

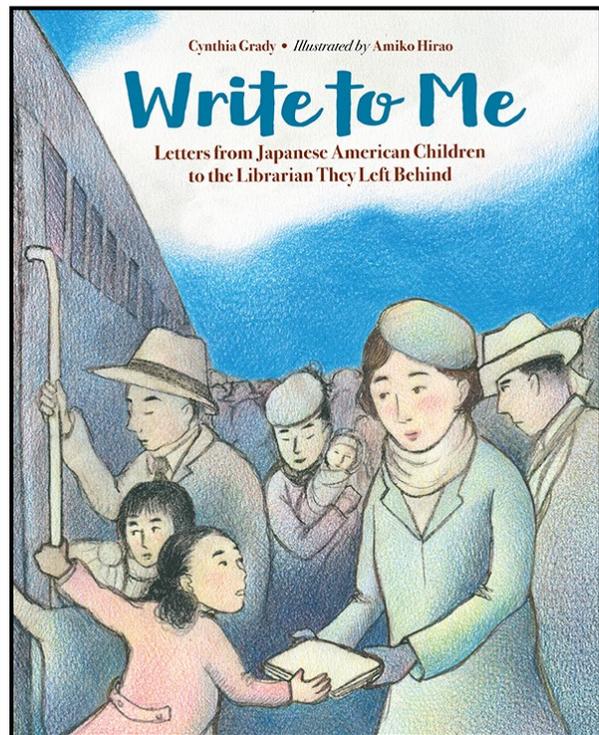
Discussion points, activities, and writing prompts to help educators use
*Write to Me: Letters from Japanese American Children
to the Librarian They Left Behind*

About the Book

★ “A beautiful picture book for sharing and discussing with older children as well as the primary audience.”
— *Booklist*, starred review

A touching story about Japanese American children who corresponded with their beloved librarian while they were imprisoned in World War II internment camps.

When Executive Order 9066 is enacted after the attack at Pearl Harbor, children's librarian Clara Breed's young Japanese American patrons are to be sent to prison camp. Before they are moved, Breed asks the children to write her letters and gives them books to take with them. Through the three years of their internment, the children correspond with Miss Breed, sharing their stories, providing feedback on books, and creating a record of their experiences. Using excerpts from children's letters held at the Japanese American National Museum, author Cynthia Grady presents a difficult subject with honesty and hope.



978-1-58089-688-7
E-book editions available

Aligned to the Common Core State Standards Grades 1-2

About the Author & Illustrator



Cynthia Grady grew up in California. After teaching 6th grade for several years, she relocated to Boston to study children's literature. Cynthia knew she wanted to write the night she sat surrounded by her eight siblings listening to her grandmother read *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. She is the author of *Like a Bird: The Art of the American Slave Song* (Millbrook Press) and *I Lay My Stitches Down: Poems of American Slavery* (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers). Cynthia lives in New Mexico with her partner and two house rabbits. Visit Cynthia online at cynthiagrady.com

Amiko Hirao earned a degree in art history in her native Japan, and later graduated from Rhode Island School of Design. She is the illustrator of children's books, including *Tulip at the Bat* (Little, Brown) by J. Patrick Lewis, *How the Fisherman Tricked the Genie* (Aladdin) by Christopher Sunami, and *All Aboard* (Little, Brown) by Mary Lyn Ray. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Common Core Alignment for Grades 1-2

Grade 1: ELA. RI.1.1-4, 6-8, 10

Grade 2: ELA. RI.2.1-4, 6-8, 10

Discussion

1. In your own words, who was Clara Breed and what was her lasting impact?
2. What happened on December 8, 1941?
3. What was Executive Order 9066, when was it signed, and who signed it?
4. Where did the idea for the Executive Order come from? How was it born?
5. Approximately how many Japanese Americans were imprisoned between 1942 and 1945?
6. Of those who were interred, what percentage were children?
7. Name the five United States that were most directly impacted by Executive Order 9066.
8. Aside from writing to the interred children and bringing them books, what else did Clara Breed do to raise national awareness of the treatment of Japanese Americans?
9. Clara had to do some detective work to find out where the holding centers were. Where were they? And where was the prison camp everyone was transferred to?
10. Name three injustices Clara's children had to deal with when they arrived at the prison camp.
11. Aside from books and letters, what else did Clara send to the children to keep their minds off of things?
12. When was Executive Order 9066 officially rescinded? Who rescinded it?
13. What commission did President Jimmy Carter establish in 1980 and what was the goal of the commission?
14. When Japanese Americans were finally released from the prison camps, what was the new problem that faced them?
15. Approximately how many children in total corresponded with Clara while Executive Order 9066 was in effect?
16. What were families allowed to bring with them to the internment camps?
17. When did the US government officially apologize to the Japanese Americans?
18. What did every imprisoned person have to wear while traveling?

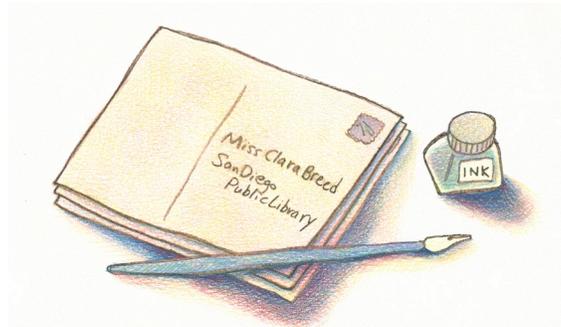
Activity

Every year to mark Human Rights Day on December 10, hundreds of thousands of people around the world send letters and sign online petitions on behalf of someone they've never met, as part of Amnesty International's program Write for Rights.

These messages help convince government officials to release "prisoners of conscience" (people imprisoned for expressing their opinions), support human rights defenders, stop torture, commute death sentences, and end other human rights abuses.

Letter writing has always been at the heart of Amnesty International's human rights campaigning, and now that you've read *Write to Me* and learned what Japanese Americans unjustly experienced, it's your turn to give back and help someone else! Consider writing a letter to someone unjustly imprisoned who deserve freedom and the power to have their say.

Find more information on how you can participate here: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/write-for-rights/>



Learn More

Find out more about Executive Order 9066 and how it impacted hundreds of thousands of Japanese Americans by reading the following books:

Bunting, Eve. *So Far from the Sea*. New York: Clarion, 1998.

Lee-Tai, Amy. *A Place Where Sunflowers Grow*. New York: Children's Book Press, 2006.

Mochizuki, Ken. *Baseball Saved Us*. New York: Lee & Low, 1993.

Moss, Marissa. *Barbed Wire Baseball: How One Man Brought Hope to the Japanese Internment Camps of WWII*. New York: Abrams, 2013.

Uchida, Yoshiko. *The Bracelet*. New York: Philomel, 1993.

Yamasaki, Katie. *Fish for Jimmy*. New York: Holiday House, 2013.