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Study Guide

for

Picture Bride

by Yoshiko Uchida



New York, New York Columbus, Ohio Woodland Hills, California Peoria, Illinois

Meet Yoshiko Uchida



I was writing stories when I was ten, and being the child of frugal immigrant parents, I wrote them on brown wrapping paper which I cut up and bound into booklets . . . I also kept a journal of important events which I began the day I graduated from elementary school. . . . By putting these special happenings into words and writing them down, I was trying to hold on to and somehow preserve the magic as well as the joy and sadness of certain moments in my life, and I guess that's really what books and writing are all about.

—Yoshiko Uchida

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Considered one of the most important Japanese American writers of her time, Yoshiko Uchida (1921–1992) wrote more than thirty books, including nonfiction for adults and fiction for young people. The daughter of Japanese immigrants, Uchida (pronounced Oo-CHEE-dah) grew up in Berkeley, California. Although her father had a secure job with an international trading company, many of her family's immigrant friends lived in poverty because anti-Asian discrimination limited job opportunities.

While Uchida's parents provided their two daughters with financial security, many books, and enriching experiences, the outside world—especially school—could be a frightening place for a young girl of Asian ancestry in the 1920s and 1930s. In high school, Japanese American students were excluded from social functions. Anxious to escape from high school, Uchida took a heavy class load in order to

graduate early and enter the University of California at Berkeley by the time she was sixteen years old.

Returning home from her university classes on December 7, 1941, the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II, Uchida found that her father had been taken away by FBI agents for questioning. This was the beginning of three years of harassment and forced confinement of her family and thousands of other Japanese Americans on the West Coast. U.S. government officials feared that some among the population might be sympathetic to Japan during the war.

Uchida and her family were first sent to a detention center at Tanforan Racetrack in California, where they lived along with others in crudely converted horse stalls. "Dust, dirt, and wood shavings covered the linoleum that had been laid over manure-covered boards, [and] the smell of horses hung in the air," Uchida wrote later. Conditions were even worse at a hastily constructed camp in the desert near Topaz, Utah. Uchida at first turned down an opportunity to go to the East Coast as a student because she felt she should remain with her fellow detainees. In 1943 a fellowship to Smith College in Massachusetts allowed her to leave Topaz. She would later write, "I left Topaz determined to work hard and prove that I was as loyal as any other American."

After receiving her master's degree in education Uchida taught for a while. Supporting herself with office jobs, she began her writing career in New York City. After publishing a collection of Japanese folktales for children, she received a fellowship to study in Japan. Although Uchida focused on Japanese history and the Japanese American experience in much of her writing, she saw a larger purpose:

I try to stress the positive aspects of life that I want children to value and cherish. I hope they can be caring human beings who don't think in terms of labels—foreigners or Asians or whatever—but think of people as human beings. If that comes across, then I've accomplished my purpose.

Introducing the Novel

Tomorrow, at last, the ship would dock in San Francisco and she would meet face to face the man she was soon to marry. Hana was overcome with excitement at the thought of being in America and terrified of the meeting about to take place. What would she say to Taro Takeda when they first met, and for all the days and years after?

—*Picture Bride* (chapter 1)

These words reflect the emotions of twenty-one-year-old Hana Omiya, the main character of *Picture Bride*, as she nears the end of her journey to the United States. Hana not only is traveling alone to an unfamiliar country but also is about to meet for the first time the man she has promised to marry. Hana's experiences mirror the real experiences of hundreds of young Japanese women who immigrated to the United States as "picture brides" in the early nineteenth century. Yoshiko Uchida's fictional character gives these women a voice—revealing why many journeyed to America and what their lives were truly like after they arrived.

In many states, marriages between white Americans and people of Japanese descent were outlawed. For that reason Japanese American men often sought arranged marriages. Frequently, the marriages were arranged through family or friends of the woman or the man. The couple, often strangers to each other, would agree to marriage after exchanging pictures and perhaps some letters. The women who agreed to this arrangement, called picture brides, sometimes saw the marriage as a door to opportunities not available to them in Japan. Like Hana, many were excited by the idea of going to the United States.

Community, family life, and tradition were important to Japanese women. In the United States, many found that their communities and families were continually threatened by outside problems. In addition to having to adjust to marriage with a virtual stranger, the women quickly learned that many people in the United States were not friendly to Asian immigrants and their families.

White Americans felt threatened by the influx of Chinese and Japanese immigrants. Their

attitudes often led to open hostility, violence, and the imposition of restrictions on the work that Japanese Americans could do and the places where they could live. In *Picture Bride*, Hana enters the United States with innocent excitement but, over the course of time, learns some harsh realities about U.S. society.

In learning about Hana's experiences, readers can see how one woman's strength of character helps her face the challenges of her new life. Through Hana, Uchida gives voice and emotional depth to the actual women who faced some of the same struggles and conflicts. The author also invites readers to examine, and learn from, this difficult period in Japanese American history.

THE TIME AND PLACE

Picture Bride takes place over the course of about twenty-six years, between 1917 and 1943. These volatile years in U.S. history included both World War I and World War II as well as the Great Depression, the period of severe economic hardship in the 1930s. Hana and her husband live and run a store in Oakland, California, a city on San Francisco Bay, just east of San Francisco. In the early nineteenth century, nearly all of the country's Japanese immigrants lived on the Pacific Coast.

It took courage and daring for the heroine of *Picture Bride* to board a steamship in 1917 and embark on a long journey to an unknown land, where she knew no one. Over the centuries, it has taken courage for many young people to come to the United States. Their reasons may have differed from Hana's, but the challenges of making one's way in a foreign culture were probably much the same. Why do people voluntarily leave the countries where they were born for other lands? What accounts for what the historians call "waves of immigration" when no war or catastrophe causes the movement?

The desire to improve one's economic situation is a factor in many large migrations. The migrations of Europeans from the 1600s to the late 1800s were often prompted by the hope of owning land on the large and unsettled North

American continent. Some came to establish businesses and begin new careers, often settling in colonies and communities populated by earlier arrivals from their home countries.

When Hana arrived in California in 1917, the period of the largest influx of immigrants to the United States was ending. Beginning in 1840 and continuing until the 1920s, 37 million immigrants arrived, mostly from European countries in which the Industrial Revolution was changing the economy. It is estimated that less than 10 percent of the immigrants to the United States over the years were motivated by political or religious reasons.

Regardless of their country of origin, the majority of the immigrants faced discrimination in their new country. National laws and official actions often reflected the prejudices of the U.S. electorate, as Hana and her husband discover in the novel. Immigration laws are frequently revised even today, often reflecting the need in the United States for workers and economic development. Despite the annual limits on the number of people who can migrate to this country—usually under 1 million—about 3.6 million names were on the waiting list at the end of the twentieth century.

Did You Know?

In the first chapter of *Picture Bride*, readers are given insight into Hana's family life and cultural background. She is said to be the daughter of one of her village's last samurai.

Samurai refers to members of the warrior class in Japan's feudal system, which developed in the twelfth century. Between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries, Japan was divided by civil war and political unrest. Military governors, or **shoguns**, ruled the country. They divided the country into regions, each governed by a **daimyo**, or lord. Daimyos, in turn, hired samurai to protect their regions and property. Samurai lived according to a strict code of behavior, known as **bushido**, that called for extreme dedication to one's job, loyalty to superiors, and the building of physical and mental strength. Although samurai originally referred only to soldiers, the term gradually changed to include all members of the warrior class who owed loyalty and services to feudal

superiors. The warrior class included soldiers as well as wealthy people who lived on estates and performed other services.

From the beginning of the seventeenth century, samurai formed the leading, most respected class in Japanese society. People within this warrior class were often wealthy and powerful, owning large amounts of land. In 1868 a new emperor reorganized Japan's government. The positions of shogun, daimyo, and samurai were eliminated, so people like Hana's father found their lives dramatically changed. Some fell into poverty, while others went on to become successful businesspeople or politicians.

The fact that Hana's father was a samurai indicates that her family has had a long and prestigious history in Japan. Also, the values of her family are probably influenced in part by the strict values of the samurai.

Before You Read

Picture Bride Chapters 1–9

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What might it be like to leave family and friends behind and move to a faraway land where the language, the customs, and the way of life were completely unfamiliar to you?

