# Embracing Intercultural Knowledge

This resource includes a list of recommended books and films that you can explore to enhance your world perspective and understanding of socio-cultural issues. You can follow these recommendations to learn about cultures, topics, and issues beyond your own cultural background. Remember that each item listed represents a window through which you see a portion of a culture, a situation, or something that occurred within a given context.

Books

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| **Title and author**  | **Blurb**  |
| ***The House on Mango Street*** Sandra Cisneros, 1984    | *The House on Mango Street*is a bestseller taught in schools and universities worldwide. The book follows the remarkable childhood and self-discovery journey of Esperanza Cordero, a young Latina growing up in Chicago. Through a series of emotional vignettes, we witness how Esperanza invents who and what she will become.  [Click here to access more information about ***The House on Mango Street***](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/139253.The_House_on_Mango_Street).   |
| ***Five Little Indians***Michelle Good, 2020    | In *Five Little Indians*, Kenny, Lucy, Clara, Howie, and Maisie were taken from their families and sent to a residential school when they were very small. Barely adults, they are released and left to contend with the seedy world of east side Vancouver. Fuelled by the trauma of their childhood, the five friends cross paths over the decades and struggle with the weight of their shared past. [Click here to access more information about ***Five Little Indians***](https://www.cbc.ca/books/the-cbc-books-writers-to-watch-list-24-%20canadian-writers-on-the-rise-in-2020-1.5666130).   |
| ***Americanah*** Chimamanda Adichie, 2014  | This book narrates the immigration story of Ifemelu and Obinze, a young Nigerian couple during military-ruled time, to the US. In their new home, Ifemelu finds herself reflecting for the first time and acting upon her identity as a black woman while facing difficult choices and challenges in contrast with her academic success. Obinze takes a different journey and leaves the US for England to reunite with Ifemelu fifteen years later in a democratic Nigeria. [Click here to access more information about ***Americanah***](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/15796700-americanah).   |
| ***Third Culture Kids*** David Pollock, 2001  | This book explains the challenges and benefits of children that grow up in a different country. It explores their real-life experiences and the effect on personal multicultural identity formation, providing practical suggestions and advice on how to maximize the benefits. [Click here to access more information about ***Third Culture Kids***](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/121920.Third_Culture_Kids).     |
| ***A House in Norway*** Vigdis Hjorth, 2017  | This novel tells the story of Alma, a divorced textile artist who finds herself struggling to balance her unconscious assumptions and her self-image as a good feminist and an open-minded liberal while weaving the design of a tapestry for an exhibition to celebrate the centenary of women's suffrage in Norway. [Click here to access more information about ***A House in Norway***](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/34082836-a-house-in-norway?rating=5&utm_medium=api&utm_source=book_widget).   |
| ***How to Pronounce Knife*** Souvankham Thammavongsa, 2020  | *How to Pronounce Knife* is a collection of idiosyncratic and diverse stories. From a young man painting nails in a salon, to a housewife learning English from soap operas. This book explores the tragedy and humour in the daily lives of immigrants.  [Click here to access more information about ***How to Pronounce Knife***](https://www.cbc.ca/books/the-cbc-books-writers-to-watch-list-24-canadian-writers-on-the-rise-in-2020-1.5666130).   |
| ***Death of a Red Heroine*** Qiu Xiaolong, 2000  | This novel narrates how inspector Chen Cao of the Shanghai Special Cases Bureau struggles to identify the murderer of a young “national model worker,” renowned for her adherence to the principles of the Communist Party (Red heroine). In his search for justice and the truth about this crime, he faces political forces that become very risky obstacles. [Click here to access more information about ***Death of a Red Heroine***](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/126606.Death_of_a_Red_Heroine).   |
| ***Sanaaq*** Mitiarjuk Nappaaluk, 2014  | Sanaaq is an intimate story about how an Inuit family (Sanaaq, a strong and outspoken young widow and her daughter, Qumaq), negotiates the changes brought into their semi-nomadic community in northern Quebec by the coming of the *qallunaat*, the white Catholic and Anglican missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century that threaten to change their extraordinary lives forever.  [Click here to access more information about ***Sanaaq***](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18693201-sanaaq).   |
| ***They Said This Would Be Fun*** Eternity Martis, 2020  | The debut memoir from Eternity Martis, *They Said This Would Be Fun* captures the difficulty of navigating through white spaces as a student of colour. Eternity thought going away to university would help her discover who she really is. Hoping to escape her abusive boyfriend, nerdy reputation, doting Pakistani family, and complicated feelings towards her absent Jamaican father, she heads out to the predominantly White college city of London, Ontario. At school, she discovers an entitled culture of racism and sexism: she encounters blackface at parties, hears racial slurs at the bar, and has teachers ask her permission to discuss race in classrooms where she is the only student of colour. [Click here to access more information about ***They Said This Would Be Fun***](https://www.cbc.ca/books/they-said-this-would-be-fun-1.5423026).   |
| ***The Backpacker’s Father*** Gunnar Kopperud, 2006  | When his daughter disappears while backpacking in Indonesia's Spice Islands, Francisco travels to look for her. His acquaintance with the country's president unwittingly sets off a chain of events that prove to be catastrophic. At the same time, two Scandinavian journalists who are making a film about a remote tribe cynically twist the details to make them more dramatic. This novel demonstrates how very little Westerners know about Indonesia and its ethnic tensions. [Click here to access more information about ***The Backpacker’s Father***](https://jccc.libguides.com/c.php?g=511242).   |



