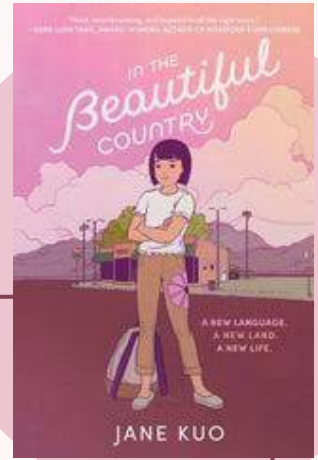


# In the Beautiful Country Educator's Guide



1

This book is a novel in verse, which means that the story is told through a series of poems. How does reading short, succinct poems add to or take away from the reading experience?

2

Anna, the main character, reveals that “beautiful country” is the Chinese name for America. Do you think “In the Beautiful Country” is a good title for this story? Why or why not?

3

After arriving in America, Anna states (pg. 34), “here, in the land of more, our world is so small.” What might she be referring to? What are some examples of how America is “the land of more” and what are some examples of how Anna’s world is now “so small”?

4

The poem “Ghost” (page 41) is about an incident that occurs on Anna’s third day in America. Sometimes authors leave out certain facts, so the reader can infer what is happening in the story for themselves. In your own words, describe the situation Anna finds herself in and summarize the order of events in this poem.

5

Towards the end of the novel, Anna ponders the words, “Be kind. Hold on. Let go.” Cite examples of how she does all three.

6

In the beginning of the novel, we meet Anna as she and her mother are preparing to leave for America. Anna is tasked with the job of sorting through all of her stuff and deciding if an item goes in the giveaway pile, the trash can or the suitcase. Pretend that you are moving to a faraway place and you have to sort through all your belongings, just like Anna did. Choose three items you placed in the giveaway pile and write about why you decided to give them away. Or choose three items you placed in the suitcase and write about why you put those items in the suitcase.

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7

Do you have any family stories of how you or your ancestors immigrated to America?

8

Ma gives Anna some advice about how to make friends. She said, "The secret to making friends is not to care so much about what other people think." and "The secret to getting people to like you is to like yourself." What do you think of Ma's advice? Do you agree or disagree and why? Now come up with your own piece of advice about the secret to making friends.

9

The word "home" is mentioned 20 times in the novel. Make a list of how Anna's understanding of home changes throughout the story.

10

The author Jane Kuo has stated that *In the Beautiful Country* is based on her life and that Terry and Don really did exist. Does knowing that the story is true add or detract from your enjoyment of the novel? Why?

