

Novel•Ties

A Single Shard

LINDA SUE PARK



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with a specific novel. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel on its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for guided reading by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter or group of chapters; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Koryo Period

In its ancient history, the land we now know as Korea was divided into kingdoms. As one kingdom would gain power, it would unify the land under its domain. The kingdoms were unified under the northern state of Koryo from A.D. 918 to 1392. The name “Koryo” derives from “Koguryo” and is the root of the modern name “Korea.”

The Koryo period was beset by internal problems and wars with China, Manchuria, and Japan. This same period, however, was marked by many achievements. In this period of peace following a treaty with China in 1022, there was a blossoming of culture that led to great advances in scholarship and art. One of the crowning achievements of the period was a distinctive ceramics industry, which developed the unique gray-green celadon stoneware now hailed as one of Korea’s greatest contributions to the fine arts.

Celadon Pottery

Celadon is a type of ceramic pottery that exhibits both beauty and grace, demonstrating a unique combination of classical form and artistic expression. Korean potters borrowed techniques from those of the Sung Dynasty in China. Plain celadon reflected the traditional technique and style imported from Sung China. It was, however, distinguished by its elegance and its unique color, achieved with a bluish-green glaze.

Pottery is a result of clay, fire, and glaze. Korean celadon begins with white clay, which is purified and then shaped on the potter’s wheel. The vessels are then engraved with designs, covered with glaze, and baked in a kiln at a high temperature.

Korean potters improved on their work by developing an inlay technique around the twelfth century. They made pattern incisions in the vessels and then filled them in with a white or black slip, a semi-liquid form of clay. Next, the vessels would be fired in a kiln. After this, they would be covered with a celadon glaze and then fired once more.

Buddhism

Buddhism, a religion popular in the early part of the Koryo dynasty, originated in India and came to Korea first through China. Buddhism teaches that the goal of the faithful is to achieve nirvana, a blissful state of insight and release from the bonds of self and the world. The state of spiritual perfection is achieved through the practice of humility, generosity, mercy, restraint from violence, and self-control.

During the Koryo dynasty, the state supported Buddhist temples. The monks were not taxed and were influential in the king’s court. Buddhism became an economic power as well as a spiritual influence in Koryo. It also brought the community together at ritual observances in the temples, providing a means of release of daily stress through prayer, and stimulating scholarship and study. The monks also served the community by caring for the unfortunate, such as orphans and the homeless, by taking them into the temples.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. A *shard* is a piece of broken earthenware or pottery. Knowing this, what do you think the story will be about? Where and when do you think it takes place? Have you read any other books by the same author?
2. Read the Background Information on page three of this study guide and do some additional research on twelfth-century Korea. Then fill in the first two columns of a K-W-L chart, such as the one below. When you finish the book, return to the chart to complete the third column.

Twelfth-Century Korea

What I Know -K-	What I Want to Learn -W-	What I Learned -L-

3. Have you read any other books of fiction or seen any films that take place in Korea in the present or in the past? If so, what did you learn about life at that time?
4. If possible, obtain a film or find a book that shows a potter working at a potter's wheel. Follow the steps of this exacting process to have a better appreciation of this craft. Also, try to find color photographs or actual examples of celadon-glazed pottery. Display this in the classroom while you are reading.
5. With your classmates, discuss how young people today determine their futures and the work they will do. As you read the book, compare these criteria with those that faced Tree-ear, the main character.
6. *A Single Shard* is a book of historical fiction—one that uses history as a background for imagined events. The characters in such a work may be fictional or historical or both. What other works of historical fiction have you read? What do you enjoy about this type of book? What information does it give you that you would not be able to get by reading a history book?
7. *A Single Shard* won the Newberry Medal in 2002. Read about John Newberry's life and about the Newberry award. Why is the medal awarded? What other Newberry Award books have you read?