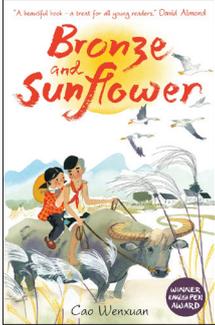




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Bronze and Sunflower

Author: Cao Wenxuan
ISBN: 9781406348460
ARRP: \$16.95
NZRRP: \$18.99
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

A beautifully written, timeless tale by bestselling Chinese author Cao Wenxuan. When Sunflower, a young city girl, moves to the countryside, she grows to love the reed marshlands – the endlessly flowing river, the friendly buffalo with their strong backs and shiny round heads and the sky that stretches on and on in its vastness. However, the days are long, and the little girl is lonely. Then she meets Bronze, who, unable to speak, is ostracised by the other village boys. Soon the pair are inseparable, and when Bronze's family agree to take Sunflower in, it seems that fate has brought him the sister he has always longed for. But life in Damaidi is hard, and Bronze's family can barely afford to feed themselves. Will the city girl be able to stay in this place where she has finally found happiness?

Author Information:

Cao Wenxuan is one of China's most important children's writers and is widely considered the country's most subtle and philosophical, often referred to as China's very own Hans Christian Andersen. He is a professor of Chinese literature at Peking University, and has in turn taught some of China's best young writers. Many of his books have been bestsellers, including *Thatched Cottage* and *Red Gourd*, and his work has been translated into French, Russian, Japanese, Korean and English. Cao has won several of China's most prestigious awards for children's literature, including the Song Qingling and Bing Xin prizes.

How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore suitable for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary years 5-6
- Secondary year 7
- Ages 9+

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Geography

Example of:

- Novel
- Fiction

Themes/ Ideas:

- Family
- Poverty
- Loyalty
- Community

National Curriculum Focus:*

English

Year 5
ACELA1504
ACELT1608
ACELT1609
ACELT1610
ACELT1611
ACELY1699
ACELY1701

Year 6
ACELA1525
ACELT1613
ACELT1614
ACELY1708
ACELY1711

Year 7
ACELA1529
ACELA1782
ACELA1531
ACELT1619
ACELT1620
ACELY1721
ACELY1722

Geography

Year 5
ACHGK028
ACHGK029
ACHGK030

Year 6
ACHGK031
ACHGK032
ACHGK033
ACHGK036

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.



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Discussion Questions And Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *Bronze and Sunflower*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The translator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?

What is the purpose of this novel (i.e. to entertain, inform or persuade)? How can you tell? Who do you think is the intended audience?

After Reading

This novel has many themes that share a message. Write a short paragraph about each of the following themes:

- Family
- Poverty
- Loyalty
- Community

Based on what Sunflower thinks, says and does, how would you describe her? What is important to her? What are her strengths? How does she change over the course of the story? Also answer these questions for Bronze.

With your students, create a character map to explore the relationships in the book. Use your blackboard, white board, or a large sheet of paper. Put Sunflower and Bronze's names in the center and circle them. Then ask students for names to add to the map. As you write these names around Flora's name, circle each one. Then have students come and draw lines between the characters that interact with each other. Once you have mapped the relationships, look and see who connects with whom. Are there any characters who connect with everyone else? Write a short description about the key relationships, focusing on how they change over the course of the novel.

Describe the setting of the novel including the location and time. Write a short report on the villagers including what they eat, what their houses look like, what they do for work and any other interesting information. Use evidence from the book to support your description.

Why do you think the villagers were so reluctant to take Sunflower in? Why do you think Bronze's family decided to take her in?

Write a book report on *Bronze and Sunflower*. Write about if you enjoyed the book, using evidence from the text to support your evaluation. Make a recommendation about who would be interested in this book and draw connections to similar or related books.

Narrative pyramid

Bronze and Sunflower unfolds in chronological order, which works well for studying story structure. One graphic organiser that links character and actions is a narrative pyramid. You can find templates for one on the Internet or have students create their own. A narrative pyramid has eight lines, with its words centred to resemble a pyramid. Each line contains one more word than the line above it, in this order:

- line 1: the main character's name
- line 2: two words that describe the character
- line 3: three words that describe the book's setting
- line 4: four words that describe the character's main conflict
- line 5: five words that describe a key event in the story's plot
- line 6: six words that describe another key event
- line 7: seven words that describe a third key event
- line 8: eight words that describe how the character's conflict is resolved.

After students have completed their pyramids, invite them to decorate their papers and share them with the class.

Readers' Theatre

Have students work in small groups to dramatise a scene from the book. First they should find a passage with a lot of dialogue. Then they need to convert the passage to a script with a short introduction to set the scene. The parts that aren't dialogue should be assigned to a narrator who gives the introduction, explains action if necessary, and helps with transitions. After students have written and edited the script, have them choose roles and practice delivering their lines. They can then perform for the rest of the class, with or without props.

Geography

Write a description of the land based on how the author describes the environment. Make a collage of images that you think represent the author's description of the land. How do the features of the environment affect the residents of the area?

Look up Damaidi on Google Maps or in an atlas. Where is it? What language do people speak there?