

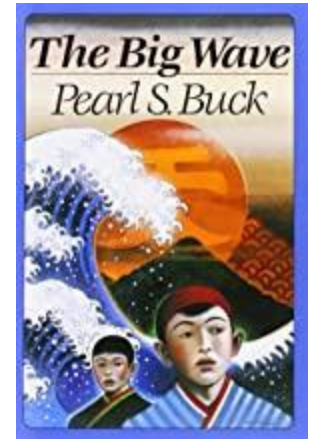
Book Review: The Big Wave

Author: Pearl S. Buck

Grade Level: Grades 3-6

Guided Reading Level: GR Level Q

Information from Amazon



https://www.amazon.com/Big-Wave-Pearl-S-Buck/dp/0064401715/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3VLI1R12QPW96&keywords=the+big+wave+by+pearl+s.+buck&qid=1683076198&srefix=the+bog+wave%2Caps%2C436&sr=8-1

The powerful novel by Nobel Prize-winning author Pearl S. Buck, about two friends who must face the pain of losing everything—and how to face their grief with courage.

Kino lives on a farm on the side of a mountain in Japan. His friend, Jiya, lives in a fishing village below. Everyone, including Kino and Jiya, has heard of the big wave. No one suspects it will wash over them, until the rushing water sweeps away the whole village—including Jiya's family.

As Jiya struggles to overcome his sorrow, with the help of Kino and his father, he comes to understand that it is only in the presence of danger that one learns to be brave, and that even in the face of terrible tragedy, life and love are stronger than death.

Review Highlights...

- Features a Japanese male protagonist, Jiya.
- Features the bond of friendship.
 - Jiya and Kino
- Features a mom/dad family dynamic household and neighborhood.
- Shows the Japanese fishing village community and the mountain community of this special place in the world.
- Features the literary example/description of a tsunami
 - On p.21 and 22, the author describes a tsunami/big wave in such detailed language that provides students an ability to fully visualize the event.
- The story features literary concepts...
 - Foreshadowing *"The sea is our enemy," Jiya replied. p. 4*
 - Personification *"It (ocean) rose higher and higher lifting up, hands and claws" p.17*
- Written with descriptive language that allows the reader to fully visualize Jiya's and Kino's world.
- Features the complexity and struggle of incredible loss and resilience that comes from love.
- THEME: ***"Enjoy life and do not fear death...That is the way of a good Japanese."***

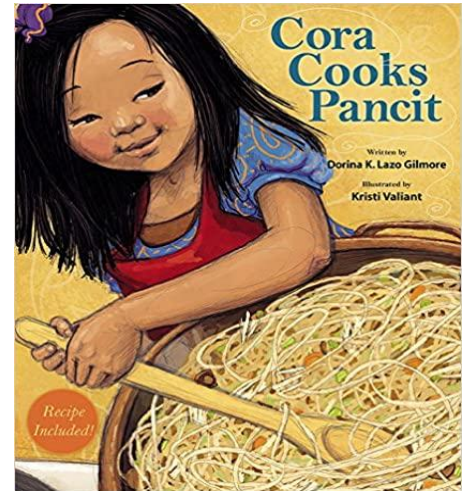
Book Review: Cora Cooks Pancit

Author: Dorina K. Lazo Gilmore

Illustrator: Krisiti Valiant

Grade Level: DK-2

Guided Reading Level: M



Book Synopsis from Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=cora+cooks+pancit&crd=360IIVQ5AEQOD&srefix=cora+cooks%2Caps%2C367&ref=nb_sb_ss_ts-doa-p_1_10

Cora and Mama work together to cook up pancit for the family in this celebration of Filipino heritage and foods. Cora loves being in the kitchen, but she always gets stuck doing the kid jobs like licking the spoon. One day, however, when her older sisters and brother head out, Cora finally gets the chance to be Mama's assistant chef. And of all the delicious Filipino dishes that dance through Cora's head, she and Mama decide to make pancit, her favorite noodle dish. With Mama's help, Cora does the grown-up jobs like shredding the chicken and soaking the noodles (perhaps Mama won't notice if she takes a nibble of chicken or sloshes a little water on the floor). Cora even gets to stir the noodles in the pot--carefully-- while Mama supervises. When dinner is finally served, her siblings find out that Cora did all their grown-up tasks, and Cora waits anxiously to see what everyone thinks of her cooking. Dorina Lazo Gilmore's text delightfully captures the warmth between mother and daughter as they share a piece of their Filipino heritage. With bright and charming illustrations by Kristi Valiant, Cora's family comes alive as Cora herself becomes the family's newest little chef.

