

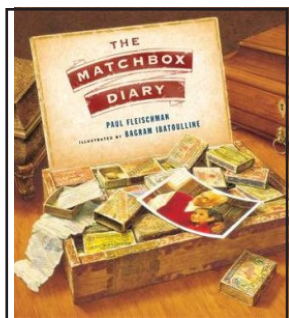


# CRUCHLEY'S COLLECTION

Diana Cruchley is an award-winning educator and author, who has taught at elementary and secondary levels. Her workshops are practical, include detailed handouts, and are always enthusiastically received.

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## THE MATCHBOX DIARY



Grandfather has a room full of treasures, each with a story attached. She asks for the story of the cigar box filled with matchbooks, each with a tiny symbol of a story from grandfather's life.

Paul Fleischman, Candlewick, ©2013, ISBN 978-0-7636-4601-1

## A BOX OF MEMORIES

Ask students to interview their parents for a half dozen memories of their own childhood. Then ask them to think of a symbol for that memory - what object might call that memory up? Tell them each story should be about 50-100 words - that they will write in class - each on a tiny piece of paper about the size of a 3X5 card (both sides). This might be a good exercise to print from a computer.

If your school's budget can take it, buy about 200 match boxes for wooden matches. Dollar store. Find and print images from the Internet to paste on the boxes if you wish to make them look "old fashioned". Remove all the matches ahead of time, and then allow each student to create their own "*Box of Memories*." This can make a nice father or mother's day gift.



## PERSONAL WRITING

A springboard from a picture book to personal writing should provide at least three topics if possible. Here are some ideas:

1. Grandfather mentions an olive and a banana. Tell stories about your first encounters with any new foods, and your impressions.
2. The whole family finds a schoolmaster's son who can read, and he reads their father's letters to them. Stories of being read to, or reading to someone else.
3. These Italian immigrants were crowded on the ship, crowded at work, and crowded in the tenement they lived in. Talk about all the times you feel crowded.



## MINING A PICTURE

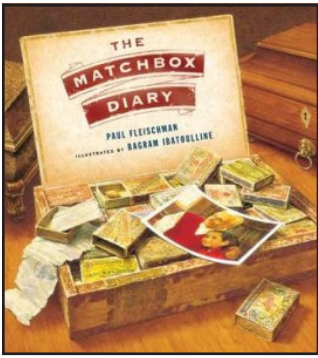
In one of the matchboxes is a picture of grandfather's father. The author writes 151 words about that photo - and this is in a picture book where words are at a premium. Ask students to bring a picture to class. You could then show how you can "mine a picture" to write.

1. When was this photo taken? Why do you think it was taken?
2. Who is the person in the picture? Why is the person in that pose?
3. Who took the picture? Talk about the picture taker.
4. What is being worn in the picture? Talk about the clothes.
5. What other things are in the picture?
6. What is the mood of the picture?
7. What smells, sights, sounds, do you associate with the picture?

Now students have enough to easily write about 200 words about the photo.

## A "MAP" OF OUR TRIP

The image to the left is of matchboxes covered with a map, each of which contains a story from a trip. This might work as an interesting field trip report. With either *Box of Memories* and *Map of Our Trip*...have students hand in the words to be marked - saves you opening all those little boxes.

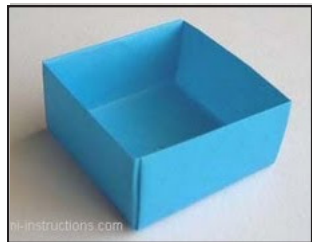


## THE MATCHBOX DIARY, CONT.

### MAKING SMALL BOXES

This story uses as a “prop” a matchbox. *The House Baba Built*, by Ed Young, mentions that the children would gather silkworms and put them in little origami boxes that they built, and feed them mulberry leaves. There are many Youtubes of simple instructions for making your own origami boxes. This is the easiest one that I found. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZS8zS8p98M>)

To make the “inside” of the box - just take about .5 cm off two sides of the square to make a smaller square.



