

**PS 39 Diversity and Inclusion Book of the Month: May**  
**Theme: Immigration and Migration**

**Book Title:** First Generation:  
36 Trailblazing Immigrants and Refugees Who Make America Great  
By Sandra Neil Wallace and Rich Wallace

**Grade Level:** 4th / 5th

**Book Summary:**

Celebrate the genius, diversity, and grit of immigrants and refugees in this boldly illustrated guide to 36 American trailblazers.

The men and women in this book represent nations from Somalia to Germany, from Syria to China, from Mexico to Sweden, and more. They are people like Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, international singing sensation Celia Cruz, star basketball player Dikembe Mutombo, world-renowned physicist Albert Einstein, and influential journalist Jorge Ramos. And they are *all* immigrants or refugees to the United States of America. Their courage, their achievements, and their determination to change the world have helped make our country a stronger place. Perhaps after reading their stories, *you* will be inspired to make the world a better place, too.

**Discussion Questions:**

- What does the title, 'First Generation: 36 Trailblazing Immigrants and Refugees Who Make America Great' make you think about?
- What does it mean to be 'trailblazer'? Why do you think the authors chose to share the stories of these particular 36 first generation immigrants and refugees?
- Had you heard the stories of any of those featured in the book before reading? Were any of their stories new to you? Why is it important that we learn of their accomplishments and influence?
- Was there one story that stood out for you? What distinguished them? What funny, sad, or inspiring moments jumped out for you?
- Study the quotations by each of the 36 first generation immigrants and refugees discussed in this book. Which quote is the most powerful for you? Why?
- Whose mother said, "when you take the elevator up to reach the top, please don't forget to send it down" as a proverb to live by? What does this proverb mean to you?
- Thinking in terms of stories being windows or mirrors, why might this book be valuable to have in schools?
- Pack an imaginary suitcase with five objects you would take to a new country. What would they be? Why would you choose those items?
- In what ways might you be a trailblazer? How can young people blaze the trail ahead of them today? How will you be making an impact on the world?