Freewrite

Spend five to ten minutes writing about what it might be like to be a stranger in a faraway land. Consider how you would deal with loneliness, homesickness, and the need to learn a new language and a new way of life.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how a young Japanese woman struggles to adjust to her new life in the United States.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

The first Japanese immigrants came to the United States in the 1880s, usually to work as farmers or laborers on the West Coast. Japanese immigrants often farmed land that white settlers did not want. Japanese farmers were successful—they worked hard and produced high-quality crops. By 1900 there were nearly twenty-five thousand Japanese in the United States. Their success and increasing numbers did not escape the attention of white settlers, particularly farmers who said they could not compete against Japanese farmers. These complaints launched the first anti-Japanese campaigns in the United States. Groups formed to try to end Japanese immigration, and Japanese farms and businesses were frequently vandalized. This hostility was fueled by more than farmers' concerns about competition. It reflected the same intense racism that had prompted a ban on Chinese immigration in 1882.

Point of View

Throughout most of *Picture Bride*, readers watch events unfold through the eyes of Hana, the main character. The author does not limit readers to Hana's point of view, however. Uchida occasionally allows readers into the minds of other characters. As you read, notice that sometimes the point of view shifts and the perspective of another important character is presented.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

affluence [af' lōō əns] *n.* abundance; wealth

conscientious [kon' shē en' shəs] *adj.* ethical; principled

demur [di mur'] *v.* to challenge

disparage [dis par' ij] *v.* to belittle

latitude [lat' ə tōōd'] *n.* freedom of action or choice

perpetuate [pər pech' oō āt'] *v.* to continue

placid [plas' id] *adj.* calm; mild

premonition [prē' mə nish' ən] *n.* a feeling about the future

pungent [pun' jənt] *adj.* biting; strong

vulnerable [vul' nər ə bəl] *adj.* exposed; unsafe

Active Reading

Picture Bride Chapters 1-9

In the first nine chapters of the novel, readers are introduced to a variety of characters. Most of these characters will play important roles in the remaining sections of the novel. As you read, fill in the chart below with details about each character.

	Role in Community	Characteristics
Hana	Taro's picture bride	naive, intelligent, high-spirited
Taro		
Yamaka		
The Todas		
Dr. Kaneda		

Responding

Picture Bride Chapters 1–9

Personal Response

What thoughts went through your mind as you read about Hana's first year in California? What is your opinion of some of the ways in which Hana responds to the challenges of her new life? Compare Hana's responses with your own response in the **Focus Activity**.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Why does Hana agree to marry Taro? What is her attitude toward her decision after she arrives in the United States?

2. Who are the Todas? How is Kiku Toda different from Hana?

3. Describe the relationship that develops between Hana and Kiyoshi Yamaka. What mixed feelings does Hana have about the relationship?

Responding

Picture Bride Chapters 1–9

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Evaluate the relationship between Hana and Taro. Do you think that their marriage will last? Why or why not?

5. Do you think that Hana takes her new role seriously? Give evidence from the novel to support your answer.

Literature and Writing

Analyzing Character Development

In the first chapters of the novel, the author introduces the fascinating characters in Taro's circle of friends. Analyze how she uses description and dialogue to characterize these friends and to show how they relate to others. Explain how she uses scenes involving this group of friends to reveal information about the characters and the society in which they live.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In the first nine chapters, most of the events are seen from Hana's point of view, with the narrator describing Hana's thoughts, emotions, and reactions to those events. In your group, discuss the character of Taro and his view of the same events. What emotions might he experience in response to different situations and events? How might his inner feelings differ from his words and actions? Use evidence from the text to support your ideas and opinions.

Social Studies Connection

When she wants to pray, Hana often addresses both Buddha and Taro's Christian God. Use on-line or print resources to learn more about the role of Buddhism and Christianity in Japan. Make brief notes about the basic beliefs of each religion and when it was introduced into Japan. Evaluate how Hana's character might have been influenced by the ideas of Buddhism and Christianity.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

Picture Bride Chapters 10–23

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What are some qualities that can help people solve problems, accept change, or rise above difficult circumstances?

Share Ideas

In a small group, talk about specific personal qualities that can help people adjust to change and survive difficult times. If possible, refer to individuals you know or have read about. Share your insights with the members of another group.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out what personal qualities help Hana deal with a variety of problems and changes in her life.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

During the early nineteenth century, the U.S. public's hostility toward Japanese immigrants influenced aspects of government policy. The San Francisco Board of Education, in response to public pressure, voted to racially segregate schools in 1906. All Japanese American schoolchildren were sent to schools in Chinatown. When Japan protested this action, President Theodore Roosevelt proposed a "gentleman's agreement" whereby he would try to end segregation if Japan would stop Japanese men from immigrating to the United States. Other laws that grew out of anti-Japanese sentiment included the Alien Land Law of 1913, which banned Japanese people from owning land, and the Immigration Act of 1924, which officially halted Japanese immigration to the United States.

