



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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The Clock Tower on Grand Avenue: A Cultural Reading Adventure

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INTRODUCTION

The New Haven Public Schools have in recent years placed a greater emphasis on literacy, as well as the teaching of writing, and the importance of both to student success. As a sixth grade teacher and avid reader, I have always placed an importance on the students' written expression, particularly in response to reading materials. Increasingly, I have found one of the major deterrents to students' enthusiasm for writing has been their inability to relate to the required reading associated with most academic subjects. Many cannot "see" the written word as a form of expression for their experiences. This narrow view also makes students unreceptive to learning about other cultures.

In contrast, we as teachers take for granted that reading books of quality can add to a student's range of experience. However, for the most part, our students view reading as a chore. To combat this view, we must find ways to enhance their ideas of quality by selecting (beginning with) literature of interest to our student populations.

Each year a colleague and I conduct a reading for enjoyment program that we dubbed "Readers are Leaders." The students are allowed to read books that interest them, setting a goal of the number of pages they will read in a given time period. The teacher also sets a goal and reads. The class goal is then set from all the individual goals. This curriculum unit incorporates the basic premise of the "Readers are Leaders" program, that students enjoy reading more when books are of interest to them. The books selected here are a result of past class interests. The themes have appealed to several classes in recent years. The content of the books is integral to the unit direction.

The major focus of this unit is on the varying teaching strategies that can be utilized to have students conduct a comparative study of cultures using at least three novels. The unit incorporates a plan to correlate the readings with writing assignments. The novels have been selected for ethnicity, content and the "teachability" of the material. A list of supplemental reading materials that reflect the diverse ethnic backgrounds of the Fair Haven Middle School students has been included. The list is appropriate to varying age and reading levels. The students can read and report on other books that they read independently.

The ultimate goal of any literacy plan is to have students read, write and speak fluently. Listening and comprehension skills are imperative for the accomplishment of this goal. The overall goal of reading

instruction is to produce independent, strategic learners. The first component of such instruction is planning. The writing of this curriculum unit is my planning phase -- selecting appropriate materials and suggesting methods of presenting the materials.

The second instructional phase could be called the teaching phase. This is where the teacher presents, models and discusses the strategy of the day. Pre-reading activities help activate prior knowledge or build background information to stimulate student curiosity about the pages to come. The third and fourth phases are guided practice and independent practice. The teacher will alternate reading methods to accomplish the third and fourth phases of the instructional plan.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The sixth grade reading text, *Vistas in Reading Literature* (McDougal, Littell), presents an adequate culturally diverse selection of stories and poetry. Thus, this unit is designed for use during the last marking period of the year as literary, social studies and social development review. It is supplemental and not intended to replace district prescribed texts. The objective of the unit is to enhance the students' knowledge of cultures, genre and reading enjoyment through study of novels. The activities and lessons will serve as tools to review year-long reading objectives. Reading books of cultural interest will be an enjoyable way for students to review the skills required to analyze the individual components of a story.

Reading is a complex interactive process between the background knowledge of the reader and the novel. Comprehension takes place when the reader builds meaning between the novel and the reader's own experiences. The reader needs to engage in active thinking and use key strategies to build this meaning before, during and after reading. Hence, this unit proposes to provide the teacher with the key strategies to focus the reading instruction of a cross cultural study.

The major emphasis in the reading text throughout the year is placed on the elements necessary for a complete story. A story has several components --characters, setting, conflict or plot and theme. The questions the story answers are who, what, when, where, how and why. These are also the questions we attempt to answer when we examine a culture different from our own.

