



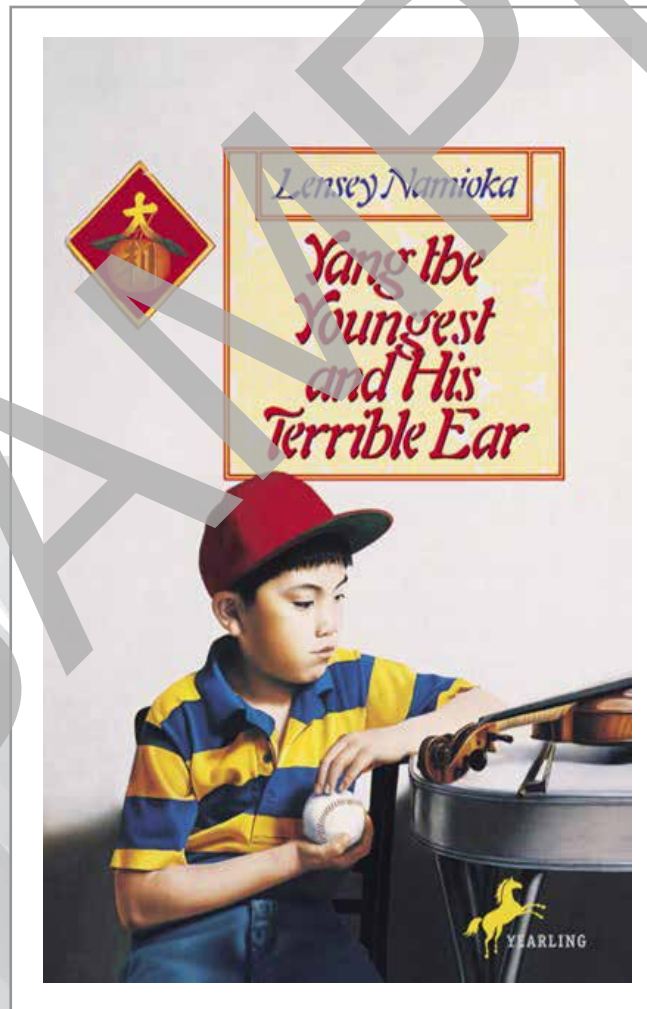
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 3-5**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear**

Lensey Namioka



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

# Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear

Lensey Namioka

## 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

Identifying attributes, research, compare/contrast, pros/cons, brainstorming, problem solving, creative thinking, patterns, critical thinking

### Comprehension

Predictions, conflict, sequencing, cause and effect, inference

### Listening/Speaking

Dramatizing, interviewing, storytelling, discussion, oral reports, music

### Literary Elements

Literary analysis, story mapping, characterization

### Vocabulary

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

### Across the Curriculum

Social Studies—culture, law, immigration; Art—drawing, design and color, diorama, collage, puppet making, advertisements, comic strip; Technology—Web page, Internet; Sports—history, rules; Drama—reenactments

### Writing

Character journal, poetry, letters, personal writing, review, creative writing, titles, diary

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## Summary

*Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear* tells the story of Yingtao, a nine-year-old Chinese immigrant, who does not excel on the violin. His father wants all four of his children to become accomplished musicians, but Yingtao is tone-deaf and cannot play on key. While trying to make new friends at school, Yingtao meets Matthew, who introduces him to the game of baseball. Matthew loves to play the violin, but his father wants him to be a great baseball player. The two friends think up a plan to help each other win their fathers' praise and still fulfill their own dreams.

## About the Author

Lensey Namioka has written numerous books for children. Many of her humorous books deal with a variety of social and cultural issues that affect the four children of the Yang family. Lensey Namioka currently resides in Seattle, Washington.

## Introductory Activities

1. **Previewing the Book:** Have students look at the cover and answer the journalist's questions about what they see: Who? What? When? Where? and Why? Based on their answers, students predict what the book will be about.
2. **Predicting:** Given the following clues, students write a paragraph predicting what they think will happen in the story.  
recital      dedication      Chinese      practice      baseball      music
3. **Character Journal:** List the main characters from *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear* and have students choose one. As they read the book, students should write regular entries from that character's point of view. Journal entries should reflect on the events of the story. At various points in their reading, have students share their journals with classmates.
4. **Attribute Web:** Create an attribute web (see page 10 of this guide) with students for each of the following ideas: friends, tone-deaf, practice, obedience, and baseball. Ask students to quickly tell what each word brings to mind. Encourage students to elaborate on particular ideas.
5. **Prediction Chart:** Have students set up a prediction chart (see pages 6-7 of this guide) to use as they read the book.
6. **Anticipation Questions:** Have students respond to each of the following statements with a "thumbs up" (I agree) or a "thumbs down" (I disagree) and discuss their responses.
  - Children should always follow their parents' wishes.
  - You should not tease people who have different customs or ideas.
  - Friends should help and support each other.

- Parents should always encourage their children’s interests and hobbies.
- Parents love their children equally.
- Most people have hidden talents and abilities.
- Practice makes perfect.
- People who play an instrument are smarter than people who play a sport.