Issei and Nisei

People who immigrated to the United States from Japan, like Hana and Taro, were known as *Issei*. The children of *Issei* were known as *Nisei*. Because they were born on U.S. soil, *Nisei* automatically became citizens of the United States. As citizens, they could own property; thus, parents often would purchase land under their children's names. U.S. citizenship, however, could not protect *Nisei* from racist attitudes. Although they had lived in the United States since birth and usually spoke fluent English, *Nisei* were seen by many other Americans as outsiders.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

dissuade [dɪ swādʹ] v. to discourage

effusive [ɪ fūʹsɪv] adj. expressive; talkative

erratically [ə ratʹɪk əlē] adv. not consistently

evanescent [evʹə nesʹənt] adj. short-lived

impel [ɪm pelʹ] v. to move forcefully

inconspicuous [ɪnʹkən spɪkʹū əs] adj. not noticeable; faint

indignation [ɪnʹdɪg nāʹshən] n. outrage

morose [mə rōsʹ] adj. sad

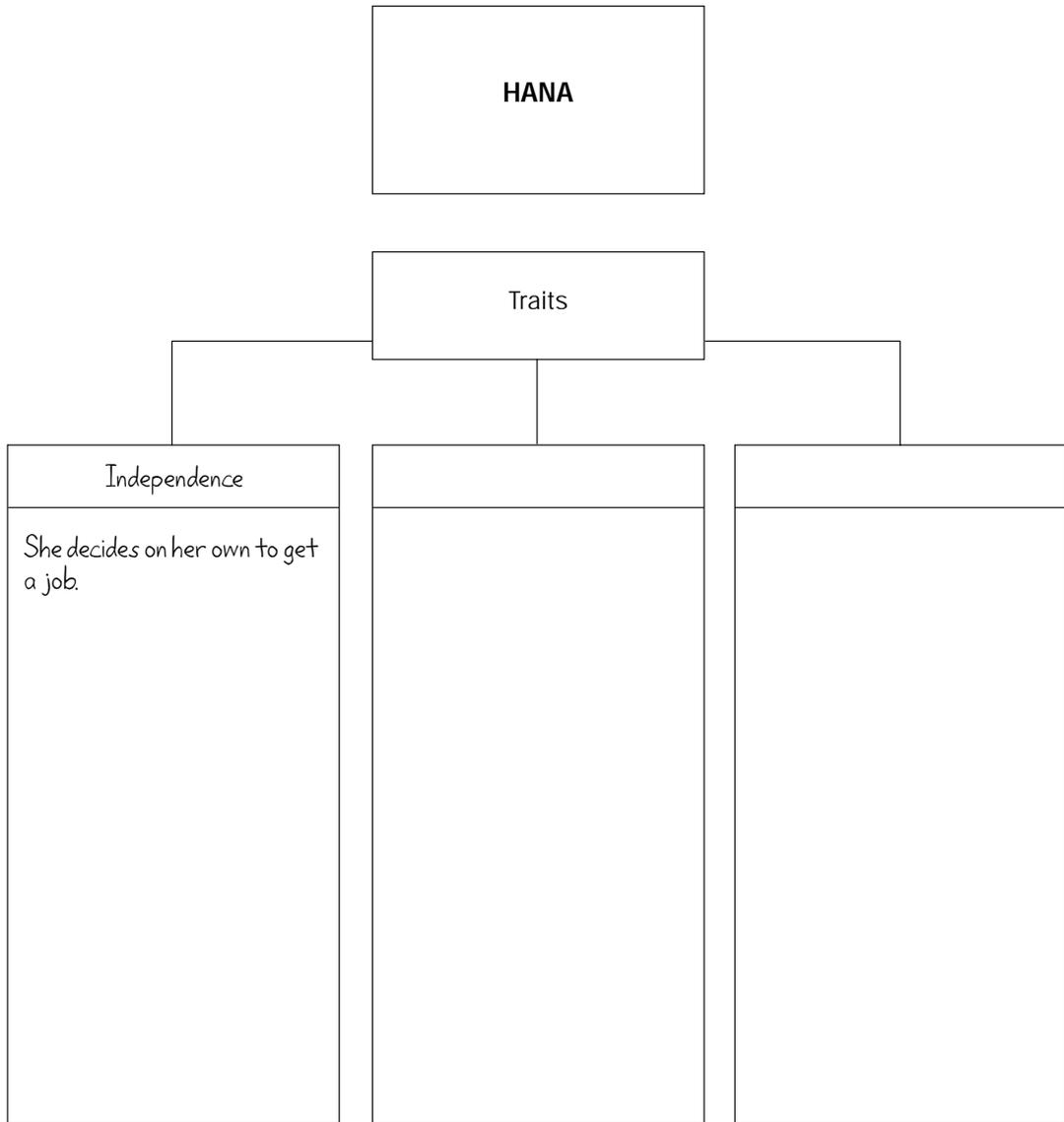
ominous [ɒmʹə nəʃ] adj. threatening

vehemence [vēʹə məns] n. emotional intensity

Active Reading

Picture Bride Chapters 10–23

In chapters 10–23, you will see Hana in a variety of new situations and can continue to interpret what her actions reveal about her character. As you read, think about Hana's most striking personality traits. List those traits in the top section of the boxes below. In the bottom section of each box, list actions that reveal that particular trait.



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Responding

Picture Bride Chapters 10–23

Personal Response

What situations or events in chapters 10–23 made the strongest impression on you? Give reasons for your answers.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Why do several men from the neighborhood visit the Takeda home? How do Hana and Taro react to the visit?

2. Explain why Nishima is staying in the Takeda home. What do Hana's actions toward him reveal about her character?

3. Describe how Mary treats her mother on the day of the school visit. What can you infer about Mary's attitude toward her mother?

Responding

Picture Bride Chapters 10–23

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Why do you think Mary's feelings toward her family and her heritage change so much as she grows older?

5. In your opinion, how has the relationship between Hana and Taro changed since the early chapters of the novel? Give evidence to support your response.

Literature and Writing

Letters of Reconciliation

