

Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story
(Two 6th Grade Lesson Plans Relating to Japan)
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- I. Purpose
 - A. Big Concept: One person doing the right thing can make a difference in the world.
 - B. Essential Questions
 - 1. Whom should we turn to when struggling to make important decisions? (family, friends...)
 - 2. What do we mean by the terms conscience and character?
 - 3. How should our conscience influence what we do?

- II. Rationale: Exploring and Responding to Non-Fiction Reading
 - A. Listening Comprehension
 - 1. Literal and inferential
 - 2. Making predictions
 - B. Student Responses
 - 1. Highlighting skills
 - 2. Class discussions
 - 3. Written responses
 - 4. Students' artwork
 - 5. Whole group, small group, and individual

- III. Materials
 - A. Teacher copy of the picture book: Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story, by Ken Mochizuki (Lee & Low Books, Inc., New York: 1997).
 - B. Background material for teacher: "Chiune and Yukiko Sugihara" (Jewish Virtual Library. <http://www.us-israel.org>).
 - C. Class set (one handout for each student): "Afterword" of Passage to Freedom.
 - D. White copier paper (one sheet for each student).
 - E. Highlighter pen for each student.
 - F. Colored pencils for each student.

IV. Activities

- A. Teacher checks for prior knowledge by asking students what they know/understand about Europe in 1940-especially the influence of Hitler's Germany in Europe at that time. Ask students if they think Japan had a presence in Europe at that time. Fill in the knowledge gaps with appropriate facts and details.
- B. Teacher introduces the book, Passage to Freedom, to class. Teacher reads aloud the book, including the Dedication at the beginning. **Do not read the "Afterword" to the class at the end.**
- C. Teacher pauses and stops, as appropriate, checking for:
 1. literal and inferential comprehension
 2. predictions
 3. students' emotional responses to events
- D. At end of read-aloud, teacher asks students to predict what might have become of the Sugihara family. Students a one-paragraph narrative summary telling what they think became of each family member. Students finish this as homework (due the following day).
- E. Next day: Teacher asks students to share their predictions in small groups. Teacher asks each group to share ONE family prediction with the class. Teacher leads the class in discussion, praise, and applause, and collects all paragraphs for grading.

(END of FIRST LESSON)

SECOND LESSON :

- F. Teacher hands out copies of the "Afterword" (one for each student). This tells what actually happened to the family following the story. Teacher guides students through highlighting the key facts about the family as the class reads aloud the "Foreword" together.
 - G. Homework (begin in class): Students fold their own sheets of white copier paper in fourths. Reflecting on what they have learned from Passage to Freedom, students use each fourth to draw a colorful visual and write a one-sentence caption describing that visual (creating a total of four visuals and four captions). Teacher may prompt students for specific responses, such as including two visuals/captions relating to personal conscience and choice, and two visuals/captions depicting interesting facts learned from the book.
- V. Assessments
- A. Listening engagement during teacher read-aloud
 - B. Highlighting activity
 - C. Writing and drawing activities
 - D. Participation in whole group and small group discussions
- VI. Intended Grade Level: 6th Grade
- A. Scale down to 4th or 5th grades: Teacher might read aloud the "Afterword" rather than directing students to highlight it.
 - B. Scale up to 7th or 8th grades: Students could highlight the "Afterword" independently (as homework).