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Common Core Connections

Set against a background of the 1927 Friendship Doll exchange between Japan and the U.S., this historical novel focuses on themes of courage, honor, and change. Compelling characters and a vivid sense of setting combine with a fast-moving chronological plot to make this a strong choice for classroom study and independent reading. In this guide, you'll find questions for discussion and writing about character development, theme, plot, setting, and language, which require the close reading called for by the Common Core Standards. Suggested classroom activities extend the book and its topics in the areas of language arts, social studies, and geography.

Notes throughout the guide correlate the questions and activities with specific Common Core Language Arts Standards for Reading, Writing, and Speaking & Listening. For more information on specific standards for your grade level, visit the Common Core website at www.corestandards.org.

DOLLS of HOPE

by SHIRLEY PARENTEAU

ABOUT THE BOOK

Inspired by a little-known historical event, this engaging companion to *Ship of Dolls* is told from a Japanese girl's point of view. When eleven-year-old Chiyo Tamura is sent from her home in a small Japanese mountain village to a girls' school in the city of Tsuchiura, she never imagines that she will soon be in Tokyo helping to welcome more than twelve thousand Friendship Dolls from America—including Emily Grace, a gift to her own school. Nor could she dream that she'd have an important role in the crafting of Miss Tokyo, one of fifty-eight Japanese dolls to be sent to America in return. But when an excited Chiyo is asked to be Emily Grace's official protector, one jealous classmate will stop at nothing to see her fail. How can Chiyo reveal the truth—and restore her own good name? In another heartwarming historical novel, the author of *Ship of Dolls* revisits the 1927 Friendship Doll exchange, in which teacher-missionary Sidney Gulick organized American children to send thousands of dolls to Japan in hopes of avoiding a war between the two nations.



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COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

Correlate to Common Core ELA Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL.4–6.1, RL.4–6.2, RL.4–6.3; Craft and Structure RL.4–6.4, RL.5–6.5, RL.5–6.6. ELA Speaking & Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration SL.4–6.1.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Near the end of the book, Yamada-san says to Chiyo that he sent her away to school because he was impressed by her “adventurous spirit” (page 309). Give detailed examples from the story of Chiyo’s adventurous spirit. Yamada-san also says that he wanted Chiyo to have “opportunities to grow.” Discuss how Chiyo grows throughout the story and what changes her.
2. Chiyo admires Hana’s attitude, saying that “Hana could make an adventure of anything” (page 81). Describe Hana and discuss whether you agree with Chiyo’s description of her. Compare and contrast the characters of the two girls. What makes them good friends?
3. Chiyo thinks that Yamada-san sends her to school to learn the qualities of a traditional Japanese girl, such as modesty. What are some other traits of a traditional Japanese girl, including physical ones such as walking smoothly? Discuss whether you think these traits would be helpful in your own life, whether as a girl or a boy.
4. Yamada-san believes that Hoshi will be a good role model for Chiyo. Talk about Hoshi’s character and her actions, especially the ways she tries to undermine Chiyo. What motivates her to be so mean to Chiyo? What are the results of the way she acts?
5. Although Chiyo doesn’t meet the master doll maker Hirata-san until halfway through the book, he is a key character. Describe the times he appears and why he’s important in the story. Find passages that explain his work and passages that show what kind of person he is.
6. When Chiyo decides to hide in the basket to go to Yamada-san’s, she knows she is “risking her honor” (page 4). When she is caught, she feels shame (page 11). Discuss the meaning of honor and shame in this section and throughout the book. Compare their importance in Chiyo’s life to what honor and shame mean to you.
7. Analyze how the theme of war is developed in the narrative, both on a personal level between Chiyo and Hoshi (see page 74) and on a political level. What is the connection of the Friendship Dolls to war and peace? What does Hoshi’s father, a military man, think about the dolls, and why?

8. Another recurring theme in the book is the changing role of women in Japanese society. What situations in the book make Chiyo think about this topic? Describe different girls and women in her life who are examples of different roles for females. What are flappers, and how are they changing society?
9. While Friendship Dolls are intended as a message between nations, dolls are also very personal objects. When Chiyo begins the journey to her new school, she holds tight to the doll her sister gave her, “drawing comfort from her sister’s love” (page 24). How can a doll give Chiyo comfort? How does the doll help her at school? Describe Chiyo’s feelings about Emily Grace. Why do dolls matter to Chiyo and to others who love them?
10. While in Tokyo, Chiyo becomes something of a celebrity. How does this happen? Explain what happens as a result of her photographs in the paper. What are the advantages and disadvantages of fame for Chiyo?
11. When she goes to have tea with Yamada-san near the end of the book, Chiyo is angry about Hoshi’s actions, but she realizes that “keeping bitterness in her heart would be the same as letting Hoshi win” (page 303). What does she mean by that? Discuss whether you agree with her viewpoint, and why or why not.
12. Chiyo encounters many difficult situations, one of which is Shizuko’s hiding the truth that Hoshi was the one who cut up Emily Grace. Yet Chiyo thinks, “If not for Shizuko’s silence, I would have missed so much” (page 315). Explain what she would have missed. Can you find any other negative occurrences in the book that turn out to have positive outcomes?
13. Yamada-san gives Chiyo the choice of whether or not to return to Tsuchiura Girls’ School. She thinks about it and explains her decision in the last chapters. What are the pros and cons of returning? Do you think she makes the right choice? Why or why not?
14. Find places in the story where the author uses questions in the narrative (rather than in dialogue). Whose point of view do the questions take? Does it vary? Analyze why the author uses questions and what effect it has on readers.
15. When Chiyo first arrives at the school, she feels “as if the koi from ponds beyond the gate swam within her, nervously fluttering their fins” (page 26). Find other places where the koi metaphor is used and discuss its impact. In addition, more than once, Chiyo sees her life as balanced on scales. Talk about that recurring metaphor and other imagery in the narrative, and the pictures they create in your mind.



COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

Correlate to Common Core ELA Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL.4–6.1, RL.4–6.2, RL.4–6.3; Craft and Structure RL.4–6.4, RL.5–6.5; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas RL.4–6.7, RL.4–6.8. ELA Speaking & Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration SL.4–6.1, SL.4–6.2; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL.4–6.4, SL.4–6.5. ELA Writing Standards: Text Types and Purposes W.4–6.2, W.4–6.3. Production and Distribution of Writing W.4–6.4. Research to Build and Present Knowledge W.4–6.7, W.4–6.8.



ACTIVITIES

English Language Arts

A LETTER TO LEXIE

When Chiyo first sees Emily Grace, she learns that a girl named Lexie wrote the doll's letter and included two haiku, one of which Chiyo later quotes. Have each student compose a letter to Lexie from Chiyo in which Chiyo explains who she is, her relationship to the doll, and what happens to Emily Grace. The letter can address why Chiyo likes the haiku so much, and other topics that the student considers important. Have students share their letters orally or post them on a bulletin board.

SOUNDS LIKE?

When Chiyo is hidden in the basket in the first two chapters, she listens carefully to sounds around her. In this scene and elsewhere in the book, the author appeals to the reader's sense of hearing, using vivid words to describe sounds. Have students find some examples of this in the text. Then have students think of a place they know that has interesting sounds and write a description of it with an emphasis on sounds. They can share and compare their descriptions in small groups.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Create a simple cause-and-effect graphic organizer for your students' use. It should have a left-hand column titled **CAUSE** and a right-hand column titled **EFFECT**, with four boxes in each column. Hold a class discussion about the importance of causes and effects in moving a plot forward. Then distribute the organizers. Have each student choose four key actions in the book that lead to important results and use them to fill in their organizer. In small groups, have students explain their choices and how each cause led to its effect.

CIRCLE UP FOR SEQUENCING

To review the sequence of actions in the book, assign each student one or two chapters. Distribute paper strips that are big enough to hold several sentences. Then have the students label each strip with a chapter number and write a three-sentence summary of the chapter. Next, have students assemble in a circle in the order of their chapters and read their summaries aloud in order. Then have them put the strips on a bulletin board in chapter order so that the book's sequence is laid out visually.



BONUS CLASS PEN-PAL PROJECT!

