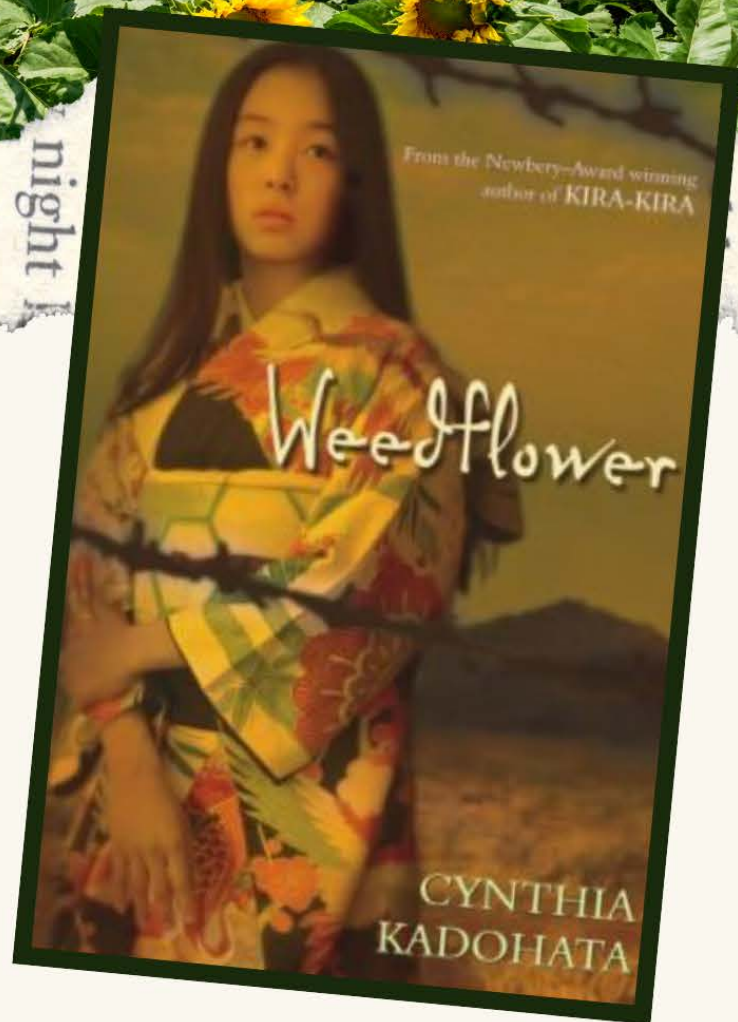




A Discussion Guide

from





CHAPTER READING GUIDE

SUMMARY OF TEXT

In the book *Weedflower*, by Cynthia Kadohata, twelve-year-old Sumiko feels her life has been made up of two parts: before Pearl Harbor and after it. The good part and the bad part. Although she is the only Japanese American in her class, she is used to the discrimination, and okay with it because she has her family and her flowers to come home to. However, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor the United States government forces all Japanese Americans living in California and other states into internment camps. Sumiko and her family are taken to a camp in Poston, Arizona where she soon discovers they are living on a Native American reservation and unwanted there as well. Sumiko befriends a young Mohave boy, and together they try to understand the racial and political challenges they are facing during the time. This book will open eyes to the unjust treatment of people in American history, and help navigate conversations about cultural bias and racial profiling.

IAITC ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Check out IAITC's "Throw and Grow" lesson to make your own wildflower seed ball. Help bring wildflowers back into nature! Find it at www.agintheclassroom.org.
- Use IAITC's "Plant Maze" Lesson to learn how the presence or absence of light affects plant growth. Find it at www.agintheclassroom.org.
- Sumiko loves gardening, and she and Mr. Moto must find the most efficient way to grow their garden in harsh conditions. Check out IAITC's "DIY Seed Tape" Lesson to make today's gardening easier! Find it at www.agintheclassroom.org.
- IAITC's "Garden-in-a-Glove" lesson helps show students how germination occurs and what plants need to survive. Find it at www.agintheclassroom.org.
- Use <https://iaitc.co/history> to research different events in Illinois history.



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 1

Page 1

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Jiichan want to drive Sumiko to the birthday party?
- How does Sumiko's parents being deceased impact her role in the family?

WRITE AWAY

- The first line of the book says "This is what it felt like to be lonely." Why do you think the book starts this way? Predict how this line could remain relevant throughout the rest of the book.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: LITERARY DEVICES

- Setting- What is the setting and time period of this story? How can you tell? And how will this be important later?

