



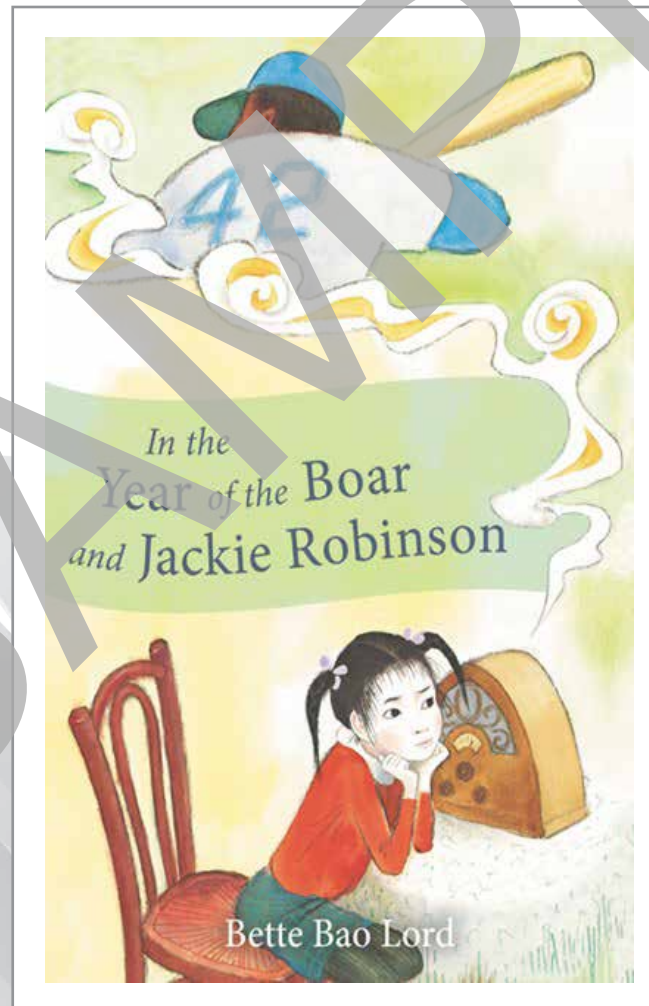
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 3-5**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson**

Bette Bao Lord



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson

Bette Bao Lord

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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**ISBN 978-1-50203-884-5**

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying  
and categorizing, analyzing,  
interpreting, evaluating

### Comprehension

Predicting, summarizing,  
comparison/contrast,  
drawing conclusions, cause  
and effect

### Writing

Summary, procedural, letter,  
narrative

### Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms,  
context clues

### Listening/Speaking

Participation in discussion  
and cooperative groups,  
entertainment of others with  
dramatic activities

### Literary Elements

Characterization, setting,  
conflict, point of view,  
figurative language, imagery

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## Summary

At age ten, Shirley Temple Wong travels with her mother from China to join her father in Brooklyn, New York. Shirley's adjustment to her new home isn't easy. Making friends, understanding a new culture, finding her way in a strange place, and learning English are all trying experiences for Shirley. As the title suggests, Shirley becomes enamored with baseball. The year is 1947 and Jackie Robinson has just broken the race barrier in major league baseball. The Brooklyn Dodgers compete in the World Series and Shirley is accepted as a friend and representative for her classmates.

## About the Author

Bette Bao Lord was born in Shanghai, China, in 1938. She came to the United States in 1946 and is now a naturalized U.S. citizen. She has earned a B.A. from Tufts University and a M.A. from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Her career includes serving as assistant director of the East-West Cultural Center at the University of Hawaii, performing and teaching dance, lecturing with the Leigh Bureau, and writing. Her first book, written with her sister Sansan, was [Eighth Moon: The True Story of a Young Girl's Life in Communist China](#). She also wrote [Spring Moon](#), a family saga set against a background of twentieth century China.