Review Highlights...

- Features a Filipino female protagonist, a young Cora.
- Features family dynamics/Mom, Dad, Cora and her older siblings.
- Uses food to connect Cora with her Filipino family and history.
- Connects to past generations/demonstrates an appreciation/reverence for culture.
 - Grandfather immigrated to the US; worked in the California farms/fields.
 - Features grandfather's recipe.
- Positively and respectfully demonstrates the rich and dynamic Filipino culture.
- **Picture book. (Beautiful illustrations.)**
- Universal theme: Cora no longer wants to be seen as a baby. She wants to do the things her older siblings do.
- Filipino/Tagalog vocabulary is introduced in the story; provided in the glossary.

Book Review: Front Desk

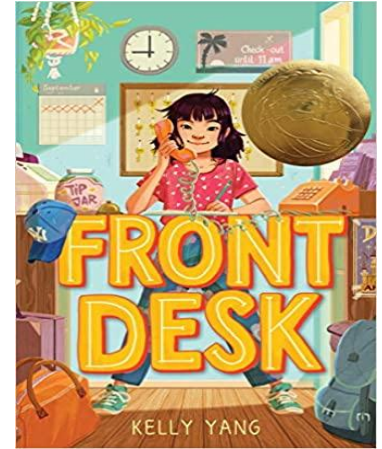
Author: Kelly Yang

Illustrator: Tracy Subisak

Grade Level: Grades 2-6

Lexile Reading Level: 790

Information from Amazon Website



https://www.amazon.com/Front-Desk-Kelly-Yang/dp/1338157795/ref=tmm_hrd_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1683079061&sr=8-1

Winner of the Asian / Pacific American Award for Children's Literature!* *"Many readers will recognize themselves or their neighbors in these pages."* -- Kirkus Reviews, starred review Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. **Number 1:** She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. **Number 2:** Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. **Number 3:** She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?

Review Highlights...

- Features a Chinese female protagonist, nine year old, fifth grader Mia Tang.
 - Features an immigration story.
 - The family immigrated from China to southern California (Anaheim).
 - Mia navigates school and friends in this new place.
- Features a mother/father/child family dynamic.
 - Mia is an only child.
 - She is very close with her cousins, who are only children as well.
 - The author highlights the Chinese government rule of only one child per family.
- The Tang family resides in a motel that they manage.
- Features community; the family builds a community for themselves.
 - The Tans redefines community for themselves and keep secrets to protect their new community.

Book Review: Feeding the Fight: The Story of Maria Orosa

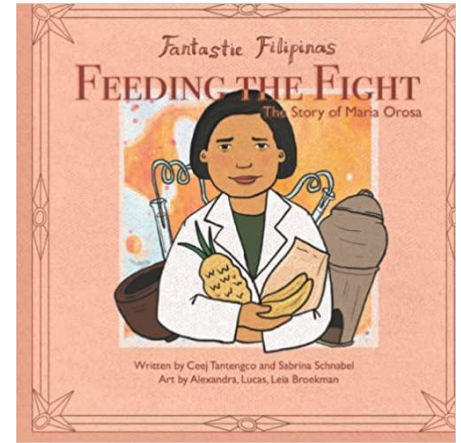
Author: Ceej Tantengco and Sabrina Schnabel

Illustrator: Alexandra, Lucas, Leia Broekman

Grade Level: Grades 2-6

Lexile Reading Level: 790

Information from Amazon Website



https://www.amazon.com/Fantastic-Filipinas-Feeding-Fight-Story/dp/6214670177/ref=sr_1_8?crid=1E6JXNRP7KEZO&keywords=feeding+the+fight+book&qid=1683806315&srefix=feeding+the+fight+book%2Caps%2C147&sr=8-8

She was the inventor of banana ketchup and a food chemist who used her ingenuity to feed the people during World War II. Here's the unforgettable story of how Maria Orosa saved thousands of lives with her delicious recipes.

Review Highlights...

- Features a Filipino female scientist; food chemist Maria Orosa
 - Based on true events of her life.
 - Provides historical perspective of World War II.
 - Considered a war hero for her inventions and activism.
 - Instrumental in focus of soybeans as a part of a balanced diet.
- STEAM focused—features the invention of banana ketchup.
- Written an engaging format using pictures and graphics along with text.
- Illustrates a deep love for her people/community of the Philippines and the world.
- Demonstrates the process of inventing through tenacious practice and trials.
- Historically referenced and based on a real person and events.
- Beautifully illustrated and includes very descriptive words.
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) focused story.
- This book is part of a series called Fantastic Filipinas.

