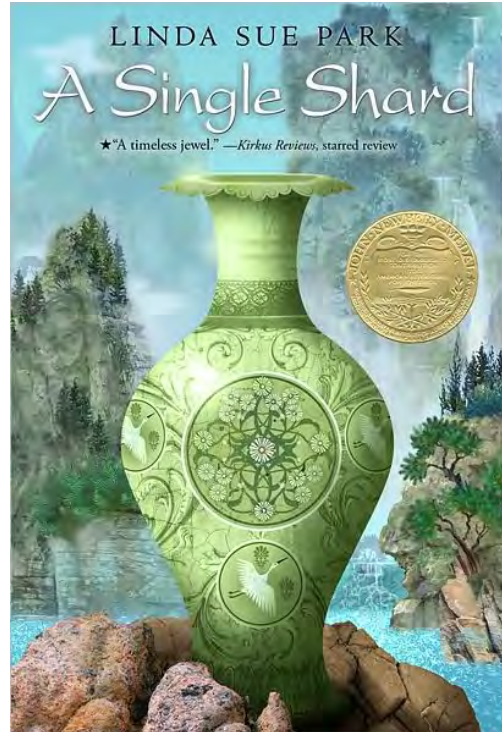


A Single Shard

by Linda Sue Park

His home under the bridge outside the village of Ch'ulp'o is the only one he has ever known, and Tree-ear considers himself lucky to have it. After all, he was a nameless, homeless toddler when Crane-man took him in ten years ago. Since then, Crane-man has taught him to forage for food, keep warm, and savor the simple joys their limited way of life offers. Together, they make the best of what they have. Besides, neither has anywhere else to go. Crane-man is disabled, and Tree-ear is an orphan. In 12th century Korean society, both are destined to be outsiders.

Although he accepted his fate long ago, Tree-ear's imagination has grown restless. Whenever he has a moment to spare, he heads to Potter Min's house. From his hiding place in the woods, he studies the master potter's technique at the throwing wheel or sneaks a closer look at his newest pieces. Watching him transform misshapen lumps of clay into such exquisite vessels—flawless in symmetry, shape, and color—makes Tree-ear's heart soar! If only he had the chance, could he learn to do the same? One fateful day, Tree-ear is so busy day dreaming that he gets caught trespassing in Potter Min's yard. As punishment, Tree-ear finds himself doing the reclusive potter's chores and spending less and less time with Crane-man, especially once the villagers hear the royal emissary for pottery ware is on his way to Ch'ulp'o. Will Tree-ear's assistance enable Potter Min to earn the highest honor, a royal commission? Will the master potter defy tradition and give an orphaned boy the chance to become his apprentice? Will Tree-ear leave Crane-man behind?



About the Author

Since she was very small, reading has always been Linda Sue Park's top favorite thing to do, and believe it or not, she became a published author herself at the age of nine! Seeing one of her poems printed in a children's magazine inspired Park to continue writing stories and poems throughout her childhood, and her parents encouraged her efforts. Her love of books even led her to study English literature in college. Park tried out several different jobs (such as public relations writer, food journalist, and teacher) before settling into a career writing children's books. As the daughter of Korean immigrants, she is dedicated to helping young readers make positive, meaningful cross-cultural connections, particularly between America and Asia. Park has won numerous awards for both picture and chapter books, including the 2002 Newberry award for her novel *A Single Shard*. She has also contributed two novels to a popular collaborative writing project with which you may already be familiar: *The 39 Clues*. To learn more about Linda Sue Park, especially the books she thinks every kid should read, visit [her personal Web site](#).

Getting Started

You can find *A Single Shard* at your local or school library, or at local or online bookstores. It's also available as an ebook for your iPad, Kindle, or Nook.

While You're Reading

Every good story is full of captivating characters, timeless and timely themes, significant settings, pivotal plot points, and vivid vocabulary that combine to engage our brains and our hearts. In this section of the website, you will find activities that invite you to dig deeper into each of these literary elements for a better understanding and enjoyment of the book.

To aid your investigation, save our "Writing While You Read" guide (see pages 22 and 23), with helpful tips on keeping a reading journal and annotating a book while you read.

Respond to the following prompts in your Reading Journal as you read (or re-read!) Chapters 1-4 of *A Single Shard*.

- The key way a writer helps his or her readers connect with a story is through its characters. Which qualities, behaviors, and choices do you think make some characters more appealing than others? To help you answer this question with specific evidence from the book, use the Character Grid you'll find on pages 24 and 25 below (and you can make extra copies of page 25 if you need them). Tuck it inside your book, and, each time you meet a new character, take a minute to jot down the name and your initial observations about him or her on your Character Grid. Be sure to revisit your Grid every few chapters or so, too! There may be more ideas you want to add as you get to know each character better.
- When we first meet Tree-ear, he has just arrived home with his pouch full of rice (5). What does his encounter with the farmer tell you about Tree-ear's character? What kind of boy is he?
- Describe Tree-ear and Crane-man's home under the bridge. What are the prominent features, sights, sounds, textures, and smells? How do you think growing up in this setting has affected Tree-ear?
- Based on what you know of their situation, do you think Tree-ear and Crane-man are outsiders in Ch'ulp'o by choice or necessity? Why? What alternatives for food, shelter, and occupation do they have?
- Both Tree-ear and Crane-man have unusual, nature-based names (7). How did they get these names? How do their names compare with others' in the community? In this culture, how might one's name be a reflection of his or her place, or value, in society?
- Obviously, securing enough food is a prime concern for Tree-ear and Crane-man on a daily basis. They are willing to rummage for scraps in the village rubbish heaps, eat plants that most people consider "weeds" (27), and scour harvested fields for overlooked grains of rice. According to Crane-man, "these [are] honorable ways to garner a meal, requiring time and work. But stealing and begging . . . [make] a man no better than a dog. Work gives a man dignity, stealing takes it away" (6). Crane-man and Tree-ear would rather go to bed hungry than act dishonorably. How do you think



these two characters maintain such a positive outlook despite the many challenges they face in life? Why do they cling to their sense of honor even though they have so little?

- Crane-man has obviously taught Tree-ear to be mindful of proper etiquette. Tree-ear is careful to keep his eyes cast downward respectfully whenever Potter Min or his wife is speaking to him (25, 30). He bows humbly when greeting or thanking others (28, 31). He bows with palms raised when receiving a gift (34). Because he is a homeless orphan, Tree-ear must be doubly certain that his words and behavior never cause offense, particularly to his elders. When Min catches him trespassing in his yard and accuses him of stealing, however, Tree-ear cannot resist “[raising] his head and [looking] at Min. He [keeps] his voice respectful, but his words [are] proud” (17). Much to Min’s surprise, Tree-ear stands up for himself: “I would not steal. Stealing and begging make a man no better than a dog” (17). Why does this bold reply change Min’s mind about Tree-ear? How might this confrontation have ended differently if Tree-ear had remained silent?
- In what way(s) does Crane-man’s withered leg affect his day-to-day activities? What special skills and abilities has he cultivated despite his disability? In what way(s) is he an artist himself? Be sure to include specific examples from the text for support.

Respond to the following prompts in your Reading Journal as you read (or re-read!) Chapters 5-9 of *A Single Shard*:

- Works of historical fiction, like *A Single Shard*, bring people and events from the past to life and help us understand the human experience in a more meaningful way than textbooks can do. Based on what you have



read so far, what observations can you make about the homes, clothing, food, religion, traditions, and customs of 12th century Korea? How do these cultural elements influence the way Tree-ear lives, thinks, and interacts with others on a daily basis? How does Tree-ear’s culture compare with your own today? Try creating a [Venn diagram](#) (see pages 26 and 27) to help you visualize the similarities and differences. Think about the ways in which a typical young person’s life has changed over the last nine-hundred years or so.

- Describe Potter Min’s creative process. Is throwing pots merely a job for him, or is it something more? How do his completed pieces and reputation compare to other potters’ in the village? Consider how Min’s approach to his work compares to your own. How does your own approach differ depending on whether you’ve been assigned the work or chosen it for yourself?
- In some ways, it is surprising that a boy like Tree-ear would even be interested in pottery making. After all, he has spent most of his life living under a bridge and rummaging through rubbish heaps. Nevertheless, he agrees to work for Potter Min without pay (30). He perseveres despite injuring himself many times chopping wood and digging clay (21, 31). He withstands Min’s vague instructions, harsh mood swings, and scolding (42). To Tree-ear, learning to throw a pot is more than worth all of this frustration. Despite his poverty, he dreams in vivid

detail of the prunus vase he hopes to create someday: “It [will] be . . . the most elegant of all the shapes. Tall and beautifully proportioned, rising from its base to flare gracefully and then round to the mouth” (52). The contrast between Tree-ear’s living conditions and his artistic vision is striking. Who or what inspires him? As the book progresses, what gifts or abilities do you see Tree-ear discovering and cultivating in hopes that his dream will soon become a reality?

- Consider the way Potter Min supervises Tree-ear. Day after day, “[T]he potter [barks] terse commands, which Tree-ear [struggles] to satisfy by whatever means [are] available to him—watching Min, watching other potters, experimenting. He [does] not know why Min [does] not explain things more fully; Tree-ear’s mistakes often cost valuable time or [waste] valuable clay” (42). Why do you think Min doesn’t take the time to show Tree-ear what to do? Have you ever been asked to do something without first being shown how to do it? How did that make you feel? Do you prefer to learn through trial-and-error, as Tree-ear must, or does another method work better for you?
- Over the course of the novel, three adults come to have a significant impact on Tree-ear’s life: Crane-man, Potter Min, and Min’s wife. Compare these adults’ treatment of Tree-ear. Does one have more of an impact on Tree-ear than the others? How might having relationships with all three provide Tree-ear with a more balanced view of himself and his life? To help yourself visualize the similarities and differences in their words, tones of voice, body language, and attitudes, create your own triple Venn Diagram in your Reading Journal. See pages 26 and 27 below for help getting started. Be sure to include specific examples from the book for support.
- Tree-ear observes that, though Crane-man and Potter Min are very different from one another, they do have one quality in common: Both are very proud. In Chapter 8, Potter Min has no new inlay work to show Emissary Kim because he has broken it all in frustration over the flawed glaze and brown spots that appeared during the kiln firing (89, 85). This choice puzzles Tree-ear. Min has worked for weeks “like a man with a demon inside him” (78). If earning a royal commission is truly “his life’s desire” (47), why doesn’t Min just show Emissary Kim one of the broken fragments? Surely his trained eye would overlook the inexplicable firing problem and recognize Min’s impeccable skill. Later, in Chapter 9, Tree-ear is again surprised when Crane-man refuses Min’s wife’s offer to let him work for food because “[h]e does not wish to be fed out of pity” (102). Why won’t Crane-man accept her help? He knows there will be no one to bring him a daily meal for many months while Tree-ear is away.

Min’s and Crane-man’s choices lead Tree-ear to wonder, “Why [is] it that pride and foolishness [are] so often close companions?” (102). What do you think? What is “pride” anyway, and what makes it a valuable quality to have? Conversely, how might one’s pride get in the way of his or her well-being? How might one avoid falling victim to pride? Include an example or two of your own to support your answer.

- At the end of Chapter 8, Min cruelly tells Tree-ear, “Know this, orphaned one If ever you learn to make a pot, it will not be from me. . . . The potter’s trade goes from father to son. I had a son once. . . . He is gone now. . . . You are not my son” (95). When he hears this, Tree-ear can “hardly breathe,” and, as “Min’s words [ring] in his ears,” he “[wants] to shout” in frustration (96). After a while, though, Tree-ear calms down and comes to terms with his situation. He feels deflated but determined to continue working for Min. He even agrees to carry Min’s special pieces all the way to Songdo alone. Why do you think Tree-ear refuses to leave Min’s service? Has he given up hope that he will one day learn to be a potter? Does his pride have anything to do with it? What evidence in the story tells you so?

- Just before Tree-ear departs on his journey, he and Crane-man exchange gifts (107). In what way(s) is each gift a symbol of one friend's deep, genuine understanding of the other? How is each friend's offering just what the other needs?

Respond to the following prompts in your reading journal as you read (or re-read!) Chapters 10-13 of *A Single Shard*:

- As you probably already know from your own reading, many ancient myths and legends include magical animal characters. Interestingly, the fox is one such character that appears in many different contexts across many cultures. What are some stories you know in which a fox is a prominent character? What qualities or behaviors do you associate with the fox? How does the fox influence other characters' choices and/or the outcome of the story? Does the story teach a lesson or explain something about how the world works?

With your answers to these questions in mind, now consider the fox's role in *A Single Shard*, first when Crane-man explains how he came to live under the bridge (82) and later when Tree-ear is spending the night alone in the mountains as he journeys to Songdo (114). What role does the fox play in these two contexts? How do Crane-man's and Tree-ear's unusual, unexpected encounters with the fox affect them? Why do you think the author chose to weave this mythical animal into an otherwise down-to-earth, realistic story?

- Perhaps the most shocking and disheartening moment of the book occurs in Chapter 11 when Tree-ear is attacked at the Rock of the Falling Flowers. Although such brutal behavior is certainly inexcusable, sometimes it can be helpful to try and understand what drives people to do bad things. Take a closer look at the description of Tree-ear's attackers, particularly their clothing and faces (121). Why would the bandits rob a poor, defenseless boy? How do you think the bandits must feel when they discover that, instead of food, there are only extravagant gifts for the palace in Tree-ear's jiggah?

- At the end of Chapter 11, Tree-ear resolves to put the vicious attack behind him and take a pottery shard to Songdo. Do you think Potter Min would have done the same in his place? Consider what Crane-man tells Tree-ear near the beginning of the book: "Scholars read the great words of the world. But you and I must learn to read the world itself" (7). How has Tree-ear learned to "read" human nature in a way that Potter Min has not? How does Tree-ear anticipate Emissary Kim will respond to the salvaged pottery? Why?

- Though they show their feelings in different ways, Min and his wife have clearly missed Tree-ear and worried for his safety. When Tree-ear finally returns from Songdo, Min actually sits down to talk with him and offers to teach him to



throw pots. Min's wife, who has already asked Tree-ear to call her "Ajima" (meaning "Auntie"), now urges Tree-ear to stay in their home permanently (91, 147). Then she asks him for a favor: "Would it be agreeable to you if we were to call you Hyung-pil from now on?" (147). After all this time, Min and Ajima wish to adopt Tree-ear and give him their family name. Why is this gift so precious to Tree-ear? How will it change the course of his life?

- In the final chapter of the book, Tree-ear returns home only to find that his best friend, his only family, has died. At first, he feels shocked, heartbroken, and guilty for leaving Crane-man alone for so long. After some time, though, Tree-ear's thoughts turn to the invaluable lesson he learned from his friend: "*One hill, one valley . . .*" (148). With that lesson in mind, Tree-ear resolves to "make replicas, dozens if need be," until his dream of creating a perfect prunus vase is realized (147). How will Tree-ear's "journey" to create this piece help him find peace and honor the memory of his friend Crane-man at the same time (148)?
- Throughout ancient Asia, the crane was honored as a symbol of longevity, eternal youth, and good fortune. Why do you think the crane was such a popular image for artists, like the one who created the real-life "Thousand Cranes Vase" (148)? What connections do you see between the crane, as a cultural symbol, and Crane-man, the character from *A Single Shard*? Why do you think Linda Sue Park, the book's author, highlighted these connections in Tree-ear's best friend and mentor?
- Now that you've finished the book, look back over the notes you've made on your [Character Grid](#) (see pages 24 and 25), especially those about Tree-ear, Crane-man, Potter Min, and Ajima. Decide whether each of these main characters is static or dynamic. In what way(s) do these characters help one another overcome fear, sadness, or pain and bring out the best qualities in one another? What has changed (or stayed the same) about each character as a result?
- *A Single Shard* chronicles Tree-ear's coming of age, his transition from boyhood to manhood. Looking back over the book, what would you say are the key events in Tree-ear's growth journey? At what moment does he begin to realize that he is no longer a child but a strong, self-reliant young man who can make decisions and look out for himself? What evidence in the story has led you to this conclusion?

For a visual, create a story map (or plot diagram) in your journal:

1. First, draw the shape of a large mountain peak.
2. Beginning at the bottom left of the mountain and moving up the side, record the key events in Tree-ear's development. What steps does he take toward growing up?
3. At the top of your diagram, the mountain's peak, record Tree-ear's turning point. At what moment does he finally realize he is no longer a boy?
4. Then, moving down the right side of the mountain, record the remaining events of the story. How do you see Tree-ear acting in a new, more grown-up way?
5. Finally, consider the connections between Tree-ear's coming of age and your own. Even though this story takes place hundreds of years ago, what can you learn from Tree-ear about the process of growing up? Jot down your ideas in the center of your diagram.
6. Oftentimes, the title is our biggest clue to the theme, or overall message, a book's writer wants to get across to us readers. At first glance the title *A Single Shard* may remind us of the piece of fine pottery Tree-ear salvages from the waterfall after he is attacked. What deeper meaning might this book's title have, though? How might you rewrite the title *A Single _____* (fill in the blank) based on a lesson you've learned from this book? Why? Remember to explain your reasoning thoroughly and include specific evidence from the text for support.

Getting to the Root



English is a living language. It changes and grows all the time. One of the best ways to understand the history of the English language and to unlock the meanings of unfamiliar words is to learn Latin and Greek word parts. As you study biology, you will learn more and more of these word parts, and once you know them, you will begin to recognize them in all kinds of words—and you'll find that your knowledge of those word parts will help you decipher the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Roots are the "base" of plants, and Latin and Greek roots form the base of many English words. For example, the Latin root *audi* means "to hear." How many modern English words can you think of that include the root *audi*?

Next, take a look at each word part below. Beside each part is a word from *A Single Shard* containing that word part. You can find the word in context on the page number in parentheses.

- **per** – *perusal* (4)
- **de, ris** – *derision* (18)
- **im, pude** – *impudent* (37)
- **felic** – *felicitous* (41)
- **prun** – *prunus* (52)
- **labor** – *elaborate* (59)

1. Can you determine the meaning of the root from your knowledge of the word beside it?
2. If not, think of other words that you know that also contain that root. What do those words have in common? Based on that common element, can you figure out the meaning of the root?
3. If you're still stumped, check out this [list of Latin and Greek roots](#).
4. Now that you know the meaning of the root, how many words can you generate that use the root?
5. Once you understand the meaning of the root, you'll find that even your understanding and appreciation of familiar words will deepen and grow when you think about how that root works in those words.

Words, Words, Words

A Single Shard is full of great words. Below is a list of some of the words from the book that may be unfamiliar to you, along with the page number on which each word appears in the story. Be sure to follow the steps below for other words in the book that are new to you.

- glean (4)
- oblivious (4)
- precariously (20)
- placid (22)

- spoor (27)
- insolence (30)
- celadon (43)
- diversion (51)
- awl (58)
- incision (59)
- connoisseur (64)
- surreptitiously (65)
- invective (66)
- lugubrious (72)
- harangued (73)
- pliant (75)
- plaintive (81)
- cortege (88)
- feigned (96)
- trepidation (109)
- studiously (112)
- pinioned (123)
- quell (134)
- incredulous (136)
- chastened (136)
- skepticism (138)
- welter (147)



Before you look these words up in a dictionary—or ask someone what they mean—try working through the following steps:

1. Generate a list of other words that share one or more of the same word parts. What do the words on the list have in common? Are there any clues from those commonalities that you can use to help figure out the meaning of the unknown word? Hint: Some word parts—as they appear in English words—have multiple meanings as we look back at the Latin and Greek, in part because of changes that have occurred in the words over the years. For example, does the "ped-" in "pedestrian" mean the same thing as the "ped" in "pediatrician"? Where there is possible confusion, context clues (see step 2) are extremely important.
2. Go back and reread the word in its context. This context includes the sentence in which you find the word, but you should also read one or two sentences both before and after the appearance of the word. What context clues do you find that might unlock the meaning of the word for you?
3. Make your best guess at the meaning of the word.
4. Look up the definition in [a dictionary](#). Be sure to also look for information about the word's origin. This information will often contain the Latin or Greek word from which the word is derived.
5. How close was your guess?

Explore

Our world is full of connections—between people, places, and events. In this section of the website, you will find activities that uncover some important connections—in chemistry, physics, history, and philosophy—between *A Single Shard* and our world!

Chemistry

Taking a Scientific Approach to Pottery Making

Up until the last two hundred years or so, potters have been forced to rely on a time-consuming process of trial and error to determine what combination of ingredients, glazes, and firing techniques would yield the strongest results. Surely, this approach required lots of patience and perseverance. The constant uncertainty about how pieces would turn out must have been very frustrating, just as it was for Min and Tree-ear in *A Single Shard*. Today, such frustrations can be avoided, thanks to recent advances in the field of chemistry. Let's learn more about the scientific tools and techniques that help modern potters study ancient pieces, achieve more certain results, and save time, too!

Activities

- [Observe the ways in which a third-generation American potter relies on his college study of chemistry to improve the process by which his family produces pottery.](#)
- [Learn how a recent college graduate combines her knowledge of chemistry, pottery making, and mathematical modeling to predict the outcome of different glazing techniques used in the pottery studio.](#)
- [Study what happens to the clay on an atomic level](#) during the [kiln firing process](#) to make each piece of pottery hard, strong, and resistant to liquids—in other words, ideal vessels for eating, drinking, and storing foods! What happens to the water molecules that make clay pliable as the temperature in the kiln climbs? When the atoms rearrange themselves into a crystalline structure, what happens to the piece of pottery?
- [Distinguish the chemical reactions](#), and resulting types of pottery, produced by [oxidation firing versus reduction firing](#).
- [Compare the chemical make-up of ceramics \(the Greek term for “pottery”\) to that of other naturally occurring materials.](#)
- Determine how the Korean Onggi potters (see the "Korean Pottery: From Everyday Use to Collectible Art" **Uncover** activities on pages 11 and 12) [adjust the chemical composition and firing temperature of their clay](#), which results in a microporous structure that is ideal for food storage.
- Consider how archeological chemists collaborate with geologists, anthropologists, art historians, archeologists, and other scholars to [study ancient ceramics](#). Using [cutting-edge lab instruments](#), chemists can accurately [identify](#) and [date](#) ancient pottery specimens.
- Imagine all the innovative ways in which ceramics science is being adapted to increase hardness and melting point in existing technologies, such as [car engines](#), [hypersonic vehicles](#), and [other high-tech devices](#).

Did you have any idea the principles of chemistry could be applied to the study of pottery making in such creative, interdisciplinary, and labor-saving ways? Perhaps you might like to pursue a career in archeological or ceramic chemistry. What other ways can you think of to combine your artistic and scientific interests?

Physics

Motion, Momentum, and Energy of a Potter's Wheel

Have you ever thought about how and why a pottery wheel moves? What principles of physics impact the creation of wheel-thrown pottery? Let's take a closer look!

Activities

- [Review Sir Isaac Newton's Laws of Motion.](#)
- Learn how the development of [wheels](#) and [flywheels](#) has enabled potters to minimize friction and conserve energy while rotating and shaping their pottery pieces.
- [Identify the physical force that keeps a potter's work from flying off the wheel.](#) Why are many people [misinformed about how and why this force works](#)?
- Conduct an [at-home experiment](#) to see centripetal force in action!



Now that you have a stronger understanding of pottery wheel movement, think about why the wheel is such an important tool in pottery making. How do wheels make a potter's work easier? How have potters harnessed the physics of wheel movement to [produce symmetrical pieces](#)? Why do you think collectors often consider such pieces more beautiful and valuable?

History

Putting 12th-Century Korean Culture into Perspective

Much like beauty, history is "in the eye of the beholder." The details of "what happened" and "why" all depend on who is telling the story! This is especially true when looking at Korean history. Because of [its relatively small size and geographical location](#), Korea has always had to work harder to protect its sovereignty, or independence, as a nation while remaining open to surrounding cultures for trade and educational opportunities. In the 12th century, which provides the backdrop for *A Single Shard*, Korean culture was heavily influenced by its relationship with China, a much larger and more powerful nation. As a result, it can be tempting to unpack Korea's history from a Chinese perspective. Many scholars do! Instead, let's take our cues from the novel's author, Linda Sue Park. In her novel,

China, and other world events, are on the periphery. Their influence is felt but does not overshadow most Koreans' day-to-day effort to eke out a living. Let's consider this time period from an average Korean's point-of-view.

Activities

- [Get a sense of what was happening elsewhere around the world during the 12th century](#), which is part of the Post Classical Era of human history. How does the Korean way of life depicted in *A Single Shard* compare with others around the world in the same time period? What was happening politically and socially in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas? How much do you think people from small Korean villages—like Potter Min, Tree-ear, and Crane-man—would know of, or be affected by, these world events and cultural differences?
- Narrow in on [the accomplishments of the Chinese Song Dynasty](#) and consider the strong influence it must have had on neighboring Korea. Notice that Korea is even included within Chinese boundaries on this historical map. Whose historical point of view do you think the map represents? Why?
- Consider what makes the Korean perspective on Post-Classical [history](#), [trade](#), [technology](#), [art](#) (be sure to click on each piece of art to learn how it was influenced and created!), and [religion](#) distinct from China's.

Throughout its history, Korea has withstood many attacks from countries who wanted to take over its lands and resources for their own political and economic gain. The [political pressures of the 20th century](#) were particularly strong, and, as a result, Korea split into two nations, North and South Korea, in 1945 at the end of World War II. Relations between the two nations have been tense ever since. Despite these difficulties, Koreans remain resilient and committed to collaborating with other nations to improve their homeland. Many are also hopeful that North and South Korea will someday overcome their differences and be reunited as one nation. In what way(s) do you think maintaining a strong sense of their unique heritage and national identity has ensured Korea's survival throughout its long history?



Korean Pottery: From Everyday Use to Collectible Art

Although the characters in *A Single Shard* are fictional, what you have read about the geography, geology, and pottery trade in Tree-ear's 12th century Korean village is historically accurate: "Ch'ulp'o had become an important village for ceramics by virtue of both its location and its soil. On the shore of the Western Sea, it had access both to the easiest sea route northward and to plentiful trade with China. And the clay from the village pits contained exactly the right amount of iron to produce the exquisite gray-green color of celadon so prized by collectors" (12). Korean incised (sometimes called "inlaid") celadon pottery was prized throughout Asia, particularly at Chinese court, due to not only its remarkable craftsmanship but also its unique coloring. In many ways, the results celadon potters achieved during this period could be considered the culmination of thousands of years of work refining their materials, technique, and production process. They had become masters of an art form.

At the same time, there were other Korean potters, who were also highly-skilled, crafting comparatively plain, large, and sturdy pieces for everyday household use. The potters who refined the process for making these pieces, called Onggi, clearly did not receive the same kind of recognition for their work. Why? What distinguishes a piece of hand-crafted pottery from this period as art? In what way(s) has our definition of “art” changed (or stayed the same) over the last thousand years?

Activities

- [Consider the long history of pottery making](#), both for everyday use and for artistic expression, around the world. Pottery became more commonplace once humans began to set up permanent villages and raise crops because they needed vessels for eating and storing excess food. Over time, designs and decorative patterns became more and more sophisticated as [craftsmen learned how a clay's chemical composition and firing temperature affected coloration and strength](#).
- [Track the development of Korean pottery techniques](#) from ancient times to today. Note the remarkable transformation in craftsmanship and finish from the Unified Silla Period to the Goryeo Period, the time in which *A Single Shard* takes place.
- [Learn how adjustments to chemical composition, kiln structure, and artistic technique made pieces produced during the Korean Goryeo dynasty so drastically different](#).
- [Identify the distinguishing features of celadon pottery](#) as well as the possible origins of its name.
- Examine the celadon coloring and incised crane detail on [this prunus vase](#), which was produced using the *sanggam* technique developed by Korean potters during the Goryeo dynasty. What made this technique innovative for its time? Why might the crane image have been appealing to Korean potters?
- Compare incised celadon glazed and Onggi earthenware pottery. While some Postclassical Era Korean potters were perfecting techniques for decorative pottery destined for wealthy homes, [others were perfecting pieces to withstand the demands of everyday use in any household](#) where [food must be stored without the benefit of electricity](#). How do the two creative processes, and final products, differ? Why?
- [Observe a 21st century Korean potter at work in his studio](#). Is his pottery meant to be decorative or for everyday use? How can you tell? In what way(s) is his creative process similar to that of his ancestors? In what way(s) has he been influenced by the more developed world in which he lives? Does he consider himself a craftsman or an artist? What is the difference?

Now that you have taken a closer look at the 12th century Korean pottery trade, think again about why one type of pottery was considered more valuable than the other. Is that still true today, or has our valuation of “art” become less dependent on the beauty of the final product and more focused on the person and process by which a piece is created?

Philosophy

Confucianism in Korean Society

Throughout their country's long history, Koreans have adopted a variety of religions. However, for centuries one code of behavior has remained highly influential and united Koreans as a people, no matter what religion they have chosen to observe at any given time. Let's explore how the social and political customs introduced by ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius took hold in Korea and why they are still observed there today.

Activities

- [Familiarize yourself with Confucius' life, work, and influence throughout Asia](#) during the 6th century BCE.
- Consider how the [revival of Confucianism in China fifteen hundred years later](#), during the Chinese Song Dynasty, would have reached into Korea, during the concurrent Goryeo Dynasty, as well through the two nations' strong cultural and trade connections. Keep in mind that this is Tree-ear's time period, so look out for possible connections between the book and the Confucian ideas and customs you are studying.
- Identify the [Korean social and political customs](#) that are rooted in Confucius's [five basic ideas about behavior and five basic virtues](#). Which customs have persisted despite the many upheavals and changes the country has faced? Why?
- Distinguish Confucianism from [the prominent religions observed in Korea](#) over time. What characteristics do you think make Confucianism [more a code of social and political behavior than a religion](#), like Shamanism, Buddhism, or Christianity?

Now that you know what you're looking for, look through *A Single Shard* for moments when characters exemplify Confucian principles in their behavior, manner of speaking, or decision making. What clues enable you to identify these moments? How does your knowledge of Confucianism help you better understand what the characters in this book do, say, and think?

Create

Experiment with Clay

After reading an entire book about the art of pottery making, are your hands itching to get into some clay? Go ahead and give it a try! Clay art is both inexpensive and forgiving. If ever you aren't satisfied with what you have made, no problem! Simply roll your clay back into a ball and begin again just like Tree-ear does in *A Single Shard*: "He [keeps] a small ball in his waist pouch and [experiments] with it whenever he [has] the chance. After some time a shape [begins] to form out of the clay; it [is] almost as if the clay [is] speaking to him, telling him what it [wishes] to become" (105). As Tree-ear learns, there is something quite satisfying about using your hands to shape an unwieldy lump of clay into something beautiful and meaningful.

You'll need only a few basic items to get started:

- clay (air dry, modeling, or natural earthen clay from a local factory or art supply store)
- popsicle stick

- toothpick
- sharpened pencil with unused eraser
- dental floss
- plastic wrap
- small plastic cup or flower pot
- small paint brushes (as for watercolor or oil painting)
- small bowl of water
- acrylic paint (to decorate air dried pieces if desired)

Once you have gathered all of your materials, you are ready for a beginner's course in hand-shaped pottery! Set up your supplies, along with your computer or tablet, on an adult-approved work surface. Be sure to keep your extra clay wrapped in plastic, so it will stay moist and pliable (a synonym for one of our vocabulary words: "pliant").

Begin working your way through each of the following instructional videos one at a time. Watch the first video all the way through once for an overview of the shaping process. Then re-play it as you follow the steps. (Feel free to pause the video as necessary!) Once you are satisfied with the piece you've made, move on to the next video. Try not to worry over the quality of your final products. Instead, just relax and enjoy the creative process. Find ways to put a little of your own personality into each one!

- [Pinch Pot](#)
- [Coil Pot](#)
- [Owl](#)
- [Fish](#)



Now that you are more familiar with clay-shaping techniques, why not try designing a little monkey of your own? Look back at the end of Chapter 9. How do you envision Tree-ear's gift for Crane-man?

When you are finished, clean your work area and leave your pottery pieces in a safe, out-of-the-way place to air dry for several days. Then you can decorate them with acrylic paint if desired. *****CAUTION:** Remember, your pottery pieces are made of porous material, so they should be used only for decorative purposes. (Do not fill them with water or food.) DO NOT attempt to fire or oven bake your pieces without supervision from a properly trained expert at a pottery studio.***

If this crash-course in hand-shaped pottery has inspired you to tackle more advanced techniques—or even to try your hand at [wheel-thrown pottery](#)—ask your parent or another trusted adult to help you search out more instructional videos, library books, or even a pottery studio near you!

Sample Korean-Style Cuisine

One of the best ways to get to know another culture is through its cuisine. While we're studying *A Single Shard*, why not try Korean-style food? In the past, mastering traditional Korean recipes has been a challenge for American cooks, as the necessary ingredients are either expensive or difficult to find. Thankfully, Korean food is becoming more and more popular in the United States, so many chefs have adapted traditional Korean recipes using ingredients that are more readily available in the Asian food section of your local grocery store. Also, many Korean-style recipes are rice based and flexible in terms of the vegetables and meats (or meat substitutes!) you use, so once you have a few basic ingredients on hand, you can try out several different combinations of ingredients and levels of spiciness to suit your own taste buds!

For starters, ask a parent or adult to help you prepare a [Korean Rice Pot](#) or [Korean Beef Rice Bowl](#). If you don't care for meat, simply substitute extra-firm tofu. If you don't like a particular vegetable the recipe calls for, just leave it out. While you are out shopping for ingredients, be sure to grab a jar of Kimchee if you see one, so you can experience this traditional garnish along with one of your recipes!

If these recipes agree with you, consider trying one of [these more complex dishes](#) or planning a family outing to a Korean restaurant near you. Be sure to explore your library's cookbook section and the Asian food section of your grocery store for other cook-at-home ideas as well.

Stage a Shadow Play

Have you ever given any thought to what people in 12th century Korea did for fun? With no bookstores, Internet, movie theaters, portable electronics, playgrounds, or toy stores, how did people spend their precious free time after a long day's work was done? In *A Single Shard*, we usually find Crane-man and Tree-ear telling stories, particularly in the evenings when their only source of light is the fire. Interestingly, though, these stories are not merely for entertainment. They also teach Tree-ear many lessons about how the world works and how an honorable person should live. This type of storytelling would have been very common in Korean villages like Ch'ulp'o. In fact, every culture across the globe has some tradition of teaching the history, mythology, and guiding principles of its people through community storytelling.

[Shadow puppetry](#), or shadow play, is one of the world's most ancient forms of storytelling. It was very popular across Asia in the 12th century, particularly in China. You'll remember from your reading that, at this time in history, Korean and Chinese cultures were closely linked through trade. Although there is little remaining evidence, scholars assume that shadow play was a popular pastime in Korea as well. Today, the Chinese, in particular, are working hard [to preserve their shadow play heritage and ensure that the tradition continues for future generations](#). Artists and audiences around the world are also becoming more aware of this shared tradition, so shadow puppetry courses and performances are growing in popularity once again. Why not join in the fun yourself?

For inspiration, think back to the importance of storytelling in *A Single Shard*. Some of the most surprising storytelling moments in the book revolve around the unexpected appearance of a fox. Is the fox magical or symbolic in some way? How does the fox affect the human it encounters? Does the fox offer a lesson of some kind? How might one of these stories be adapted into a meaningful shadow play?

Here are the items you will need to get started:

- pencil (or pen) and writing paper
- white pencil or crayon
- wooden craft sticks or drinking straws

- black cardstock
- pointed scissors and/or craft knife
- cutting board or mat
- clear tape
- light colored paper (tissue, parchment, or wax) or bed sheet
- cardboard boxes
- flashlight



To stage a shadow play of your own, follow these steps:

1. Envision yourself as a village storyteller preparing a new performance. Begin by re-reading the two fox scenes in Chapters 7 and 10 of *A Single Shard*. Which fox story would you like to re-tell in your shadow play? Which aspects of the story's setting, characters, and events will you emphasize? What lesson do you hope your audience will learn from it? Jot down your ideas on your writing paper.
2. Now you are ready to rewrite the fox story in your own words. Choose language that will be smooth to recite, exciting to hear, and meaningful to share. Include both dialogue (conversation between characters) and detailed description (of sights, sounds, body language, and so forth). Be careful, though, to keep your script short and sweet. Aim for 1 to 1 ½ pages.
3. Once your script is complete, craft your scenery and shadow puppets by following the steps outlined in [this instructional video](#).
4. Next select some music to play in the background while you perform your play. What style of music seems best suited to the story and puppets you have designed? (You may need to ask a parent or other trusted adult for help with this step.)
5. To highlight your puppets' detailed features and articulated movements, make a simple shadow screen by spreading tissue paper between two cardboard boxes and shining your flashlight inside. (You could also hang up a light colored bed sheet. Be creative and use whatever you have on hand!) Obviously, as you tell the fox story, you will want the audience to focus on your amazing, handcrafted puppets, not your hands. To maintain the illusion that the puppets are moving on their own, either set up your shadow screen on a tabletop or [construct a platform of cardboard boxes](#).
6. Be sure to practice cuing up your music and performing the play a few times. Tape your script to the back of your stage, so you can read it easily while moving the puppets behind the paper screen.
7. When you are ready to stage your play, invite your family and friends to watch! You may even wish to set up a video camera to capture the event, so you can see it yourself later.

After your performance, take some time to chat with your audience about what they learned from the story and show them how your puppets work. Did your shadow play get across the message you were hoping to convey? What would you do differently if you staged the play again? A seasoned storyteller is always looking for ways to fine tune his or her performance and make it even better!

Stand up for Cranes in the Korean Demilitarized Zone

Cranes have been widely revered throughout Asia for centuries as symbols of longevity, eternal youth, and good fortune. Many ancient stories even tell of cranes living for a thousand years. Despite their cultural significance, however, cranes in Asia, and across the globe, are among the most endangered bird families due to vast habitat loss. Their numbers have declined drastically over the last century, as human development (such as modernized agriculture, pesticide use, oil production, utilities, and transportation) has rapidly pushed back the boundaries of the cranes' home ranges.

To the great delight of conservationists, though, some crane species have found [an unexpected sanctuary in the Korean Demilitarized Zone \(DMZ\)](#) that has separated North and South Korea since the end of the Korean War. This strip of wild, uninhabited land has formed a vital wildlife corridor linking [Red-crowned](#) and [White-naped](#) cranes with their winter nesting and breeding grounds on the West coast of Korea and elsewhere in southern Asia. Today, as diplomats and world leaders work toward a peaceful resolution between North and South Korea in the near future, conservationists are searching for a way to preserve and protect the DMZ land, so it will remain a wildlife refuge even after the heavily guarded fence surrounding it is removed.

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) is leading the charge. In cooperation with scientists and conservationists in both North and South Korea, the ICF is working to educate policy makers and farmers about the importance of adopting wildlife-friendly organic farming practices and preserving the centuries-old nesting grounds of the [Han River Estuary](#) at the western edge of the DMZ. One day, they hope North and South Korea will cooperate to transform these lands into [an international peace park](#).

Take some time to explore the [ICF's Web site](#) and learn [how and why this nonprofit got started](#) forty years ago. Note their long-range plans, particularly for conservation efforts in [East Asia](#), in [North America](#), and in [developing conservation leadership](#). As you can see, the ICF is always looking for ways to get the word out about protecting vulnerable crane species, both in Korea and around the world. Moreover, this initiative offers a strong example of cross-cultural cooperation. No matter our political or social views, we can all agree that endangered animals and ecosystems need our care and protection.

How can you help? Here are some project ideas to consider:

- Draft some land use guidelines! Based on what you've learned about cranes' nesting, diet, and migratory needs, write some specific rules for the future Peace Park that would enable humans to enjoy the lands and preserve crucial habitat space at the same time.
- Create a kid-friendly logo! Draw, paint, or computer design a new International Crane Foundation (ICF) logo that kids your age would love to wear. Then the ICF could have it printed on t-shirts, tote bags, and caps to sell in their gift shop with all proceeds going toward crane care.
- Design an international lesson plan! Use what you've learned about Asian cranes to make a learning tool (poster, slide presentation, brochure, or handout) and activity that the ICF could share with Korean elementary

school children to help them understand the vital importance of conservation work in their country.

(HINT: South Korean children learn English at school, so don't worry about needing to translate!)

- Encourage Donations! Organize a "Save the Cranes" fundraising activity (like a workshop, family fun walk, bake sale, or silent auction) to help your community make a donation to the ICF.

Reflect & Connect Prompts

In Duke TIP's online Book Club, the "Reflect & Connect" prompts provide an opportunity for students to share their ideas about the book with other Duke TIP students. You may choose to record your responses to these questions in your Reading Journal, or you can use them to talk about the book with friends or classmates who have also read it.

Blinded by Greed

On his first day of work for Potter Min, the potter's wife provides Tree-ear with a full bowl of rice, dried fish, and vegetables for lunch. Tree-ear is speechless with gratitude and thinks to himself, "The feast-day banquets in the palace of the King could never better the modest meal before [me], for [I have] earned it" (34). The next day, he brings his own bowl for lunch (38). Hoping to share his good fortune with his friend, Tree-ear carefully devises a plan to eat only a half bowlful of food and hide the rest, so he can take it home to Crane-man at the end of the day. To his surprise, Potter Min's wife quickly figures out what he is doing and refills his half-empty bowl during the afternoon. After many days of this, Tree-ear is fairly certain that, if he did eat the whole bowl of food, she would probably refill it anyway. Although he is tempted to eat more, "the very thought [frightens] him. How quickly one [becomes] greedy!" (47). Tree-ear refuses to take advantage of the woman's kindness. However, he hasn't actually done anything wrong, so why do you think he is so hard on himself? Why is it so difficult to remain humble and thankful when we already have what we need? How can we avoid letting greed change us?

Tales of Traditions Past

When Tree-ear struggles to understand why Potter Min won't teach him to throw a pot simply because he is an orphan, not his son, Crane-man points out, ". . . a well-kept tradition can be stronger than law" (97). What do you think Crane-man means by this? Why do you think people are so reluctant to let go of traditions passed down through the generations? In what way(s) are traditions valuable? Have you ever witnessed, experienced, or learned about a time when a tradition prevented people from making positive changes for the future? What happened?

Share the Wealth

As you have probably deduced based on Tree-ear's and Crane-man's experiences, the poor, hungry, and homeless of 12th century Korea got by with very little assistance. Villagers allowed them to rummage through their rubbish piles for scraps. Farmers opened up their fields to gleaners once the rice had already been harvested. Monks from the temple periodically cared for the sick, distributed second-hand clothing, and took in those who had nowhere else to go. Otherwise, the needy were given a wide berth, especially orphans like Tree-ear because they "were considered very bad luck" (60). This reluctance to get involved with the poor and homeless was fairly typical during this time period, both in Asia and around the globe.

How does this treatment compare with the ways in which poor, hungry, and homeless people are cared for in your own community, state, and nation today? Which types of assistance do you think are the most beneficial? Who is best suited to offer these services? Why?

You Never Know

After spending quite some time working for them, Tree-ear learns what happened to the Mins' only son. This knowledge helps Tree-ear better withstand the potter's unpredictable mood swings and remain loyal despite them. Potter Min's unspeakable sadness has caused him to withdraw from society, to become a temperamental recluse, and, while this doesn't excuse his behavior, it certainly changes the way we see him. Why is it so easy to judge another person's behavior when we really don't have any idea what challenges he or she may be privately facing? How does knowing about someone else's challenges affect your impressions of his or her behavior? In what way(s) does giving difficult people the "benefit of the doubt" make it easier to get along with them? Share your own real-life example to support your answer.

Mind over Matter

When Tree-ear begins to second-guess his decision to undertake such a long and dangerous journey on his own, Crane-man encourages him: "Your mind knows that you are going to Songdo. But you must not tell your body. It must think one hill, one valley, one day at a time. In that way, your spirit will not grow weary before you have begun to walk" (93). First, what do you think Crane-man means by this? Next, think of a time when, like Tree-ear, you doubted your abilities and felt afraid to face a long, difficult task. What was that like? Who or what kept you from giving up? In what way(s) is self-doubt more difficult to overcome when most things come pretty easily to you?

City Mouse or Country Mouse?

When Tree-ear finally reaches the city of Songdo after many weeks journeying confidently over fields and along mountain paths, he is taken aback by the drastic change in his surroundings. There are "more people, more buildings, more traffic" than he has ever seen in one place before (132). As he makes his way to the palace, "[t]he noise of the traffic [seems] to press in on his ears, on his very body. Everywhere there [are] people hurrying about" (132). He has to concentrate even more intently to avoid these urban distractions and find Emissary Kim. In the end, Tree-ear is clearly more at ease in a rural environment, like his familiar home in Ch'ulp'o. How about you? Do you feel more at home in the country, in the city, or somewhere in between? Why?

Actions Speak Louder than Words

SPOILER ALERT

If you haven't finished the book, stop reading here and come back later!

Tree-ear is speechless with relief and gratitude when Emissary Kim awards Potter Min a royal commission at long last. He wants to express his thanks, but no words will come to his lips. Instead, he drops into a deep, formal bow, hoping this action will convey the feelings his voice cannot. He hopes Emissary Kim will understand, as "[t]here [are] some things that [cannot] be molded into words" (139). Have you ever had a similar experience, where you had to

rely on actions, rather than words, to communicate your feelings? Tell us about it! Were you able to get your message across successfully?

The HeART of Human Experience

Seeing the real-life "[Thousand Cranes Vase](#)," whose "maker is unknown," inspired author Linda Sue Park to imagine its creator and the world in which he or she once lived (148). Although the story she tells in *A Single Shard* is fictional, it does lead us to consider the human being, the life experience, behind this stunning piece of artwork. This same sort of thinking can be applied to any works of art we encounter in museums, concerts, textbooks, or even our own homes. How does art, in all its forms, enable us to better understand the world around us? What does art tell us about the human experience in various places or moments of history? How do found objects, like old household items or farm implements, end up as "art" on our walls? To illustrate your point, share an example of a work of art you've seen or heard. What was it like? How did it make you feel? How did it change your way of thinking?

Keep Reading

A few thoughts on books and reading...

"When I have a little money, I buy books; and if I have any left, I buy food and clothes."—Erasmus

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."—Dr. Seuss

"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read."—Groucho Marx

What's next?

We hope that you enjoyed reading *A Single Shard*, by Linda Sue Park. Check your email for information about our next book club selection. In the meantime, if you are looking for a new best friend—and aren't inside a dog—here are some books you might enjoy. Don't forget to use the tips from "Writing While You Read" (see pages 22 and 23) to deepen your enjoyment and understanding of these books too.

- *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*, by Chris Grabenstein
- *The Lost Kingdom*, by Matthew J. Kirby
- *Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures*, by Kate DiCamillo
- *The House of Power*, by Patrick Carman
- *Rivers of Fire*, by Patrick Carman
- *The Dark Planet*, by Patrick Carman
- *The Phantom Tollbooth*, by Norton Juster
- *Navigating Early*, by Clare Vanderpool
- *The Apothecary*, by Maile Meloy
- *The Apprentices*, by Maile Meloy (sequel to *The Apothecary*)
- *The City of Ember*, by Jeanne DuPrau
- *The People of Sparks*, by Jeanne DuPrau
- *The Prophet of Yonwood*, by Jeanne DuPrau
- *The Diamond of Darkhold*, by Jeanne DuPrau
- *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, by Trenton Lee Stewart
- *Chasing Vermeer*, by Blue Balliett
- *The Lightning Thief*, by Rick Riordan
- *Fever 1793*, by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Treasure Island*, by Robert Louis Stevenson
- *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, by Brian Selznick





Writing While You Read

Have you ever read every word on a page, and turned every page, but when you finished reading, you couldn't remember anything that you had read? If so, you're not alone! Reading can be relaxing, but sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that reading is passive, when it should be active. This doesn't mean you need to run while reading – that might not be a good idea. Writing as you read, however, makes reading active. This process involves some effort, but the payoff for that effort is a deeper understanding and greater enjoyment of the books that you read.

Two strategies for being an active reader are keeping a reading journal and annotating your books.

How do I keep a reading journal?

Below are some suggestions of things that you might write in your reading journal. Experiment with them. You may find that one strategy works really well for you, while others don't work at all. There's really not a right or wrong way to keep a reading journal, as long as you use it as a place to explore your thoughts, reactions, and questions as you read.

What Do I Write?

Write a brief summary, in your own words, at the end of each chapter or section. Include the main ideas or concepts of the chapter, major events in the plot, and any new information that you learn in the chapter.

Do you meet a new character? If so, what is the character like? How do you know? What are the reasons behind what that character says and does? How is the character like other characters in the book? How is the character different? Does this new character remind you of characters you've read about in other books?

Does the setting change? If so, how does the new setting compare and contrast with the previous one? Why does the setting change?

Create your own title for the chapter. If the book includes chapter titles, you might write about why the author has chosen that particular title for the chapter. How does it relate to the main ideas or concepts, major events, and character action in the chapter?

Respond to the chapter. What is the most interesting thing in the chapter? What did you learn that you didn't know before? Do you agree or disagree with the choices the author is making about plot and character? Why or why not? What do you think is going to happen next? How can you connect what is happening in the book to other things you've read? To other things you know? To your own experience?

Identify words that you don't know. Some of these words may just be new to you; others may be jargon, terminology that is used in a particular field or academic discipline. Look these words up in a dictionary, write down their definitions in your notebook, and be sure you understand their meanings and how the author is using them. Often these words are some of the most important in the reading.

Make note of passages where you are confused and/or have questions, and be sure to include a page number. Once you finish the chapter, you can return to the passages. Perhaps further reading clarified the confusion. If not, you know exactly which points in the text to further research or to ask questions about.

Write down striking or unusual use of language. Often writers use particular words, expressions, or sentences in ways that we wouldn't have thought to use them, and the effect can really jump off the page at us. If you come across a passage that seems really cool to you, write it down in your reading journal.



Throughout the online book club activities, you will find activities that are specifically labeled “Reading Journal.” When you see that label, read the writing prompt, and respond to it in your reading journal. These prompts will usually ask you to write about a personal connection to what you’ve been reading. For example, a journal prompt might ask you to write about a time when you found yourself in a situation that is similar to a situation of one of the characters in the book.

To Write or To Type, That is the Question!

Your reading journal doesn’t have to be a hard-copy, hand-written one, but there are some advantages to using an old-fashioned journal:

- The physical act of writing promotes a stronger memory for new words, phrases, and strategies you will be learning
- The hard copy notebook can evolve into a collage, a scrapbook, even a work of art that represents your creative, messy, overflowing mind!

How and where you keep a reading journal is much less important than actually doing it! So find an old notebook that may be buried in your desk, ask mom or dad if you can buy an inexpensive composition book, or create a new folder on your home computer and get started!!



How do I annotate a book?

As the word suggests, annotating a book involves making notes or other types of marks that help you focus on particular words or passages that seem important, are often repeated, relate to other things you’ve read, or simply interest you as a reader. An active reader annotates a text by doing any or all of the following:

UNDERLINING

Specific words that convey significant events or elements of the story’s characters, plot or theme

VERTICAL LINE ALONG THE MARGIN

This helps the reader quickly find an important passage underlined, or to highlight a paragraph or other section too long to underline.

ASTERISK/STAR/DOODLE ★

Placed in the margin, this device is reserved for the most important, special ideas, events or elements of the book. There would be no more than a dozen of these in the entire book; by flipping through, one could easily find once again the most significant passages in the text.

4. NUMBERS

Placing numbers in the margin can help count a set of related points or ideas the author is listing.

P.#32 PAGE NUMBERS

Often indicated by “p. #” or “Cf. #” next to the number, this indicates an idea or element is connected to another on different page of the book, and should be considered together.

CIRCLES

These serve the same function as underlining key words or phrases, but may be reserved for the BIGGEST ideas or facts in the book.

Of course, all of these strategies involve marking in the book. So if you’re planning on annotating your book, we recommend that you have your own copy – librarians take a very dim view of writing in books that belong to the media center/library!



Names, Places, & Faces...Oh, My!

Keeping Track with a Character Grid

When reading a new book, it can be helpful to keep track of the characters you meet and what you think about them. This Character Grid is one way to do just that!

Characters in books (or movies!) are often very like people you meet every day in real life. You may notice the way a character dresses, talks, thinks, behaves, or makes new friends. As you record your ongoing thoughts here, remember that some characters will change and grow depending on what happens to them—or whom they meet—as the story progresses. These are called **dynamic** characters. On the other hand, some characters stay the same no matter what happens to them. These are called **static** characters. Whether a character is willing to change and grow can affect the kind of person he or she turns out to be in the end, and it can also influence how we, as readers, feel about that character.

For example, Marlin, from the movie *Finding Nemo*, starts out as an overprotective dad who doesn't believe his son Nemo should try new things because he might get hurt. As the movie progresses, though, Marlin makes new friends, like Crush and Dory, who help him learn to guide and encourage his son without keeping him from experiencing the fun life has to offer. By the end of the movie, Marlin has changed his way of thinking about how to be a "good" dad. This not only makes him a dynamic character but also makes us like him better and want him to succeed as a parent. (If Marlin had not changed his ways, we might have ended up being frustrated by him.)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Tuck this Character Grid into your book or Reading Journal. Then, each time you meet a new character in the book, take a moment to write down his or her name on the grid and answer the "As You Are Reading" questions. (If you run out of writing room, feel free to create your own grid or answer these questions in your Reading Journal!)
2. Once you have finished the book, go back through your grid and answer the "After You Have Finished the Book" questions. As a way of wrapping up, consider: With which character(s) did you connect most strongly? What does this tell you about yourself?

Character's Name	As You Are Reading...		After You Have Finished the Book...	
	Where/When do you meet this character?	Describe this character's appearance and behavior.	What stands out to you about this character's name, behavior, or choices?	Why is this character important to the story overall?
			Is this character static or dynamic ? What evidence from the book tells you so?	

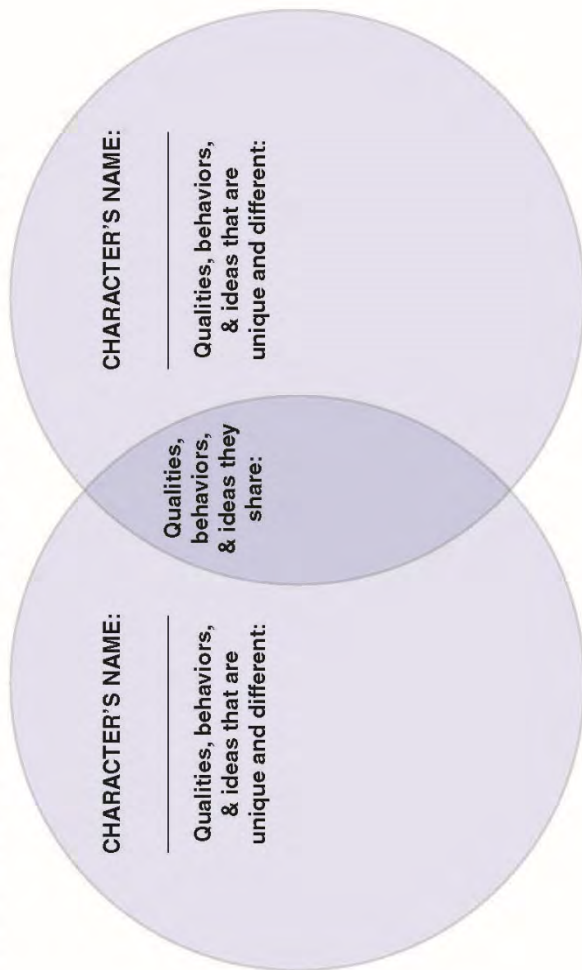
Side-By-Side Comparison with a Venn Diagram

Creating a Venn Diagram can help you visualize and make sense of the similarities and differences between two or more things. For example, as you are reading a book, you could use a Venn Diagram to compare key characters, places, or events.

A basic Venn Diagram is made up of two, partially overlapping circles. Let's say you wanted to compare two characters. In the outer part of each circle, you would write one character's name and list the qualities, behaviors, and ideas that make him or her unique and different. In the space where the circles overlap, write down characteristics the characters share. If we were comparing Marlin and Dory, from the movie *Finding Nemo*, here is how our Venn Diagram might look. (If you've seen this movie, try adding some observations of your own!):



Now you are ready to draw your own Venn Diagram in your Reading Journal! To get started, try something like this:



If you want to compare more than two characters, places, or events, simply add additional circles to your Venn Diagram. Be creative! Just pay attention to the places where your circles overlap and look for similarities there. Here are some other possibilities:

