

3 Literacy Strategies for Using Bilingual Picture Books in **Any Classroom**



(Even If You You're Not Bilingual)

Why this matters? Bilingual books aren't just for students who speak another language. They build vocabulary, cultural awareness, and comprehension for all students.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Use illustrations to drive discussion and inference | <p><i>Let the pictures do the heavy lifting.</i></p> <p>Ask: "What do you notice about the setting?" or "How do the characters feel?"</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boosts visual literacy• Builds confidence for multilingual learners• No translation required |
| 2. Invite students to compare words or phrases across languages | <p><i>Even if you don't speak the other language, model curiosity.</i></p> <p>Ask: "What do you notice about how this word looks or sounds?"</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports cross-linguistic transfer• Builds decoding skills• Promotes a welcoming and curious classroom culture |
| 3. Center identity: "Who do you see in this story?" | <p><i>Bilingual books often reflect cultural practices, family structures, and perspectives not always found in traditional texts.</i></p> <p>Ask: "What's familiar? What's new?" or "Who do you think this story is for?"</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Builds empathy• Validates lived experience• Encourages students to see themselves and others on the page |