



My Name Is Yoon **Mini-Unit Plan**

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Meet the Designers:

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This mini-unit was developed at the Doors to the World 2017 Summer Institute sponsored by the Five College Center for East Asian Studies and funded by the Freeman Foundation.

Introducing the Mini-Unit:

This unit was designed for 2nd graders to build their awareness of multicultural literature and empathy with the difficulties of immigration and assimilation. This unit was also designed to help 2nd graders to learn strategies to read critically.

Contextualizing the Picture Book:

Title: *My Name Is Yoon*

Author: Helen Recorvits

Illustrator: Gabi Swiatkowska

Publisher: Frances Foster Books/Farrar Straus Giroux

Date of Publication: 2003; 2014 by First Square Fish Edition

ISBN-10: 1250057116

ISBN-13: 978-1250057112

Genre: Realistic fiction

Time Period: Contemporary

Cultural Themes: Immigration, assimilation, friendship, identity

Media of Illustrations: Oil paint and pencil

Summary:

My Name is Yoon is a beautifully rendered picture book depicting a Korean child who has left her native home and immigrated to America. She is struggling with the cultural differences. This is evidenced by Yoon's resistance to writing the English version of her name.

At the beginning of the book, Yoon is given a phonetic spelling of her Korean name in English. Although her dad reassures her that the English version of her name still keeps its original meaning of "shining wisdom", Yoon dislikes it because it loses the uniqueness of her Korean name. Yoon can see in her Korean name the symbols dancing together, reminding her of the life she left behind in Korea. In her English name she sees the letters each standing alone with no connections to each other, symbolizing her current feelings.

Throughout the book, Yoon continues to have difficulties adjusting to her new life, particularly school life. While trying to find her place in her new world, Yoon escapes into her own fantasies. Each time the teacher asks her to write her name, Yoon writes the name of one of her fantasy characters instead. She uses CAT as her name to show her desire to hide away, and picks BIRD to indicate her wish to be free to do what her heart is thirsty for—to fly back to Korea, her safe harbor. The turning point of the book comes when Yoon is approached by one of her American classmates, who offers Yoon a CUPCAKE. This action implies that Yoon is accepted by her classmates. And then, Yoon starts writing CUPCAKE as her name, showing that she is no longer hiding herself. She is trying her best to assimilate to the group because she wants to be liked by her peers and the teacher. The CUPCAKE name earns her a big smile from the teacher. This helps affirm for Yoon that America might also be a good home, where she is accepted for who she is.

As a result, Yoon begins sharing with her parents what she has learned from school, and writing YOON as her name. These changes earn her recognition and praise from both her parents and the teacher. In the end, Yoon is happily using the English phonetic spelling as her name, with the awareness that she keeps the original Korean meaning of "shining wisdom."

It is important to note that Yoon's teacher allows her space and time to re-identify where and who Yoon is in her new environment. She steps back when Yoon is defiant and not following directions. At the same time, with smiles she shows Yoon her understanding and acceptance. When Yoon finally starts to open her heart to this new world, her teacher positively reinforces it with big hugs, celebrating with Yoon.

About the author and illustrator:

Author **Helen Recorvits** was born in Rhode Island. She went to Rhode Island College, earning a degree in education and psychology. She went on to receive a Master's degree as well as a certification in gifted and talented education. Recorvits was an educator before devoting her time to writing, and also speaks at conferences and literary events. Today, Recorvits and her family live in the town of Glocester, Rhode Island. She enjoys reading and writing stories about people who are trying to find their place in life, and people with hope in their hearts.

Illustrator **Gabi Swiatkowska** was born in 1970 in Poland. She is an artist, musician, and children's author and illustrator. She was nominated twice for the American Library Association Notable Book Award. With *My Name Is Yoon*, she won the Ezra Jack Keats Award. She was also on the New York Public Library's list of 100 Great Children's Books.

