

Grandfather's Journey Mini-Unit Plan

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Designer:

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Mini-Unit Introduction:

This unit is designed for first grade English Language Learners (ELL) with English language proficiencies ranging from Level 1 (Entering) to Level 3 (Developing) in a small group (fewer than 10 students); "pull out" setting.

Student goals:

Content/Theme: Explore the concept of "home," how it is defined on a personal level, how the definition of "home" can be different for different people, and the associated emotions surrounding "home" or its absence.

Language goals: Develop social and content vocabulary both receptively (listening/reading) and productively (speaking/writing) through asking questions, answering questions, and providing details in group/paired discussions and activities

Teacher goals:

Pedagogy: Fine tune Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) skills, begin utilizing Whole Book Approach (WBA) strategies and integrating more multimodal opportunities for students to explore a theme

Contextual Information:

Grandfather's Journey: Allen Say is the author and the illustrator.
Publisher: Sandpiper, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing,
1993

Summary: A Japanese American man recounts his grandfather's journey to America which he later also undertakes, and the feelings of being torn by a love for two different countries.

Genre: Fiction

Media: Watercolors

Cultural themes: Extended family connections (grandparents), homesickness, voyages and travel, maintaining identity in a new environment

Author/Illustrator background: Allen Say was born in Yokohama, Japan, in 1937. His father was a Korean orphan raised by a British family in Shanghai, and his mother was a Japanese American born in Oakland, California. The family separated when his parents got divorced. Allen was living unhappily with his father and his sister was living with their mother. When Allen was twelve, he was sent to live with his maternal grandmother in Tokyo where he became an apprentice to a cartoonist. At sixteen, Mr. Say moved to America with his father and his father's new family. He spent a short time in a military academy, but was expelled and then enrolled himself at Citrus Union High School where he pursued his art.

Mr. Say returned to Japan only to return to California shortly thereafter. He got married and began studying architecture, but was then drafted into the army, where he spent two years in Germany. The military newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*, published his first photographic work.

When he returned to California, Mr. Say continued to work with photography but also sketched. Eventually, he was encouraged to

become a freelance illustrator. In 1972, he published his first book, *Dr. Smith's Safari* (Harper & Row). He worked on several books over the next 16 years, but after illustrating Diane Synder's *The Boy of the Three-Year Nap*, which won a Caldecott Honor Award and a Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, Mr. Say focused solely on writing and illustrating books for children.

Sources of inspirations for the author: "During Allen Say's childhood, he and his family moved over and over again. Always changing homes and going to new schools made him feel uncomfortable wherever he lived." (Houghton Mifflin Reading Education Place, n.d.) Mr. Say turned to art as a coping mechanism and his talents got the attention he was looking for. In Mr. Say's stories, the pictures often come before any text (or even a basic storyline) is developed. The events in *Grandfather's Journey* are semi autobiographical, based on his travels back and forth between Japan and California during his young adult and mature adult life.

Contextual Information References:

Houghton Mifflin Reading Education Place. (n.d.). *Meet the author/illustrator Allen Say*. Retrieved from <http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hmr/mtai/say.html?grade=4>

Houghton Mifflin Company. (2015). *About the author Allen Say*. Retrieved from <http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/authors/allensay/author.shtml>

Learning Experiences:

Learning Experience 1: Exploring the cover art (ideally with title, author, and Caldecott Medal removed to eliminate distraction): 30-40 minutes

Visual Teaching Strategies: The teacher uses VTS that incorporate these three main inquiries (see resource on VTS for full description on this method of exploring illustrations with students):

- What's going on in this picture?

- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What else can you find?

The teacher can record a list of responses or ideas that stem from this shared learning experience to provide a reference for comparison during later lessons to check individual and/or group understanding.

This learning experience is a low stress way for students of all language proficiencies to engage with the art and provides the teacher with insights into students' background knowledge in order to fine tune subsequent lessons.

Scaffolding for English Language Learners (ELLs):

Vocabulary: Verbally provide essential vocabulary as necessary as long as it does not alter a student's response (i.e. if a student calls the life preserver a "white ring you throw into the water if someone falls in", you can and should provide the term "life preserver". However, if a student says there is a white thing in the picture that looks like a toilet seat, do not correct the student, but continue asking questions to provide students an opportunity to discuss the item further).

