

NCTA Lesson Plan on Korea
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Purpose: The attempt to destroy another culture during a harsh occupation can be a devastating experience.

Rationale: Even though students may be aware of the Japanese occupation of Korea before and during World War II, they may not have a personal understanding of what the experience was like for those who endured it. The best medium to teach empathy for the sufferings of others is through the reading of a well-written novel.

Materials: *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood* by Richard E. Kim

Activities: Each chapter is assigned for homework reading. Students are given the attached study guide a chapter at a time and are asked to prepare to lead a discussion of each chapter's questions the next day in class. Students will rotate leading the discussion. Questions may also be used as quizzes to check on homework and reading comprehension. Students will be assigned Japanese names to be used throughout the reading of the book. They will use only these names during class.

Assessment: Students are asked to write on one or more of the summary questions at the end of the study guide.

Extension: Students can read *When My Name Was Keoko* by Linda Sue Park, which is about the same period in Korean history, though the main character in the story is female. Students can discuss how the novels are similar and different and write a 5-paragraph essay about gender roles in World War II Korea.

Grade Adaptation:

- Target gifted grades 6-7
- This novel would probably not be appropriate for younger students
- Older students could:
study the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars and their consequences for Korea.

investigate what happened to Koreans who went to Manchuria during the War.

investigate how Korea came to be divided after World War II.

watch “Mash” the film and discuss it.

report to the class on current issues of rocket testing and nuclear development in Korea.

investigate the history of Korea prior to 1910.

Lost Names by Richard E. Kim, Study Guide

Chapter I: Crossing

1. Describe the setting of the story.
2. Who is the narrator?
3. What is situation of the family: Who is the father? Who is the mother? Where are they going and why?
4. Make a map on Korea, showing Seoul, the Tuman River, Manchuria, and Siberia
5. What are winters like in this area?
6. How do various characters in this chapter show pride and bravery?
7. Research the circumstances under which the Japanese came to occupy Korea and Manchuria.
8. Research the bombing in Shanghai that killed the commanding Japanese general.
9. How does the family eventually get across the river?
10. Of what significance is “Vengeance is Mine” on pp. 12-13?
11. How does the author compare the situation of the Koreans with that of the Jews?
12. What different emotions does the mother go through throughout this first chapter? Can you intuit the emotions of other characters?
13. What do you think the phrase, “We’ve made it across,” means, both after the crossing and later when it is repeated by both the woman and her son?

Chapter II: Homecoming

1. What year is it at the beginning of chapter 2? How much time elapses between chapter 1 and chapter 2? What has happened to the family since chapter 1?
2. What do you make of the grandfather’s statements about the father on P. 23?
3. What is the significance of the children’s and teachers’ school uniforms?
4. Briefly define the following: malicious (P. 22), billowing (P. 24), communal well (P. 25), acacias (P. 26), crane, battalion (P. 29), lectern, “annexed”, (P. 31), pandemonium (P. 33), rapt (P. 35), extraterritorial privileges, evacuation, harassment (P. 37), glowering (P. 41), “Yoodo” (P. 48), demure (P. 49)
5. How does the boy react to being asked to bow to the emperor?

6. On a map show the movement of Japanese forces into mainland Asia from 1910 to 1938. Of what significance is the phrase, "Peace in our time" (P. 32)?
7. Explain the irony of what the children are told about the War.
8. What song does the protagonist choose to sing to his new classmates, and what is the song's meaning to him and to the other children in the class?
9. How is the first day of school both a success and a disaster for the boy?
10. How do the different members of the boy's family treat him after his first day of school?
11. How does the boy both make a school friend and lose a school friend?
12. List three things that happen to the boy's Korean teacher.
13. In this chapter, how does the author convey both the boy's innocence and an understanding of what is really going on in the school?

Chapter III: Once upon a Time, on a Sunday

1. What are the professions of the boy's grandfathers? maternal uncles? paternal uncles? What does this say about who the boy is?
2. How much time elapses between chapter 2 and chapter 3?
3. What does the boy's family do on Sundays? What does the boy do on Sundays and why?
4. Briefly define the following: theatrics (P. 59), nonchalant (P. 60), derogatory (P. 61), calisthenics (P. 62), predicament (P. 63), dubious distinction (P. 63), pungent, panorama, undulating (P. 64), precocious (P. 68), portend (P.73), presumptuously (P. 78), cryptically (P. 79), oblivious (P. 83), omnipresent (P. 85)
5. What are "the several meanings" of the name of the grandfather's orchard?
6. Describe a "fighting kite."
7. What is the significance of Koreans being allowed to "volunteer" for the Japanese army?
8. Research the German-Russian Mutual Non-aggression Pact.
9. What changes are taking place in the school? What position do they leave the teacher in?
10. What "sorts of tricks" does the tenant farmer show the boy?
11. What comparison does the boy make between the stars and maps of the earth?
12. What indications do we have in this chapter that the boy is beginning to grow up in terms of his understanding

Chapter IV: Lost Names

1. Briefly define the following words: interminable, repugnant, impenetrable, tenaciously, perversely, treacherous (P. 87), veranda (P. 88), “requisitioned”, magnanimity (P. 95), enigmatic, surrealistic (P. 96), inclement (P. 105), exhume (P. 110), tremulous (P. 112), insolently, self-lacerating lamentation, legacy (P. 113), unabashedly (P. 114).
2. How is the white rice like the boy’s skates?
3. How do the Korean farmers react the Japanese requisitioning of their animals and crops?
4. What reason do the Japanese give for the sewing up of the students’ pockets? How does the boy’s father react to this action?
5. Where are the men going in their traditional dress? Why do they wear black armbands?
6. Find pictures of traditional Korean clothes, label them, and mount them on colored paper or poster board and bring them to put up in the classroom.
7. Why did the father choose the name “Iwamoto”?
8. Why did the father ask his son never to forget the scene at the police station? What year did that happen?
9. Research the Battle of Britain.
10. Why do the students visit the shrine on the mountain?
11. Explain why the teacher says to the father, “Even the British wouldn’t have thought of doing this sort of primitive thing in India”?
12. How are the teacher’s and the father’s feelings of shame different?
13. What is the meaning of the scene in the cemetery? Why does it make the boy so angry?