Films

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| **Title**  | **Blurb**  |
| ***Whale Rider*** 2002  | This drama tells the story of a 12-year-old Maori girl who dreams to become the first female chief of her New Zealand tribe. However, her grandfather refuses to recognize and accept her desire, as he does not want to shift his ancient customs and cultural values that establish female gender roles away from chiefdom. Destiny calls for the girl’s fulfilment of her dreams, even if that means risking her life in the process. [Click here to access the trailer of ***Whale Rider***](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0298228/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1).   |
| ***Babel*** 2006  | This drama presents the intertwining connections of people located in different countries (Morocco, US, Mexico, Hong Kong) with different languages and cultures but similar human experiences of struggle, life-threatening experiences and resilience. A multicultural mosaic of languages, cultures, colours and sounds allows the audience to embark on a journey of cultural reflections and learning while witnessing the deconstruction of cultural stereotypes into real life experiences. [Click here to access the trailer of ***Babel***](https://www.imdb.com/video/vi2058879257?playlistId=tt0449467&ref_=%20tt_pr_ov_vi).   |
| ***House of Hummingbird*** 2018  | This south-Korean drama presents the self-discovery, empathy, and understanding that Eunhee, a 14-year-old Korean teenager experiences while wandering the streets of a rapidly modernizing city with a friend, going on adventures to evade the hostile experiences of her home and school. This drama takes place in Seoul in 1994, the year the Seongsu Bridge collapsed. It serves as the context wherein the main character finds ways to explain why bad things happen, searching for answers, love, and a real home, like a hummingbird’s search for a taste of sweetness. [Click here to access the trailer of ***House of Hummingbird***](https://www.imdb.com/video/vi1798553113?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_2).    |
| ***When Two Worlds Collide*** 2016  | This documentary chronicles the move by Indigenous protesters to stop the entrance of commercial trucks. This is based on the real conflict and battle that took place in the Amazon when corporate and industrial incursions were permitted to sell and destroy their land under the government of Alan García, president of Peru (2006-2011). [Click here to access the trailer of ***When Two Worlds Collide***](https://www.imdb.com/video/vi1040234521?playlistId=tt5278932&ref_=%20tt_pr_ov_vi).   |
| ***Knight of the Kings*** 2020  | This drama tells the story of a young man from Ivory Coast who is sent to MACA, a prison in the middle of the Ivorian forest ruled by its inmates. To save his life, he is designated by the boos to the new Roman and must tell a story to other prisoners as tradition. Mixing fantasy with reality, he narrates during the whole night the life and death of Zama King, a legendary outlaw. [Click here to access the trailer of ***Knight of the Kings***](https://www.imdb.com/video/vi4218077465?playlistId=tt8132778&ref%20_=tt_pr_ov_vi).   |
| ***The Namesake*** *2006*   | This drama tells the self-discovery story of Gogol, the son of first-generation Indian immigrants, born in New York. After his father explains the real meaning of his name (named after Russian Nokolai Gogol) as result of his father’s life-changing experience in 1974, Gogol’s perception and value of his Indian background transform into a cultural self-awareness journey. He then travels to India to reconcile with his identity and find purpose in his life. [Click here to access the trailer of ***The Namesake***](https://www.imdb.com/video/vi569835801?playlistId=tt0433416&ref_%20=tt_ov_vi).   |
| ***The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*** *2019*   | This drama, inspired by the real William Kamkwamba, portrays the story of a 14-year-old Malawi boy who fights resistance from his family and cultural expectations to achieve self-realization in education and create innovation. He is motivated by the need to help his community survive the famine, government rationing, and riots arising from the extreme drought that destroyed the country’s crops in 2000. [Click here to access the trailer of ***The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind***](https://www.imdb.com/video/vi2114501145?playlistId=tt7533152&ref%20_=tt_pr_ov_vi).   |
| ***Retorno a Hansala*** 2009  | This drama narrates the returning journey of a Moroccan immigrant to her hometown, Hansala. Leaving her family in Spain, she decides to visit Hansala when her brother is found dead on the seashore after crossing Gibraltar by boat. This movie uses an empathetic lens to shine a light on the difficult circumstances and racist portrayal of Moroccan immigrants living in Spain at the time. [Click here to access the trailer of ***Retorno a Hansala***](https://europeanfilmawards.eu/en_EN/film/return-to-hansala.7628).   |
| ***nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up*** *2019*   | Following the acquittal of Gerald Stanley after his murder of Colten Boushie of the Cree Red Pheasant First Nation in Saskatchewan, there was a national outcry that raised widespread awareness of the continued violence against Indigenous people. Tasha Hubbard’s film takes a sensitive but harrowing look at what followed Colten’s murder, as well as the history of colonial violence in the prairies that lead to it. Featuring tough conversations about what real reconciliation would look like, the film examines what would make a safe world for Indigenous youth.  [Click here to access the trailer of ***nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up***](https://canadianwomen.org/blog/5-films-to-watch-indigenous-%20history-month/).   |
| ***Bend It Like Beckham****2002*   | This comedy portrays a clash between British and Indian cultures. In particular, it follows a Sikh Indian girl as she faces challenges trying to join a girls soccer team in London while making sure she continues to observe the traditions and values of her family and culture. [Click here to access the trailer of ***Bend It Like Beckham***](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0286499/?ref_=vp_vi_tt_p).   |

**Image credits:**

*Open book*by Kathleen Black (The Noun Project)

*Film slate* by Chanut is Industries, TH (The Noun Project)