### SAINTS ARE ALL AROUND US

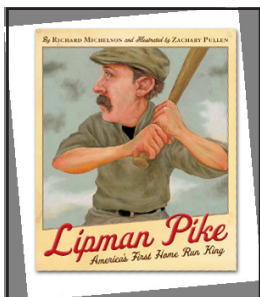
On the boat, during the storm, all of the immigrants (who are largely Catholic) pray to St. Christopher to be saved. Admitting it is tricky to try to be sure that we are not accidentally perceived as being religious...it is interesting how many places, and holidays that we celebrate were originally from the Catholic Saints. For example, why is St. Catherine's, Ontario, called St. Catherine's?

Attached is page with some of the common saints “around us”.

### LIPMAN PIKE

In *The Matchbox Diary* one of his treasured memories is of going to a baseball game with his father. *Lipman Pike* is another picture book about an immigrant experience and baseball, where a Jewish son of an immigrant (who has higher ambitions for his son than being a baseball player) becomes the first “professional” baseball player - paid to play the game that everyone loved.

Of course, with the movie *42 - The Jackie Robinson Story*, we have the story of the young black player who is the first to break “the colour barrier” in baseball.



### FOODS I EAT

Fewer than 50 years ago, the North American diet consisted almost completely of meat and potatoes and two vegetables for dinner. Since then, the arrival of many immigrants, and the establishment of many ethnic restaurants has led most people to be much more exploratory about their meals.

Ask each student to make a chart of the following countries: Britain, Germany, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, China, Thailand, North America, Mexico. Then ask them to make a list, in each category, of the foods they know about, or have tried, from that country. (They could highlight the ones they have actually eaten.) A group chart might be good in the end, to emphasize the vocabulary of food.

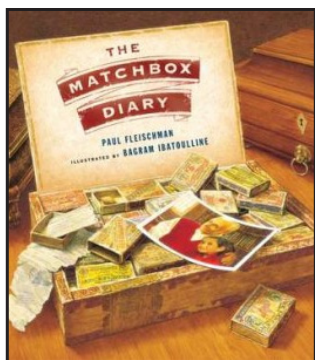
### CANADIAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

Many picture books are about the North American immigrant experience, so this might be an opportunity for students to collect stories of “how my family came to this country.”

### ITINERANT WORKERS

Part of the experience of these Italian immigrants was to work in many different temporary jobs. They worked shelling nuts, canning sardines, canning other fish, sorting peaches, shelling peas, factory sewing, and typesetting.

In Steveston, BC, there is a National Museum dedicated to the cannery industry on the Fraser River where it is interesting to see the living and working conditions of some of the workers that look very “spartan”. On the other hand, for the time, these were well-paid unionized workers for most of the life of the canneries.



# SAINTS ARE ALL AROUND US!!

## THE MATCHBOX DIARY, CONT.

### 1. Why is the Saint Lawrence River called The Saint Lawrence River?

Actually the river was the Saint Louis...because it was first part of a French colony. He was actually the very pious King Louis IX who avoided war as much as he could and when he was forced into war with England, he actually made restitution to the innocent people whose property was destroyed during the battle. He established the very famous Sorbonne University and led the first two of the Crusades to the Holy Land. Lived 1214- 1270.



### 2. Saint Christopher

One of the favourite saints. Lots of non-catholics even will have a Saint Christopher's medal, because he is the patron saint of safe travel. In this book, during the storm at sea, remembering that most Italians are Catholic, everyone is praying to Saint Christopher. The legend is that he carried a child across the river and thought how heavy he was. It turned out that it was Jesus. He was said to be over 7 feet tall.

### 3. Saint Valentine

St. Valentine aided martyrs in prison until he himself was beheaded in 269. He is not only the saint of love and happy marriages, but also the saint who protects bees and beekeepers. Celebrated Feb. 14th.



### 4. Saint Patrick

Saint Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland and we celebrate him on Saint Patrick's Day, March 17, the day of his death. He used the shamrock to explain the Trinity to the Irish when he converted the entire kingdom to Christianity which is why the shamrock is associated with Ireland.

### 5. St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis is the patron saint of animals and ecology. In his 44 years of life he helped the poor, founded the Franciscan order of monks, and saw animals as brothers and sisters because they were God's creatures. He is often portrayed with doves, or with wild animals near him.

