

STUART LITTLE - STUDY GUIDE



Meet the Author

E.B. White (1899-1985) is a beloved children's book author. It all began with *Stuart Little*, his first book for children. The book became an instant favorite.

White's second book for children, *Charlotte's Web*, became one of the most popular children's books of all time. White and his wife lived on a farm in Maine with several farm animals. In addition to writing children's books, White wrote books for adults, as well as poems and essays for a magazine called *The New Yorker*.

Why He Wrote It

White had a pet mouse when he was a small boy. He was the youngest of six children, a shy, affectionate, and private child. He also had a nose for poking into things and an eye for capturing and keeping what he saw – almost like a mouse! The idea for the character of Stuart Little, a boy who looks like a mouse, came to White in a dream.

"Many years ago," White said, "I went to bed one night in a railway sleeping car, and during the night I dreamed about a tiny boy who acted rather like a mouse. That's how the story of Stuart Little got started."

He wrote a few stories about Stuart Little and tucked them into a drawer. He thought he might someday share them with his nieces and nephews. Twenty years later, White returned to those stories and had them published as a book for young readers.

The story is told in "episodes," small happenings in a much bigger story. This approach allows Stuart to have adventures with different characters in different places. In each episode, Stuart learns something new – and we learn something new about Stuart.

Readers would often ask White if the Stuart Little stories were true. White answered, "No, they are imaginary tales... But real life is only one kind of life — there is also the life of the imagination." Readers also asked White why the ending of *Stuart Little* is so open-ended, and he said that Stuart's journey is the same as everyone's journey, always in search of what is perfect and hard to reach.



Friendship and Transformation

Transformation

Theater Games: Changing all the time!

Teachers: The four friends in *Nothing is the Same* are forced to deal with everything changing. Use these theater games to explore the concept of transformation with your classmates

Object Transformation

Procedure: Organize your students into a circle. Show a simple object, like a chalkboard eraser. Demonstrate the activity by transforming the eraser into something else simply by the way you use it. For example, it could be a candy bar, a walkie-talkie, or a telescope. Pass the object from student to student, guiding each to “transform” the object into something different than anyone else has done. With each transformation, the other students identify and describe what they see.

Team Charades

Procedure: Organize small groups of 4-5 students to sit in a line on the floor. Place a single object in front of each group. On your cue, one group member at a time transforms the object as other members guess what it has become. When someone guesses correctly, the next member transforms the object into something different from the first. The first group to successfully guess correctly what each member of their group has pantomimed scores a point. Switch objects amongst the groups. Ask students not to repeat ideas from previous objects.

Transformation in *Nothing is the Same*

Teachers: Tell students that transformation happens in *Nothing is the Same* but it doesn’t happen to an object. It happens to a person. Encourage students to be on the lookout for which characters in the play transforms -- and how they change.

Friendship

George, Bobi, Mits, and Daniel are friends in *Nothing is the Same*. But what does it mean to be a friend? Is a friend only someone you play games with? Or is friendship something more? What is the difference between a good friend, a best friend, and an okay-friend? How do you know if you have what it takes to be a good friend?

After the play, try and answer these questions:

- George is a good friend to Bobi when he _____.
- George is a bad friend to Mits when he _____.
- Bobi is a bad friend to George when she _____.
- Bobi is a good friend to Daniel when she _____.
- Mits is a good friend to George when he _____.
- Mits is a bad friend to Bobi when he _____.
- Daniel is a good friend to Geroge when he _____.
- Daniel is a bad friend to Mits when he _____.

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Interactive Exercises

Who am I?

Personal Poster

Before seeing *Nothing is the Same*: Copy and distribute the “A Poster about Me” page. Under each of the headings, “Family,” “Friends,” “Food” and “Fun,” have students create a drawing or a mini-collage that illustrate what makes each area unique to him/her. For example, under “Family,” a student might put a picture of her family, but also an illustration of where her family is from or with “Fun,” or cut out and paste pictures of activities she enjoys. When finished, hang them up around the room as if a museum gallery. Talk a gallery walk. Have everyone try to identify to whom each poster belongs.

Journal Writing

After seeing *Nothing is the Same*, have students write journal entries as if they are one of the characters. Suggested writing prompts include:

For DANIEL: Imagine it is a few days after the bombing of Oah’u. In his journal, Daniel describes what he thinks should happen to Mits and his family. What has Mits done that makes Daniel feel this way? Why does Daniel think that Japanese people are different from Filipinos, Koreans or others?