In this section of the book, Hana and her daughter are growing apart. Imagine that you are a close friend of the Takeda family. Write a letter to both Hana and Mary in which you try to help each one better understand the other and improve their relationship. Avoid assigning blame; instead, focus on the importance of the mother-daughter relationship and on practical ways that Hana and Mary can find common ground.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In your group, discuss chapters 18–19, in which the Takedas visit the Todas on their farm. Consider these questions: Why do you think the author includes this episode? How does the contrast between the rural and urban settings add to your understanding and appreciation of the characters and the society in which they live? In what ways does the vacation represent a stark contrast to some of the events that have occurred in the characters' lives back in Oakland? What passages in the two chapters do you find most memorable? Why?

Learning for Life

Imagine that you live on the Takedas' block and that you disapprove of the chilly reception the family has received. Prepare an informal speech to be presented at the next meeting of the block club, in which you encourage your neighbors to put aside their prejudices and welcome the Takedas to the neighborhood. Appeal to your neighbors' reason and sense of fairness as you try to convince them that their prejudices are irrational and that their fears are unfounded.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

Picture Bride Chapters 24–35

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What if you were forced to leave your home and your daily routine on short notice and for an indefinite period of time? What would be going through your mind?

Quickwrite

Describe how you might react if you were suddenly forced to leave your home and abandon your normal daily routine. What items would you want to take with you? What would you miss most about your everyday life?

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how Hana and Taro deal with a dramatic and unwelcome change in their lives.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

The bombing of Pearl Harbor, a U.S. naval base in Hawaii, by the Japanese in December 1941 stirred up anti-Japanese feelings that had existed for more than forty years. General John L. DeWitt, in charge of security on the Pacific coast, first spread the idea that people of Japanese ancestry might become a threat to national security. Rumors fueled by racism and irrational fear began to spread. Before long, the entire California coastline was named Military Area One, an area from which Japanese families were told that they should voluntarily move. Although many tried to move, they found that they were unwelcome in other parts of the state. In 1942 President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 9066, which gave the military permission to remove “enemy aliens” and anyone who was believed to be disloyal. People in this area were to be evacuated and moved into relocation camps.

