



**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **So Far from the Bamboo Grove**

Yoko Kawashima Watkins



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

# So Far from the Bamboo Grove

Yoko Kawashima Watkins

## 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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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Brainstorming, comparison/  
contrast, visualization,  
drawing conclusions

### Comprehension

Predicting, summarizing,  
cause/effect

### Writing

Research, narrative, essay  
writing, persuasive, letter  
writing, journaling

### Vocabulary

Context clues, key words

### Listening/Speaking

Dramatizing, interviewing,  
group discussion

### Literary Elements

Characterization, setting,  
plot development

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## Summary of *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*

*So Far from the Bamboo Grove* is the true story of Yoko, an eleven-year-old Japanese girl who lives with her family in Korea near the Chinese border. When World War II ends in 1945, Japanese citizens are no longer welcome in Korea. In fact, they find themselves in grave danger from Koreans who want to control their own country and to punish the Japanese for their occupation. Separated from her father and brother, Yoko flees from Korea with her mother and her older sister Ko. Their escape is filled with pain, suffering, and heartache, but is ultimately a story of faith, courage, and survival.

### About the Author

Yoko Kawashima Watkins was eleven years old when she escaped from Korea with her mother and older sister Ko. Today she lives in the United States on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. She married an American man and is the mother of four grown children. She wrote *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* to share her story of suffering and ultimate survival.

### Instructions Prior to Reading

You may wish to choose one or more of the following Prereading Discussion Questions and Activities. Each is designed to help students draw from their store of background knowledge about the events and themes in the story they are about to read.

### Introductory Activities

#### 1. Previewing:

- A. Have students examine the cover illustration and discuss their answers to the following questions.

What do you think this story is about? Why?

When and where does the story take place? What clues in the picture show something about the setting?

What appears to be happening in the picture?

What clues in the picture tell something about the characters?

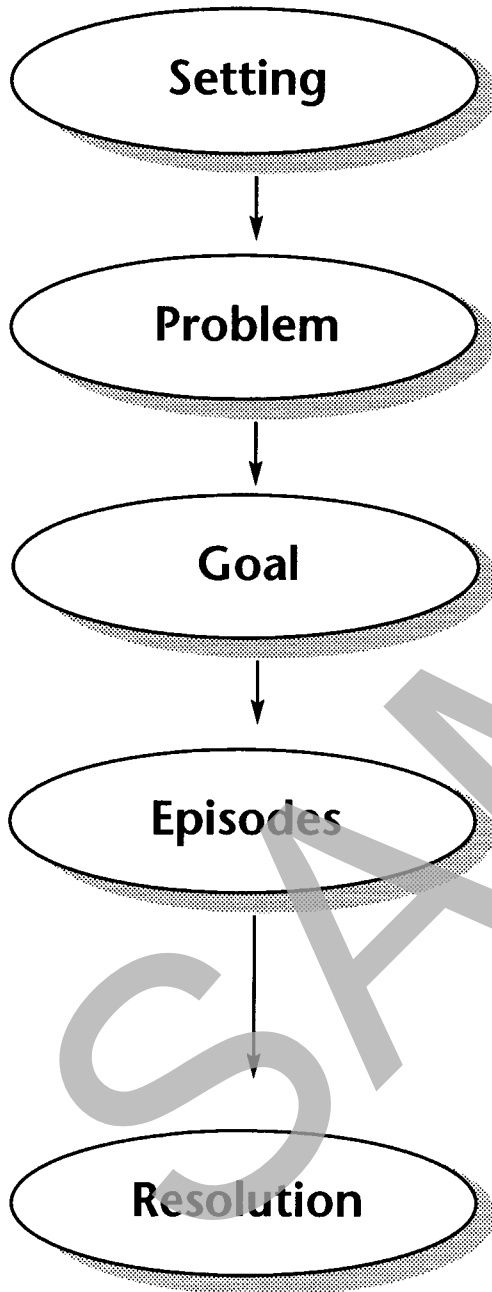
What are the characters feeling? How can you tell?

- B. Have students read and think about the book's title. Then have them discuss what the title *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* might mean.

**2. Anticipation Guide:** Have students complete the Anticipation Guide on page 4. Allow time for students to discuss the responses.

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## Story Map



Characters \_\_\_\_\_

Time and Place \_\_\_\_\_

Problem \_\_\_\_\_

Goal \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning → Development → Outcome

Resolution \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Chapter 3

### Vocabulary

torrent (45)

vibrations (45)

chemise (49)

astonishment (50)

### Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Mother, Ko, and Yoko travel at night. What are the benefits of traveling at night? (*The nights are cooler. The dark also provides protection and lets them avoid capture.*) What are the problems of traveling at night? (*It is more difficult to see, so there is more danger of falling/injury.*)
2. Yoko tells Mother that Ko is getting “bossy” and “mean.” Why would Ko become so bossy and mean with her younger sister? (*Answers will vary.*) Why does Mother defend Ko’s behavior? (*Answers will vary.*)
3. What might have happened if the bomb had not killed the Korean Communist soldiers? (*Answers will vary. Most likely, however, the soldiers would have killed Mother, Ko, and Yoko, and then stolen their belongings.*)
4. Ko is willing to wear the Korean Communist uniform and have her head shaved, but Yoko resists. Why do the two sisters have such different feelings? (*Answers will vary*)

**Predict:** Will wearing the Korean Communist uniform completely protect Ko and Yoko from harm? Why or why not?

### Supplementary Activities

1. Continue adding new information to the attribute webs, story map, and prediction chart you began after reading Chapter One.
2. **Critical Thinking:** Yoko calls Ko “Honorable Sister.” What does it mean when we say someone is honorable? What qualities does an honorable person have? List honorable people that you know or have known. Discuss your list with classmates.

## Chapter 4

### Vocabulary

munitions (52)

instinctively (53)

cubicle (55)

stealthily (55)

ransacking (57)

cursive (58)

ominous (50)

stench (60)

devoured (61)

precaution (62)

comrade (65)

reminiscing (67)