



TeachersFirst **READING TREKS**

Hotel on the Corner Of Bitter and Sweet

[TeachersFirst Reading Treks Link](#)

Synopsis of Book

This historical fiction novel, set in the 1980s, has flashbacks to the 1940s. As an adult, Henry, a Chinese-American living in Seattle, comes across some belongings in the Panama Hotel that belonged to Japanese-American families who were sent to internment camps during WWI. In flashbacks, Henry remembers his friendship with a Japanese-American girl named Keiko. When Keiko's family moves to a different internment camp, Henry goes to look for her with the help of his friend Sheldon, an African-American musician who plays in Seattle's jazz clubs. In the 1980s, Marty, Henry's son, decides to help Henry find out what happened to Keiko, which leads to a journey to New York City.

Using a TeachersFirst Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks are a way of creating a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this Instructional Guide and the accompanying Reading Trek as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Grade Level & Content Areas

Grades 9-12 English Language Arts, English, reading, literature, social studies, including history and geography. RL=7 Lexile = 850

Common Core State Standards for MS/HS

Reading

- **Informational Text** (key ideas and details and craft and structure)
- **Literature** (key ideas and details and craft and structure)

Writing

- **Text Types and purposes**
- **Research** (to build and present knowledge)

ISTE: Student Standards

(1) Empowered Learner: Students leverage technology to take an active role in choosing, achieving and demonstrating competency in their learning goals, informed by the learning sciences.

(3) Knowledge Constructor: Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.

(6) Creative Communicator: Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals.

Using the Reading Trek in Class

This title has a particularly strong place, time, and setting which are critical to the author's plot and theme and are reflected in the Reading Trek.

1. Using the Reading Trek, explore the time periods of the book, 1940s & 1980s. In large or small groups, have students work through the 1940s and 1980s layers.
 - a. As they visit the website, have them make comparisons of life in the 40s, the 80s, and now using a chart with categories of their choosing, e.g., clothing, architecture, and transportation.
 - b. Ask students to discuss or write a response about what life was like for Henry and Keiko during WWII in Seattle.
2. In the 1940s layer, have students explore the following:
 - a. Have students read the primary source document "Executive Order 9066" and think about how the order affected Japanese-Americans in the U.S.
 - b. Go through the Internment Camps links. Explore what life was like in the camps. Have students create diaries of a week in the camps.
3. In the Jazz and African American life layer.
 - a. Contrast the life of the African-Americans in Seattle to the lives of the Chinese-Americans and Japanese-Americans in the 1940s layer.
 - b. Research and discuss the issues of immigration and racism in that period.

- c. Listen to some jazz music and discuss the importance of music in the characters' lives.
4. Explore the important places in the story using the map. Discuss geography and climate and measure distances.
5. Book and author information.
 - a. Vocabulary. Use the link to take a quiz on words from the story.
 - b. Author information. Read about the author's life and family. Why did Jamie Ford choose this topic for his book?
 - c. Questions, quotations and writing prompts. Use some of the prompts linked in the Reading Trek for writing assignment prompts.

Additional Activities

1. Introduce the book to the whole class using an interactive whiteboard.
2. Have students research more about the book using the Reading Trek as a web quest.
3. Use the Reading Trek for stimulating discussion, asking questions, or writing prompts.
4. As an assignment, have small groups create their own Reading Treks using Google Maps of the book or a particular passage or topic from the book.
5. As research resources for the class, students, individually or in groups, can create Google Maps about historical events and people.
6. Additional material to explore would be information about the author, places in the story, characters, important events, discussion questions, related reading or read-alikes.
7. Have students, individually or in small groups, create videos or slideshows about life during the time periods covered.

Helpful Resources

- [Lit Lovers Guide to the Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet](#)
- [Reading Guide to the Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet on Jamie Ford's Website](#)
- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst's Pearl Harbor and World War II Resources](#)
- [OK2Ask: Mapping Across Content Areas with Google Maps Webinar Archive](#)