

Minnesota Storytime  
Reading Guide

**Title:** *Imagine a House: A Journey to Fascinating Houses Around the World*

**Author:** Angela Gustafson

**Illustrator:** Matt Kania, Matt Mills, and Amy Learn

**Photographers:** multiple

**Publisher and Copyright Date:** Out of the Box, 2003

**Connection to Minnesota:** Minnesota author and publisher

**Summary:** This is a nonfiction book about houses from around the world. Through photography and design, the book highlights 22 houses from 15 countries, with information on how the houses were built and the people who live in them.

**Suggested ages:** 4-6, 7-10, all ages

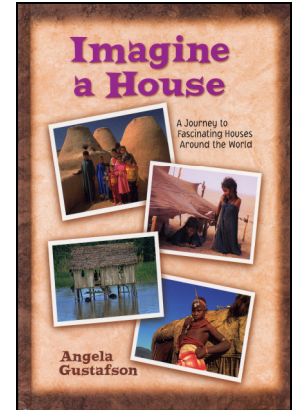
**Tips for Reading:**

- Read the captions found under the house illustrations on pages 6 and 7, and then read the picture book text (larger black type in the upper left of each two-page spread) through page 29.
- From there, discussions can move in a variety of directions. Several discussion questions and activity ideas are listed on page 32.

**Questions before reading:**

- Close your eyes. Imagine a house. What do you see?
- How would you define the word, "house"? What do you think is essential for any house?
- What does your house look like? What is your favorite part and why?
- Where has your family (parents/grandparents/great-grandparents) lived? What do/did their houses look like?
- What different factors determine the type of house someone lives in?

**To Introduce this story say:** Let's open our eyes, stretch our minds and take a trip few have taken. We will visit 15 different countries and arrive at the doorsteps of 22 fascinating houses. We will discover how they were built and see the people who live in them.



**Questions  
After Reading:**

- Which house in the book do you like best? Why?
- What materials are used to build these houses? Why?
- Who built the houses in this book? Who built your house?
- Describe a climate different from your own. What styles of houses might be built there?
- How is living in the country different than living in the city? How are the house styles similar or different?
- What different factors determine the type of house someone lives in?

**RELATED ACTIVITIES** (more activities are listed on pages 30 and 32 of the book)

**Art:**

- Draw the house you live in.
- Take photographs of the house you live in and of other houses in your community.
- Create a timeline of the houses you have lived in. Include location, dates, photos and/or drawings and your comments.
- Build a model house of your choice with readily available materials. Be creative!

**Writing:**

- Find the dictionary definition of “house.” Write your own definition.
- Compare and contrast your house with a house in the book.

**Other:**

- Plan a geography activity using maps. Locate all of the places from the book on a world map. Color in the countries.
- Many of the houses in the book are built according to tradition. Discover a special skill of a parent, grandparent or someone else close to you. Have that person teach you the skill and keep it a tradition.
- Pick out one house from the book. Come up with 10 questions and see if you can locate the answers using other resources.

**Suggestions for  
English Language  
Learners:**

- Have the children draw pictures of houses (either that they live in now or have lived in).
- Have the children talk about the variety of houses from their home country.
- Have the children interview their family members about houses and traditions in their home country.
- Discuss the names for “house” in different languages and the meaning or significance of “house” in different cultures.

**Related Books:**

- ***Homes Around the World*** by Bobbie Kalman (Crabtree, 1994)
- ***Homes*** by Fiona MacDonald (*Discovering World Cultures* series, Crabtree, 2001)
- ***Houses and Homes*** by Ann Morris (Lothrop Lee & Shepard, 1992)
- ***Children Just Like Me*** by Barnabas and Annabel Kindersley (Dorling Kindersley, 1995)
- ***If the World Were a Village: A Book About the World’s People*** by David J. Smith (Kids Can Press, 2002)

