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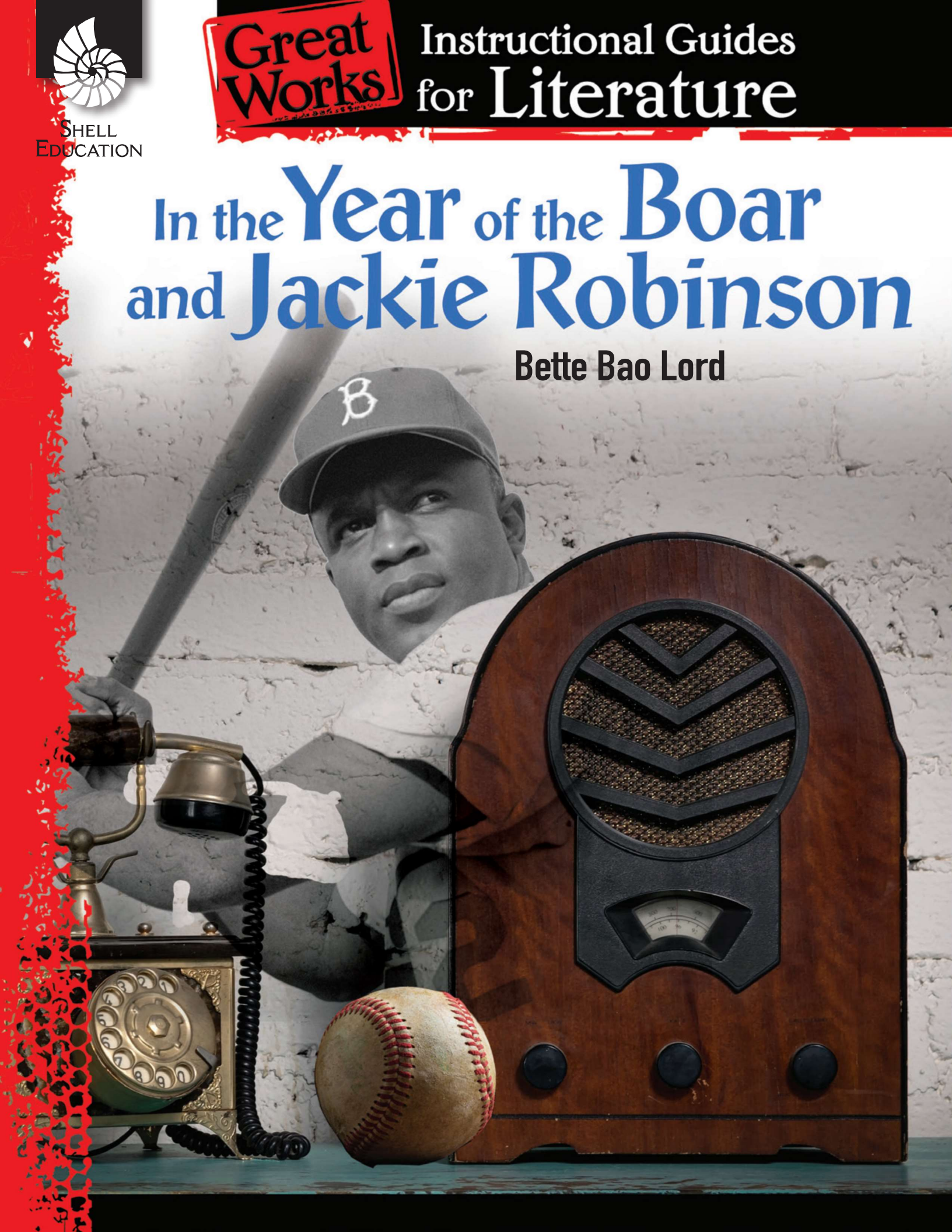
Great Works Instructional Guides for Literature

In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson

Bette Bao Lord



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How to Use This Literature Guide

Today's standards demand rigor and relevance in the reading of complex texts. The units in this series guide teachers in a rich and deep exploration of worthwhile works of literature for classroom study. The most rigorous instruction can also be interesting and engaging!

Many current strategies for effective literacy instruction have been incorporated into these instructional guides for literature. Throughout the units, text-dependent questions are used to determine comprehension of the book as well as student interpretation of the vocabulary words. The books chosen for the series are complex exemplars of carefully crafted works of literature. Close reading is used throughout the units to guide students toward revisiting the text and using textual evidence to respond to prompts orally and in writing. Students must analyze the story elements in multiple assignments for each section of the book. All of these strategies work together to rigorously guide students through their study of literature.

The next few pages will make clear how to use this guide for a purposeful and meaningful literature study. Each section of this guide is set up in the same way to make it easier for you to implement the instruction in your classroom.

Theme Thoughts

The great works of literature used throughout this series have important themes that have been relevant to people for many years. Many of the themes will be discussed during the various sections of this instructional guide. However, it would also benefit students to have independent time to think about the key themes of the novel.

Before students begin reading, have them complete *Pre-Reading Theme Thoughts* (page 13). This graphic organizer will allow students to think about the themes outside the context of the story. They'll have the opportunity to evaluate statements based on important themes and defend their opinions. Be sure to have students keep their papers for comparison to the *Post-Reading Theme Thoughts* (page 59). This graphic organizer is similar to the pre-reading activity. However, this time, students will be answering the questions from the point of view of one of the characters in the novel. They have to think about how the character would feel about each statement and defend their thoughts. To conclude the activity, have students compare what they thought about the themes before they read the novel to what the characters discovered during the story.

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How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Vocabulary

Each teacher reference vocabulary overview page has definitions and sentences about how key vocabulary words are used in the section. These words should be introduced and discussed with students. Students will use these words in different activities throughout the book.

On some of the vocabulary student pages, students are asked to answer text-related questions about vocabulary words from the sections. The following question stems will help you create your own vocabulary questions if you'd like to extend the discussion.

- How does this word describe _____'s character?
- How does this word connect to the problem in this story?
- How does this word help you understand the setting?
- Tell me how this word connects to the main idea of this story.
- What visual pictures does this word bring to your mind?
- Why do you think the author used this word?

At times, you may find that more work with the words will help students understand their meanings and importance. These quick vocabulary activities are a good way to further study the words.

- Students can play vocabulary concentration. Make one set of cards that has the words on them and another set with the definitions. Then, have students lay them out on the table and play concentration. The goal of the game is to match vocabulary words with their definitions. For early readers or English language learners, the two sets of cards could be the words and pictures of the words.
- Students can create word journal entries about the words. Students choose words they think are important and then describe why they think each word is important within the book. Early readers or English language learners could instead draw pictures about the words in a journal.
- Students can create puppets and use them to act out the vocabulary words from the stories. Students may also enjoy telling their own character-driven stories using vocabulary words from the original stories.

How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Analyzing the Literature

After you have read each section with students, hold a small-group or whole-class discussion. Provided on the teacher reference page for each section are leveled questions. The questions are written at two levels of complexity to allow you to decide which questions best meet the needs of your students. The Level 1 questions are typically less abstract than the Level 2 questions. These questions are focused on the various story elements, such as character, setting, and plot. Be sure to add further questions as your students discuss what they've read. For each question, a few key points are provided for your reference as you discuss the book with students.

Reader Response

In today's classrooms, there are often great readers who are below average writers. So much time and energy is spent in classrooms getting students to read on grade level that little time is left to focus on writing skills. To help teachers include more writing in their daily literacy instruction, each section of this guide has a literature-based reader response prompt. Each of the three genres of writing is used in the reader responses within this guide: narrative, informative/explanatory, and opinion. Before students write, you may want to allow them time to draw pictures related to the topic.

Guided Close Reading

Within each section of this guide, it is suggested that you closely reread a portion of the text with your students. Page numbers are given, but since some versions of the books may have different page numbers, the sections to be reread are described by location as well. After rereading the section, there are a few text-dependent questions to be answered by students.

Working space has been provided to help students prepare for the group discussion. They should record their thoughts and ideas on the activity page and refer to it during your discussion. Rather than just taking notes, you may want to require students to write complete responses to the questions before discussing them with you.

Encourage students to read one question at a time and then go back to the text and discover the answer. Work with students to ensure that they use the text to determine their answers rather than making unsupported inferences. Suggested answers are provided in the answer key.

