

A Single Shard



By

Linda Sue Park

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one or two chapters of *A Single Shard* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include perseverance and determination, honor integrity and loyalty, family and friendship, personal growth, death and personal loss and realizing a dream.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

Tree-ear has a dream. He has watched the master potter Min take a lump of clay and shape it into a thing of beauty. For Tree-ear the transformation is a miracle. Someday he wants to perform such a miracle himself.

But you cannot just walk up to a master potter and ask him to teach you his craft, especially not if you're an orphan like Tree-ear. First Tree-ear must prove he is worthy of Min's time and teachings. So he asks the honorable master if he can work for him, without pay, for the privilege of being near such great talent.

Tree-ear had taken his first step toward his dream.

Realizing a dream can be very hard, though. Sometimes a dream can seem so far away, it almost disappears. But maybe if Tree-ear takes it one hill, one valley, one day at a time, just maybe, he'll be able to make his dream come true. [The Publisher]

A complete synopsis and other helpful reviews can be found online at such sites as the following: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Single_Shard

Author Biography

Linda Sue Park

Linda Sue Park was born in Urbana, Illinois on March 25, 1960, and grew up outside Chicago. The daughter of Korean immigrants, she has been writing poems and stories since she was four years old, and her favorite thing to do as a child was read. During elementary school and high school, Linda Sue had several poems published in magazines for children and young people. She went to Stanford University, competed for the gymnastics team, and graduated with a degree in English. In 1997, she started writing her first book, *Seesaw Girl*. It was accepted that same year and published in 1999. Since then, Linda Sue has published many other books for young people, including *A Single Shard*, which was awarded the 2002 Newbery Medal. (Courtesy of www.lindasuepark.com)



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Student Checklist

Student Name _____

Assignment	Grade/Level	Comments

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Name: _____

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Chapter 1



Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or the “good guy”. The main character of *A Single Shard* is Tree-ear, a poor, young orphan living under a bridge in Korea centuries ago. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

protruded	ruefully	deftly	exquisite
prosperity	gourd	gruel	dignity

1. Tree-ear gazed _____ down at the broken statue at his feet.
2. There was a stately _____ in the way the wise old woman lived her life.
3. The _____ of the village depended on the success of the potters.
4. The statue of the monkey was so _____ that it was displayed before the emperor.
5. The basketball player _____ balanced the ball on his finger before going in for a lay-up.
6. All poor Tree-ear got to eat for breakfast was a bowl of _____.
7. The pistol _____ from the outlaw's jacket.
8. The dried shell of a _____ can be fashioned into a bowl.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. What is a *jiggeh*?

--

3. Some might suggest that Tree-ear was not totally honest when he brought the leaking straw box to the farmer's attention. Why might they suggest this?

4. From what you have learned about Tree-ear in Chapter One, think of three adjectives which would describe his character.

1.		2.		3.	
----	--	----	--	----	--

5. How did Crane-man come by his name?

6. How did Tree-ear come by his name?

7. How old did Crane-man suppose Tree-ear was?

--

8. How did Tree-ear end up staying with Crane-man and not with the monks?

9. What does it mean for a potter when it is a *throwing* day?

10. What two factors made Ch'ulp'o an important village for ceramics?

1.	
2.	

Good to Know ~ Tree-ear's home - Ch'ulp'o

The village of Ch'ulp'o is a village in the western part of South Korea. Although it is a small village with a population of only about 150 people it is still famous for its pottery. It is surrounded by mountains, sea and forest, and abounds in rice paddies.



Good to Know ~ Celadon

Celadon is a term for ceramics denoting both a type of glaze and color (pale jade-green). Originating in China it spread to Japan, Korea and Thailand. Shards with a celadon ceramic glaze have been recovered dating back more than 2000 years.



Language Activities



A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:

a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of *A Single Shard*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
words		An ancient weapon.
arms		Runs into violently.
first		Divisions.
sharp		Musical instruments.
reveal		One who goes away.
scrap		Complains.
shook		These are favored by many fishermen.

Now find four additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

B. A Poem Even Min Would Enjoy

The following is a poem by the great poet Henry Longfellow:

Turn, turn, my wheel! Turn round and round
Without a pause, without a sound:
So spins the flying world away!
This clay, well mixed with marl and sand,
Follows the motion of my hand;
For some must follow, and some command,
Though all are made of clay!



The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is actually the start of a much longer poem called *what Easter means to me* which is found on the poetry.com website. (Notice the absence of capital letters in this poem.)

*the day is coming
and is almost here
that glorious sunday
of easter cheer*

Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - C - B** Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first chapter of our novel.

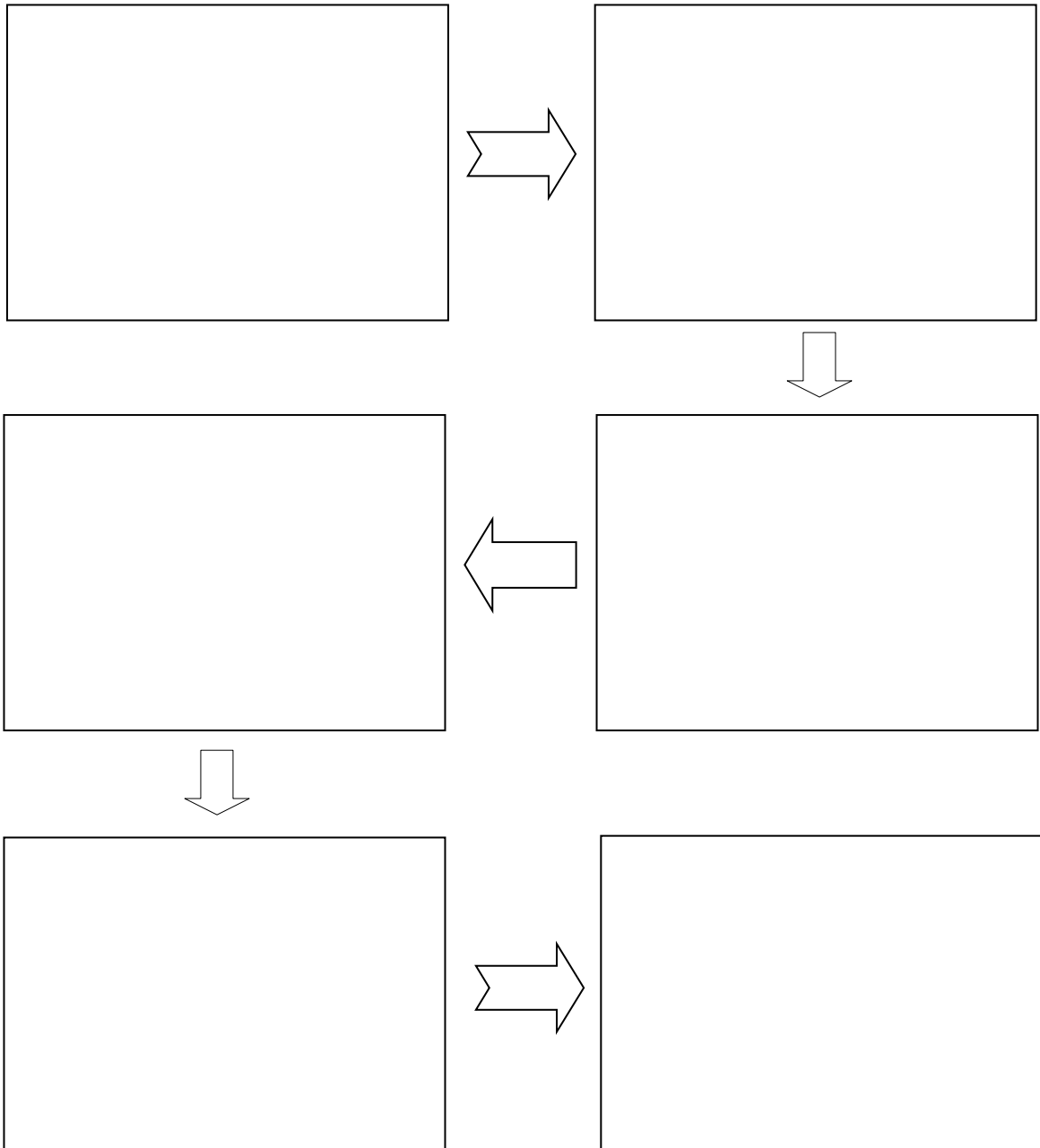
The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem on a subject of your choice. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

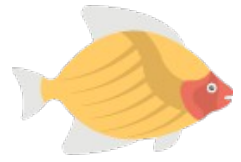
C. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this chapter. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.



D. Caviar Words

The author of this novel is noted for her use of elegant, tasteful words. Someone once stated that some words have the sound of **caviar** (rich and elegant) and others are more common (**peanut butter** words). With a colleague come up with 6 examples of each type of word, you may use any chapter of the novel to find these words.



Caviar Words	Peanut Butter Words

E. Who is going to help the poor old action word?

An **adverb** is a part of speech defined as *a modifier (or helper) of a verb* (usually an action word). Often an adverb will end in the letters **ly** (i.e. **slowly**). Our novel features a good many creative adverbs.

1. Tell him – quickly! Before he loses too much rice.
→ In this sentence, which verb does **quickly** modify? _____
2. But he laughed easily, even at himself.
→ In this sentence, what verb does **easily** modify? _____
3. . . . but strode purposefully toward a small house set apart from the others . . .
→ In this sentence the adverb _____ modifies the verb _____

Extension Activity



Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene - or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6