
EDUCATOR'S GUIDE: YURI'S BRUSH WITH MAGIC

Grades 4 - 8

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

While reading this book, students will explore:

I. Folk Tales—similarities and differences (Social studies; reading)

- The importance of sea turtles and the natural world (*Science*);
- Cultural significance of folktales and song (*Language Arts*);
- Japanese customs and history (*Social Studies*);
- How misunderstandings can impact families, sometimes for generations (*Social Studies*);
- Bullying; how to find support in family and community; self-reliance (*Social Studies*).

Folk tales exist around the world! Use the folk tales in the book to launch a survey of folk stories around the world. Are there any similarities between folk tales of different countries? (“Rip Van Winkle” and “Urashima Taro” – p. 42). How does the culture of a country influence their folk tales (“Johnny Appleseed” –USA and “Little Kyu” –Japan; p. 69)?

Ask students: How would you write the story of Urashima Taro if you came from a dry, arid area without oceans or seas?

Illustrate a cover for the three folk tales in *Yuri's Brush With Magic* from different perspectives. If these folk tales had been written by people (a) who live in an ice-bound country, (b) a tropical country, or (c) a desert, how would the cover of the story be illustrated?

Another Step: Plan a visit to your local Japan society on a special holiday: Girl's Day is March 3, and Boys' Day is May 5.

II. What creates a feud? (Social studies)

Examine the terrible feud that tears the Hamada family apart. What is its cause? [Parental disapproval about a bi-racial marriage and a misunderstanding about the letters.] Is the cause justified in any way? How could it have been brought to an end?

In class discuss the racial intolerance that is at the basis of this feud. Ask: How does it exist today? What can be done about it?

Discuss the cause and effects of war. A subject of discussion could be: Is war a feud on a large scale?

Discuss other famous feuds: Hatfields and McCoys; Capulets and Montagues in *Romeo and Juliet*, etc. Ask students: Are there any similarities between them and the Hamada family feud?

Another step: Form a debate between feuding factions: Mitsu Hamada on one side, her father, who disowned her for marrying an American, on the other. Appoint mediators who will try and bring the feud to a peaceful and satisfactory end.

III. Japanese haiku: (Writing)

Haiku is a poem consisting of 5/7/5 syllables: line one has 5 syllables; line two has 7 syllables; and line three has 5 syllables. Haiku is a deceptively simple and elegant discipline; it is meant to be an observation, which often creates thought in the reader.

*Trees with golden leaves
Toss their branches in the wind...
Ah, the cooling days.*

This haiku has a ‘season word’ and also shows the trees dancing in the cool wind. Soon winter will come.

In class give students a subject and let them try their hand at haiku, making sure that they include a season word. Take students on a nature hike or to the playground; have them record their observations; use these notes to create a poem in class. For more ideas, see: <http://www.edu.pe.ca/stjean/playing%20with%20poetry/Hennessey/howtohaiku.htm>

For further study, students could learn about Basho, one of the great haiku masters. They might write a short biography about him or choose the haiku they like best amongst his writings.

Another step: Basho ranged all over Japan writing his poems. Let students ‘walk’ across America writing haiku as they go. Create a large map of the United States and have students write out their haiku on slips and place them on the appropriate states.

IV. **Bullying:** (Social studies)

In class ask students to define the word “bullying.” Discuss the different kinds of bullying: verbal, physical, exclusion, gossip, cyber bullying. Talk about how it feels to be bullied.

Discuss the types of bullying that occur in *Yuri’s Brush with Magic*. Who is the bully? Are there other bullies? [Tammy and Ken bully Aunt Yuri so she will send them home; Cora Fowler bullies her grandson Halsey, Ken, and Aunt Yuri.]

Explore the reasons why each of these bullies might act the way they do. How would the students have responded to the bullies in each of these cases?

Another step: Ask students whether they think any of the opposing characters have similar needs. How might the students use their awareness of shared or common needs to help stop bullying outside the classroom?

V. **SEA TURTLE FACTS:** (Science)

Sea turtles and the sea are an important part of *Yuri’s Brush With Magic*

Read the sea turtle resource guide in the back of the book.

Download a free *Educator’s Guide to Sea Turtles* available from seaturtle.org at: www.seaturtle.org/documents/Educators_Guide.pdf.

Adopt a sea turtle and track its daily migration on the computer with your class; visit <http://www.seaturtle.org/adopt/> for details.

Have students debate and determine ways in which they can help safeguard sea turtles and their environment. Hold a student poster contest illustrating these ways.

YURI CROSSWORD **Answer Key:**

Across

3. Japan
5. Halsey
10. Loggerhead
13. soccer
15. bee
18. chewing gum
19. tea
21. write
22. hatchling
24. toe
25. song
26. yuri
27. boil

Down

1. beach
2. folktale
4. jellyfish
6. pelican
7. Maureen
8. Dad
9. photographer
11. wallet
12. journal
14. Raleigh
16. Emerald
17. summer
18. cat

Across

3. Yuri's home country
5. One of the bullies in the story
10. What kind of turtle nest do the kids find?
13. Ken's sport
15. What flies up the ginger seller's nose?
18. Halsey's habit?
19. Kind of drink
21. Tammy loves to...
22. A baby turtle
24. The monk's paintbrush?
25. What is Tammy trying to remember?
26. Japanese word for lily
27. What a hot pot or a turtle nest does
28. American folktale similar to Urashima

Another step: Visit an aquarium and hear the docent explain about sea turtles.

Down

1. Where does Yuri paint?
2. Type of story
4. Animal that inspires Yuri's finest painting
6. Beach bird
7. Who wrote this book?
8. Who sends Tammy a book about turtles?
9. Mr. Sol's occupation
11. What is Ken accused of taking?
12. Tammy's gift from her grandmother
14. State capital of North Carolina
16. Gemstone or an island on the Outer Banks
17. Season of the story
18. Which animal is the monk's only friend?
20. What does Ken find to solve the mystery?
23. Who sells fishing nets in the mountains?