Book Review: How to Solve a Problem

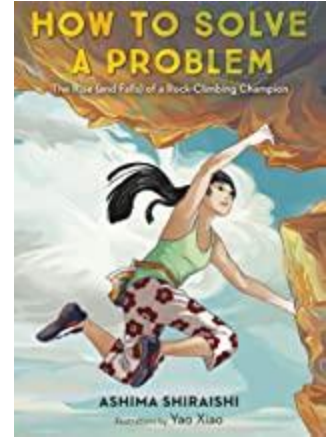
The Rise and (Falls) of a Rock Climbing Champion

Author: Ashima Shiraishi

Illustrator: Yao Xiao

Grade Level: Grades DK-3

Guided Reading Level: GR Level O



Information from Scholastic Website

https://www.amazon.com/How-Solve-Problem-Rock-Climbing-Champion/dp/1524773271/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2PQFP6ZJT80VJ&keywords=how+to+solve+a+problem+ashima+shiraishi&qid=1678407189&srefix=How+to+solve+pro%2Caps%2C151&sr=8-1

From Ashima Shiraishi, one of the world's youngest and most skilled climbers, comes a true story of strength and perseverance--in rock climbing and in life.

To a rock climber, a boulder is called a "problem," and you solve it by climbing to the top. There are twists and turns, falls and scrapes, and obstacles that seem insurmountable until you learn to see the possibilities within them. And then there is the moment of triumph, when there's nothing above you but sky and nothing below but a goal achieved.

Ashima Shiraishi draws on her experience as a world-class climber in this story that challenges readers to tackle the problems in their own lives and rise to greater heights than they would have ever thought possible.

Review Highlights...

- Features a Japanese-American female protagonist, Ashima Shiraishi.
- Features a strong bond between father and daughter.
- Features a beautiful landscape that is set in Central Park, New York City.
- Demonstrates the power of purposeful practice to accomplish a goal.
- Features the use of math to solve problems.
- Focuses the reader on the sport of rock climbing.
- Very cleverly and artistically illustrated; engaging.
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) focused story.

Book Review: Watercress

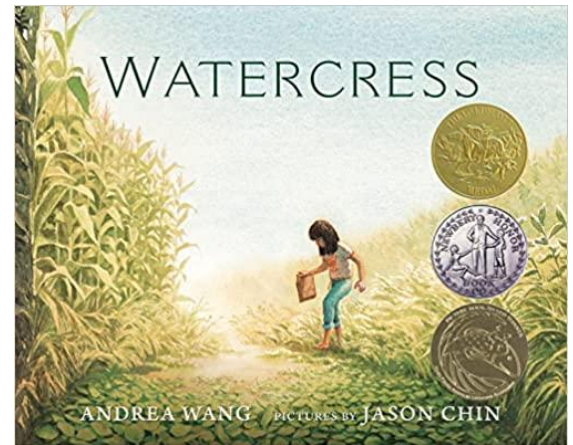
Author: Andrea Wang

Illustrator: Jason Chin

Grade Level: Grades DK-3

Lexile Level: 610

Information from Amazon Website



https://www.amazon.com/Watercress-Andrea-Wang/dp/0823446247/ref=sr_1_10?crid=34RSMWBR AOWWZ&keywords=book+illustrated+by+jason+chin&qid=1682961566&s=books&sprefix=book+illustrated+by+jason+chin%2Cstripbooks%2C132&sr=1-10

While driving through Ohio in an old Pontiac, a young girl's Chinese immigrant parents spot watercress growing wild in a ditch by the side of the road. They stop the car, grabbing rusty scissors and an old paper bag, and the whole family wades into the mud to gather as much as they can. At first, she's embarrassed. Why can't her family just get food from the grocery store, like everyone else? But when her mother shares a bittersweet story of her family history in China, the girl learns to appreciate the fresh food they foraged—and the memories left behind in pursuit of a new life. Together, they make a new memory of watercress. Author Andrea Wang calls this moving, autobiographical story “both an apology and a love letter to my parents.” It's a bittersweet, delicate look at how sharing the difficult parts of our histories can create powerful new moments of family history, and help connect us to our roots.

Jason Chin's illustrations move between China and the American Midwest and were created with a mixture of traditional Chinese brushes and western media. The dreamy, nostalgic color palette brings this beautiful story to life. An endnote from the author describes her personal connection to the story, and an illustrator's note touches on both the process of the painting, and the emotional meaning brought to the work.

Review Highlights...

- Author Andrea Wang and Author-Illustrator Jason Chin have been featured artists at Willows.
- Features a young Chinese girl, elementary school age.
- Features a mom, dad, child, sibling family dynamic.
- Connection to cultural aspects of China.
 - Parents try to give children a connection to their culture and homeland.
 - Features the importance of family history.
- Social Emotional theme...
 - Feeling embarrassed about picking and eating watercress.
 - She doesn't want to do things that are culturally aligned with her parents.
 - She struggles to navigate school and being a part of an immigrant family.
- Features descriptive language to support their readers' understanding.
- Story is beautifully illustrated by Jason Chen.

Information researched/reviewed/organized by Bridgette Blue, DEI Consultant. 2023

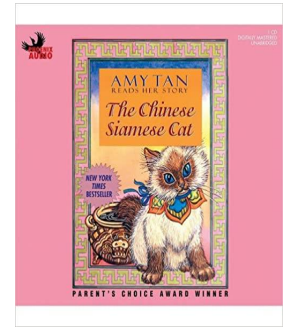
Book Review: Sagwa, The Chinese Siamese Cat

Author: Amy Tan

Illustrator: Gretchen Shields

Grade Level: Grades DK-4

Guided Reading Level: GR Level P



Information from Amazon Website¹

<https://www.amazon.com/Chinese-Siamese-Cat-Amy-Tan/dp/1597777935>

To explain the markings on their faces and tails, Ming Miao tells her kittens the story of their ancestor, Sagwa of China, and how the kitten's antics foiled the Foolish Magistrate. This fairy tale is the inspiration of a new PBS animated series debuting in fall 2001. Full-color illustrations.

Information from Goodreads Website²

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/35958>

"Before you go out into the world," Ming Miao told her five kittens, "you must know the true story of your ancestors...."

And so begins the story of Sagwa of China, a mischievous, pearl white kitten. Sagwa lived in the House of the Foolish Magistrate, a greedy man who made up rules that helped only himself. One day, Sagwa fell into an inkwell and accidentally changed one of the Foolish Magistrate's rules. Little did Sagwa know she would alter the fate—and the appearance—of Chinese cats forever!

Review Highlights...

- Features a Chinese kitten named Sagwa.
 - Story features a Chinese folktale.
 - Features aspects of Chinese history and culture.
 - Origin story of Chinese cats appearance.
- The story is very detailed.
- The book features beautiful illustrations that show aspects of Chinese culture.

¹

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Book Review: Jasmine Toguchi, Mochi Queen

Author: Debbi Michiko Florence

Illustrator: Elizabeth Vukovic

Grade Level: 2-4

Guided Reading Level: O



Book Synopsis from Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Jasmine-Toguchi-Mochi-Michiko-Florence/dp/0374308349/ref=pd_lpo_1?pd_rd_w=F0a9C&content-id=amzn1.sym.116f529c-aa4d-4763-b2b6-4d614ec7dc00&pf_rd_p=116f529c-aa4d-4763-b2b6-4d614ec7dc00&pf_rd_r=ZYHHDXNY7350573T5SS1&pd_rd_wg=QvD48&pd_rd_r=e636b513-dfdd-4795-967c-8127d32abcf2&pd_rd_i=0374308349&psc=1

The first book in a new chapter book series featuring a spunky Japanese-American heroine!

Eight-year-old Jasmine Toguchi is a flamingo fan, tree climber, and top-notch mess-maker! She's also tired of her big sister, Sophie, always getting to do things first. For once, Jasmine wishes SHE could do something before Sophie—something special, something different. The New Year approaches, and as the Toguchi family gathers in Los Angeles to celebrate, Jasmine is jealous that her sister gets to help roll mochi balls by hand with the women. Her mom says that Jasmine is still too young to join in, so she hatches a plan to help the men pound the mochi rice instead. Surely her sister has never done THAT before. But pounding mochi is traditionally reserved for boys. And the mochi hammer is heavier than it looks. Can Jasmine build her case and her mochi-making muscles in time for New Year's Day?

Review Highlights...

- Features a female Japanese-American eight year old third grader..
- Features multi-generational family dynamics; Jasmine enjoys a daily interaction with her grandmother, Obaachan, as well as aunts, uncles and cousins.
- Features connections to current events;
 - Shows new year celebrations and unique Japanese activities.
- Uses food and traditions to connect family.
 - The family creates a very treasured mochi. They have traditions as to how it is prepared and who participates.
- Connects to past generations/demonstrates an appreciation/reverence for culture.
- Universal theme: Finding one's place; belonging.
- This book is a part of a series; be sure to check out *Flamingo Keeper, Super Sleuth and Drummer Girl.*