The Internment of American Citizens

In trying to evacuate “enemy aliens” from the West Coast, the government evacuated Japanese Americans. Many of these people had never been to Japan and did not speak Japanese. Ironically, because they were U.S. citizens, they were the only persons the government allowed to hold positions of authority in the camps. Despite the fact that Japanese tradition calls for elders to be treated with respect by younger generations, Issei (people who had immigrated to the United States from Japan) were not allowed to have positions of authority, which caused conflict for many in the camps.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

cursory [kur' ser ē] *adj.* hastily done

garrulous [gar' ə ləs] *adj.* talkative

laud [lôd'] *v.* to praise

repatriate [rē pā' trē āt'] *v.* to return to the country of one's birth

sabotage [sab' ə tazh'] *n.* deliberate damage

succor [suk' ə r] *v.* to aid

Active Reading

Picture Bride Chapters 24–35

In chapters 24–35, Uchida creates a vivid picture of the deplorable conditions endured by the Takedas and other Japanese Americans who were forced to live in assembly centers and internment camps. As you read, record details of the conditions at Tanforan and Topaz in the chart below.

Tanforan	Topaz
<p>forced to live in cold, dirty horse stalls</p>	

Responding

Picture Bride Chapters 24–35

Personal Response

What is your reaction to the way the Takedas and other Japanese Americans are treated after the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Summarize the events leading up to the Takedas' arrival at Topaz. How would you characterize the living conditions at Tanforan and Topaz?

2. How do Hana and Taro cope with the living conditions at Topaz? What do their responses reveal about the character of each individual?

3. What happens when Taro goes out alone for a walk one evening at Topaz? How does Mary respond to this event? What does her response reveal about her feelings toward her parents?

Responding

Picture Bride Chapters 24–35

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Why do Taro and Hana apologize to each other near the end of the novel? Do you think these apologies are necessary? Why or why not?

5. Evaluate the decision Hana makes at the end of the book. Do you think it is the right decision? Why or why not?

Literature and Writing

Character Studies

Hana, Kiku Toda, and Mary are three strong female characters in the novel. Compare and contrast their life experiences and their character traits. Consider how each one responds to difficult situations and interacts with family members and friends.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In your group, discuss the ending of the novel. Uchida writes, “They did not know that by the time they walked to Hana’s barrack at the opposite end of the camp, another dust storm would be coursing over the desert sands, enveloping all of Topaz in its white fury.” What mood is created by this ending? How might this ending foreshadow future events? Discuss questions like these in your group, challenging group members to explain why they think Uchida may have chosen to end the novel in this way.

Health Connection

The novel shows that assembly centers and internment camps for Japanese Americans were overcrowded, unsanitary, and uncomfortable. Detainees were forced to stand in lines in order to get meager meals, to do laundry, and to use shower and bathroom facilities. In their tiny, bleak compartments, they had few comforts and little privacy. Topaz had the additional problem of being filled with blowing sand and dust. Identify specific physical and mental health risks that these overcrowded facilities presented. Share your ideas with the rest of the class.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Natsu Okuyama Ozawa—A Japanese Woman Remembers

June Namias

Before You Read

Focus Question

Have you ever imagined traveling to another country in the future to begin a career or establish a home?

Background

From a collection of interviews with first-generation Americans, a Japanese American woman recounts real experiences that echo those of the heroine of *Picture Bride*. Both women arrived in this country to begin their marriages, survived daily discrimination against their families, and endured forced detention in internment camps.

Responding to the Reading

1. During the first half of the twentieth century, most Asian immigrants to the United States suffered racial discrimination because of economic fears and misinformation on the part of white Americans. Cite some examples of discrimination that Ozawa experiences before the outbreak of World War II, during the war, and after the war ended. Remember that she does not present her experiences in chronological order. How would you describe Ozawa's attitude toward life today?

2. Ozawa says of her experiences, "The good things and the bad things both I see." From her story, what can you see as the "good things" about her life in the United States and what would you call the "bad things"? Do you feel that Ozawa believes the good things have outweighed the bad? Why or why not?

3. **Making Connections** Think about your answer to question 1. How did the attitudes of Hana and Taro affect the quality of their lives?

Passing the Word

From the perspective of a character from *Picture Bride*, write a letter to a friend or relative telling him or her what to expect if he or she emigrates to the United States in 1920.

from *Nisei Daughter*

Monica Sone

Before You Read

Focus Question

Can you remember a time when you feared a change and later realized that the change was not as bad as you had anticipated?

