

# TEACHING WORLD HISTORY THROUGH LITERATURE

**GRADES:** 9

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**SUBJECT:** World History, Literature

**TIME REQUIRED:** Four class periods: one per week for four weeks

## **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Understand the effect of Japanese occupation on civilians.
2. Understand the changes that occurred after the defeat of Japan and the division of Korea in 1945.
3. Understand the effect of war on children, both Korean and Japanese.

## **MATERIALS REQUIRED:**

- Guidelines for Book Reviews (attached)
- Sufficient copies of the following for book groups of 5-6 each:  
Parks, Linda Sue. *When My Name Was Keoko*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.  
or  
Kim, Richard, *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.

## **PROCEDURE:**

At the first Open House in the fall, volunteers will be asked to lead a book group. This is a commitment to both read assigned books and come in once a week during the course of this project. Four or five parents (along with one aide) will cover two class periods of World History. Logistically it will be tricky to find an acceptable time for all students, and some students will request that their parents work with a different class. To begin, the classes will be divided into groups, the books distributed, and an initial assignment of reading up to one third of the book will be due by the first meeting the following week. Groups will meet twice to discuss each book before essays are due. As each group will read two books, a minimum of four meetings over four weeks is required. An optional fifth meeting may be scheduled to allow for groups to discuss their essays and final impressions.

## **EVALUATION:**

Students will write a 2-3 page review of each book using the attached guidelines.

## **ENRICHMENT:**

Strong readers (and those earning honors credit) should read an additional book relating to this period and submit an additional book review. The following titles are available from most libraries:

Choi, Sook Nyul. *Echoes of the White Giraffe*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

Choi, Sook Nyul. *The Year of Impossible Goodbyes*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

Keller, Nora Okja. *Comfort Woman*. London: Virago Press, 2001.

Lee, Helie. *Still Life With Rice*. New York: Touchstone, 1996.

Stout, Mira. *One Thousand Chestnut Trees: A Novel of Korea*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1998.

*The Golden Phoenix: Seven Contemporary Korean Short Stories*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999.

## GUIDELINES FOR BOOK REVIEWS

1. Plot Synopsis and Characterization: You should briefly summarize the story line, and describe the main characters. You don't need to include every detail, but consider the important highlights. Also, are there any important *themes* which help explain what the book is about (this is different from what happens in the story)? You should introduce the main characters in the stories. How do you feel about them? Are their actions believable? How are their lives and choices rooted in this particular time and place?
2. Historical and Cultural Setting: Provide your reader (me!) with some background to the story. **You will need to do some additional research to learn more about this time period.** Where and when does the story take place? How is this setting important to the story? Are there some real characters as well as fictional ones? You also should make some observations about the cultures encountered in these books. What have you learned about people's lives in this time and place? What customs or beliefs have led people to behave differently than you would?
3. Your personal reactions: What did you like or dislike about the story? What did you learn, either about a historical period or about another culture? Would you recommend the book to a friend? Would you like to read another story like this one? If you could change something in the way the story was told what would you change?

Please DO NOT submit a list of answers to the above questions!! They are intended as a guide to help you organize your essay. You should proofread your essay (or have someone read it with you) to ensure that you have written it clearly.