

## TEACHING WITH A *SINGLE SHARD*

**GRADES:** 4-8

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**SUBJECT:** Literature

**TIME REQUIRED:** Eight to ten class periods

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Read and comprehend the book *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park.
2. Discuss the history of celadon and recreate a celadon vase.
3. Develop an understanding of the geography of Korea.

### **MATERIALS REQUIRED:**

- *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park
- Handout: Discussion Questions (attached)
- Map of Korea
- Clay or similar material for pottery making
- Paint and brushes
- Vocabulary Wall
- Pictures of celadon vases
- History source for celadon, such as Internet site: <http://www.koreainfogate.com>

### **BACKGROUND:**

The teacher should read the book: *A Single Shard* and visit the Internet sites listed. The teacher should be familiar with a form of reading called "Readers' Theater." If not, the Internet is an excellent source of information.

Korea has achieved the widespread mastery of the ash glaze earthenware technique for making celadon. The elegant jade green color appears because of a special method of firing with reduced oxygen originated in Korea during the 11th century. Countries around the world admired celadon from Korea, and Korea potters perfected and enhanced their earthenware using various inlay and incision techniques through the 15th century.

### **GENERAL SYNOPSIS of *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park**

Around the time of the creation of celadon—the 12th century—Tree-ear discovers his true calling...Tree-ear and Crane-man become a family, sharing their lives in a small village of Ch'ulp'o on the west coast of Korea. After accidentally breaking a clay box that belonged to Min, the finest master potter of all, Tree-ear becomes his apprentice to work off payment for the box. Eventually, Tree-ear takes two of Min's best-inlaid vases on a long journey to the capital in hopes of a royal commission for the master potter. The journey proves rough. Upon arrival, only one single shard remains, but the exquisite work is evident and the commission is granted. Tree-ear returns home to a life without Crane-man and becomes a permanent part of Min's family.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Bring to class a mushroom. If possible, bring the kind of mushroom that grows on tree trunks. Use the mushroom, to introduce the book *A Single Shard*. (Tree-ear was named after the mushroom that grows on tree trunks)
2. Have students read two chapters each day. Discuss chapters at the end of each class period, assigning study questions after the discussion. Create a Vocabulary Wall on which key words are written each day. Encourage students to check the Internet for related sites.
3. During the reading, locate different places on the map and have students mark these locations on their copies. Discuss the geography of Korea as the story unfolds.
4. During the reading, discuss the history and importance of the celadon. Display pictures of the celadon vases. Have students use modeling material to create a "celadon" vase and paint the vase when dry. Display vases.
5. After finishing the book, students will work in groups to create a "Readers' Theater" which is similar to a play but without props or movement. Students may create additional characters to expand the story. Students will perform their Readers' Theater for others.

**EVALUATION:**

1. Informal questioning during class discussions. Students' understanding will be assessed through comments and answers during large and small group work.
2. The actual creation of the Readers' Theater with the participation of each student in its design and performance will be an evaluation tool.
3. The answers to the comprehension questions.
4. The creation of a "celadon" vase.
5. Student copy of Korean map with places correctly located.

**ENRICHMENT:**

1. Read other books by Linda Sue Park.
2. Compare Korean celadon to pottery from other countries.
3. Become a television reporter and interview Tree-ear as the victim of crime.
4. Create a new ending to the story in which the single shard was not accepted as graciously as it was.

**RESOURCES:**

- Park, Linda Sue. *A Single Shard*. New York: Clarion Books, 2001.
- "Koryo Celadon-Secret Color of Korea." Web Site:  
<http://www.koreainfogate.com/beautykorea/special/celadon.asp>
- "Geography of Korea." Web Site:  
[http://www.koreainfogate.com/aboutkorea/item.asp?src=menu01\\_01](http://www.koreainfogate.com/aboutkorea/item.asp?src=menu01_01)

### Vocabulary for Word Wall

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|---------------------|--|
| 1. Celadon          | A type of ceramic pottery developed during the Koryo Dynasty in the ninth or tenth centuries in Korea. Celadon has a distinctive pale grayish green color. |
| 2. Earthenware      | The coarser sort of containers, tableware, etc., made of baked clay  |
| 3. Entourage        | A group of associates or attendants  |
| 4. Harangue         | A long, blustering, noisy or scolding speech   |
| 5. Impudent         | Shamelessly bold or disrespectful; shameless   |
| 6. Inlaid           | Set in pieces into a surface of another material so as to form a smooth surface  |
| 7. Insolence        | Boldly disrespectful in speech or behavior   |
| 8. Jiggeh [chige]   | An open-framed backpack made of branches.  |
| 9. Kiln             | A furnace or oven for drying, burning, or baking something, as bricks, grain, or pottery   |
| 10. Paulownia       | An Asiatic tree of the figwort family, with large, heart-shaped leaves and large, erect clusters of fragrant, violet flowers                               |
| 11. Peninsula       | A land area almost entirely surrounded by water and connected with the mainland by an isthmus  |
| 12. Scholar         | A specialist in a particular branch of learning, especially in the humanities  |
| 13. Shard           | A fragment or broken piece, especially of pottery; potsherd  |
| 14. Slip            | Ceramics clay thinned to the consistency of cream for use in decorating or casting, or as a cement or coating  |
| 16. Spade           | A heavy, flat bladed, long-handled tool used for digging by pressing the metal blade into the ground with the foot   |
| 17. Spoor           | The track or trail of an animal, especially of a wild animal hunted as game  |
| 18. Surreptitiously | Acting in a secret, stealthy way   |
| 19. Terse           | Free of extra words; short; concise  |
| 20. Trepidation     | Fearful uncertainty; anxiety   |