For GEORGE: Imagine it is the day that Mits asks George to hide the sword and other Japanese objects. George is not sure whether he should do this. Why is he nervous about it? What is he afraid might happen if someone sees him with the sword and other objects? What does he consider doing with the objects? How does he finally make up his mind what to do?

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Compare and Contrast: Headlines and Prejudice



Newspaper Headlines from Honolulu and Washington, D.C.

Since the earliest immigration efforts before the 1900's, people of Asian heritage had been subjected to prejudice and bias in the United States in terms of employment, housing, and social interactions. After the Pearl Harbor bombing, relationships between Americans, Japanese and Japanese Americans became very tense. However, Hawai'i was different. The two newspaper headlines above, one from Honolulu and one from Washington, D.C., offer a sense of those differences.

1. What is the difference between the headlines? Is there a different tone or attitude?
2. What do the headlines suggest about the way the editors feel about the Pearl Harbor attackers?
3. How would each headline make people who read them feel about the Japanese? Would the feeling be the same or different? Why do you feel that way?
4. In *Nothing is the Same*, how did each of the characters feel about the Japanese at the play's beginning? How did each feel after the attack? Why did some of them change their minds?
5. How did Mits, the Japanese American boy, feel about himself at the beginning of the play? How did he feel after the attack? What made him change his feelings about himself?

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A Poster About Me

My name is: _____

FAMILY

FRIENDS

FUN

FOOD

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Post-Show Questions

Questions for Post-Show Discussion

Following the students' experience of this stage production of *Nothing is the Same*, educators might use the following questions to prompt a classroom discussion.

1. How did the play differ from students' expectations or predictions?
2. How did the actors look in terms of their costumes, makeup, or movement? How did the actors handle the roles? How did the stage look in terms of scenery, lighting, and props? How did the play sound to the ear in terms of music, singing, and special effects?
3. What elements of *Nothing is the Same* made it a drama? What elements made it a comedy?
4. The characters in the play speak in Hawai'ian Creole English. What made it difficult to understand the way they were speaking? What made it easy to understand the way they were speaking? At one point did you realize that you had no problem understanding the characters?
5. The characters represent four friends, all eleven years old. How are they the same and how are they different? What efforts are made in the stage production to distinguish the characters, in terms of costuming, lighting, movement, and performance?
6. Who are the "good guys" in the story? Who are the "bad guys" in the story?
7. The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor is a major event in *Nothing is the Same*. How did the stage production create the impression that the attack on Pearl Harbor was happening? How did the design elements – lights, sound, projections, choreography, costumes, etc. – contribute to the impression that the attack had happened?
8. What does the play have to say about the subject of friendship?
9. Who is the most courageous character in *Nothing is the Same*? Why?
10. Do children live in war-time today? How are contemporary children likely to handle war-time?
11. Where are the adults in these children's lives? How much do adults "matter" in a child's life? Or in a kids' world?
12. Compare and contrast the four friends. What traits do they share? How are they distinct and/or different?
13. Strengths and areas for growth: Identify each character's strengths, along with areas for growth.
14. Do you agree with the decisions made by the characters? Would you make different choices?

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Resources

Books

Non-Fiction:

Air Raid – Pearl Harbor! The Story of December 7, 1941 by Theodore Taylor

Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston

Fred Korematsu Speaks Up by Laura Atkins and Stan Yogi

Remember Pearl Harbor: American and Japanese Survivors Tell Their Stories by Thomas B. Allen

Fiction:

Boy at War by Harry Mazer

Early Sunday Morning: The Pearl Harbor Diary of Amber Billows Hawai'i, 1941 by Barry Denenberg

Janey G. Blue, Pearl Harbor, 1941 by Kathleen Duey

Under the Blood-Red Sun by Graham Salisbury

Weedflower by Cynthia Kadohata

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Websites

Interview with Mrs. May Mosebrook

sandysq.gcinet.net/uss_salt_lake_city_ca25/mosebro3.htm

Teacher's Guide "My Story: Pearl Harbor"

teacher.scholastic.com/pearl/tguide.htm

A Unit on the Japanese American Internment

www.csupomona.edu/~tassi/intern.htm

Activities concerning multiculturalism and diversity

www.edchange.org/multicultural

Japanese American Internment - Teacher's Guide Library of Congress

www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/internment/pdf/teacherguide.pdf