Grammar and syntax: Through orally paraphrasing a student's responses to these questions, model possible sentence structures for responses (i.e. I see _____. I think _____ is _____ because...). This can be done verbally, and/or the teacher can provide sentence frames that early readers can refer to as they orally express their ideas.

Learning Experience 1 Reference:

Visual Understanding in Education Staff. (n.d.). *Introduction to Visual Thinking Strategies*. Retrieved from <http://www.vtshome.org/research/articles-other-readings>

Learning Experience 2: Group discussion of the definition of "home" and student-created representation of "home": 40-60 minutes

Teacher facilitates discussion: The teacher uses a variety of questions that may include the following. The teacher can record student responses by individual student, by category, etc.

- What do you think of when you hear the word "home"?
- What or who is "home"?
- Can it be more than one thing/place/person/emotion?
- What makes "home" feel like "home"?
- What happens when we are not at "home" (or it is not with us)?
- What kinds of things take us away from our homes? [explore possible positives (vacations, school) and negatives (natural disaster, war, unemployment) as appropriate]
- How does this feel?
- How do the feelings change depending on the circumstances of our departure from "home"?
- Also discuss the additional complexity of emotions depending on whether the departure from "home" was by choice or force.
- What are some feelings we might have if "home" is taken away? (Take the ideas from the last question to lead into a definition of "homesick.")

The discussion can then move to a pair and share activity where students share with their elbow partner what "home" means to them.

After the pair and share, students can move to an open-ended art activity where each student can create a visual representation of "home" using their choice of a wide range of materials. When complete, students can present their artwork to the class and explain how their choices helped create a work of art that represents their personal definition of "home".

Scaffolding for ELLs:

Vocabulary: Provide first language (L1) translations of the word "home" or any related concepts that come up during group discussion; provide visual reinforcements of concepts of "home" through pictures/video of different types of dwellings (video of homes around the world), families together, neighborhoods, etc.

Grammar and Syntax: Orally model and/or provide proficiency-appropriate sentence frames to assist students in forming their

responses (i.e. Home means _____ to me. I think home means _____, _____, and _____. Home means _____ to me because _____.)

Learning Experience 2 Reference:

Pace, T. (2013). *Houses around the world*. Retrieved from <http://youtu.be/mVoLH7DLqaI>

Learning Experience 3: Study and Picture Walk of *Grandfather's Journey*: 40-60 minutes

Vocabulary: Teacher introduces/reinforces the vocabulary to discuss the details in the anatomy of the book including: the title, jacket, author, illustrator, spine, cover, and medium. Guide students' exploration of these features and why the author might have made particular artistic choices for the features.

Book title: Teacher introduces the title and clarifies the meaning of the word "journey" (tied back to the concept of "home").

Picture walk: Teacher takes a whole group picture walk through the book, using VTS and Whole Book Approach (WBA) strategies for select illustrations.

Learning Experience 4: Text reading and prediction comparison/contrast: 30-60 minutes

Whole Book Approach: The teacher reads the text using WBA strategies to assist students in connecting the text and images for comprehension. WBA strategies include opportunities for group sharing of questions, ideas, insights, etc. during the reading. Embedded vocabulary introduction/clarification/reinforcement will occur during the reading. See chart outlining potentially new/troubling vocabulary for students and their corresponding vocabulary tier (please also refer to link for Colorin Colorado for more information about vocabulary tiers). It is

critical for a teacher to consider in advance the challenges that the vocabulary presents for their particular group of students in order to make decisions on whether vocabulary should be pre-taught or what resources to have on hand to address vocabulary clarification on the spot.

Use a standard globe to show location of Japan, California, and the Pacific Ocean (draw students' attention to the size of the Pacific compared to other oceans.)

Refer back to student responses recorded for Learning Experiences 1 and 3 to evaluate the accuracy of the predictions.

