A Single Shard

By

Linda Sue Park

A Novel Study

by Nat Reed
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:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

### 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.

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A portfolio cover is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A Student Checklist is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

**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/homonyms
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
A Single Shard


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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)
# A Single Shard
*By Linda Sue Park*

## Student Checklist

**Student Name:** __________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade/Level</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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A Single Shard

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Name:
Before you read the chapter:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “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 or movies you’ve seen. What do you think makes for an especially interesting **protagonist**?

Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>protruded</th>
<th>ruefully</th>
<th>deftly</th>
<th>exquisite</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prosperity</td>
<td>gourd</td>
<td>gruel</td>
<td>dignity</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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.
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.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Anagram</th>
<th>Clue</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>words</td>
<td>An ancient weapon.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>arms</td>
<td>Runs into violently.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>first</td>
<td>Divisions.</td>
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<td>sharp</td>
<td>Musical instruments.</td>
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<td>reveal</td>
<td>One who goes away.</td>
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<td>scrap</td>
<td>Complains.</td>
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<td>shook</td>
<td>These are favored by many fishermen.</td>
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Now find four additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

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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](http://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:** ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line 1</th>
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<th>Line 4</th>
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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.