

Read Aloud Guide

Title: *Dear Juno* by Soyung Pak, illustrated by Susan Kathleen Hartung

Best for: K-2nd grade

Summary: Juno is a young boy who often thinks about his grandmother. They have never met because she lives far away in Korea, and he lives in the United States. One day a letter arrives for Juno from his grandmother. He recognizes his name on the envelope but when he opens the letter he realized he cannot read the note because it is written in Korean. However, Juno is able to figure out the meaning of the letter based on the photo and the dried flower included with the letter. Although Juno and his grandmother cannot (yet) communicate with each other in writing, they continue to send pictures and gifts to each other to tell the stories of their lives.

Why we chose this book: We love that this book is about communicating across great distance and also across languages. Even though Juno's grandmother only reads and writes in Korean, and Juno only reads and writes in English, the two are able to communicate with each other through pictures and gifts. We love how the author honors the many ways we can communicate with each other, and highlights the strong bond between Juno and his grandmother. This book illustrates a common experience for many students growing up in one country and having extended family in another country.

Central themes: Multigenerational family life, Korean-American family, language and literacy, communication.

Introducing the book: You can begin by showing the cover, reading the title and author, and then saying something like this:

"This book is about a young boy named Juno who lives here in the United States. His grandmother lives in Korea. He thinks about his grandmother a lot, and they write each other letters."

"Have you ever received a letter in the mail? Have you ever written a letter to someone?"

After Reading: Debrief with students

"Why couldn't Juno read the letter from his grandmother?" (It's written in Korean/he might not be able to read yet.)

"What did Juno learn from the letter? How did he understand his grandmother even though he couldn't read the writing?" (He saw the photo of the cat and he saw the dried flower that she sent him.)

"What did Juno want to say to his grandmother in his letter?" (He wanted to tell her about the swinging tree, his mom and dad and Sam at their house, and the airplanes he sees - maybe he is thinking about visiting his grandmother or having his grandmother visit him.)

"What happens at the end?" (Juno receives another letter from his grandmother and thinks she is coming to visit.)