Chapter V: A Empire for Rubber Balls

1. How much time elapses between chapter 4 and chapter 5?
2. Why do many families now have maids?
3. What part is the boy given in the school play, and how does it create problems for him? How does the boy eventually *plan* to solve his dilemma?
4. Briefly define the following words: felicitations, annihilate (P. 117), adamant, needling (P. 118), confiscate (P. 120), Kamikaze, Kafkaesque (P. 123), masochistic euphoria, degradation (P. 134), ephemeral (P. 135),

mitigating, clandestinely, imminent, contingency (P. 136), collaborate (P. 140), grotesque, mercurochrome (P. 141).

5. For what purpose does the family keep a bucket of water and bags of sand outside the house? How does the family know that they are useless?
6. Research General Douglas MacArthur and Dr. Syngman Rhee.
7. What other preparations for a possible American invasion are the Koreans asked to make?
8. Why does the Japanese government give the children rubber balls? And why does it ask for them back again?
9. How does the boy collect the rubber balls for his class, and what kind of trouble does it land him in?
10. Briefly describe the confrontation that occurs between the boy, the athletics teacher, and the Inspector.
11. What does the boy say in the middle of the confrontation that worries the Inspector and helps him, too, to “make a small beginning”?
12. In the end, how does the boy solve the problem of the play and his role?
13. What do you think the boy's tears represent?

Chapter VI: “Is Someone Dying?”

1. How much time elapses between chapter 5 and chapter 6?
2. Briefly define the following words: exude, rancid, dysentery, doles (P. 144), chronic, canteen (P. 145), *personae non gratae* (P. 146), pallid (P. 147), discretion (P. 148), tirade (P. 154), lunacy, opportunists (P. 155).
3. What are the boys building, how are they doing it, and why?
4. Briefly describe what life in the tent was like.
5. Why doesn't anyone quit school, especially the boy?
6. What does his mother bring him when she visits?
7. What is the real purpose of her visit?
8. Why do his parents feel it was important for the boy to decide for himself whether to leave school and come home?
9. How does the teacher react to the boy's leaving? What further information does he give the boy?
10. What request does he make of the boy? Is it ever fulfilled? Why or why not?
11. What is the significance of the title of the chapter?
12. What has happened to the boy's maternal grandfather and his church in the boy's absence? What has happened to the father?

Chapter VII: In the Making of History – Together

1. Briefly define the following words: pungent, deluge, viscous (P.160), dirgelike (P. 162), impromptu (P. 165), defiled (P. 167), avert (P. 168) swarthy, eerie cadence (P. 169), *hara-kiri* (P. 171), emaciated (P. 173), oblivious (P. 175), expanse, immersed (P. 177), inconspicuous (P. 178), anarchist (P. 180), meander (P. 184), degenerate (P. 185), ultimatum (P. 189), deployments (P. 192)
2. What is unusual about the Japanese Emperor addressing his nation on the radio?
3. What does the grandfather remove from his wall? Why has he hidden these things away?
4. What are the family and neighbors fearful about when the surrender becomes known?
5. What do the Shinto priest and his wife want from the boy's father? How does the boy respond and why? Explain the father's comment on P. 174, "I would have done the same for your sake."
6. How do you react to the mob's desire to burn everything Japanese?
7. Why does the Japanese commandant commit *hara-kiri*, and why is the father invited to witness this event?
8. Reread the reunion scene on pp. 172-3. What makes this scene so poignant?
9. What advice does the boy give his father and the other men about how to assure security in the early days of peace, and how does his father react to these suggestions?
10. What conflict does the committee for self-rule and public safety have with the police, and how is it resolved?
11. How is the final Japanese surrender accomplished?
12. What is the significance of the dash and the word "together" in the title of this last chapter?

Author's Note

1. What is the significance of the author's emphasis on the use of the word "lost"?
2. What is your opinion on the question of the genre of this book?

Summary Questions

- 1. The baby in chapter 1 has become a man by chapter 7. How does the author indicate that the boy has become a man? What experiences do you think contribute most to his becoming a worthy adult?**
- 2. Of what importance is the family's religious faith? In what specific ways does it appear in the book?**
- 3. Pick two descriptive passages that give you a feel for the beauty of the author's homeland. Draw your own illustrations of these passages.**
- 4. At the end of the book the boy and his father have a discussion of "mere survival." Why is the son so upset that liberation has been simply "given" to them? Where do you come down on the issue of surviving or fighting back?**
- 5. Reread what the father says on pp. 184-185 about the history of Korea prior to 1910. Research it for yourself, and write a 3-5 page paper on the mistakes that were made that led to the Japanese takeover in 1910. How could things have been different?**
- 6. Do the son's dreams for Korea come true? Read about the Korean War. How did it come about, and what were its results?**
- 7. Research the current situation in Korea. What do you predict about the future?**
- 8. How did you feel about being assigned a new name? What difference did it make in how you perceive yourself? How are names important to us both as individuals and as part of our extended family and culture?**