## Vocabulary Activities

1. Target Word Charades: Have students act out some of the vocabulary words and have classmates guess the target word. Some suggested words for *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear*:

muttered (14)  
lip sync (71)

snigger (19)  
scaling (88)

annoyed (58)  
kneaded (107)

glaring (62)  
winced (123)

2. Target Word Maps: Have students complete word maps for vocabulary words of a certain part of speech. For example, adjectives from *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear* would include:

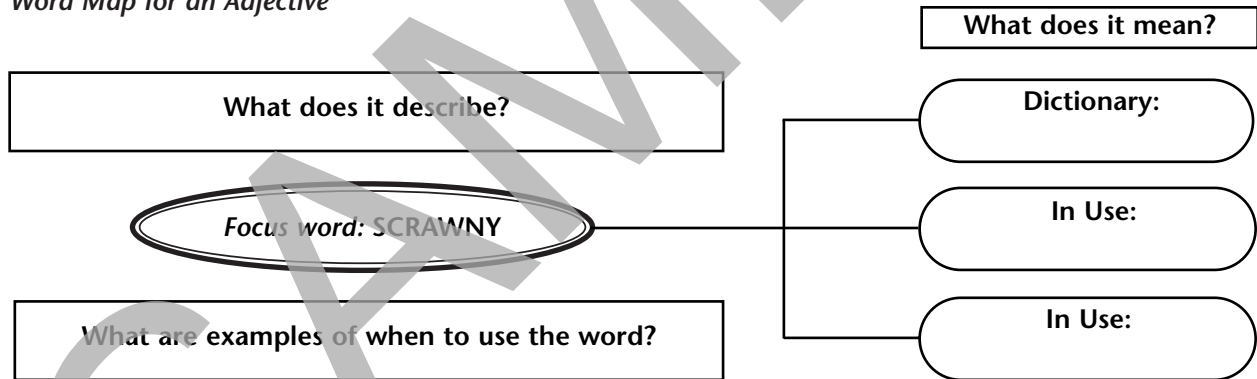
dedicated (13)  
dazzling (110)

sympathetic (36)  
dazed (117)

scrawny (39)

brilliant (70)

### Word Map for an Adjective



3. Sentences: Have students select five or six vocabulary words and use as many of the words as possible in one sentence.
4. Synonym Match: Have students select vocabulary words from a chapter and list one synonym for each vocabulary word on a small piece of paper. Students mix the pieces of paper and match each synonym to the appropriate vocabulary word.
5. Catch a Carp Game: Cut carp patterns from construction paper. The fish patterns should be large enough to fit a vocabulary word. Glue a piece of magnetic tape on the back of each fish. Place all of the fish on a sheet of blue poster board. Construct a fishing pole from a dowel or ruler by attaching a string to one end of the pole and a magnet to the end of the

- 
8. What reason does Mr. Conner give for wanting to pay for Matthew's violin lessons? *(He wants to pay for the lessons because he does not want to accept charity.)*
  9. Why does Mrs. Conner say that Yingtao is welcome in their home anytime? *(She believes that Yingtao is a good influence on Matthew.)*
  10. Why is Second Sister proud of Yingtao? *(She thinks that Yingtao gave up his place in the quartet so that Matthew could show his father that he is good at playing the violin.)*
  11. What does Yingtao think his father is going to tell him? *(Yingtao thinks his father will accuse him of disgracing the family.)*
  12. How does Yingtao feel when Mr. Yang tells him that he is proud of him? *(Answers will vary.)*

### Supplementary Activities

1. Drama: Have students act out the scene in the recital when Third Sister knocks over the screen and exposes Matthew.
2. Creative Writing: Ask students the following: Think about a time when someone was proud of you for an accomplishment. How did his/her praise make you feel? Write a poem or draw a picture that describes how you felt.
3. Writing: Have students pretend they attended the recital. Instruct them to write a review for a community newspaper about the performance.

## Chapter 8

### Vocabulary

insisted (127)	wrapped (128)	crimson (128)	persuaded (129)
fingering (129)	scooped (130)	expressionless (130)	soloist (134)
bunt (134)			

### Discussion Questions

1. Why does the family stop making Yingtao practice the violin? *(They realize that he does not have a talent for playing the violin.)*
2. Why does Matthew insist upon paying for his violin lessons? *(He wants to feel as if he is doing his share. He does not want charity from Yingtao's father.)*
3. Why does Yingtao loan Matthew his violin? *(Matthew needs a better one to play well.)*
4. How does Yingtao feel about being left out when Matthew plays in the quartet? *(He feels like the blind boy who cannot see the colors of the sunset that are described to him.)*
5. What does Mr. Yang do to show Yingtao that he has forgiven him? *(Mr. Yang gives Yingtao a baseball bat and comes to see him play in a baseball game.)*

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6. How does Third Sister encourage the family to attend Yingtao's baseball game? (*She tells her family that Yingtao never complained about practicing the violin or listening to music even though he was bored. The least that they could do is go to his baseball game.*)
  7. How does Yingtao feel when he catches the bunt from the other team? (*Answers will vary; Yingtao feels proud that his family sees that he does something well.*)
  8. Why does Yingtao think he might never hit a home run? (*Answers will vary.*)
  9. Why do Eldest Brother and Second Sister tap the bench with their pencils? (*This is the way that string players tell a soloist or a guest conductor that they think he/she did well.*)
  10. Which is better? Having a good ear or having a great eye? (*Answers will vary.*)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Critical Thinking: As a class, compare and contrast the way Yingtao feels when he plays baseball to the way he feels when he plays the violin. Have students collaborate on drawing a picture that illustrates how Yingtao and his family feel when Yingtao plays the violin. Have them also draw a second picture illustrating how Yingtao and his family feel when Yingtao plays baseball.
2. Creative Thinking/Writing: Have students write a short story telling what they think the characters from *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear* will do during their summer break from school.
3. Storytelling: Yingtao recalls a Chinese story about a blind boy who cannot see the sunset. Read another Chinese story to the class. Discuss how it is similar/different to other stories students have read.
4. Sports: Organize a baseball or softball game and play as a class, or join with another class. Have students write a short paragraph describing how, based on their own experience, Yingtao must have felt after his big game.