The three cultures that I have chosen for this study of novels are African American, Hispanic and Asian (Chinese). The criteria used for actual book selection were: promoting a positive image; presenting accurate, factual or believable material; exhibiting cultural specificity; and revealing strong three-dimensional characters. Positive images leave a lasting impression so the books chosen should reflect a positive image of the community or culture discussed. Accurate factual information can be enjoyable to read if presented in a fun manner. Stories written in the first person point of view are usually entertaining for students. The cultural references in children's material should reflect the authentic experiences and background of the culture discussed. Students should be able to see that the material is specific to them or those around them. The characters in books used should be well-rounded and fully developed, showing the multifaceted nature of people in general. The books outlined within this unit and those in the bibliography comply with these criteria.

The selections vary in length and degree of difficulty. Sharon Draper's *Forged by Fire* is the fictional tale of an African American young boy and his family relations during his childhood. Although many African American families are quite stable, this story takes a look at various factors that can and do effect many youngsters in

urban environments; such issues as physical and drug abuse, criminal activity, alternative living arrangements and the myriad uncertainties that accompany poverty. Joseph Krumgold's *...and now Miguel* is the story of a twelve year old Mexican boy and his journey for respect. Universal issues of growing up, dreaming of responsibility, accepting challenges, and father/son relationships are explored from a cultural perspective. The setting, topics and bits of Spanish will be delightful for my Hispanic students. Ji-li Jiang has written a historical piece about China when she was twelve entitled *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution*. The story details the changes within one family that occur when the government is in a state of turmoil. The location and governmental beliefs are so different students will be required to examine the geography and the society structure closely. Discussions about the process of change and its importance will be beneficial to adolescents experiencing their own "personal cultural revolutions".

The sequence of the novels was determined by the populations of the majority of my classes. This unit of study will follow closely behind a segment on Afro-American biographies. The cultural references to various time periods should be fresh in the students' minds. The social issues discussed in *Forged by Fire* will have been recently reviewed in the social development curriculum. The Hispanic novel should begin around the discussion of Cinco de Mayo to bring about a natural flow in the background information presented to the students. The Asian material is saved for last because this should be the most unfamiliar area to students requiring more guided pre-teaching, necessitating more geographical and historical information and more vocabulary introduction. The time period, however, will be familiar as the sixties and the Civil Rights movement in the United States will have been discussed in social studies and the African American history unit. Prior to reading each novel an appropriate picture book will be read to the students as a precursor to the longer study of the culture proposed in the novel assignments. Mention of past stories such as *Hatsuno's Great-Grandmother in the Vistas* text will also serve as cultural references for students. It was a story about an Asian woman in San Francisco who spoke no English and how she related to her surroundings and family with their American ways. These prior knowledge references should make the reading of the stories easier and more enjoyable for the students, thus allowing the comprehensive skills review to be a smooth transition as we read and compare novels.

The comprehension skills to be reviewed are time order; cause and effect; conflict; main idea; characterization; theme and mood; and setting. Comprehension is increased when unfamiliar or forgotten concepts and vocabulary are discussed prior to reading. Each of the stories has material conducive to time order study, particularly *Forged by Fire*: Gerald is three in chapter one and eighteen at the end of the book. Amazingly, the novel is only one hundred and fifty-six pages. The concept of cause and effect proves to be a difficult one for students to grasp in the text but chapter books give numerous examples and are very useful tools for reviewing and understanding the concept. Ji-li tells of her experiences between the ages of twelve and fourteen. The epilogue answers some of the questions students may have about her life after that time period and how she was affected by the events of those two years. This is a good example of how time order and cause-and-effect strategies go hand in hand. The following is a lesson plan that demonstrates the connections of the two strategies to a study of a novel.

Lesson Plan One

Overview: Students need guidance formulating information to help them follow the action in a story and to help them understand how the events in the story are related.

Objective: To review the concepts of time order and cause-and-effect relationships.

Vocabulary:

time order cause effect sequence finally later first then soon cause therefore since in order that various other clue words

Materials: Board, chalk and book.

Activities and Procedures:

Preteaching - write a list of events on the board:

1. David woke up and turned off the alarm.
2. After eating breakfast, David finally left for school.
3. David's alarm clock rang.
4. David then got dressed for school.
5. David got out of bed.

