

Guide to:

Thank You, Omu!

Written and illustrated by Oge Mora

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Language: English

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Genre: Fiction

Lexile: AD630L

Guided Reading Level: L

Grade Level:
Preschool – Grade 3

Featured Country of Origin:
Nigeria

Themes: food, friendship, gratitude, sharing



Publisher's Synopsis

Everyone in the neighborhood dreams of a taste of Omu's delicious stew! One by one, they follow their noses toward the scrumptious scent. And one by one, Omu offers a portion of her meal. Soon the pot is empty. Has she been so generous that she has nothing left for herself?

What we love

Oge Mora grew up in Ohio to Nigerian-born Igbo parents, and *Thank You, Omu!* subtly speaks to her identity as a second generation immigrant. As Mora explains about her book, "...it's not just an American story. And it's not just a Nigerian story. It's that in-between" (*Nigerian Parents*). The repetition in the text, use of expressive sounds ("Mmmm" and "Ahhh") and dialogue from a colorful cast of characters make it a superb read aloud. With eye-catching mixed media collages, a heartwarming message of community and sharing, and diverse characters, *Thank You, Omu!* is a wonderful addition to libraries, homes and classrooms.

Background

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, and it also is very diverse culturally, ethnically and linguistically. There are 371 ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Yoruba, Hausa and the Igbo (EE-bo). While there are 500 distinct languages spoken in Nigeria, the official language is English. Nigerians are one of the most numerous African immigrant groups in the United States, in part due to their high rates of English language proficiency and their long history of immigration to the United States. In Nigeria and in many other African countries, sharing, and in particular sharing food with strangers, is an important cultural value. Additionally, names in Nigeria often have significant meanings.

Pronunciation and Vocabulary

- Oge Mora: Pronounced "oh-GAY MOR-ah"
- Omu: Pronounced "AH-moo." It's the Igbo term for "queen." Growing up, Mora used it to mean "Grandma"
- Stew: A meal you make by cooking meat and/or vegetables in a liquid for hours
- Scent/smell: To breathe in through the nose. A scent is a specific smell that is usually pleasant
- Delicious: If something is delicious, it tastes very good and pleases you
- Wafted: To float or drift through the air
- Enough: When you have enough, you have as much as you need
- Share: To let someone else have or use something that belongs to you

Thank You, Omu! (continued)

Pre-reading Focus Questions

- What is a community? (A place where people live, work and play)
- Who are the people in a community?
- Think about a time someone shared with you. How did it make you feel?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

- What does the author mean when they describe Omu as “sorry and blue?” Why do you think that? (Show students the illustration and note the sad expression on Omu’s face.)
- At the end of the story, Omu’s community friends bring her food. The author says, “That dinner was the best she ever had.” What do you think that means?
- The word “Omu” means “queen” in Igbo, although the author, Oge Mora, used it to mean “grandma” when she was growing up. How does Omu in this story act like a queen? How does she act like a grandma? Why do you think Oge Mora chose to name the character Omu?

Interdisciplinary

This story can be connected to social studies units on community and helping others.

About the Book Author/Illustrator (by publisher)

Oge Mora graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design with a BFA in illustration. Her first picture book, *Thank You, Omu!*, was a Caldecott Honor, a Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent illustrator award, an Ezra Jack Keats illustrator award, a New York Times Notable Book and Editors’ Choice, and a Junior Library Guild selection. She lives in Providence, Rhode Island, and invites you to visit her website at <http://www.ogemora.com>.

After-Reading Discussion Questions

- How did Omu feel when her pot was empty?
- How did she feel when the community shared with her?
- Why is it important to be part of a community?
- What are some ways you can share with someone?

Additional Resources



[Author Essay: Oge Mora](#)



[Storytime with Bill: Thank You, Omu! video](#)



[Thank You, Omu! Collage Card Craft](#)



[JumpStart Activity Guide for Classrooms](#)



[The Genius of Oge Mora \(Nigerian Parents\)](#)

About the Consultant Carolyn McElligott

Carolyn McElligott co-authored and provided guidance for this guide. She is currently a K-5 EL teacher at Melrose Public Schools in Massachusetts. During her tenure in Melrose, she has taught second grade, delivered instructional coaching to Pre-K – fifth grade educators and taught adult English learners.

About The Immigrant Learning Center

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States. The Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants.