

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Gannon	School:	Hyatts Middle School
Book Title:	When My Name Was Keoko	Genre:	historical/cultural fiction
Author:	Linda Sue Parks	Pages:	199
Publisher:	Yearling	Copyright:	2004

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Sun-hee and her older brother Tae-yul are proud of their Korean heritage. Yet they live their lives under Japanese occupation. All students must read and write in Japanese and no one can fly the Korean flag. Hardest of all is when the Japanese Emperor forces all Koreans to take Japanese names. Sun-hee and Tae-yul become Keoko and Nobuo. Korea is torn apart by their Japanese invaders during World War II. Everyone must help with war preparations, but it doesn't mean they are willing to defend Japan. Tae-yul is about to risk his life to help his family, while Sun-hee stays home guarding life-and-death secrets.

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

CCS - Fiction - Reading Literature #1 - 6

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

### Review #1

Amazon.com Review

Inspired by her own family's stories of living in South Korea during the Japanese occupation in the years preceding World War II, Newbery Medal-winning author Linda Sue Park chronicles the compelling story of two siblings, 10-year-old Sun-hee and 13-year-old Tae-yul, and their battle to maintain their identity and dignity during one of Korea's most difficult and turbulent times. In alternating first-person chapters, they relate their family's troubles under the strict fascist regime. The Kim family is stripped of their cultural symbols, only permitted to learn Japanese history and language, and forced to convert their names to Japanese. Sun-hee, now Keoko, struggles to reconcile her Korean home life with her Japanese school and friends, while Tae-yul, now Nobuo, attempts to convert his growing anger into a more positive passion for flight and airplanes. Both are worried for their uncle, whom they discover is printing an underground Korean resistance paper. When Sun-hee inadvertently puts her uncle's life in danger, she sets in motion a chain of events that results in her brother volunteering as a pilot for the Japanese near the end of WWII. While Sun-hee and her parents wait in breathless uncertainty to hear from Tae-yul, the war rushes to a close,

leaving Korea's destiny hanging in the balance. This well-researched historical novel is accompanied by a thoughtful author's note that explains what happened to Korea and families like the Kims after WWII and a bibliography to entice interested young readers into learning more about a topic largely unknown to American audiences. (Ages 10 to 14)

Review #2

From Publishers Weekly

A brother and sister alternate as narrators in Newbery Medalist Park's (A Single Shard) well-constructed novel, which takes place from 1940-1945 in Japanese-occupied Korea. The Japanese government forbids the Korean language to be spoken and the country's flag to be flown, and even forces Korean families like Tae-yul and Sun-hee's to change their names (Sun-hee becomes Keoko). Through the use of the shifting narrators, Park subtly points up the differences between male and female roles in Korean society; and the father's process of choosing the family's Japanese name speaks volumes about his strength and intelligence. As the war intensifies, each family member asserts his or her individuality, from Sun-hee, who continues to keep a journal after a soldier calls it "a crime against our Divine Emperor," to her uncle, who prints a revolutionary newspaper in hiding, to Tae-yul, who joins the Japanese army to avoid helping the military police capture his uncle only to be chosen as a kamikaze pilot. The son comes to an understanding of his father rather abruptly at the novel's close, and some readers may wonder why Tae-yul was not labeled a chin-il-pa ("lover of Japan"). But, in the end, telling details provide a clear picture of Sun-hee and Tae-yul and their world. Readers will come away with an appreciation of this period of history and likely a greater interest in learning more about it. Ages 10-14.

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**What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

Title: A Single Shard

Author: Linda Sue Park

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

**Document any potentially controversial content:**

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated  Regular  At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** Ages 10 and up

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 5/15/12

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults