



TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

A Single Shard

Linda Sue Park

READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

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Linda Sue Park

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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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Table of Contents

Summary	3
About the Author	3
Introductory Activities	3
Thirteen Chapters.....	14
Each section contains: Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions	22
Post-reading Extension Activities.....	23
Assessment.....	24

Skills and Strategies

Writing

Personal writing, character journal, creative writing, poetry, reports, essays, skits

Literary Elements

Literary analysis, story mapping, plot development, setting, character analysis

Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—developing maps, research; Science—climate, ages of trees, inventions, biology; Math—symmetry; Art—designing maps, illustrations, making models, collages; Health—diet

Listening/Speaking

Storytelling, discussion, oral reports, interviewing, skits

Thinking

Identifying attributes, research, brainstorming, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, compare/contrast, decision making

Comprehension

Predicting, facts and details, sequencing, foreshadowing, cause/effect, inference, context clues, summarizing, drawing conclusions

Vocabulary

Pictionary, word maps, synonyms, antonyms, defining, parts of speech, context clues

Genre: fiction

Setting: 12th-century Korea

Point of View: third-person narrative

Themes: survival, pride, persistence, patience

Conflict: man vs. man, man vs. himself, man vs. nature

Style: third-person narrative

Tone: optimistic

Date of First Publication: 2001

Summary

Tree-ear is a young orphan who yearns to throw a celadon pot on a potter's wheel. He lives with his friend Crane-man under a bridge and they scavenge for everything they have. Tree-ear begins working for the potter, Min, in order to pay a debt. While Tree-ear is away on business for the potter, Crane-man is killed. When Tree-ear returns with a commission for Min, he is asked to stay with the potter and his wife and to learn the trade of pottery.

Background Information

The idea for *A Single Shard* came from a piece of Korean celadon pottery dated back to the 12th century. The vase is inlaid with cranes encircled in medallions and is considered a cultural treasure in Korea.

About the Author

Linda Sue Park, the daughter of Korean immigrants, was born and raised in Illinois. She has written short stories and poetry all of her life. She has a degree in English from Stanford University and has worked in education, advertising, and the oil business. She has published three other novels, many poems, and short stories. This book, *A Single Shard*, is the 2002 Newbery Medal winner.

Introductory Activities

1. **Previewing the Book:** Have students study the cover and consider the title. Then ask students to read and discuss the Acknowledgements. Based on their discussion, students predict what the book will be about.
2. **Research:** Have students research Linda Sue Park on the Internet.

Using Predictions

We all make predictions as we read—little guesses about what will happen next, how a conflict will be resolved, which details will be important to the plot, which details will help fill in our sense of a character. Students should be encouraged to predict, to make sensible guesses as they read the novel.

As students work on their predictions, these discussion questions can be used to guide them: What are some of the ways to predict? What is the process of a sophisticated reader's thinking and predicting? What clues does an author give to help us make predictions? Why are some predictions more likely to be accurate than others?

Create a chart for recording predictions. This could be either an individual or class activity. As each subsequent chapter is discussed, students can review and correct their previous predictions about plot and characters as necessary.

Use the facts and ideas the author gives.

Use your own prior knowledge.

Apply any new information (i.e., from class discussion) that may cause you to change your mind.

Predictions

Chapters 1–3

Vocabulary

bulging (3)	protruded (3)	perusal (4)	hoisted (4)
ruefully (5)	complied (5)	scholars (7)	beckoning (8)
gruel (9)	oafish (11)	celadon (12)	emboldened (14)
derision (18)	precariously (20)	wielding (21)	rifle (28)
trundled (31)	impudent (37)	brandishing (37)	