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Note: Sample answers in italics.)

### Chapter 1

1. Tree-ear made the decision to wait until the man losing the rice reached the bend in the road before he ran to catch him. Why did he wait? *Tree-ear would be able to pick up the fallen rice.* What would you have done if you had been in that situation?

*Accept reasonable answers.*

2. "Scholars read the great words of the world. But you and I must learn to read the world itself." (Page 7) What do these words mean? *Thinkers and readers can read and understand the world through the words in great books. Tree-ear and Crane-man, not having access to books, had to look at the world and figure out the mysteries of life and how the world works by themselves.*

### Chapter 2

What was the punishment Min inflicted upon Tree-ear because of the misshapen pottery box? *Tree-ear would labor for Min for nine days. Was that a fair punishment? Explain. Accept reasonable answers.*

### Chapter 3

Crane-man taught Tree-ear many things about the mountains on their walks there. What were some of the useful things he had taught him? *Which mushrooms were tasty and which were deadly; the birds by their songs; how a mountain lion's spoor was different from that of a deer; where the streams ran.*

### Chapter 4

What were the steps in getting the clay ready for the potter? *1. Cut the clay 2. Dig a shallow hole and line it with grass cloth 3. Shovel clay into pit. 4. Mix clay with water. 5. Stir repeatedly with wooden paddle until uniformly mixed. 6. Scoop sludge and pour through sieve into another pit. 7. Winnow out pebble and other impurities. 8. Leave clay a few days to settle. 9. Take water off top. 10. Test purified clay with fingers.*

### Chapter 5

How did Crane-man feel about taking the jacket from Tree-ear? *He knew it was a gift meant for Tree-ear and felt embarrassed to take it when Tree-ear should wear it.*

Why do you think Crane-man felt that way? *He looked upon Tree-ear as a son and wanted his son to have the best. He had always provided for Tree-ear.*

### Chapter 6

If you were the emissary, whose work would you have chosen for royal commission? Why? *Accept reasonable answers.*

### Chapter 7

How did Min feel about Kang's work as a potter? How do you know? *Min felt that Kang was not a good potter. He had not gone to see Kang's work. He called Kang "that bumble-fingered excuse for a potter."*

### Chapter 8

What advice did Crane-man give to Tree-ear so that his body would not become tired before the journey to Songdo? *"Your mind knows that you are going to Songdo. But you must not tell your body. It must think one hill, one valley, and one day at a time. In that way, your spirit will not grow weary before you have even begun to walk." Do you think that was good advice? Explain. Accept reasonable answers.*

### Chapter 9

1. What took the joy out of Tree-ear's work? *The realization that he would never be allowed to make a pot because the work had to be passed from father to son and Tree-ear was an orphan.*
2. Why did Ajima offer to feed Crane-man while Tree-ear was gone? *Tree-ear provided food for Crane-man, and he would be gone for a long time. Ajima probably felt sorry for Crane-man and grateful to Tree-ear for taking the pottery to Songdo.*

### Chapter 10

Why was Tree-ear so frightened of the fox? *He thought the fox would bewitch him and cause him to follow it to its lair; and, therefore, he would never see Crane-man again.*

### Chapter 11

Why did Tree-ear choose not to leap off the edge after the vases were broken? *He heard the voice of Crane-man saying that to leap was not the only way to show courage so he decided it took more courage to face Min. He had promised Ajima to return safely and Crane-man was waiting for him.*

### Chapter 12

How do you think Tree-ear felt when showing the shard to Emissary Kim? *Accept reasonable answers.* How did Tree-ear feel at the end of this chapter? *Delighted that his master had received the royal commission. Relieved that the broken vases had not hindered the commission.*

### Chapter 13

1. Why did Min act so quiet and solemn when told the joyful news that he had received the royal commission? *He was worried about the fact that Crane-man had died and he hated having to tell Tree-ear.*
2. Do you think Tree-ear ever got to create a vase of which he could be proud? Explain your answer. *Accept reasonable answers.*
3. What was the significance of Tree-ear being given a new name? *The new name showed that he was accepted as the adopted son of Min and Ajima and that he could now become a potter.*