

Somali Representation in Children's Literature

Over the past thirty years the Somali population in the United States has grown exponentially, most noticeably in Minnesota. Many Somalians have been forced to flee their country because of famine and militant Islamist group al-Shabab. While Minnesota seems like an odd place to relocate, many have chosen to call it home because of the many job opportunities and numerous nonprofit agencies and NGOs whose primary purpose is to resettle refugees. As the population grows, so does the number of Somali children in the public school system. Diverse representation in children's literature is an important aspect in fostering respect for diversity and empathy for others. This paper examines current children's literature with Somali representation, looking at how accurately this population is represented in the texts. In addition, it will examine the availability of these texts to teachers and whether or not there is a need for an increase in Somali representation in children's literature to match the growth in the population.