Awards and other recognitions:

- * Outstanding Book of the Year by the New York Is Book Country Committee
- * ALA Notable Children's Book
- * IRA Notable Books for a Global Society
- * Best Book of the Year by *Child Magazine*, *Family Magazine*, *Bank Street Books*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *School Library Journal*
- * Booklist Editors' Choice

Learning Experiences:

Learning Experience Design #1: Build Background Before Reading

Ask students to conduct a survey by interviewing their friends, family members, and/or teachers. The survey questions are:

- * What is your full name? Do you know the meaning of your names? Why did your parents choose your name?
- * Would you ever want to change your name? What new name would you choose? How would you feel if someone else decided that you would change your name?
- * Have you ever moved to a new home or school? Was it easy or difficult to make new friends? What did you miss about your old home/school?
- * Has anyone ever made fun of you because you were different? How did that make you feel?
- * If you are interviewing a person from another country, please ask them to write their name in their native language for you.

Ask students to share their results and discuss with them the meanings of immigration, assimilation, and identity.

Learning Experience Design #2: Preview and Read-Aloud

Introduce the book

Show students the front cover of the book and guide them to discuss what they see on the cover pages.

- * What do you think is happening here?
- * What makes you think that?
- * What else did you notice?
- * Can you pose the way Yoon is on the cover page? How do you feel when posing that way? What do you think her body language is telling you? When have you ever felt that way, and why?
- * What do you think the layout of the picture on the cover page says about Yoon? (Possible answers: she has not made up her mind. She is trying to find her identity. She is in the process of figuring out where and who she is. She might feel like she is losing who she is.)
- * What did you notice about the font of the title? Why do you think the illustrator chose this font for the title?

Show students the title page and guide them to discuss what they see, focusing on the character traits, using similar VTS and WBA questions to the ones listed above.

During Reading

1st two pages: Teacher demonstration of reading and comprehension strategies

VTs and WBA questions:

- * What do you think is happening here?
- * What makes you think that?
- * What else did you notice?
- * Why do you think this illustration spreads across two pages?
- * How does the starkness of the picture make you feel?
- * What does this say about how the character feels?
- * What do the colors make you feel? Are they happy colors?

2nd two pages: Read out loud together and turn and talk to analyze text

Remind students to talk about the pictures.

VTs and WBA questions:

- * Does Yoon like her English name? Why?
- * How does Yoon feel about her Korean name? Why?
- * Do you agree? What makes you agree/disagree?

The pages with Yoon's cat face: Teacher demonstration of reading and comprehension strategies, text analysis

VTs and WBA questions:

- * What differences do you notice in this illustration? Where is the gutter? How is it used in the picture? What do you think the illustrator is trying to tell you by using this technique?
- * What do you think is happening to Yoon? What makes you think that? What else do you notice?
- * Where is this transformation taking place, in reality or her fantasy world? Why is this happening?

The pages with Yoon flying: Pantomime to do text analysis

Have students:

- * Imitate what Yoon is doing in the picture
- * Pretend they are flying freely in a forest
- * Close their eyes to feel the freedom of flying to anywhere they would like to go
- * Call out their feelings with words. Use a word splash to record feelings called out.
- * Sit, think, and talk about what makes Yoon want to fly away. What is she trying to escape? What makes her think like this? Does this remind you of a similar feeling of wanting to get away? Have you ever wished to escape like Yoon does? What was it you wanted to escape?

The page with Yoon and her classmate with a cupcake in her hand: Teacher guided discussion and role play to analyze text, Multimodal Opportunities

- * Have students act out with a partner what is happening on the page. Remind the students to keep in mind that Yoon might not be able to speak English, and Yoon's feelings are changed

- because of this event.
- * Have students discuss their feelings when doing role play and think out loud: *Why are there such changes?*
- * Ask students: *How do you feel when someone shows you an act of kindness?*
- * This is a turning point of the book. *Why do you think so?*
- * Show students [Sharon Gloude-mans' animated video, "Alone."](#)

Last page and the back cover page: Venn diagram to analyze text, Multimodal Opportunities

- * Have students compare and contrast the images of Yoon on both pages. Ask students: *What differences do you notice? What similarities do you see?*
- * Have students pose like the image of Yoon on the last page and call out their feelings. Have one or two students pose the way Yoon is on the back cover and let the others describe her feelings. *How does each picture show Yoon's different feelings about assimilation?*
- * Ask students: *Do you think this is a happy ending?* Use 2-3 supporting details to explain why.

