



The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden

Title: The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden by Heather Smith and Rachel Wada as a Read Aloud and Shared Inquiry Discussion (Junior Great Books method)

Lesson Plan by: Ellen Broyles, Jonathan Alder Schools, NCTA 2021 (The Ohio State University seminar)

Theme/Topic: A whole village must recover from great loss of life after a tsunami swept away many coastal villages in 2010. Attention on the science of the tsunami and the physical and emotional impact that occurred, Japanese culture, history and geography.

Introduction (2-3 sentence summary of lesson): Students will read silently the Book Titled; The Phone Book in Mr. Hirota's Garden in small groups or as a larger sized group. The story shares a real life loss of a brother a year before the Tsunami struck Japan who build a phone booth with a disconnected phone help him work through his grief. In the story of Mr. Hirota lost his daughter in the giant wave. Makio, who lost his father to the tsunami which struck the coastal area of Japan in 2010. Mr. Hirota built a phone booth on a hill overlooking the ocean with a disconnected phone on a table where he could talk to his son and the words would spread to the wind. Makio came there as well to talk to his father and eventually the whole village came to talk to lost loved ones. It was a healing experience to a terrible natural disaster. Teacher will ask several reflection questions and lead a re-reading to group, lead discussion, allow students to reflect and answer in groups to critical reading questions.

Subject(s)/Grade level(s): Reading Grade 3: Typical Classroom Small Group and/or Grade 2/3 Gifted Student Class

Duration of lesson: 45 Minutes

Connection to standards/common core:

Ohio Learning Standards: Grade 3 Language Arts - Interacting with Literary Text

RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate an understanding of text, referring explicitly to the text as a basis for the answers

RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (eg. their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events

Essential Questions:

To introduce children to another culture, perhaps not familiar to them, in the context of a challenging story line.



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Learning Objectives:

To introduce students to a better understanding of a village who lost many people to a natural disaster and each member helped all heal.

To practice children in being critical readers by asking complex questions whereby detailed study of the written text of a trade book reveals literary inferences and cultural clues.

Materials Needed: Multiple copies of the Picture Book The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden, Globe, Drawing Paper, Pencils, Crayons, Word Bank Cards, List of Critical Thinking Questions

Pre-Assessment of Prior Knowledge:

How will students show what they already know about the topic of this unit? Discussion of geography through global locations of countries. ie. Japan and coastal influences on the island nation, United States

What activities will be used? Students will be familiar with shared inquiry style of reading discussion:

Individual artistic responses will help children respond to vast depth of the story.

Lesson Activities/Instructional Strategies:

- 1) Introduce locations of Asian countries and distance to the United States and other North American countries. Briefly allow children to share what they know about Asian cultures.
- 2) Students pre-read picture book individually and silently
- 3) Teacher leads group discussion and asks general questions regarding text, illustrations, key vocabulary, biographical information on the author.
- 4) Teacher leads off oral group reading of book. Students may volunteer to read portions aloud. Students may ask questions as the story is read aloud. Students draw a word bank card to share while the oral reading is occurring.
- 5) Teacher asks series of deep critical reading questions. Students respond with passage support for answers. ie. from text asking why does the phone have no connecting wires? Why is the phone booth on a high hill overlooking the ocean?
- 6) Teacher can offer a variety of options to students to respond to literature, either with drawing a portion of the story, writing a follow up short story, and any other personal expression.



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Closing/Reflection Activity: *How are students engaging with ideas from another culture? What it means for them?* Students will have multiple follow up opportunities to show the gain of cultural knowledge through visual and verbal responses.

Post-Assessment: *How will students demonstrate what they have learned about the topic from this unit? What activities will be used?* Visual, written expression, discussion participation, reflection on friends/classmates to show better understanding

Links to examples:

- Junior Great Books Shared Inquiry Methodology
- [The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden](#) written by Heather Smith and illustrated by Rachel Wada, Orca Book Publishers, c. 2019