

Optional: Asian Historical Book Set Lesson Plan

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Go to <https://carolinaasiacenter.unc.edu/outreach/k-14-lesson-plans/north-carolina-centered-resources/asian-historical-book-set-lesson-plan/>

This lesson plan was created by Sarah Brown, adapted from Yin Lesson Guides by Yin on the book *Coolies*.

Grade Level/Duration:

- 3rd-5th grade
- 600-660 typical Lexile Reading Level, two books above this Lexile Reading Level, one book below this Lexile Reading Level
- 1-2 Reading Class Periods

Standards:

Common Core:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.4, CCSS.ELA-Writing.W.3.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4, CCSS.ELA-Writing.W.4.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.6, CCSS.ELA-Writing.W.5.3

Mini-Lesson:

Introduce today's lesson by talking about Asia's location. Where is Asia located? Ask students to point to it on a map or a globe. Ask students to raise their hands if they have ever heard of China, Cambodia, India, Tibet, or Vietnam. Assess their prior-knowledge of these places by asking them what they have heard of these places, such as people, food, or stories. Tell them there are different genres of books, including historical fiction. Break the definition of historical fiction down by first asking students what they think historical means, and then ask students if they know what fiction means. You can define it by drawing a picture for each word to make a definition. If you chose to explain the term in this way, ask them to come up with the pictures to make it more meaningful. One can give the example of fiction being like Harry Potter and historical like a book on the Civil War. Ask them why they think it is important to learn about past events in other areas of the world, like Asia. One can emphasize how it is important to learn about past world events because we are global citizens and it can affect America too. We can learn from famous people in Asia like Gandhi or cultures and people who come to America from Asia like China. Tell them today we are going to learn about historical fiction from Asia in reading groups. Introduce each book and point to the country where it is from. Asian historical fiction can be about different points in history and how it makes people move to a new country from Asia. *A Song for Cambodia* is set in Cambodia during Khmer Rouge and features a Cambodian boy who comes to America. *The Cambodian Dancer* is also set in Cambodia during Khmer Rouge and features a woman who is trained in classical Cambodian dance and who comes to America. *The Lotus Seed* also features a refugee who comes to America, but she is from Vietnam during the Vietnam War. *The Coolies* is set in America in the 1800s and it features immigrants from China. Asian historical fiction can also be about important people from Asia and the lessons they teach us. *Grandfather Gandhi* is set in India and features Gandhi and his grandson. The extension book is *The Dalai Lama* and features the Dalai Lama from Tibet.

Read *A Song for Cambodia* by Michelle Lord. Go through the graphic organizer together to model what students should do in their reading groups. For the pre-reading questions, have students

answer them in groups first and then share with the class. These pre-reading questions should help students to start to think like the character. Have students do round-robin as you go through the book to answer reading comprehension. For the vocabulary, ask students to raise their hand and say a word they did not know in the book. Go through the vocabulary sheet for one or two of these new words. You can also do one example together or look at the given example. Have students then do an individual vocabulary word. For the finding evidence activity, begin by giving two statements and ask students to say which one is true and which one is false. "Arn was sad to leave his family" or "Arn loved working at the labor camp." Emphasize the first one is true because the book says Arn did not want to leave his mother's arms while the second one was not said in the book about Arn loving to work at the labor camp. It is important to find evidence when talking about general statements of the book; otherwise, you could say anything about the book that may not be true. Go through the finding evidence page together. For the visual activity, introduce how to describe a character by putting students in the character's shoes. Give students 5-10 minutes to draw Arn on the stick figure. Ask students to close their eyes and imagine if they were Arn. How do you think Arn felt when the soldiers took him to the work camp? Arn was afraid of the Khmer Rouge. Show "Afraid of Khmer Rouge" is written by the figure. What characteristic do you think he needed to be in order to not be scared? Point out how "strong" describes Arn and write it down by stick figure Arn. Ask them to imagine what it would be like for Arn to play the khim when he was sad at the labor camp. He was a "music-lover" (indicate how it is written on the page). How do you think Arn felt when he met Reverend Peter? Write down "friendship." For 3rd grade, tell them how his feelings of friendship of Reverend Peter led him to come to America. For 4th grade, point out where they can find it in the text as evidence. For 5th grade, compare and contrast Reverend Peter and Arn. Ask them to come up with words and put them around the stick figure describing Arn's experiences, character, traits, motivation, feelings, etc. Emphasize any feelings or traits that helped with the sequence of events, can be drawn from the text, or comparing and contrasting two characters.

Activities:

Divide students up into four groups. Assign *The Cambodian Dancer* to students who struggle with reading. Ask students to pick a leadership role whether it is Vocab Hero, Comprehension Companion, Evidence Detective, or Visual Voice. There can be two or more students in a role, but all roles should be filled. Have students take turns reading divided by each page. Pass out the handouts modeled after the previous handouts you used for *A Song for Cambodia*. Ask students to lead different activities depending on their role. Have the Vocab Hero help group mates find vocabulary words. Have the Comprehension Companion help group mates answer questions about the story. Have the Evidence Detective help group mates match evidence to certain themes and statements. Have the Visual Voice help group mates to design a picture of the main character with words describing the character surrounding it.

Have students present to class. Ask each student to talk about the role they played and what they found. For example, the Vocab Hero can tell one vocab word their group found.

Assessment:

For the writing activity, ask students to write a narrative that elaborates on one of the main character's in the book events or a narrative about the future. For example, one could write a story about Arn going back to Cambodia to play the khim or a story about Arn escaping to the refugee camp. Make sure to emphasize keeping the same characterization and writing in the perspective of the protagonist. Have students use dialogue, transitional words, and a conclusion.

Extension:

Read *The Dalai Lama* by Demi. Pass out the news article on the Dalai Lama (grades 3-8). Have students read it to themselves. Discuss it with students. Ask them what is the Dalai Lama's point of view on how to deal with Chinese invasion. Point out from the story of the Dalai Lama setting up a

free public schools and a model for a restored Tibet. Emphasize how the Dalai Lama reacts to this with kindness. He thinks of the plight of his people. Point out the evidence in the text. Ask students to devise a speech to China on their invasion, acting like the Dalai Lama. Ask them to think about how if The Dalai Lama reacts with peace or with war.

OR

Give students old magazines. Ask students to create a collage of character traits and feelings about the Dalai Llama. For example, one could write kindness, peace, bright, curious, sad for his people, happy to be the next dalai lama, love for brother, etc.

Resources:

- Book Set Website on Carolina Navigators
- [Handout on Song for Cambodia as a model](#)
- [Handout on Grandfather Gandhi](#)
- [Handout on The Lotus Seed](#)
- [Handout on The Cambodian Dancer](#)
- [Handout on Coolies](#)
- [News Article on the Dalai Lama](#)