The remaining pages: Popcorn reading and turn to listen/talk

- * Have students do a quick share with a partner of the most important details they noticed, or an interesting word they discovered, or a thought-provoking picture they found.
- * Have students talk about the story elements in their reading.
- * Ask students: *If you were in Yoon's position, would you make the same decision as she did? Would you prefer to keep your name, or change your name if you moved to another country?*
- * Did anyone in the book help Yoon? What did they do to help her feel better? Have you ever helped a new student feel more comfortable? What did you do?

Summative Learning Experience:

Writing project

Have students write an opinion essay to explain their thoughts on the story's ending. Do they think it is a happy ending? Do they think it is sad ending? Why? Students need to use 2-3 supporting reasons to illustrate their opinions.

Debate

Follow up writing project with a class debate: Does *My Name Is Yoon* have a happy or unhappy ending?

Art Infusion

Have each student create their own identity collage using their name as a central feature. Ask students to show their identity through their family traditions, food, family members, clothing, personal interests influenced by/shared with their family, and things that make them feel special.

Art Infusion

Ask students: If you were moving to a new country and you could only bring one suitcase with you, which five items would you bring in that suitcase? Why are they important to you? Have students each make a suitcase using shoe boxes.

Readers Theatre

Have students work in groups of six to perform the story from the book. Students will need to write

their own scripts, design their own scenes, and choose their own actions based on their interpretation of the book. For students who do not like acting, they can [create a storyboard](#) to illustrate their interpretation of the book.

Standards:

Targeted Reading Strategies

Ask and answer questions, analyze characters, compare and contrast, making connections.

Objectives

RL2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

RL2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

RL2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

W2.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section

SL2.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

Vocabulary

Content words: settle, wrinkle, wisdom, quietly, chalkboard, patient, wrapper

Next Steps for Your Learning:

Juxtaposing Texts

The Name Jar, by Yangsook Choi

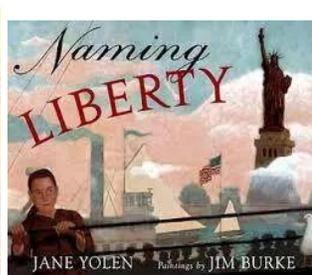
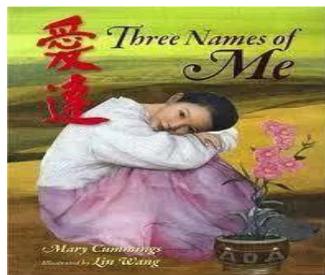
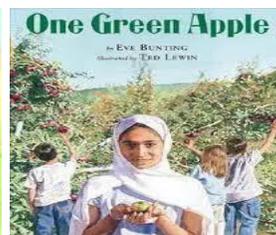
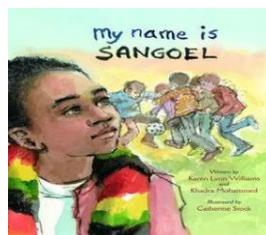
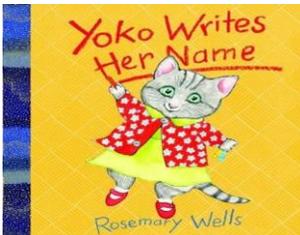
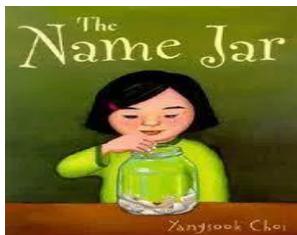
Yoko Writes Her Name, by Rosemary Wells

My Name is Sangoel, by Karen Williams and Khadra Mohammed

One Green Apple, by Eve Bunting

Three Names of Me, by Mary Cummings

Naming Liberty, by Jane Yolen



Additional Resources for book extension:

Have students use Google Translate to translate their names into Korean, or practice some common phrases in Korean.