KCET Japanese internment in California

www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/national-security-racism-detention-the-relocation-of-californias-Japanese-American

World War II: Internment of Japanese Americans 45 photos The Atlantic Photos of Santa Anita in Arcadia

www.theatlantic.com/photo/2011/08/world-war-ii-internment-of-Japanese-Americans/100132/

A High-School Educator's Curriculum on Hawai'i Internment

www.Hawai'iinternment.org/educators/educators

National Park Service – World War II Valor in the Pacific

www.nps.gov/valr/index.htm

Smithsonian – The Nisei Soldier Congressional Gold Medal

www.cgm.smithsonianapa.org

Online Collection of Letters between San Diego Librarian Clara Breed and Students in Camp

www.janm.org/collections/clara-breed-collection/

Online Course on Teaching Japanese American Incarceration with Primary Sources–Densho

www.densho.org/learning-center/

Five Things To Know About Liliuokalani, the Last Queen of Hawaii – Smithsonian Magazine

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/five-things-know-about-liliuokalani-last-queen-hawaii-180967155/#THV5zk2Tr5YmoJMe.99>

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Explore Los Angeles

For further engagement with the story of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese American internment, and the experience of Asian-American immigrants, students, teachers, and families could visit and explore:

The Japanese American National Museum, located in the Little Tokyo district of downtown Los Angeles, is dedicated to preserving the history and culture of Japanese Americans. The museum covers 130 years of Japanese American history, dating to the first generation of immigrants. It also contains artifacts, textiles, art, photographs, and oral histories of Japanese Americans.

100 North Central Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90012
213.625.0414
<http://www.janm.org/>

The Go For Broke Memorial is located adjacent to the Japanese American National Museum, at the end of North Central Street. The monument honors Japanese Americans who served in the United States Army during World War II.

355 E 1st St Ste 200
Los Angeles, CA 90012
310 328-0907
www.janm.org/exhibits/goforbroke

The Manzanar National Historic Site is located in Independence, CA., within driving distance of Los Angeles. In 1942, the United States government ordered more than 110,000 men, women, and children to leave their homes and detained them in remote, military-style camps. The Manzanar War Relocation Center was one of ten camps where Japanese American citizens and resident Japanese aliens were incarcerated during World War II.

5001 Hwy 395
Independence, CA 93526
760 678-2194
www.nps.gov/manz/index.htm

The Museum of Tolerance is a multimedia museum in Los Angeles, California, designed to examine racism and prejudice around the world with a strong focus on the history of the Holocaust.

9786 W Pico Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035
310 772-2505
www.museumoftolerance.com

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The Korean Bell of Friendship is a massive bronze bell housed in a stone pavilion that was presented by the South Korean government to the United States to celebrate the 1976 bicentennial and to symbolize friendship between the two countries.

Angel's Gate Park
3601 S Gaffey Street
San Pedro, CA 90731
310) 548-7705
www.facebook.com/Korean-Friendship-Bell-258800735999/

The Dawool Jung Korean Pavilion is a traditional Korean gazebo with a garden built by South Korean craftsmen in 2006 as a tribute to the location where Koreatown began in the late 1960s. The title refers to a harmonious gathering place.

Located at the intersection of West Olympic Blvd & Irolo St
Los Angeles, CA 90006
visitkoreatown.org/korean-pavilion-garden-dawooljung/

The Filipino American National Historical Society Museum promotes understanding, education, enlightenment, appreciation, and enrichment through the gathering, identification, preservation, and dissemination of the history and culture of Filipino Americans in the United States.

337 E Weber Ave
Stockton, CA
209-932-9037
[By appointment only]
<http://fanhs-national.org/filam/>

Historic Filipinotown Christmas Parol (Lantern) Parade held in early December in downtown Los Angeles along Union and Temple streets. An iconic symbol of victory of light and hope over darkness during Christmas season in the Philippines, a parol is an ornamental, star-shaped Christmas lantern that is made of bamboo and colorful paper and comes in various sizes and shapes. Parol is a well-known Christmas decoration in the Philippines, as well as in countries where Filipinos live as expatriates.

<https://www.facebook.com/parolparade/>

Festival of Philippine Arts & Culture

Annual festival with food, arts, performances. Held in October in 2017 (location was Echo Park).
<http://www.filamarts.org/>

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Santa Anita Park is a thoroughbred racetrack in Arcadia, California. With its panoramic view of the San Gabriel Mountains, it is one of the world's most beautiful race tracks.