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How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Guided Close Reading *(cont.)*

The generic open-ended stems below can be used to write your own text-dependent questions if you would like to give students more practice.

- What words in the story support . . . ?
- What text helps you understand . . . ?
- Use the book to tell why _____ happens.
- Based on the events in the story, . . . ?
- Show me the part in the text that supports . . . .
- Use the text to tell why . . . .

Making Connections

The activities in this section help students make cross-curricular connections to mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, or other curricular areas. These activities require higher-order thinking skills from students but also allow for creative thinking.

Language Learning

A special section has been set aside to connect the literature to language conventions. Through these activities, students will have opportunities to practice the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation.

Story Elements

It is important to spend time discussing what the common story elements are in literature. Understanding the characters, setting, plot, and theme can increase students' comprehension and appreciation of the story. If teachers begin discussing these elements in early childhood, students will more likely internalize the concepts and look for the elements in their independent reading. Another very important reason for focusing on the story elements is that students will be better writers if they think about how the stories they read are constructed.

In the story elements activities, students are asked to create work related to the characters, setting, or plot. Consider having students complete only one of these activities. If you give students a choice on this assignment, each student can decide to complete the activity that most appeals to him or her. Different intelligences are used so that the activities are diverse and interesting to all students.

Vocabulary Overview

Key words and phrases from this section are provided below with definitions and sentences about how the words are used in the story. Introduce and discuss these important vocabulary words with students. If you think these words or other words in the story warrant more time devoted to them, there are suggestions in the introduction for other vocabulary activities (page 5).

Word	Definition	Sentence about Text
patriarch	oldest male member of a group or family	Bandit's **patriarch**, her grandfather, lets her pick her own American name even though she is a child.
scowled	made a frowning expression of displeasure	Bandit **scowls** at her cousin because she doesn't agree.
brazier	a pan for holding burning coals	The room grows cold as the coals in the **brazier** burn out.
harmony	pleasing or suitable arrangement of parts; agreement; accord	Grandmother believes that everything should be in **harmony** to welcome the new year.
summoned	called or sent for in order to meet	Grandmother **summons** Bandit to her quarters because she has something to tell her.
abacus	an instrument for making calculations by sliding beads along rods or in groves	Uncle uses the **abacus** beads to figure out his accounts.
mourners	people displaying signs of grief or sorrow for a death	The family cries like **mourners** because Bandit and her mother decide to move to America.
relented	became less severe, harsh, or strict	Grand-grand Aunt has never **relented** or forgiven her husband for making fun of her.
clan	a group of persons united by a common interest or ancestor	Bandit's grandfather is the head of the Bao family **clan**.
delicacies	something to eat that is rare or luxurious	Servants circle the floor with drinks and **delicacies**.

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Name _____ Date _____

Vocabulary Activity

Directions: Choose four words that you feel are the most important in understanding the chapter. Write each word in a box below. Under each word, draw a picture to help you remember and understand the meaning of the word as it is used in the text.

Words from the Story

patriarch	scowled	brazier	harmony	summoned
abacus	mourners	relented	clan	delicacies

Word: _____	Word: _____
Word: _____	Word: _____

Name _____ Date _____

Guided Close Reading

Closely reread the section that starts with, "I was wondering about your freckles . . . ." Continue until, "Who asked *you*?"

Directions: Think about these questions. In the space below, write ideas as you think about the answers. Be ready to share your answers.

1. What does the author want readers to understand about the Chinese New Year traditions? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. How does Bandit react when called up by her grandfather? What does this tell you about their relationship?

3. What is the purpose of the details about the relationship between Grand-grand Uncle and his wife?

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Name _____ Date _____

Story Elements–Character

Directions: Pick a character from the book, and write a poem about the character using details from the book. Use the diagram to help you write your poem.

Father	Joseph	Señora Rodriguez
Mother	Toscanini	Mrs. Rappaport

_____
name of character

_____ _____
2 words describing the character

_____ _____ _____
3 words describing a setting that includes the character

_____ _____ _____ _____
4 words describing an event in the story that involves the character

_____
repeat the name of character