

## IN-CLASS INTRODUCTION

This lesson is designed to provide students with a one-class introduction to the book. The lesson can be used to start off a class reading of the text, or to encourage them to read it independently.

**As a recipient of One Book resources, the Free Library requires that you devote one class period to introducing *The Buddha in the Attic* to students, either using this lesson or your own plan.**

Like the essential questions, these activities emphasize both the literary and historical aspects of the book – feel free to use one or both sets of activities.

### Literary Intro

1. Ask students: what groups are you a part of? Brainstorm these ideas on the board. Try to get students to think of as many angles as possible: sports teams, friend circles, and other groups they chose might be obvious to them. What groups are they a part of without choosing to be?
2. On paper, give students 5-10 minutes to describe that group, starting with the word “we” – and without just telling us who “we” are. What do “we” do? What do “we” represent? What do “we” sound like? (Remind them, if necessary, that this is the first person plural.)
3. Give students a chance to trade papers with a partner and/or read their works to the class. Can students correctly identify which group is being described? How do they know?
4. Without handing out books to the group, read them the first paragraph from *The Buddha in the Attic*. (“On the boat, we were mostly virgins.”) Do they know who the “we” is in this story? How? Key connections include kimonos, rice, hair color, and the sea.
5. Hand out or project the picture of the “Picture Brides” (included on the next pages.) When do they think this photo was taken? How do they know?
6. Distribute books and continue reading the first chapter. Many, many questions are posed in this section; feel free to try and answer them. See the discussion questions in this packet for more prompts.

### Historical Info

1. Ask students: What do you know about Japan? Brainstorm these ideas – if students need help separating fact from fiction, put ideas up on the board; if not, have them work in pairs or small groups, and then share out their lists.

2. Distribute or project the two images of the “Picture Brides.” Ask them to theorize: when were these pictures taken? And what’s going on here?
3. Keep the pictures visible, and read students the first paragraph of *The Buddha in the Attic* (“On the boat, we were mostly virgins.”) What do they think about them women now? This activity can be repeated for the first few paragraphs of the book, until students are getting their minds around the situation.
4. Distribute books as well as maps of Japan (included on the next pages). As students get to the section naming different places in Japan, ask them to locate them on the map. Which have they heard of, and which are new?
5. Give extra time to discussing the view of Americans on page 7. Why do the Japanese women think this way? In what ways are their beliefs accurate, and in what ways not? Are they right to believe that their lives will be better in America?
6. See the discussion questions section of this packet for more prompts.



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*For the “Traitors” and “Last Day” chapter, students can look at this photograph of a Japanese family checking into an internment camp in California. The boy in the photo is author Julie Otsuka’s uncle; behind him is her mother, and the couple on the left are her grandparents.*



## Timeline of Japanese Immigration – Adapted from Densho.org

<http://www.densho.org/assets/sharedpages/timeline.asp?section=resources>

**March 26, 1790** - The U.S. Congress, in the Act of March 26, 1790, states that "any alien, being a free white person who shall have resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for a term of two years, may be admitted to become a citizen thereof."

**1891** - Japanese immigrants arrive on the mainland U.S. for work primarily as agricultural laborers.

**June 27, 1894** - A U.S. district court rules that Japanese immigrants cannot become citizens because they are not "a free white person" as the Naturalization Act of 1790 requires.

**May 7, 1900** - The first large-scale anti-Japanese protest in California is held, organized by various labor groups.

**October 11, 1906** - The San Francisco Board of Education passes a resolution to segregate children of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean ancestry from the majority population.

**1908** - Japan and the U.S. agree (Gentlemen's Agreement) to halt the migration of Japanese laborers in the United States. Japanese women are allowed to immigrate if they are wives of U.S. residents. Using this loophole, "Picture Brides" begin to arrive in the United States.

**1913** - California passes the Alien Land Law, forbidding "all aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning land. This later grew to include prohibition on leasing land as well, and 12 other states adopted similar laws.

**1920** - Japanese American farmers produce \$67 million dollars worth of crops, more than ten percent of California's total crop value. There are 111,000 Japanese Americans in the U.S., 82,000 are immigrants and 29,000 were born in the U.S.

**July 19, 1921** - White vigilantes deport 58 Japanese laborers from Turlock, California, driving them out by truck at gunpoint. Other incidents occur across California and in Oregon and Arizona.

**November 13, 1922** - The United States Supreme Court rules on the *Ozawa* case, reaffirming the ban on Japanese immigrants from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens. This ban would last until 1952.

**1924** - Congress passes the Immigration Act of 1924 effectively ending all Japanese immigration to the U.S.

**November 1941** - A U.S. Intelligence report known as the "Munson Report" commissioned by President Roosevelt concludes that the great majority of Japanese Americans are loyal to the U.S. and do not pose a threat to national security in the event of war with Japan.

**December 7, 1941** - Japan bombs U.S. ships and planes at the Pearl Harbor military base in Hawaii. Over 3,500 servicemen are wounded or killed. Martial law is declared in Hawaii.

The FBI begins arresting Japanese immigrants identified as community leaders: priests, Japanese language teachers, newspaper publishers, and heads of organizations. Within 48 hours, 1,291 are arrested. Most of these men would be incarcerated for the duration of the war, separated from their families.

**February 19, 1942** - President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066 authorizing military authorities to exclude civilians from any area without trial or hearing. The order did not specify Japanese Americans--but they were the only group to be imprisoned as a result of it.

**March 1942** - The Wartime Civil Control Administration opens 16 "Assembly Centers" to detain approximately 92,000 men, women, and children until the permanent incarceration camps are completed.

**January 1944** - The War Department imposes the draft on Japanese American men, including those incarcerated in the camps. The vast majority comply, a few hundred resist and are brought up on federal charges. Most of the resisters are imprisoned in a federal penitentiary.

**August 6, 1945** - The U.S. drops the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Three days later, a second bomb is dropped on Nagasaki. Japan surrenders on August 14.

**August 1945** - Some 44,000 people still remain in the camps. Many have nowhere to go, having lost their homes and jobs. Many are afraid of anti-Japanese hostility and refuse to leave.

**1948** - President Truman signs the Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act. Approximately \$38 million was paid from this act, only a small fraction of the estimated loss in income and property.

**1983** - The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians issues its report, *Personal Justice Denied*, on February 24 and its *Recommendations*, on June 16. The *Recommendations* call for a presidential apology and a \$20,000 payment to each of the approximately 60,000 surviving persons excluded from their places of residence pursuant to Executive Order 9066.

**1983 - 1988** - The wartime convictions of Gordon Hirabayashi, Minoru Yasui, and Fred Korematsu (the three men who protested the curfew and/or incarceration orders) are vacated ("nullified") on the basis of newly discovered evidence that the U.S. military lied to the Supreme Court in the original proceedings.

**August 10, 1988** - President Ronald Reagan signs HR 442 into law. It acknowledges that the incarceration of more than 110,000 individuals of Japanese descent was unjust, and offers an apology and reparation payments of \$20,000 to each person incarcerated.

**October 9, 1990** - In a Washington D.C. ceremony, the first nine redress payments are made.