## Background Information

The Chinese New Year falls sometime between January 21 and February 19. The Chinese lunar calendar is a combination of mathematical complexities and symbolic tradition. The twelve animals associated with specific years were selected, tradition holds, on the basis of a cross-country race. The finishers were rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse, ram, monkey, rooster, dog, and boar.

Rat	1948, 1960, 1972, 1984
Ox	1949, 1961, 1973, 1985
Tiger	1950, 1962, 1974, 1986
Hare	1951, 1963, 1975, 1987
Dragon	1952, 1964, 1976, 1988
Serpent	1953, 1965, 1977, 1989
Horse	1954, 1966, 1978, 1990
Ram	1955, 1967, 1979, 1991
Monkey	1956, 1968, 1980, 1992
Rooster	1957, 1969, 1981, 1993
Dog	1958, 1970, 1982, 1994
Boar	1947, 1959, 1971, 1983

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10. What was unique about Bandit's Grand-grand Uncle and his wife? (*Though they'd been married for sixty years, because of some past forgotten misdeed, they didn't speak. The uncle painted unflattering pictures of his wife, like with warts.*)
  11. Who is Shirley Temple Wong? (*Bandit with her new American name*)

**Supplementary Activities:**

1. Investigate Chinese naming to explain the names in the book.
2. What is the Chinese character at the beginning of Chapter 1? Investigate Chinese writing.
3. What is the Chinese year 4645? Why is this a different year than we usually use? Why are there different numbering and calendar systems across the world?
4. Locate a mah-jongg set and try playing the game.

**Chapter 2: "February A Journey of Ten Thousand Miles"—**

**Pages 21-39**

**Vocabulary:**

faltered 22	unperturbed 22	queasiness 22
torrential 23	burrowed 25	jostled 26
ogled 26	rickshaws 28	queried 34
skeptical 34	emphatic 35	rebuke 39

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Complete the enclosed simile/metaphor page for this chapter. (See page 13-14 of this guide.)
2. Describe mother. (See diagram on next page.)
3. Have you ever met anyone like Shirley's mother? Describe and share anecdotes.
4. Detail Shirley's trip to her father. (*She and her mother travelled for a month by boat to San Francisco, by taxi to the train station, and then by train to Brooklyn.*)
5. Why were Shirley and her mother so different in greeting her father? (*age and maturity and cultural expectations*) How would you greet your father in a similar situation (that is, when you hadn't seen him for a year)?

- 
7. Why did Shirley want to go for Father's cigarettes? *(to prove that she was able to do it)*
  8. How did Shirley find her way home to the apartment? *(Her father found her and he and his friends who were on each corner returned to the apartment.)*

### Supplementary Activities:

1. Complete the fortune cookie summary and prediction sheet. (See page 15 of this guide.)
2. Draw a picture of the apartment.
3. Talk about Shirley's mother's reaction to the new apartment. How will her life be different in America from her life in China?

## Chapter 3: "March China's Little Ambassador"—Pages 41-49

### Vocabulary:

obediently 43	reputation 43	ebony 44
escapade 47	quizzical 49	

### Discussion Questions:

1. Why was the first interview at school embarrassing for Shirley? *(Not understanding English, she couldn't understand the conversation.)*
2. Why was there a mistake about Shirley's grade placement? *(When the principal asked Shirley her age, she indicated ten, which was correct to her, but not by U. S. calculation. Shirley was placed in grade 5 with ten-year-olds.)*
3. How were Shirley's impressions of the principal and her teacher funny? *(The principal had no eyebrows and blue hair. Shirley thought that her teacher must have been a cardinal in a previous life, because she had dainty bones and fiery red hair that was brushed skyward. These descriptions were funny because they rang true, allowed the reader to picture the people, and were stated in different words than expected.)*
4. Where did Shirley eat lunch? *(at a nearby store)*
5. What were the students trading at lunch? *(baseball cards)* Why might that be important in the story? *(A famous baseball player is named in the title of the book.)*
6. What do you think was wrong with Shirley's eyes? *(Because the principal winked at her, Shirley tried to follow suit in her interaction with her teacher, but Shirley didn't know how to wink and simply blinked.)*