

So Far From the Bamboo Grove

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Unit Topic: Literary Elements/ Reading/Grammar and Writing

Novel: So Far From the Bamboo Grove by Yoko Kawashima Watkins

Grade: 6th-8th English Language Arts

Unit Time Frame: 6-7 Weeks

Essential Questions

1. What are literary elements and how do they affect a novel or story?
2. How does character perspective impact the story?
3. What qualities do the characters possess in order to survive?
4. How is personal freedom valued?

Learning Objectives

Students will connect with the text personally and academically.

Students will understand a historical event through the point of view of an 11 year-old Japanese girl.

Students will identify various literary concepts (character, setting, conflict, theme, and autobiography) and evaluate their importance in the text.

Students will reflect upon their reading experience and what they have learned in a final project

Rationale for Using Novel

-“So Far From the Bamboo Grove” is a great novel to use in middle school. It is an easy read, so it is something that struggling readers will be able to read (great for IEP inclusion classes).

-It is easy to create cross-curricular activities with this novel.

-There are many events and situation that spur high level thinking and discussion.

-It is based on real life experiences that students can connect with.

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Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.6

Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

Unit Summary

- Students will be reading So Far from the Bamboo Grove in class
- Students will be given prompt from or related to the story and asked to write journal entries (ranging from possibly paragraph to a full page) and when asked to provide evidence from the text
- Students will participate in class discussions and well as table discussions about themes and conflicts discussed within the text
- Students will be asked to identify, spell, and define words from the text as vocabulary words and will be required to use them in their writing
- Students will be asked to identify different parts of speech within the text and their own writing
- Students will be asked to evaluate the story and reflect on personal connections they have made with the characters or situations in the story

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Formative and Summative Assessments

Formative

Observation of students throughout the class

Questioning of students

Group Work

Vocabulary

Reading comprehension quizzes

Class, group, and individual discussions

Journals and writing prompts

Summative

Final project

Vocabulary Quizzes

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Journal Entries

1. **Survival Pack** Tell students to imagine that they have to leave their homes suddenly and are only able to take with them the things that they can carry in a bag on their back. They will need to include all the things that they would need to survive (food, clothes, med, etc.).
2. What do you think the story is about? Why? When and where does the story take place? What clues in the picture show something about the setting? What appears to be happening? What clues in the picture tell you something about the characters? What are the characters feeling? How can you tell?
3. Ask students to think about the events from chapter one and write a good title for the chapter. Tell why.
4. Why do you think Calligraphy writing is so important in Japanese culture?
5. Was it a good decision to leave the boxcar? Why or why not?
6. Freewrite about a time when you got into an argument/fight with a member of your family. What was it about? How did you resolve it?
7. Where is Hideyo? What do you think happened to him?
8. Why are the foods of Japan important to Yoko and her family?
9. What new problems/conflicts might mother, Ko, and Yoko face in Japan?
10. What will the new year be like for Ko & Yoko?
11. What do you think that Yoko wrote in her essay? Pretend you are Yoko. Write the opening of your essay entitled "Understanding."

Vocabulary

chemise [shə mē z] n. a woman's one-piece undergarment, similar to a slip

evacuate [i vak ū ā t̄] v. to move away from a place, especially for protection

futon [foō ton] n. a thin mattress placed on the floor for use as a bed

khaki [kak ē] adj. light yellowish brown

rucksacks [ruk saks] n. backpacks

torrents [to rənts] n. violently rushing streams of water

frolic [frol ik] v. to play and run about

hibachi [hi ba chē] n. pan in which charcoal or wood is burned to heat or cook food

prestigious [pres tij əs] adj. having honor or status as viewed by other people

sarcastic [sar kas tik] adj. having the character of sharp speech intended to be humorous or to cause pain

Discussion Questions

http://www.glencoe.com/sec/writerschoice/litlibrary/pdf/so_far_from_bamboo_grove.pdf

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Final Project

So Far from the Bamboo Grove Assessments

You must complete enough assignments to make up 100 pts.

All of the assessments below are worth 15 pts.

1. Illustrate a scene from the book, using paint, markers, colored pencils, pen and ink, charcoal colored paper, photographic collage, etc. (15pts)
2. Find song lyrics from any artist that you feel define one of the characters in the book. Have a copy of the lyrics and describe why you think that these lyrics define this character. (15pts)
3. Research calligraphy and write your name, favorite food, and best friend in calligraphy. (15 pts)
4. Create a map and timeline of the route that Ko and her family took to get back to Japan. Include any of the major events on this map. (15pts)
5. Act out a scene from the book. You can work with a partner on this. (15pts)
6. Choose any character and write a poem about that character. (15pts)
7. Learn about origami and create your own origami (3 pieces of work). (15pts)
8. Create a diorama for a scene in the book. (15pts)

All of the following assessments are worth 25 pts (Must choose at least one)

1. Pretend like you are Ko and you have to write a letter to your father who is still alive about why you left the bamboo grove. Please make sure to include much detail of what has happened in your travels. (25 pts)
2. Rewrite the ending of the novel. Include dialogue and description. Do you like your ending better or the book's original ending. (25pts)
3. Write a 1 to 2 page description of a time where you witnessed someone being discriminated against because they are different. Explain how you felt at the time, how you reacted at the time, and how you might react in the future. (25 pts)
4. Research culture of the Japanese. Create a PowerPoint outlining the important aspects of their culture. (25 pts)

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Culture Day

- Put students into groups
- Begin by distributing the green tea while the stations are introduced (5 minutes)
- Students will rotate clockwise
- Have an adult at each station
- Stations will have six to eight minutes at each one
 - Origami-Learn to make origami
 - Chopsticks-learn to use chopsticks with popcorn
 - Sushi making
 - Dress up
 - Computers-learn to say words in Japanese
- Students will then help clean up before they leave

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Escape to Japan (Gifted Extension)

Put yourself in Ko's families position. It is your job to create an escape plan to get from Korea back to Japan. Knowing what you have learned from the novel create a plan for escaping Korea with the meager possessions that Ko has. How would you revise or what could you do alternately than Ko;s family to make the escape go faster and smoother? Create this escape route on a map (can either be digitally created or drawn, whichever you like). Discuss what the pro's and con's are of your escape route. Predict what the possible dangers could be and explain your reasoning for why these risks are acceptable to take. You can use a T-Chart for your pros and cons and your reasoning should be written below (1-2 paragraphs). Once in Japan, then devise a plan for survival (your mother dies as in she does in the novel). How would you make money? Where would you go for housing or shelter? Again, use information from the novel, however this will take some research on post WWII Japan. In your research, you may need to look at what jobs were available for kids at that time, what did kids do who were orphaned, etc. Your survival plan should include a created budget based on the job and money you bring in (items necessary are food, drink, shelter, clothes, and any other essential necessities i.e. cooking materials). and what you are doing for shelter. All information (map, pro/con T-chart and reasoning, and survival plan) should be put able to be presented to the class.

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Resources

http://www.glencoe.com/sec/writerschoice/litlibrary/pdf/so_far_from_bamboo_grove.pdf

chrome-extension://bpmcpldpdmajfigpchkicefoigmkfalc/views/app.html