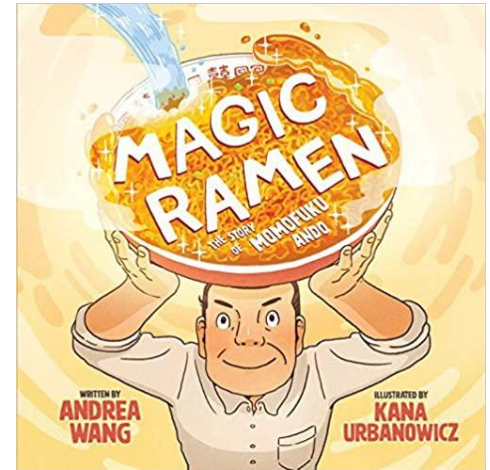
Book Review: Magic Ramen

Author: Andrea Wang

Illustrator: Kana Urbanowicz

Grade Level: 1-6

Guided Reading Level: P



Book Synopsis from Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Magic-Ramen-Story-Momofuku-Ando/dp/1499807031/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1O5DJ3SAYKEQW&keywords=the+magic+ramen&qid=1684408305&srefix=the+magic+ramen%2Caps%2C163&sr=8-1

Inspiration struck when Momofuku Ando spotted the long lines for a simple bowl of ramen following World War II. *Magic Ramen* tells the true story behind the creation of one of the world's most popular foods.

Every day, Momofuku Ando would retire to his lab—a little shed in his backyard. For years, he'd dreamed about making a new kind of ramen noodle soup that was quick, convenient, and tasty for the hungry people he'd seen in line for a bowl on the black market following World War II. *Peace follows from a full stomach*, he believed.

Day after day, Ando experimented. Night after night, he failed. But Ando kept experimenting.

With persistence, creativity, and a little inspiration, Ando succeeded. This is the true story behind one of the world's most popular foods.

Review Highlights...

- Inspired by the true story of the invention of *instant* ramen for everyone to enjoy.
- Features a Japanese male protagonist, Momafuku Ando
- Features references to historical events
 - Osaka, Japan after World War II.
 - Food scarcity and feeding the poor.
- The protagonist Ando is inspired by the needs of his community.
- Features connection to community.
- Celebrates the scientific method and trial and error.
 - Shows Ando process and thinking.
- Features the need of persistence to achieve a goal.
- **Book Quote:** “Peace follows from a full stomach.”

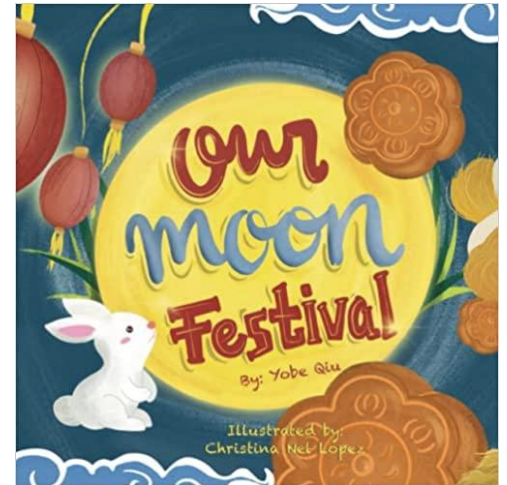
Book Review: Magic Ramen

Author: Yobe Qiu

Illustrator: Christina Nel Lopez

Grade Level: DK-2

Guided Reading Level: M



Book Synopsis from Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Our-Moon-Festival-Celebrating-Communities/dp/1957711000/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2828AQG4JETZ9&keywords=our+moon+festival&qid=1684411152&sprex=our+moon+festival%2Caps%2C159&sr=8-1

The story highlights different families and their diverse traditions as they observe Zhong Qiu Jie, Tết Trung Thu, and Tsukimi! In all three stories, children will learn about foods, traditions, dances, parades, and poetry involved in the celebration of the Moon Festival. Just like "Our Lunar New Year" by the same author, children will be so captivated by the celebrations that they will feel part of holiday too!

Review Highlights...

- This book celebrates different moon festivals and culture.
 - Features events around Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival: Zhong Qiu Jie.
 - Shows Chinese family and community celebrating the festival.
 - Features events around Tet Trung Thu: A Vietnamese Moon Festival
 - Show Vietnamese family and community celebrations of the festival.
 - Religious observances to honor loved ones/ancestors are featured.
 - Features event around Tsukimi Japanese Moon Festival
 - Traditions of the Tsukimi moon festival are shown.
- In all the festivals, extended family and community celebration is featured.
- For all the festivals featured there is vocabulary associated with food and the traditions
- <https://www.seattleschild.com/asian-holiday-book-series-helps-to-expand-kids-horizons/>