Ask the students what they notice about the list of events. They should notice that they are out of sequence. Then, have them rearrange the events in the correct sequence (3,1,5,4,2). Talk about the fact that life and stories occur in a particular order. Then ask the students what caused David to awaken, the ringing of his alarm clock. Point out that events in life and stories often occur for reasons and causes. This point can be tied into previous social development discussions about choices. One would then review the vocabulary as clues to determining time order and cause and effect.

While reading the novel students will maintain journal entries that will chronicle the events of the story. They will also be responsible for finding and referencing these vocabulary clues in their journals. These entries will be beneficial for writing assignments given throughout the unit such as the following cause and effect chart :

Cause Effect

1.

a. Gerald plays with the lighter

b. The curtains catch on fire.

2. a. _____

b. Gerald was taken from his mother.

3. a. _____

b. Gerald must go back to live with his mother.

Several other examples with one or both sides blank would finish the chart for students to complete either individually or in arranged pairs.

Once the novel is complete the students will create a close time line of story events. This would not be a new concept only a review of an activity completed several times over the course of the year.

Assessment - Student understanding of the concepts will be derived from the verbal answers, the cause and effect chart and the time line of story events. Writing assignment: What effect did fire have on Gerald? Explain the cause of this reaction.

The preteaching lesson given here is seemingly simplistic, however necessary, particularly in combination with the vocabulary list. Students must recognize the words that indicate transition in literature in order to include these words in their own writings.

Some of the reading method strategies to be utilized are silent sustained, paired and other groupings, individual and teacher reading aloud to students.

SETTING

Students have been told repeatedly that every story must have several elements to make it complete. Setting is of those main elements that has a causal relationship to a novel's content and outcome. *Red Scarf* is an excellent novel to use for this discussion. Ji-li's story would have a different meaning in any other country. The political conditions in China during the 1960's are the cause of her particular story. Prior to reading *Red Scarf* the students will be given a map of China with population information. The places discussed in the story will be plotted on the map.

Forged by Fire takes place in the midwestern city of Cincinnati, Ohio. The features of importance are the river in an urban area that has cold winters. Riverfront Stadium is a place of wonderment and fascination for a young boy. The story is a modern tale without any actual year references.

...and now Miguel 's action is located on the New Mexico/Colorado border in the Carson National Forest. Miguel prefers to call the area Rio Grande Sangre de Cristo, the mountain range name. Farm land, open space, animals and independence are the keys to this novel. The time period and farming concepts will require explanation, but are not far fetched for the students. Prior reading will have been *Where the Red Fern Grows* and other short stories with similar settings.

Red Scarf Girl takes place in China during the '60's during the cultural revolution. The memoir format allows for the review of non-fiction materials. Students need to be reminded that the elements discussed in this

curricular unit are equally relevant to non-fiction.

Upon completion of the three novels a semantic map will be completed by the students for the purpose of comparing the effects of the setting upon the story.

SETTING COMPARISON SHEET

Part I: Complete the chart for the main character in each novel.

STORY SETTING(s) EFFECT ON CHARACTER

1. Forged by Fire
2. ...and Now Miguel
3. Red Scarf Girl

Part II: Answer the following question in complete sentences.

1. Describe how the setting (story location) is important to each story.
2. Could Miguel have lived in Gerald's neighborhood? Why or why not? Use story details to explain your answers.
3. Name two similarities between each setting.
4. In which setting would you most like to live and why?

CHARACTERIZATION

Characters, the people discussed in books, are the driving force of any story. A work centers around one or more important people who are called main characters. The minor characters help to keep the plot moving forward. Characterization is the way a writer creates and develops a character through words and actions, through descriptions of the character and through what the other characters say about that character. The discussions in the sixth grade text regarding characterization cover in detail the idea of inferring character traits. This idea is shown in the following lesson plan.

Lesson Plan Two :

Overview: Students must be able to identify with the characters in a story to fully comprehend the story. This lesson is one of many ways students can identify character traits.

Objectives:

Students will be able:

1. To recognize character traits and relationships among characters.
2. To recognize changes in traits and relationships as the book progresses.

Materials:

Chalkboard; large pieces of drawing paper; pencil or markers; writing paper. (an overhead projector and transparency are optional).

Activities:

This activity can be done as a whole group, in small groups or on an individual basis, depending upon the abilities of your class. (If this is completed as a whole class use an overhead transparency or the board to make a semantic map as you make yours.)

Question: Who is the main character of the novel?

Response: Write that name in the center of a large piece of paper.

Question: What is he or she like?

Response: Write specific descriptions of the person under their name, then draw box around the name and all of the descriptors.

Question: Who else is important in the story?

Response: Write their names evenly spaces around the center box.

Question: How does the main character feel about these people?

Response: Write descriptive feeling words on lines running away from the center box toward each other box.

Question: How does each minor character feel about the main character?

Response: Write thoughts on arrows running from the outer boxes toward the center box.

Tell the students when they have finished filling out the boxes as described they are to write about how they felt about the main character at the beginning of the story and at the end of the story. A small group discussion about their feelings will help them share and formulate their written ideas.

To further develop individual thinking the students would then be asked to write a brief character analysis for each of the main characters. Afterwards they would then be asked to write an analysis for one minor character in each book. The final writing piece would be to have the students compare the two characters and explain

how their similarities and differences influenced the story's action. A sample prewriting chart would be:

PREWRITING SHEET

CHARACTER TRAITS EFFECT ON STORY

GERALD

MIGUEL

Ji-Li

ANGEL

GABRIEL

AN YI

CONFLICT/PLOT:

Conflict is defined as a struggle between two opposing forces. The struggle that the character faces creates the conflict that is important to every story. Previously, the students will have explored the ideas of internal and external conflict and how characters are effected by these concepts. The students will discuss these issues for the main characters in each book and how the conflict drives the story.

Unfortunately, many of the students in our society have experienced the multiplicity of familial relationships similar to Gerald's plight in *Forged by Fire* . Some have experienced first hand the shuffling from one relative to another and/or the redefining of family by remarriage and blending and most are aware of someone who has adjusted to such changes.

The conflicts Gerald faces are physical and internal fires. The story plot is effected by actual fires and Gerald's reactions to the result of each fire moves the story along. His anger toward his mother and Jordan disturbs him greatly. Despite his anger, his compassion for Aunt Queen and Angel helps him move forward in a positive manner as he attempts to resolve the negative issues. The balancing of positive and negative feelings is a concept discussed often in the social development curriculum.

Middle school itself is a time of transition and self-awareness. Confidence, courage and independence are qualities built and tested during these years. The desire to prove one's self no longer a child is quite strong. Miguel's story provides an example of how one boy handles an experience that grants his wish to be allowed to expand his responsibilities. Despite the era and location differences students can relate to the qualities Miguel exhibits. Miguel has an external conflict with the mountains and sheep but he also has an internal conflict with his fear. As a teacher you can help the students make analogies to their own lives, for example being allowed to venture to the mall by themselves or to baby-sit for the first time.

While *Red Scarf* also presents a different location and time the lessons for courage and determination are similar. This time period was also one of world upheaval; therefore, the potential for enlightening classroom discussion is abundant. Ji-li is confused by new governmental philosophies and her father's treatment. She

alternates between withdrawal and outspoken rebellion. Ji-li is also discovering her family's history and how the past is affecting her present and changing her future. She is often confronted with the question of how to react. This idea is familiar and appealing to middle school students.

Prediction exercises are useful strategies for conflict/plot discussions and writing assignments. What might have happened to Gerald if his mother had not been available to take him when Aunt Queen died? Would things have been different for Ji-li if she had gone to the audition? Would Miguel have different feelings if he did not like Johnny Marquez?

