



GRANDFATHER'S JOURNEY

AUTHOR: ALLEN SAY

ILLUSTRATOR: ALLEN SAY

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Grandfather's Journey](#)

**** REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! ****

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE BOOK

This is a story of the author's grandfather, who left Japan for California, and eventually returned to Japan with his family. Though the grandfather was happy to be home in Japan, he missed the mountains and rivers he left behind. When his grandfather dies, the author, who grew up in Japan, decides to see the mountains and rivers his grandfather missed so much. He stays in California, but like his grandfather, never forgets his homeland.

([amazon.com](#))

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Allen Say was born in Yokohama, Japan, in 1937. He dreamed of becoming a cartoonist from the age of six, and, at age twelve, apprenticed himself to his favorite cartoonist, Noro Shinpei. For the next four years Say learned to draw and paint under the direction of Noro, who has remained Say's mentor. Say illustrated his first children's book -- published in 1972 and has written and illustrated many books for children. *Grandfather's Journey* is the winner of the 1994 Caldecott Medal. Say is a full-time author and illustrator living in Portland, Oregon.

THE READ ALOUD

BEFORE READING

Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- (cover) I notice the gold medal on the cover and see that this is the 20th anniversary edition. I wonder what makes this book so special.
- Can you find anything on the cover that gives us a hint about what the story is about?

DURING THE STORY

Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content.

- (p. 4) I notice that the illustrator used brown tones to show the main character as a young man. Does that help you understand the story better?
- (p. 5) What do you think "New World" means here?

GRANDFATHER'S JOURNEY

TOPICS & THEMES:

- Immigration
- Family
- Multicultural

Tips for every book!

POWER PHRASES:

I WONDER...

I NOTICE...

TELL ME MORE...

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Tell me more, why do you think that?"

"How do you know that?"

"Why do you think they feel like that?"

"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"

- (p. 9) Why would a desert remind the young man of an ocean?
- (p. 10-11) I wonder why the man found all of the new sights so exciting.
- (p. 15) Why do you think the man returned to America once he got married?
- (p. 18) What memories made the man return to Japan?
- (p. 28) I wonder why the grandfather never got another songbird. Do you have any ideas?
- (p. 30) Why did the person telling the story (the narrator) go to California?

AFTER READING

Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read.

- Why does the narrator say, "I think I know my grandfather now"?

BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- Do you know anyone who moved to the United States from another country? I am going to name some countries. If you know someone from that country, put your thumb up: Mexico, Africa, Iran, Haiti.
- Does anyone know someone from a country different from the ones I mentioned?

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- Turn to a neighbor and tell what is the first thing you would want to do in a new country.

SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- Conduct a picture walk though the book having children retell the story
- Why do you think the young man left his home country?
- I wonder why the man left America.
- Why wasn't the village a place for a girl from San Francisco?
- What stopped the old man from returning for a visit to America?
- Is it possible to love living in two places?

Suggested Optional Activity:

- Divide into pairs. Tell each other what incidents in the story make the narrator and his grandfather similar. Report to the group and see if everyone concurs.

2. WRITING ACTIVITY

- Create a postcard to a loved one "back home." Write about something you have seen and draw its picture on the other side of the card.

3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Have each child create a list of questions that they would like to ask their grandparents or parents about new places they have been. If these adults were born in another country, make questions pertinent to the immigrant experience. This can be extended to having questions answered at home and then reporting to group.

COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1 ,2.3,2.5,2.7