VOCABULARY

Embossed Forlorn
Graded

AG VOCABULARY

Carnations Field
Greenhouse Farmers

CHAPTER 2

Page 12

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Sumiko only change the family's bathwater once a week?
- Why does the family always wait for Jiichan to finish eating before they leave the dinner table?
- How can we compare family traditions and normality in Sumiko's family to what it looks like today?

WRITE AWAY

- In this chapter Sumiko describes each of her family members. Which family member do you relate to the most and why?

VOCABULARY

Admonished Incarcerated
Ambled Uncomprehendingly



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 3

Page 23

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think the boys on the school bus are mean to Sumiko?
- Why does Tak-Tak ask “Are they going to kill us?” at the dinner table?

WRITE AWAY

- Every Friday night at dinner, Uncle asks each member of the family to share anything “special” on their minds. Think about what you would share and write a paragraph about it.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT

- Research questions about World War II to ask and play the P.I.G. game that Mr. Johnson was playing with his students.

VOCABULARY

Emitted Ostentatiously

AG VOCABULARY

Disbud Pesticide

CHAPTER 4

Page 33

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why did Marsha’s mother make Sumiko leave the party?
- How do you think Marsha felt when her mother asked Sumiko to leave?
- Why doesn’t she tell Uncle and Jiichan about the situation, but shares the news with Bull?

WRITE AWAY

- How does this chapter make Sumiko’s saying, “This is what it felt like to be lonely” more relevant to the story? How would you feel in Sumiko’s position?

VOCABULARY

Resigned



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 5

Page 44

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why will Mr. Hirata only share his news with Uncle?
- Why does hearing about the rifle make the situation more real for Sumiko?

WRITE AWAY

- Sumiko's family quickly burns everything that shows their Japanese loyalty after the Pearl Harbor bombing. Why is this?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: HISTORY

- Research the bombing of Pearl Harbor to understand the time period of the book.

VOCABULARY

Shriveled Automated

AG VOCABULARY

Horse Chrysanthemums

CHAPTER 6

Page 54

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is taking Jiichan and Uncle important to the government officials after war has been declared?
- Do you think the FBI will be back? Why or why not?
- How could the pouch Auntie asked Sumiko to hide help them in the future?

WRITE AWAY

- Use what you know about life in America after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. What do you think is going to happen to Uncle and Jiichan?

VOCABULARY

Declaration Immigrated



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 7

Page 61

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why are the family's bank accounts frozen?
- If you were in Sumiko's position, would you have wanted to go back to school?

WRITE AWAY

- Sumiko has mentioned her family's Buddhist faith in multiple occasions. Research Buddhism to understand the family's religion better.

VOCABULARY

Peered Limbo

CHAPTER 8

Page 66

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Anyone of Japanese descent was either arrested without reason or had their movements restricted. How is this treatment of other humans different from the world we know today?
- What does voluntary evacuation mean?
- Should the family have left California while they had a chance? What might happen to them now?

WRITE AWAY

- Sumiko loves her family's flower farm and does not want to leave it. What is something you are passionate about? What would you be willing to do to protect it?

VOCABULARY

Furor Descended



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 9

Page 72

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who is coming to buy all the Japanese's belongings?
- Why did Sumiko lie about buying Baba the horse back?

WRITE AWAY

- Sumiko says her cousin will be successful first because he is older. Do you think this is always the case? Explain.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: MATH

- Sumiko sold her expensive silk scarf for a dollar. Research how the value of one dollar has changed over time.

VOCABULARY

Assessing Resignedly

CHAPTER 10

Page 77

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Sumiko shudder when she sees signs in the windows that say, "I am an American"?
- Where do you think the Japanese families will be taken?

WRITING AWAY

- Think about what you would do if you had to pack up and leave your home forever. What items would you take with you? What significance do those items have?

VOCABULARY

Deserted

AG VOCABULARY

Irrigation Ditch Bloom
Ranunculus



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 11

Page 84

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why are there searchlights going throughout the stables?
- How do you think Sumiko feels about having to sleep in a horse stall?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: LITERARY DEVICES

- Point of View: This story has been told from Sumiko's point of view. How would the things we knew be portrayed differently if the story was told by Tak-Tak? Or Bull?

VOCABULARY

Mundane Accentuating
Gong Latrine

AG VOCABULARY

Stable Horse Stall

CHAPTER 12

Page 90

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why was Mrs. Ono receiving a letter from the woman living in her house a miracle?
- Sumiko asks Ichiro, "Is it better to go or stay here?". What do you think is the better option?