Background

Monica Sone is a second-generation Japanese American who grew up in Seattle, Washington. In this selection from her autobiography, *Nisei Daughter*, Sone writes about the first time she was aware of her Japanese ancestry. *Nisei* is a Japanese term meaning “a son or daughter of Japanese immigrants who is born and educated in America and especially in the United States.”

Responding to the Reading

1. Why was Sone upset to discover that she was Japanese American? Find quotes to support your answer.

2. After reading *Picture Bride*, can you find similarities in the ambitions and personalities of Monica Sone’s father and Taro Takeda? In your opinion, would the two men have found much in common to talk about if they had met at a social event? Explain.

3. **Making Connections** In your opinion, how does Mary’s attitude toward her heritage in *Picture Bride* compare with Sone’s attitude? Explain.

Writing a Poem

Find words and phrases in *Picture Bride* that you think could also describe Monica Sone. Arrange the words and phrases to create a poem. Give your poem a title.



Topaz: City of Dust

Yoshiko Uchida

Before You Read

Focus Question

Which of your personal possessions would you take with you if you had to leave your home for small temporary quarters far away?

Background

Picture Bride is one of many books Yoshiko Uchida has written about the Japanese American experience. This selection from *Desert Exile* is Uchida's autobiographical account of living in Topaz, the same internment camp she wrote about in *Picture Bride*. Japanese Americans were placed in internment camps because of fear and prejudice during World War II.

Responding to the Reading

1. In your opinion, what effects did living in a "crude, incomplete, and ill-prepared" camp have on the people inhabiting it? Give examples from the text.

2. What is your opinion of the rules and the official actions at Topaz?

3. How do the internees at Topaz manage to create their own working community within the camp? What does this tell you about them?

4. **Making Connections** Identify some experiences in "Topaz: City of Dust" that Uchida retold as the experiences of Hana in *Picture Bride*.

Creative Writing

Imagine that you are being forced to leave your home and live in an internment camp. Write a poem about how you feel about leaving.

Sent from the Capital to Her Elder Daughter

Otomo No Sakanoe

Before You Read

Focus Question

Do you believe the old saying “Absence makes the heart grow fonder”?

Background

Before safe, efficient, and fast means of transportation became readily available, leaving home to establish a new life in a distant place could mean that a young person would never see his or her parents again. The mother in this eighth-century poem could have empathized with Hana’s mother although the two lived centuries apart.

Responding to the Reading

1. The speaker begins this poem with a metaphor comparing the mother’s pride in and affection for her daughter to a mythical god’s love of his treasures. Paraphrase this metaphor in poetry or prose, using modern-day symbols of wealth.

2. In her mind’s eye, the mother sees one feature of her daughter’s face. Do you think her comparisons of this feature to the movement of objects are effective in giving you an impression of the daughter’s face? Why do you think the mother would focus on one feature?

3. **Making Connections** Yoshiko Uchida describes Hana as attractive and high-spirited. From words and phrases that Uchida uses to describe Hana, what traits and characteristics of her daughter might Hana’s mother have remembered?

Literature Groups

If you were a parent, would you ever consider arranging a marriage for your child? Do you see advantages to arranged marriages? What are some disadvantages?

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Rain Music

Longhang Nguyen

Before You Read

Focus Question

Recall a time when you had to make a choice between two desirable options. What did you decide to do? What factors did you take into consideration to make this choice?

Background

“Rain Music” centers on the difficult decision that Linh, a young Vietnamese American woman, must make. Author Longhang Nguyen knows firsthand about the conflicts that a woman like Linh might face. Born in Vietnam, Nguyen emigrated to the United States in the late 1970s.

Responding to the Reading

1. What choice does Linh have to make? What does she decide to do?

2. What factors does Linh take into consideration when making the choice? What do these factors suggest?

3. **Making Connections** Compare Linh’s parents (“Rain Music”) with Mr. and Mrs. Takeda (*Picture Bride*). In what ways are their hopes for their children similar?

Internet Connection

After reading “Rain Music,” what questions do you have about the history or culture of Vietnam? Surf the Internet to find Web sites that provide answers to your questions. If any of your questions remain unanswered, post them on an appropriate electronic bulletin board. Then use your questions and answers as the basis for a brief oral report to your class.