Pages	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
4,5	"left his home" "see the world" steamship journey	astonished	Japan Europe (European clothes) Pacific Ocean
6,7	appeared explored train riverboat "days on end"		New World North America
8,9	farm fields remind "had crossed"	enormous amaze endless	desert sculpture
10,11	huge cities factories buildings excited mountains rivers "clear as sky"	bewildered marvel towering	
12,13	"shook hands" travel "longed to see" return	black men white men yellow men red men	

14,15	strong sunlight "after a time" village marry "childhood sweetheart" bring/brought bride	lonely seacoast	Sierra Mountains New Country
16,17	"made their home" "had a baby" grow		San Francisco Bay
18,19	remember Songbirds Forget "nearly grown" "wait no more" homeland	surround himself	
20,21	just (as exactly/same)	exchange stories	
22,23	"fell in love" born	nearby	
24,25	favorite Weekend plan a trip	raised	warblers silvereyes
26,27	war bombs "fell from the sky" "nothing left of the city"	"scattered our lives like leaves in a storm"	
28,29	keep/kept		
30,31,32	"the funny thing is" homesick know	longing (in the heart)	

	miss		
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Learning Experience 4 References:

Colorin Colorado, Inc. (2007). *Selecting vocabulary words to teach English language learners*. Retrieved from <http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators/content/vocabulary/>

Tripline, Inc. (2014). *A fictional trip by Jennifer Newton*. Retrieved from http://www.tripline.net/trip/Grandfather's_Journey-0255231254711003B1B58105F1B8C425

Coloring Castle.com. (n.d.) *United States of America map*. Retrieved from http://www.coloringcastle.com/pdfs/us_states/united_states_state_names.pdf

Time, Inc. (2015). *Time for Kids Around the World Japan*. Retrieved from <http://www.timeforkids.com/destination/japan>

National Geographic Kids. (n.d.) *Japan*. Retrieved from <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/japan/#japan-gardens.jpg>

Summative Learning Experience: Creating a visual representation of home/journey either in response to their understanding of the book, or as a link to their personal lives

Students can work on at least one art project consisting of one of the following:

- Create a paper boat (using origami or otherwise constructed) that can be decorated (using watercolors like the book illustrations?) and then filled with representations of people, places, and/or items that constitute home or the items they would bring with them if they had to leave home permanently. The items on the inside of the boat can be drawn, cut and pasted from photos or magazines,

molded from clay, or pieces of realia. The scale of the boat will be clarified by the use of a Lego figure.

- Create a picture book (with or without short amounts of text) that recreate the events of *Grandfather's Journey* or tell the story of a personal journey. Students' illustrations can be in watercolor, crayon, colored pencil, or collage and can mimic the framing that Allen Say uses in his illustrations. The orientation of the books will remain consistent with *Grandfather's Journey*.
- Create a short theater piece representing a part of *Grandfather's Journey* or a theater piece that tells of a personal journey.
- Create a map that shows grandfather's travels or a map that plots a personal journey. Students can also try to estimate/calculate the miles travelled.

Students will present their art with their peers and explain the choices they made and how it links to their understanding of the story (verbally and/or writing).

Summary Learning Experience Reference:

Instructables.com (n.d.) *How to do a supereasy origami boat*. Retrieved from <http://www.instructables.com/id/How-To-Do-A-Super-Easy-Origami-Boat/>

Extended activities: Students collaboratively compose interview questions to bring home and record family responses about their journeys or experience immigrating. Students then share these experiences through writing, a theatrical piece, or piece of art work

Possible Companion texts:

Fox, M. (1997). *Whoever you are*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co.)
(Great for younger ages up to approximately 4th grade)

Tan, S. (2006). *The Arrival*. London: Hodder Children's Books.
(More complex book, in wordless, graphic novel format, best suited for more mature students in the middle school years and up.)

Standards:

WIDA ELD Standards:

Std 1: Social and Instructional Language

Std 2: Language of Language Arts

Std 3: Language of Mathematics

Std 4: Language of Science

Std 5: Language of Social Studies

Common Core ELA:

Reading and Literature: RL.1.1-1.4, RL.1.6, RL.1.7, RL.1.9

Writing: W.1.3, W.1.5, W.1.8

Speaking and Listening: SL.1.1-1.6

Language: L.1.1, L.1.2, L.1.4-1.6

Common Core Math:

Geometry: 1.G.3

Measurement and Data: 1.MD.1, 1.MD.2, 1.MD.4