WRITE AWAY

- Jiichan described his trip from Japan to Sumiko: "The thing that kept everybody going was a single word: America." (p. 92) Why did Jiichan feel that the word America was the most important thing his family owned? How was the America he now experienced different from before?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: GEOGRAPHY

- Sumiko talks about the dioramas her class made portraying a different life in a foreign country. Have your students make their own dioramas.

VOCABULARY

Dioramas Throngs
Bedlam Meager



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 13

Page 97

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This chapter starts with a list. How does the use of lists like this one enhance the book?
- How might the situation have ended differently if a Japanese man had laid in the train tracks in

WRITE AWAY

- Have you ever protested something? What was it and how did you advocate for what you believed was right?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: HISTORY

- The man lying in the railroad tracks was protesting the evacuation. Research protests that have happened more recently and why these protests took place.

VOCABULARY

Pronglike Disembarked
Jovial Claustrophobic

CHAPTER 14

Page 103

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Would you rather live at the racetrack or Poster, Arizona? Why?
- What makes Sumiko think Mr. Moto has been at the camp longer than a week?

WRITE AWAY

- Mr. Moto offers a bite of rattlesnake to Sumiko. Write about a time where you were faced with something new. What did you do?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: LITERARY DEVICES

- Identify the simile used in this chapter. How do similes give a better understanding of an object?

VOCABULARY

Mirage Balefully
Futile Yearned

AG VOCABULARY

Tractors



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 15

Page 117

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do the children not listen to their parents while they are in camp?
- Why does Sachi tell Sumiko they are in constant danger because they live on a Native American reservation?
- What do both the Japanese and Native Americans have in common? How have they both been treated by the American government during this time?

WRITE AWAY

- Research what life was like for the Native Americans living on reservations during that time.

VOCABULARY

Partitions Opulent
Lingered Indignantly

AG VOCABULARY

Bean Field

CHAPTER 16

Page 125

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How is Sumiko changing from being stuck in camp?
- Why would the other men in camp beat up Yamada?

WRITE AWAY

- Pretend you are Sumiko writing a letter to Jiichan and Uncle. What would the letter say?

VOCABULARY

Lethargic



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 17

Page 134

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why didn't the newspapers cover who was winning the war?
- Why does Sumiko say, "the rest of America will be satisfied" if Uncle, Jiichan, and the family in Poston were to pass away?
- Why doesn't Frank like Sumiko?

WRITE AWAY

- What would you do if you were one of the kids in camp? Would you be rebellious or calm? Would you try to get a job?

VOCABULARY

Disdainful Prefecture

AG VOCABULARY

Pig

CHAPTER 18

Page 144

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think Mr. Moto agreed to plant the flowers?
- Do you think Sumiko was disappointed when Frank was not in the bean field?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: AGRICULTURE

- Mr. Moto and Sumiko are growing flowers in less-than-ideal conditions. Look up how flower farms and greenhouses plant their crops today.

VOCABULARY

Expertise

AG VOCABULARY

Bean Cuttings Germinate



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 19

Page 149

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why did the government say the people living in Poston were doing their “patriotic duty”?
- How has the garden improved Sumiko’s mood? Why is this?

WRITE AWAY

- Sumiko’s third grade teacher made them write a paragraph about their favorite thing. Write about your own favorite thing and compare it to Sumiko’s. Does your favorite thing make you different?

VOCABULARY

Knack Paranoia

AG VOCABULARY

Sprouted Dirt
Organic Matter Manure
Chicken Coop

CHAPTER 20

Page 155

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Would you want to leave the camp or stay in Poston?
- How did the Japanese being placed on a reservation actually help the Native Americans who lived there?
- Why did Frank call Sumiko “Weedflower Girl”?

WRITE AWAY

- Have you ever been given a nickname? What was the meaning behind it?

VOCABULARY

Resettlement Scoffed



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 21

Page 162

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Sumiko question if she and Frank are friends?
- How will Bull and Ichiro react to Sumiko's friendship with a Native American boy?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: HISTORY

- Frank talks about some of his people's views on what happens to their ancestors after death. Research traditions of the Mohave tribe.

VOCABULARY

Inescapable Envisioned

AG VOCABULARY

Garden Blossom

CHAPTER 22

Page 168

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What made Sumiko and Mr. Motto so proud of their garden?
- What "responsibilities" is Sumiko talking about if she and Frank are friends?

WRITE AWAY

- Write about a time when you were picked on by others for a choice you made. How did you react? Were you able to hold your head high and ignore it?

VOCABULARY

Unfettered Disperse
Dignity

AG VOCABULARY

Stalks



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 23

Page 174

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why did the children not respect their teacher, Miss Kelly?
- Why were teachers having nervous breakdowns in the camp?
- What caused Sumiko to be satisfied when the white teachers quit working at the camp?
- How would you feel about fighting in the United States military if you were Bull and Ichiro?

