

Elementary Curriculum Resource Consideration  
May 2022

*It's Ramadan Curious George* by H.A. Rey and Hena Khan

*Lailah's Lunchbox* by Reem Faruqi

Background:

Albemarle County Public Schools has seen a noticeable increase in the number of Muslim students and families in our community as a result of the placement of families evacuated during Operation Allies Welcome by the Department of Homeland Security and subsequently placed through the International Rescue Committee (IRC). As a result, teachers and staff have looked for additional resources that provide mirrors for these students and their lived experiences and windows for our non-Muslim students into the experiences of their classmates and community.

A team of 9, including school principals, teachers, librarians, students, families, and community partners evaluated two books from the American Federation of Teachers' *Colorin Colorado* resources list, *Lailah's Lunchbox* by Reem Faruqi and *It's Ramadan, Curious George* by H.A. Rey and Hena Khan. Both books are recommended by the Islamic Society of Central Virginia.

**Title: Lailah's Lunchbox**

Author: Reem Faruqi

Illustrator: Lea Lyon

*Genre: Children's fiction; Holiday fiction*

*Publishing date: 2015*

*Summary:*

Lailah is in a new school in a new country, thousands of miles from her old home, and missing her old friends. When Ramadan begins, she is excited that she is finally old enough to participate in the fasting but worried that her classmates won't understand why she doesn't join them in the lunchroom. Lailah solves her problem with help from the school librarian and her teacher and in doing so learns that she can make new friends who respect her beliefs. This gentle, moving story from first-time author Reem Faruqi comes to life in Lea Lyon's vibrant illustrations. Lyon uses decorative arabesque borders on intermittent spreads to contrast the ordered patterns of Islamic observances with the unbounded rhythms of American school days.

*Highlights from review team:*

Beautiful illustrations; Focus on being yourself; Inclusion of author's note and glossary to support student understanding;

*Awards and Recommendations:*

American Library Association for Children (2016)  
2019 Daybreak's Children's Picture Book Award  
Recommended by the Islamic Society of Central Virginia  
Notable Social Studies Trade Book For Young People 2016

*Recommended Age(s):* Reading age 6-8; Grade levels 1-7

*Recommended purpose:*

Include in elementary school libraries; Use as read aloud for grades 2-5

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>3.8</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>2.75</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>3.8</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

*Recommendation:*

*Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.*

**Title: It's Ramadan Curious George**

Author: H.A. Rey and Hena Khan

Illustrator: Mary O'Keefe Young

Genre: Children's fiction; Holiday fiction

Publishing date: 2016

Summary: It's the first day of Ramadan, and George is celebrating with his friend Kareem and his family. George helps Kareem with his first fast and joins in the evening celebration of tasting treats and enjoying a special meal. Then, George helps make gift baskets to donate to the needy, and watches for the crescent moon with the man in the yellow hat. Finally George joins in the Eid festivities to mark the end of his very first Ramadan.

Highlights from the review team:

Use of familiar characters; Diversity of the Muslim community, particularly in racial background, apparel, and food

Awards and Recommendations:

New York Public Library's Blessed Ramadan, Blessed Eid: Books for Children and Teens for the Holy Month List.

Recommended Age(s): Reading age 3-6; Grade levels preK-5

Recommended purpose:

Include in elementary school libraries; Use as read aloud for grades preK-2

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>3.6</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>3.8</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>3.4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>3.6</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist,</i>	<i>3.6</i>

<i>composer/producer etc.</i>	
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>1.75</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>3.4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>3.6</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>3.5</i>

***Recommendations:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***