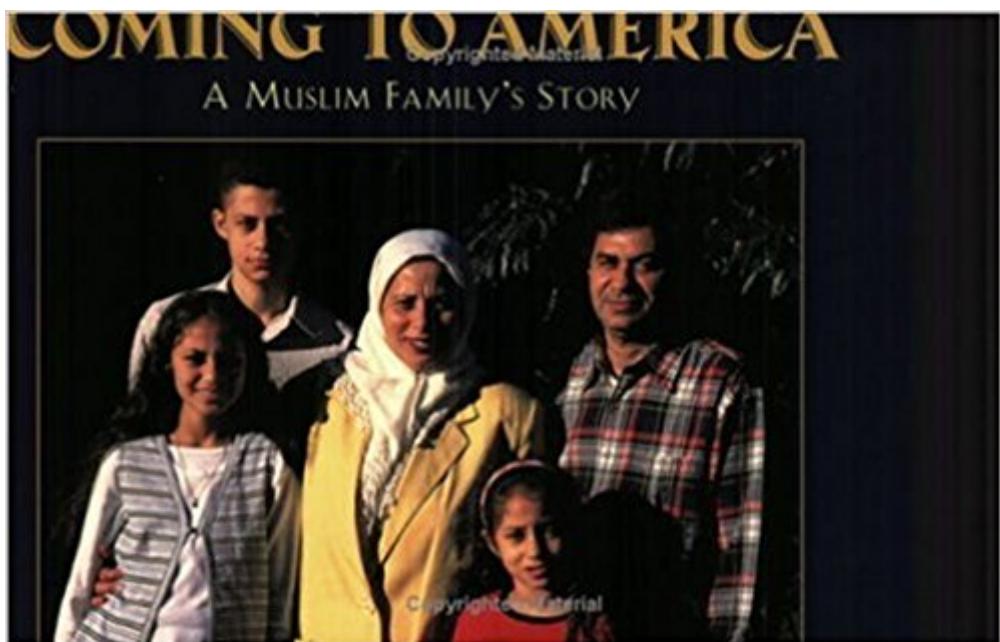


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# Coming To America: A Muslim Family's Story



## **Synopsis**

After four years of hard work and frugal living in New York, Hassan Mahmoud can afford to bring his family from Egypt to live with him. This close-knit family adapts to American life while staying true to their Muslim beliefs and Egyptian customs. Intimate and charming scenes of daily life are recounted -- preparing family meals, visiting a mosque in Manhattan, discovering the joys of snow. Through captivating color photographs and engaging text, this thoughtful book helps young readers understand Muslims as individuals and families.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 870L (What's this?)

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Product Dimensions: 10.5 x 0.2 x 8.5 inches

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #571,296 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #63 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Emigrants & Immigrants #974 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > United States #3256 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies

Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 3 - 5

## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 2-5-Unlike Jessica Chalfonte's *I Am Muslim* (Rosen, 1996) and Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith's *Celebrating Ramadan* (Holiday, 2001), both of which focus on religion, Wolf's book looks at the life of an immigrant family from a broader perspective. A lively essay describes the Mahmouds' arrival in the U.S. from Egypt; how the various family members spend their time at school, work, and at home; non-Muslim friends; interest in prototypical American activities such as watching television and playing basketball; and attendance at the mosque on Friday. Unfortunately, there are two errors in a sentence that reads, "Facing east is a gesture of respect for Muhammad, the man who wrote the Qur'an, Islam's holy book." In fact, Muslims pray toward Mecca because they believe that God's

house is there and Muhammad did not "write" the Qur'an; he was illiterate. The Muslim belief is that he committed the text to memory as the angel Jibra'il (Gabriel) dictated it. Large, excellent-quality color photographs on each spread depict such events as marketing, a birthday celebration, and a graduation. Wolf portrays the Mahmouds as individuals rather than as representations; his approach serves the important purpose-especially in a suspicious and stressful time such as our own-of pointing out that differences of religion do not signify differences in humane behavior, love of family, or appreciation for hard work. Yet, the experience of this family can stand, in some ways, as a representation of the intersection of Islam with the United States. Coop Renner, Blackshear Elementary School, Austin, TX Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 3-5. Addressing the surprising scarcity of books designed to introduce young readers to American adherents of this rapidly growing faith, Wolf adds impersonal, but specific, commentary to a generous set of big, bright photos to profile a family of Egyptian immigrants living in New York City. Hassan Mahmoud works nights and frets about not seeing enough of his family. His wife, Soad, hampered by her lack of English, seems practically a shut-in, except when she goes to language class. On the other hand, the three Mahmoud children have adapted to their new country well, and are seen doing familiar tasks at home and at school, being with non-Muslim friends, enjoying both traditional foods at dinner and an American-style cake brought in to celebrate a birthday. Wolf ends on a formal note, with photos of the family at prayer in a Manhattan mosque. Though the character portraits in this photo-essay are more generalized than those in Hoyt-Goldsmith's *Celebrating Ramadan* (2001), and larger issues, such as post-September 11 tensions, remain unexamined, children will come away more likely to consider the Mahmouds, and immigrant families like them, neighbors, rather than strangers. John Peters Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I have used this photojournalism/picturebook in the classroom before in the context of a critical analysis of western discourse on immigration and found it very useful.

A great way to teach my young kids a new perspective. The great photos in the book are very helpful. It is written in a way that my students and I can identify many similarities between us, to increase understanding.

The photo-essay *Coming to America: A Muslim Family's Story* is a brightly photographed realistic portrayal of a family's arrival in the United States from Alexandra, Egypt. The father arrives first, after winning a "green card lottery" offered to Egyptians who want to work in America. He worked long hours as a grocer in Queens, N.Y. until he was able to bring his family. Text and beautiful bright color photographs let the reader share the experiences of eight-year-old Rowan Mahmoud and her family once they all arrive. The photos capture the family at home, in school, and at the mosque. Their religion is an integral part of their life, but school, television, and playing with friends take up most of their time. We see the children in American schools with American teachers and schoolwork, but then return home to their Muslim and Egyptian traditions. Particularly useful in the classroom is the way Wolf tackles immigration issues for both adults and children; the hardships of learning a new language, the economic problems of finding an appropriate job, homesickness etc. At a time when many Muslim and Arab families in the U.S. feel subject to discriminatory governmental regulations and public attitudes, this book is especially welcome.

Tells the story of a Muslim family who moved from Alexandria Egypt to New York City. Colorful pictures depict family members at work, at school, at home, in the neighborhood. Promotes understanding of the challenges immigrants face and some basic information about Islam. Excellent for any age.

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