



# Read Aloud Guide

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**Title:** *Drum Dream Girl* by Margarita Engle, Illustrated by Rafael Lopez

**Best for:** TK-3rd grade

**Summary:** *Girls cannot be drummers.* Long ago on an island filled with music, no one questioned that rule—until the drum dream girl. In her city of drumbeats, she dreamed of pounding tall congas and tapping small *bongos*. She had to keep quiet. She had to practice in secret. But when at last her music was heard, everyone sang and danced and decided that both girls and boys should be free to drum and dream.

**Why we chose this book:** We love that this book shares the remarkable true story of Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, a Chinese-African-Cuban girl who broke Cuba's traditional taboo against female drummers. The illustrations are bold and engaging, and story is inspiring.

**Notes:** Review the Author's Note at the end of the book before reading for relevant background information.

**Central themes:** Multicultural biographies, music, following one's dream

**Introducing the book:** You can begin by showing the cover, reading the title and author, and then saying something like this:

*"This book is about a young girl who loved to play music, but she wasn't allowed to at first. After lots and lots of practice, she is able to perform for people and they loved her music. Do any of you play musical instruments?"*

**After Reading:** Debrief with students

*"Why do you think only boys were allowed to play drums?"*

*"When people hear Millo play the drums, what did they notice? How did hearing her music help them change their minds about the rule/tradition that girls weren't allowed to play drums?"*

*"Do any of you have any hobbies that you have to practice a lot in order to get better?"*

**Introducing the book:** You can begin by showing the cover, reading the title and author, and then saying something like this:

*"This book is about a young girl named Ami Chi who lives with her parents here in the United States. One summer the family travels to Vietnam where her parents are from. They visit relatives, but it's really hard for Ami Chi at first because she doesn't speak Vietnamese, and she is not happy at first."*

*"Does anyone here have parents that were born in another country? Have you ever gone to visit with them?"*

**After Reading:** Debrief with students

*"How does Ami Chi feel about being in Vietnam at the beginning of the trip? How do you know?" (She is unsure, she doesn't like it; she says she wants to go home.)*

*"How does she feel about Vietnam towards the end of her trip?" (She likes it more; she calls it "home," she meets some friends and has fun playing.)*

*"Why does Ami Chi feel like Vietnam is also her home?" (She has relatives and friends there, she belongs there as well as at her home in the US.)*

*"Does anyone here feel like they have more than one type of home?"*