The discussion around conflict should be interactive, whereby the students review the characters of the book together examining each one's emotions. A discussion worksheet could be constructed similar to the following one. This sheet could be completed in groups or individually prior to a whole group or small group discussions.

NAME	INTERNAL CONFLICT	EXTERNAL CONFLICT
Gerald		
Aunt Queen		
Angel		
Jordan		
Monique		

THEME:

The theme is the message about life or human nature that the writer presents in a work of literature. *Forged by Fire* ; ...and now *Miguel* and *Red Scarf Girl* have themes of courage and preserving. In each book there are individual themes and moods that make for good discussion and writing assignments.

Forged by Fire - the title itself creates the essence of determination. The initial discussion to have with the students is on the meaning of the word "forge". "Forge" as a noun is an open furnace in which metal is heated before shaping. Use of the same word as a verb means to progress slowly or with difficulty. Both meanings have significance to Gerald's life. Students should be asked to give words to describe fire. Then, asked to write in their journals what it might mean to be "forged by fire" as a piece of metal and as a person. Upon completion of the novel these thoughts should be revisited -- Do you have different ideas about the meaning of "to be forged by fire" after reading the book? It should be apparent to the students that Gerald's life was moved forward by fire, not once but twice. Early in life, Gerald almost dies in a fire he set when his mother left him home alone as she searched for drugs. He thrives until he is nine with a tough and loving Aunt Queen. Suddenly, his mother is back with an abusive husband and a small sister, Angel. This step-father proves to be brutal with a flaming temper that makes Gerald unhappy. Gerald grows close to Angel as he tries to protect her from Jordan. Gerald shows that good can come from evil and that persistence, patience and determination can see one through a difficult situation.

Miguel learns to be patient, talk through problems and be observant of changes around him. He also accepts responsibility for his wishes and the action that occurs after he gets his wish. He admits at one point when he is feeling anger toward Johnny that it was not Johnny's decision that got them to this point but his and he must react accordingly. Miguel turns within himself for strength to continue his journey. Again the character is demonstrating that persistence and patience can see one through a difficult situation.

Miguel's story also points to an important theme in many cultures, food and family meals. The key to an

attitude change for Miguel is being invited to eat "first" with the men after shearing. He needs his father's permission to sit and Johnny acts as his intermediary. This section of the book is a good beginning for a writing lesson.

Lesson Plan Three

Overview: Many cultures have traditions that involve meals and seating arrangements, but often students have not examined what occurs in their own families.

Objective: The students will practice expository writing by completing a Type 1 and a Type 3 assignment explaining a family meal time custom.

Materials: paper, pen or pencil and ...and Now Miguel p153-156.

Activities and Procedures:

The students will be asked to brainstorm and then write about a family celebration that involves a big meal. Questions to stimulate thoughts might include --Does everyone sit together? Is there a children's table? Do they long to sit with the adults?

Note: A journal question before or after this assignment might be -- Why would Miguel find sitting with the men so special? Is his being allowed to join them for a meal a symbol of his acceptance for more responsible chores?

Assessment: Written papers will be checked for details. Oral sharing of corrected Type 4 papers will be encouraged.

The *Red Scarf Girl* location is China but the problems Ji-li faces in school are identifiable to students everywhere. Early in the novel the students are told to participate in a movement to criticize the educational system by writing big posters called da-zi-bao. During the Cultural Revolution these da-zi-baos, normally used to discuss important issues, were used to attack and humiliate people. Ji-li came to school one day to discover she was accused of having a "relationship" with a teacher on a da-zi-bao. The poster stated that he had made her the math teaching assistant because she was rich not because she was smart and worked hard. This accusation hurt Ji-li but she finds solace in her friend An Yi who also had things written about her mother being an evil monster. The two girls comforted each other.

