing, a letter) that anchor identity.
Symbolism	The use of an object, character, or setting to represent an abstract idea.	Analyze key symbols representing hope, danger, or memory within the text.
Narrative Voice/Style	The method and perspective through which the story is told (e.g., first-person, unreliable narrator, visual/wordless).	Analyze how the *way* the story is told shapes the reader's **empathy** and understanding.
Setting as Character	Analyzing the environment (the old land, the journey, the new land) as an active force that influences events and emotions.	Analyze how the new setting helps or hinders the central figure's adjustment.

Expert Jigsaw Guide: The Four Movements of the Arc

Students choose one role to become an expert on the corresponding phase of the **Re-Imagining Migration Learning Arc**.

Role 1: Stories We Carry (Life Before Migration)

Focus: Moving Stories (Phase 1). Analyzing the pre-migration context, identity, and the patterns carried forward.

Expertise Focus	Core Analytical Task	Preparation Tasks (Pre-Group Discussion)
Life Before & Push Factors	**Identify the 'why' of the move.** Analyze the figure's relationships, routines, and community before migration.	1. Detail **three patterns** (traditions, habits, objects) the figure carries forward. 2. Identify the specific **Push Factor** (e.g., war, economic collapse) and its representation in the text.
The New Arc Questions	**Stories We Carry**	Prepare to discuss: How does the text show **what patterns we carry forward** (values, fears) versus the patterns we must break to leave?
Literary Focus	**Motif, Characterization**	Explain how the author characterizes the central figure's relationship to their home and family, using specific literary elements.

Role 2: In Between Worlds (The Journey)

Focus: The Journey (Phase 2). Analyzing the liminal space of travel, the challenges of **ambiguous status**, and encountering borders.

Expertise Focus	Core Analytical Task	Preparation Tasks (Pre-Group Discussion)

The Journey & Borders	**Analyze the nature of the journey.** Examine the borders, the bureaucracy, and the loss of control.	1. Detail a specific **border** (literal or figurative) the figure encounters, and how it is represented (e.g., as a wall, a maze, or a door). 2. Find evidence showing the figure's **Ambiguous Status** (neither belonging nor rejected).
The New Arc Questions	**The Journey: In Between Worlds**	Prepare to discuss: What does the text reveal about being **neither here nor there**? How is the figure treated while on the move, and who holds the power over their journey?
Literary Focus	**Symbolism, Setting as Character**	Explain how the setting (e.g., ocean, detention center, train) functions as a **character** that creates obstacles or opportunity.

Role 3: Growing Together (Adjustment & Belonging) 🌱

Focus: Becoming (Phase 3). Analyzing the process of **adjustment**, cultural encounters, and achieving **belonging**.

Expertise Focus	Core Analytical Task	Preparation Tasks (Pre-Group Discussion)
Adjustment & Encounter	**Examine cultural fusion.** Analyze the dynamic between the central figure and the new community.	1. Identify a key interaction that allows the figure to **grow together** with the new community. 2. Distinguish the difference between an act of **Assimilation** and an act of true **Belonging** in the text.
The New Arc Questions	**Becoming: Growing Together**	Prepare to discuss: When newcomers arrive, **who changes**? How might the *receiving community* change as much as the *newcomer*? What is the difference between "fitting in" and truly belonging?

Literary Focus	**Conflict, Theme**	Analyze the central conflict related to identity. What stays the same about the figure even when everything around them changes?

Role 4: Building Together (Action & The Cycle)

Focus: Turning to Action (Phase 4). Analyzing the text's implicit call to action, its connection to the **shared human condition**, and the larger cycle of migration.

Expertise Focus	Core Analytical Task	Preparation Tasks (Pre-Group Discussion)
Action & The Cycle	**Determine the text's message.** Analyze the ending and the generational impact of the move.	1. Analyze the final image/scene: What does it teach us about **Building Welcoming Societies**? 2. Find a moment where the figure (or their descendant) helps a new arrival, completing the cycle of kindness.
The New Arc Questions	**Turning to Action: Building Together** and **Public Stories**	Prepare to discuss: What can each of us do to help create **belonging** based on the text's ending? How does this story challenge or reinforce common **Public Stories and Narratives** about migration?
Literary Focus	**Ending/Resolution, Tone**	Explain how the author uses the ending (e.g., cyclical, open, resolved) to create a final **tone** about the future of migration.

Socratic Seminar: Essential Questions on Shared Humanity

These questions guide the final seminar discussion, moving from textual analysis to ethical responsibility.

1. Stories We Carry: The Nature of Universal Experience

How does the _____use its specific genre/style (e.g., wordless narrative, first-person memoir) to make

_____'s story feel universal, and what are the limitations of this universality?

Supporting Questions:

- By focusing on one perspective, does the author risk overlooking the unique struggles of other migrant groups?
- What is the single most important message the central figure would have for the receiving community?

2. In Between Worlds: Sacrifice and the Price of Hope

In what ways does the text suggest that survival relies not just on resilience, but on the kindness of strangers? What is the ethical responsibility of the "receiving community" represented in the text?

Supporting Questions:

- Analyze the supporting characters who help the figure. What loss or sacrifice did they make that informs their act of kindness?
- How does the contrast between bureaucratic systems and personal, intimate acts of help reflect the real challenges of navigating a new system?

3. Growing Together: Finding Home

The text explores the difference between 'fitting in' and 'belonging.' What, precisely, does the

_____ define as "belonging," and when does_____achieve it?

Supporting Questions:

- Does belonging happen when the figure finds economic security, emotional security, or when they are finally accepted by the community? Use textual evidence to support your answer.
- Analyze a key **motif** (e.g., a family heirloom) in the text. How does its fate track the figure's journey of forming a new identity?

4. Building Together: The Enduring Cycle

The text suggests that migration is a "shared human condition" rather than a temporary problem. What does the ending of the_____suggest about the responsibility of the next generation to "Build Together"?

Supporting Questions:

- What knowledge or disposition has the next generation gained that their parents did not have upon arrival?
- If the central message is a call to action, what is the action the reader is implicitly being asked to take in their own community?

Student-Choice Inquiry Projects: Beyond the Text

Students choose one track to connect the themes of the text to real-world context, history, and civic action.

Track A: The Author and the Art of Storytelling

Goal: Understand how the creator's background and artistic choices shaped the text's universal nature.

Focus Area	Inquiry Questions	Research Opportunities
Creator Background	How did the author/director's background (personal or family migration history) influence their decision to create this story?	Research interviews, biographies, or artistic statements focusing on their comments about **universal human experience**.
The Narrative Choice	How does the chosen narrative style (e.g., wordless, unreliable narrator, found footage) make the experience relatable yet stylized?	Analyze critical reviews of the text that discuss its narrative form and how it affects the audience's **empathy**.
Purpose & Impact	What did the creator hope to achieve? How is the text used today by organizations that advocate for migrants and refugees?	Research the text's reception and its practical use in educational or humanitarian contexts.

Track B: Migration in Current Events and Oral History

Goal: Connect the emotional reality of the central figure to present-day news and contemporary migrant stories.

Focus Area	Inquiry Questions	Research Opportunities

Contemporary Journeys	What recent current events illustrate the **Push/Pull Factors** shown in the text?	Find two current news stories about migration. Identify which parts of the central figure's journey (Departure, Journey, Arrival) are reflected in the modern story.
Oral Histories	Where can we find similar oral histories from people who have migrated to **our local community**?	Research local historical societies, community centers, or digital archives (like StoryCorps or museum collections) that feature **oral histories** of immigrants or refugees.
Representation	How does media coverage often differ from the empathetic, individual focus of the text?	Compare imagery or language from news reports on migration to the portrayal in the selected text. Discuss how this difference affects the audience's **empathy**.

Track C: Places and Museums of Migration History

Goal: Research institutions that physically collect and share the migration stories that mirror the themes in the text.

Focus Area	Inquiry Questions	Research Opportunities
Processing Centers	How do real-world sites like **Ellis Island** or other historical entry points represent the bureaucratic stage of the journey seen in the text?	Research the experiences of migrants arriving at one of these sites. What documents or objects were most critical to their entry?
National Museums	What is the purpose of a dedicated migration museum (e.g., museums in specific	Research the digital collections of a migration museum. Identify an object that tells a story of **Resilience** or

	countries)? How do they use *objects* to tell a story?	**Belonging** similar to a key item in the text.
Memorials & Monuments	How do communities choose to memorialize or celebrate the contributions of immigrant groups?	Find and research a local or national monument dedicated to an immigrant group. What does its design communicate about the group's journey and their eventual **Belonging**?

Track D: Final Written Projects (Synthesis & Action)

Goal: Synthesize learning from the text and the Learning Arc into sophisticated written arguments or creative responses. (Educator Note: Consider providing mentor texts for students to model their writing.)

Project Type	Focus/Goal	Assignment Details
Creative Writing	**Moving Stories & Personal Response**	**Well-Constructed Creative Piece (Poem, Reflection, Short Story, etc.):** Capture your creative response exploring topics like migration, belonging, or identity in a format that moves you.
Literary Analysis Essay	**Understanding Migration & Rhetoric**	**Well-Constructed Essay:** Analyze: How does the author use rhetorical devices to make a social commentary about migration and/or belonging? (Use evidence from the text.)
Argumentative Essay	**Turning to Action & Civic Responsibility**	**Well-Constructed Essay:** Argue using evidence from the text to answer **one** of the following: 1. How should society be structured to embrace a changing world? 2. What is the role of belonging in thriving communities? 3. What are the most important perspectives for a world on the move?