WRITE AWAY

- Discuss the pros and cons of staying in the camp versus leaving. With the information the family now has, are they making the right decision by staying?

VOCABULARY

Whopper Allegedly

CHAPTER 24

Page 184

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What has made Sumiko feel like her family is no longer a family?
- How do you think Mr. Moto feels about his son?
- What is the significance of Sumiko joining the other children in stealing a chicken?

WRITE AWAY

- Think about Sumiko now versus when she first got to camp. How has she changed?

VOCABULARY

Frigid Benignly
Ambience Endemic

AG VOCABULARY

Chicken Coop



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 25

Page 195

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why would Frank be willing to risk going into the camp to see Sumiko's Garden?
- What makes Sumiko defend Frank when the Japanese boys are attacking him?
- Why does Sumiko finally agree to a meeting between Bull and Frank's brother?

WRITE AWAY

- Why are dreams so important to Frank? Have you ever had a dream that you believed had real meaning? What happened?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: LITERARY DEVICES

- Foreshadowing: How have the events in the book led up to the moment of Frank getting beat up? Did you see it coming?

VOCABULARY

Illogical

Pummeling

CHAPTER 26

Page 203

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did Sumiko apologizing to the boy she hit help the situation in an unexpected way?
- Why will Ichiro not join the war effort if the option becomes available?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: HISTORY

- Sumiko finds the war very complicated when Frank tries explaining it to her. Create a timeline of World War II from the Pearl Harbor bombing until the end.

VOCABULARY

Dissipate



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 27

Page 207

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did Sumiko know Bull would agree to meet Frank and his brother?
- Why do you think Bull is not bothered by Sumiko and Frank's friendship?
- What do you think will happen at this meeting?

WRITE AWAY

- Sumiko has grown up taking care of Tak-Tak. How has growing up in the camp changed their relationship?

VOCABULARY

Scarcely

CHAPTER 28

Page 211

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does the author show there is tension in the group's meeting through the text?
- Why did the government take away Frank's and other Native Americans' right to vote, as well as their native names?
- How does Bull know Frank and Joseph are fine after the dust storm?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

- In this chapter Bull teaches Joseph about farming and irrigation. Research how irrigation works today and how it benefits farmers.

VOCABULARY

Tentatively

Illogic

Democracy

Desolate



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 29

Page 222

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does the survey seem silly to the Japanese in the camps?
- Why do both Bull and Ichiro sign up to go to war?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

- Symbolism: What does the moth represent to Sumiko? What is its significance?

VOCABULARY

Verbatim Instituting
Foreswear Allegiance

CHAPTER 30

Page 231

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it unfair that Japanese Americans had to prove themselves to the American government?
- Why was Sumiko adamant about staying in camp?

WRITE AWAY

- Research the “No-No Boys” and write a paragraph about their efforts. Why did they choose to take the stand they did?

VOCABULARY

Dejectedly Exhorted

AG VOCABULARY

Plant Acres



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 31

Page 237

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do you believe Auntie and Uncle Kenzo are making the right decision to move away from camp?
- Why did Auntie not wake Sumiko to say goodbye to her cousins?
- Why did the two men get married the night before leaving for war?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: LITERARY DEVICES

- Write a sentence using alliteration about the events that occurred in this chapter.

VOCABULARY

Phonograph Record

CHAPTER 32

Page 244

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does the death of Frank's brother make the friendship between Frank and Sumiko even more unusual?
- What does Frank mean when he says, "My future is here. Yours is somewhere else."?

WRITE AWAY

- Frank tells Sumiko that the more people who are free in the world, the better it is for Native Americans. What does this mean? How does it relate to the unfair treatment of Native American people?

VOCABULARY

Mourning Explosively

AG VOCABULARY

Cultivated



CHAPTER READING GUIDE

CHAPTER 33

Page 248

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why did Sumiko finally decide to leave camp?
- What significance does the list at the end of the book have?

WRITE AWAY

- Write your own epilogue for the end of the story. Describe Sumiko's life in Chicago. What happens to her family after they leave camp Poston?

VOCABULARY

Shriveled Automated

FINAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What significance does the title have to this story?
- How does the author incorporate historical facts into the book?
- What questions do you still have after finishing the book?
- How do the events Japanese-Americans and Native Americans endure in this story change your perspective on American history?
- Can you list the ways agriculture is incorporated in the text?
- What does this book teach you about cultural bias and racial profiling?
- How is cultural bias still present today?
- What questions does the End Note answer?
- What is the author's purpose for writing this novel?