It is also the historic site of the Santa Anita Assembly Center where Japanese residents and Japanese American citizens were processed for "evacuation" during World War II from newly created military zones.

285 W Huntington Drive

Arcadia, CA 91007

626 574-7223

www.santaanita.com

The Goodwill Garden at Sierra Madre Elementary School was originally built by Japanese American students in the 1920's to celebrate a new school building in 1930. In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, the garden was destroyed in an act of hatred toward Japanese Americans. The Japanese garden was rediscovered and restored by students in 1993.

141 West Highland Avenue

Sierra Madre, CA 91024

626 396-5890

The Japanese Garden at Descanso Gardens

The one-acre Japanese-style garden within Descanso Gardens contains a stroll garden, a pond-and-stream garden, a tea garden and teahouse, and a small raked-gravel garden. The gardens were expanded to include a bridge and a small replica of a traditional Japanese farmhouse. Members of the Japanese American community volunteered to complete the construction. The acreage outside the Japanese garden includes the largest collection of camellias, many of which were acquired from Japanese American growers who were forced to leave their West Coast homes and nurseries.

1418 Descanso Drive

La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011

818 949-4200

<https://www.descansogardens.org/>

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The Japanese Garden at the Huntington Botanical Gardens

Built over a century ago, the historic Japanese Garden at the Huntington features a distinctive moon bridge, a drum bridge, koi-filled ponds, a bamboo forest, the historic Japanese House, a walled Zen garden, an expansive bonsai court, and a ceremonial teahouse and tea garden.

1151 Oxford Road

San Marino, CA 91108

626 405-2100

www.huntington.org/JapaneseGarden/

The Storrier Stearns Japanese Garden in Pasadena was created by landscape designer Kinzuchi Fujii (1875-1957), who commenced the project in 1935 and abandoned the endeavor in 1942 due to World War II internment. The garden was named after its first patrons, Charles and Ellamae Storrier Stearns. The park holds a koi pond with koi, a tea house where tea ceremony is regularly held, and aura of equanimity. In 2005, the Garden became a California Historical Landmark and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

270 Arlington Drive

Pasadena, CA 91105

626 399-1721

www.japanesegardenpasadena.com/

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Standards

Here are some of the California state standards that apply to fifth grade students attending this performance of *Nothing is the Same* and doing the activities in this study guide from visual and performing arts. Other grade years are available by visiting: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/thmain.asp>

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre

Students observe their environment and respond, using the elements of theatre. They also observe formal and informal works of theatre, film/video, and electronic media and respond, using the vocabulary of theatre.

Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as sense memory, script, cue, monologue, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist, to describe theatrical experiences.

Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre

1.2 Identify the structural elements of plot (exposition, complication, crisis, climax, and resolution) in a script or theatrical experience.

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre

Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.

Development of Theatrical Skills

2.1 Participate in improvisational activities to explore complex ideas and universal themes in literature and life.

2.2 Demonstrate the use of blocking (stage areas, levels, and actor's position, such as full front, quarter, profile, and full back) in dramatizations.

Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.3 Collaborate as an actor, director, scriptwriter, or technical artist in creating formal or informal theatrical performances.

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre

Students analyze the role and development of theatre, film/video, and electronic media in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting diversity as it relates to theatre.

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Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

- 3.1 Select or create appropriate props, sets, and costumes for a cultural celebration or pageant.
- 3.2 Interpret how theatre and storytelling forms (past and present) of various cultural groups may reflect their beliefs and traditions.

History of Theatre

- 3.3 Analyze ways in which theatre, television, and film play a part in our daily lives.
- 3.4 Identify types of early American theatre, such as melodrama and musical theatre.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing, and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences

Students critique and derive meaning from works of theatre, film/video, electronic media, and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.

Critical Assessment of Theatre

- 4.1 Develop and apply appropriate criteria for critiquing the work of actors, directors, writers, and technical artists in theatre, film, and video.

Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

- 4.2 Describe devices actors use to convey meaning or intent in commercials on television.

5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Theatre, Film/Video, and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to theatre.

Connections and Applications

- 5.1 Use theatrical skills to dramatize events and concepts from other curriculum areas, such as reenacting the signing of the Declaration of Independence in history social science.

Careers and Career-Related Skills

- 5.2 Identify the roles and responsibilities of performing and technical artists in theatre, film, television, and electronic media.