Ji-li had to endure many other changes that summer as their neighbors' houses were raided and she was forced to stay inside or close to home in case her family home was raided too. Her parents felt the need to dismiss the housekeeper to help them to keep a lower profile. This decision meant more work for Ji-li, shopping, cooking and cleaning. She was not good at these things but learned through her mistakes. The book continues with many events that are unpleasant and Ji-li details how she dealt with each. Students should be reminded that Ji-li examined each event carefully and kept a positive attitude as she realized she could not control the situation. This book will be read aloud by the teacher one chapter at time, because the events are good for group discussion and written journal entries. For example, after reading "The Sound of Drums and Gongs" the assignment will be :

Ji-li had a summer experience that was unpleasant. Describe a time when your plans were changed by circumstances beyond your control.

Change evokes emotional decisions such as those made by Gerald, Miguel and Ji-li, and this idea is a great source for thematic comparison of the three novels. All three books emphasize the importance of history, change and the continuity of the generations, this is one source of comparison I will explore with my students. Gerald's story shows the extended family caring for each other in a difficult time. Miguel is joining the men in the family tradition of sheep herding. Ji-li learns her family history as it relates to the political climate within her country.

This discussion of family, history and geography will be the segue into the project's overall objective to conduct a comparative study. Once the students have completed all three novels a comparative study will be conducted to illustrate the "cultural" similarities and differences of the characters in the given stories.

The three main characters are similar in age, while differing in gender. The students will be able to speculate the differences in dress, schooling, foods, celebrations and other issues through research within the novels and from other sources. I will divide the class into study groups. The students will then list the similarities and differences between the characters in the three novels. Another class session will be used to analyze maps of the story locations. The students might be divided into three groups, each group representing one of the story locations. Each group would make an oral presentation on their location after making maps, researching climate, natural resources, customs and other areas of interest.

The culminating project will be a class book with the working title of "The Clock Tower on Grand Avenue". This title is derived from the center piece of the middle school, a large clock tower rising toward the sky. The clock tower also symbolizes the students standing tall and making a statement of who they are and from whence they came. The students will write their own vignettes and essays to reflect the similarities and differences they see within the small Fair Haven community. They will be encouraged to write about their own family experiences, cultural celebrations, and/or any thing that has challenged them in their lives. All forms of expression will be accepted -- plays, poetry, prose, songs stories and artwork. The students will use the Collins Writing Across the Curriculum method to complete all phases of the project.

The Collins Writing Across the Curriculum Method is way of standardizing the format of student written product in all middle school subject areas. Students are taught to set up their papers with the name on the top line of the right hand side of the paper with date underneath their name. The method features "types" of writing that are not necessarily sequential. Type 1 writings encompass the brainstorming phase of composition. Students are told the subject and asked to reflect their thoughts either in lists, webs, outlines or by whatever method is desirable to the teacher and students. Usually they are then asked to use the brainstormed information to write a draft essay or a Type 3 paper.

Type 3 writing is in rough draft form. Students are told to skip lines as they write. In the upper left hand corner they are asked to write the focused corrections areas (FCA'S) for this assignment. A sample FCA might be use of subject/verb agreement. The teacher will only correct those areas of the draft. Once student's finish writing they are asked to read heir work aloud to themselves as a means of self-correction. Type 4 writing is a re-writing of the corrected Type 3 in paragraph form. The Type 5 is a totally corrected completed published work usually with a cover and ready for sharing and/or display.

Perhaps you are wondering about Type 2 writing. This is used for answering questions or essays that have a definitive answer and is very good to use as a method of checking for understanding after a lesson. They are

quicker to write, can be given any time and are usually written in normal paragraph form.

In summary, this writing method concentrates on various types of written expression and the writing assignments given during each novel study will reflect this variety. Techniques such as brainstorming; definitive answer questioning to check for reading comprehension; open ended questioning to elicit opinions; predicting and character analysis are some of the methods that will be written into the unit discussion and lesson plans. It should be noted that the student's journals maintained throughout the reading of each novel will make the final comparisons easier. Therefore, periodic checks of the journals is advisable.

