

A Guide for Using

The Master Puppeteer

in the Classroom

Based on the novel written by Katherine Paterson

This guide written by Michelle A. Breyer



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6421 Industry Way
Westminster, CA 92683
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Made in U.S.A.

ISBN 1-57690-517-9

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Introduction

A good book can touch our lives like a good friend. Within its pages are words and characters that can inspire us to achieve our highest ideals. We can turn to it for companionship, recreation, comfort, and guidance. It can also give us a cherished story to hold in our hearts forever.

In *Literature Units*, great care has been taken to select books that are sure to become good friends!

Teachers who use this literature unit will find the following features to supplement their own valuable ideas.

- Sample Lesson Plans
- Pre-reading activities
- Biographical Sketch and Picture of the Author
- Book Summary
- Vocabulary Lists and Suggested Vocabulary Ideas
- Chapters grouped for study with each section including a
 - quiz*
 - hands-on project*
 - cooperative learning activity*
 - cross-curricular connection*
 - extension into the reader’s life*
- Post-reading Activities
- Book Report Ideas
- Research Ideas
- Culminating Activity
- Three Different Options for Unit Tests
- Bibliography
- Answer Key

We are confident that this unit will be a valuable addition to your planning, and we hope that as you use our ideas, your students will increase the circle of “friends” they have in books!

Interpreting Proverbs

The Japanese are famous for their use of figurative language and proverbs to express themselves. Teachers in ancient schools would pose proverbs to their class and have them respond in appropriate verse. Young couples in courtship or military leaders planning strategy for battle would correspond in proverbs or riddles to convey their messages. In chapter 4 of *The Master Puppeteer*, the characters express themselves using a variety of proverbs. Find the proverbs below in the chapter and write what you feel the characters are trying to say.

1. *“Mothers make a career of being upset. Anxiety is dearer to them than a full rice bowl.”*

2. *“As elders go, we are not a bad lot, for we have so many elders above us that with the possible exception of Wada we are as squeezed of meanness as a pickled turnip of wine.”*

3. *“We all learn here by the honorable path of horrible mistakes.”*

4. *“The crow who thinks to imitate the cormorant—drowns.”*

5. *“You are like a bunch of centipedes who have to bind a straw sandal on every foot before you start your journey.”*

6. *“He said that in this world there are only four things to be feared: earthquake, thunder, fire, and—father.”*

Now you try it. Write a proverb to express the situations below as if you were the author of the story.

1. Jiro’s impression of Yoshida at their first meeting: _____

2. Jiro’s impression of working at the Hanaza: _____

Character Lantern Poems

The two most popular forms of Japanese poetry are the tanka, which was made popular during the Heian period, and the haiku, which replaced the tanka during the Tokugawa period. Both of these forms create a blend of simplicity and subtlety and can be found in any current literature about Ancient Japan.

Now You Try It

1. Make a chart like the one shown below on the board or overhead. Assign a small group to each character. Have each group describe its impression of the character at the beginning of the story and its impression by the end of the story. Share group findings as a class and record them on the chart.

Character	Beginning	End
Jiro		
Isako		
Hanji		
Yoshida		
Kinshi		
Okada		

2. Tell students that they will be writing Japanese poems to show the changes in the different characters throughout the story. Review the two types of poems below.

Tanka (five lines)

The sun sets at dusk, (five syllables)
 Deep into the blue abyss (seven syllables)
 Where sea and sky meet (five syllables)
 To kiss goodnight to daytime (seven syllables)
 And sleep very quietly (seven syllables)

Haiku (three lines)

The sun sleeps at dusk, (five syllables)
 Quietly sinking below (seven syllables)
 A blanket of sea (five syllables)

3. Have students choose a character to write about. They will write a tanka poem to describe the character at the beginning of the story and a haiku poem to describe the character at the end of the story. Proof their poems before letting students write them onto the lanterns.
4. To make lanterns, have students cut colored construction paper into lantern shapes. Punch a hole in the top of the lantern and add string. If desired, glue a fringe of contrasting colored tissue paper to the bottom of the lantern.
5. On one side of the lantern have students write their tanka poem, and on the other side their haiku poem. Hang the lanterns from the ceiling so that each poem can be seen.