Discussion Questions

1. What is funny about Crane-man’s question at the beginning of the book? (*Crane-man and Tree-ear often joke about their poverty. “Have you hungered well today?” is one of their jokes.*)
2. Do you think it is okay for Tree-ear to watch the man losing rice for a few minutes before stopping him? Explain your answer. (*Answers will vary.*)
3. What common phrase do we use today for “good deserves good”? (*One good turn deserves another.*)
4. Why is it important that Crane-man and Tree-ear do not beg for food or clothing? (*Working gives a man dignity where begging does not.*)
5. What does Crane-man mean when he says, “Scholars read the great words of the world. But you and I must learn to read the world itself”? (*Educated people often depend on books for what they know of the world. Crane-man and Tree-ear depend on the sights and sounds around them to learn about the world.*)
6. How does Crane-man’s life compare to that of a crane? (*Cranes often stand on one leg and live long lives, and so it is with Crane-man.*)
7. Compare Tree-ear to the rectangular clay box. How are they alike? (*On the outside, Tree-ear appears to be a poor, plain orphan. But on the inside he has brilliant thoughts, ideas, and a great imagination. The box appears plain on the outside, but inside holds the surprise of more boxes fitting neatly inside.*)
8. Why do you think Min’s anger loses its edge after Tree-ear explains that stealing would make him no better than a dog? (*Min sees Tree-ear on the inside—that the boy has honor and morals—instead of concentrating on Tree-ear’s ragged outward appearance.*)
9. Do you think Tree-ear cries from the pain of the blisters? Explain. (*Answers will vary. Tree-ear cries from exhaustion.*)
10. What process does Crane-man use to clean the wound? Does this surprise you? Explain. (*Crane-man soaks the bandaged wound in the river, removes the soiled wrap, and applies a paste of ground herbs to fight infection.*)
11. Whose fault is it that the wood-gathering chore wasn’t completed? What do you think Min and Tree-ear learn from the experience? (*It is Min’s fault that the wood was not placed at the*

kiln because he wasn't specific in his instructions. Min learns to give better instructions and Tree-ear learns to ask questions.)

12. Why does Crane-man offer to help Tree-ear chop wood? *(He knows Tree-ear's hand will be slow to heal with so much wood chopping.)*
13. Discuss the charity of Kang helping to unload the cart. What does Tree-ear learn about Min during his and Kang's conversation? *(Kang is younger than Min and more able to chop and stack wood. Kang tells Tree-ear that Min has needed help for a while because he can't keep up with his wood chopping duties.)*
14. How are Crane-man and Min's wife compared in the book? *(Both are nice and have gentle eyes.)*
15. Why is Tree-ear excited that he can continue working for Min for no pay? Would you work so hard for no pay? Explain. *(Tree-ear hopes that someday he will be able to sit at the wheel and throw a pot. The only way to do this is to work for Min.)*
16. Why is Tree-ear frustrated with himself when he learns how Crane-man broke his crutch? *(Tree-ear has always been the one to go to the beach when there is a run of flounder. He feels that he has let Crane-man down.)*
17. Crane-man says that it is a waste to spend too much time grieving over what cannot be changed. What does he mean by this? What are other familiar ways to say this? *(He means that when something bad happens, one should move on and not dwell on it. Don't cry over spilled milk. Put your past behind you.)*

Supplementary Activities

1. Research: Have students research the word *jiggeh*. As part of their research, students may examine the cover of the book. Ask: What does the item on Tree-ear's back resemble? Have students research the innovation of the backpack.
2. Creative Writing: Tree-ear knows no family other than Crane-man. Ask students to consider what Tree-ear's family might have been like. Instruct them to create an imaginary family tree for Tree-ear. Students should then draw conclusions as to what trade Tree-ear might have learned from his real father and write a paragraph about this trade.

Chapters 4–6

Vocabulary

fervently (38)
sieving (43)
rendered (53)
incising (59)
inscribed (67)

curt (40)
suffice (43)
untoward (54)
emissary (61)
clucking (68)

unobtrusive (41)
vigilance (50)
pantaloons (56)
impending (65)
feigning (69)

felicitous (41)
translucent (51)
garb (58)
surreptitiously (65)
pretense (70)