As previously stated, the overall objective of this unit has been to incorporate reading strategies and writing techniques into a cultural adventure for students. It is my intention that my students will read, enjoy reading and learn something about other cultures in the process. Ultimately, I hope they will learn to express themselves in humanistic terms that just happen to reflect their cultural heritage.

TEACHER'S ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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A detailed annotated bibliography written in column form. The books are divided into five sections: appreciating cross-cultural and multicultural families; understanding nontraditional families; meeting intergenerational and extended families; dealing with cultural conflict through humor and realism and enjoying feast of language play and illustrations. Each book

is described in detail with points for student observation.

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STUDENT'S ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Draper, Sharon. *Forged by Fire*. New York: Aladdin. 1997. Gerald was fascinated by fire as a child, accidentally ignited his apartment and was sent to the loving home of his favorite aunt. When she dies, Gerald moves back with his substance addicted mother, little sister and an abusive step-father. The author includes "Discussion Topic" and "Activities and Research" sections at the end of the book. English, Karen. *Just Right Stew*. Honedale, Pennsylvania: Boyds Mills Press. 1998. A wonderful story of family members adding their own "special" ingredient to a pot of stew to make it just right an excellent read aloud for a discussion of individuals within families and various cultures adding to the "pot" to make the family and/or world just right. Fleischman, Paul. *Seedfolks*. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books. 1997. Thirteen voices tell one story of the flowering of a Cleveland vacant lot into a neighborhood garden. The group of strangers is young, old, Haitian, Korean, Hispanic, tough, haunted and hopeful. Jiang, Ji-li. *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution*. New York: HarperCollins 1997. Ji-li grew up in Shanghai where, in 1966, Mao's Cultural Revolution child's eye view of a terrifying time and caused her "bourgeois" family to become outcasts. This memoir tells of how one family's courage under fire gives a

Krumgold, Joseph. *...and now Miguel*. New York: Harper & Row. 1953.

Twelve-year old Miguel Chavez longs to accompany the adult males of his close-knit, sheep-herding family in to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, where for generations they have pastured their sheep during the summer. A coming of age classic.

Lee, Milly Nim and the War Effort. Boston: Farrar 1997.

Determined to gather together the most newspapers for her class paper drive during World War II, Nim competes for first place with Garland, a classmate who belittles her for being proud of Chinese and not American, though she is being both.

Moy, Tina. *Chinese Americans*. (Cultures of America Series). New York: Marshall Cavendish Corporation 1995. Great reference for various aspects of Chinese Americans - history; family and community life; religion; customs and contributions to American culture. Contains quick chronology history list from 5000 BC to 1991. A helpful glossary of important terms is included. Payton, Sheila. *African Americans*. (Cultures of America Series). New York: Marshall Cavendish Corporation 1995. Great reference for various aspects of African American. The chronology list covers 1526 to 1992. Press, Petra. *Mexican Americans*. (Cultures of America Series). New York: Marshall Cavendish Corporation 1995. Reference book that covers Mexican American history from Old Mexico to recent contributions to the American culture. The quick reference list spans from 4000 BC to the 1960's. The glossary of terms is quite useful. Speare, Elizabeth G. *Sign of the Beaver*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1983. Matt lives in the wilderness in the 1700's and his father is away. An Indian chief and his grandson, Attean, save him from a bee attack. The two boys become friends and learn about each other. It is a story of physical survival and the understanding of a culture unfamiliar

to you. Matt experiences emotional dilemmas at the Beaver tribes moving on and

at his father's proclamation of more settlers coming. Good for classroom discussion.

Taylor, Mildred D. *The Gold Cadillac*. New York: Dial Books 1987. A view of the South in the 1950's as one family travels from Ohio to Mississippi in a brand new gold Cadillac. Other books

by author *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and *The Friendship*.

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