Connect with a school in Japan and, as a class, correspond via e-mail, postcards, or letters.



Social Studies

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD!

Dolls of Hope is filled with references to food. As a class, make a list of food and drinks mentioned in the book. Then talk about which foods are familiar to anyone in the class. If possible, cook or bring in some of the foods, or have students find photographs and descriptions of them on the Internet. In small groups, students can compare and contrast their own diet with what Chiyo eats in the novel.

WELCOME TO TSUCHIURA GIRLS' SCHOOL

In small groups or pairs, have students list similarities and differences between your school and Chiyo's, based on specific passages in the text. Which differences have to do with the fact that *Dolls of Hope* takes place in 1927? Which are due to the school's being in Japan? Have students create brochures to advertise the Tsuchiura Girls' School, highlighting the features they like the most about it.

GETTING TO KNOW JAPAN

Dolls of Hope mentions many aspects of Japanese history, geography, and culture. Have students work alone or in pairs to research an aspect mentioned in the book, such as kimonos and geta, shoguns, the emperor, rickshaws, Tokyo, Lake Kasumigaura, and similar topics. Students could also choose to learn more about the topic of the Friendship Dolls. Have students write a short report with a list of sources and give a multimedia presentation to the class. Here are two starting points for research:

Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kids Web:
<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/index.html>

Friendship Doll website:
<http://www.bill-gordon.net/dolls/index.htm>

Maps and Math

NAUTICAL NUMBERS

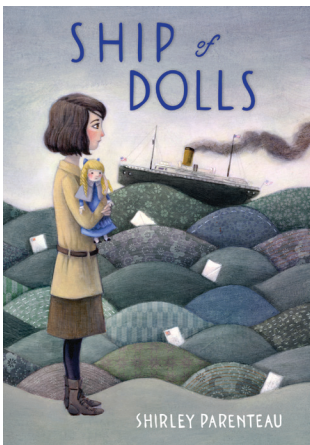
Have students do the map and math problem that Chiyo's teacher assigns on page 52. First students must determine how far it is in nautical miles from Yokohama, Japan, to San Francisco. One approach is to measure the distance on a world map, using the map's legend to figure out the scale of miles. Another way is to find an international distance calculator online that supplies nautical miles. The teacher explains that the ship will take ten days. Based on the distance the ship will travel and the number of days the journey will take, have students figure out how fast the ship would go.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shirley Parenteau’s first book about the friendship dolls was *Ship of Dolls*, published in 2014. She has been writing since she was a girl growing up in Oregon. She is the author of *One Frog Sang*, *Bears on Chairs*, *Bears in Beds*, *Bears in the Bath*, and many other children’s books. Shirley Parenteau lives with her husband in northern California.

READ THE FIRST PART OF THE STORY!



HC: 978-0-7636-7003-0
Also available as an e-book
and in audio

“Set in 1926, this moving description of a child’s coming to terms with a new family arrangement includes a real event: an exchange of dolls between Japanese and U.S. schoolchildren conceived as a message of peace. Period details abound, but what rings most historically true is the 11-year-old’s relationship with dolls: Emily Grace, who will carry goodwill messages to Japan; and Annie, recipient of confidences and not a few tears.” — *Booklist*

“Tender and funny, this story of friendship and family is reminiscent of Beverly Cleary’s work. Fans of *Ramona* will have no trouble connecting with and rooting for lively and likable Lexie, and doll aficionados will also enjoy this engaging title.” — *School Library Journal*

“Period details from the actual 1926 exchange of Friendship Dolls provide fascinating context for this old-fashioned heroine’s journey of personal growth. Historically inclined readers will enjoy this heartwarming story and its feisty heroine.” — *Kirkus Reviews*

“A well-crafted, involving story.” — *The Horn Book*



This guide was prepared by Kathleen Odean, a school librarian for more than fifteen years who presents workshops on new books for young people, including one that focuses on nonfiction titles and their connections to the Common Core. She served as chairperson of the 2002 Newbery Award Committee and is the author of several guides to children’s books, including *Great Books for Girls*, *Great Books for Boys*, and *Great Books About Things Kids Love*.