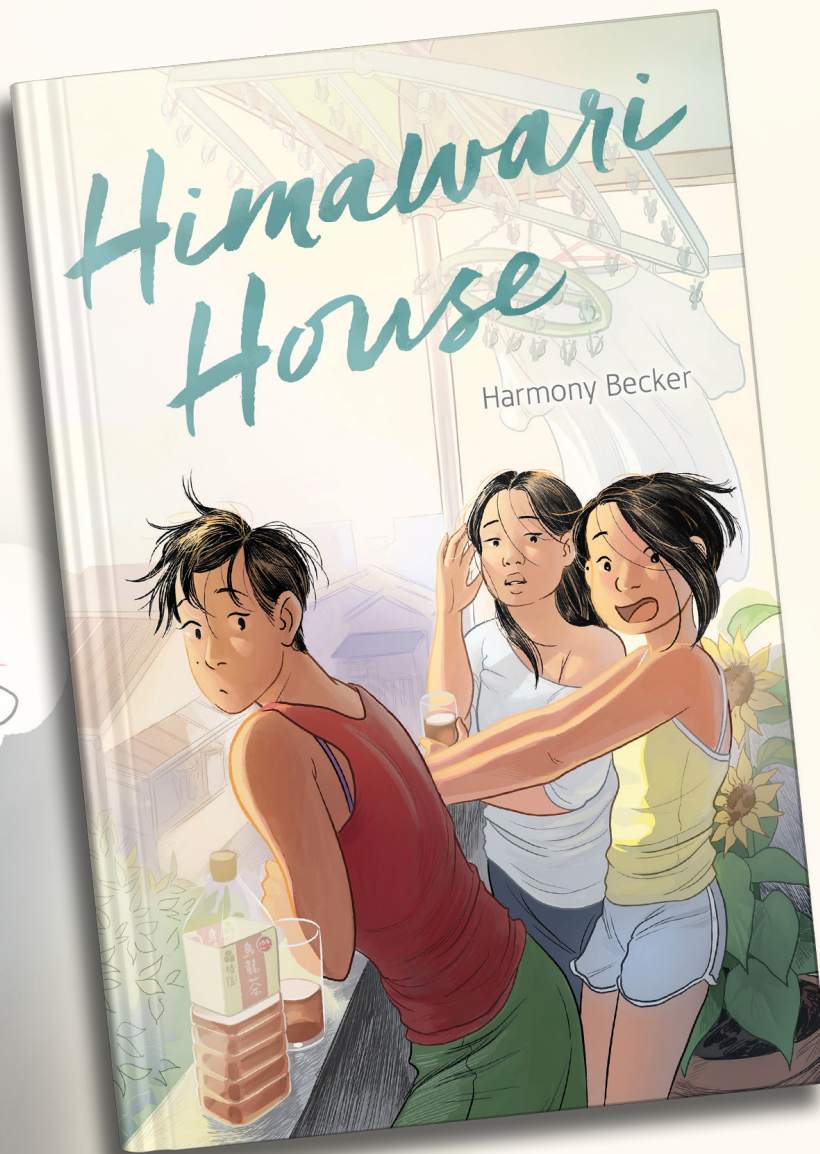


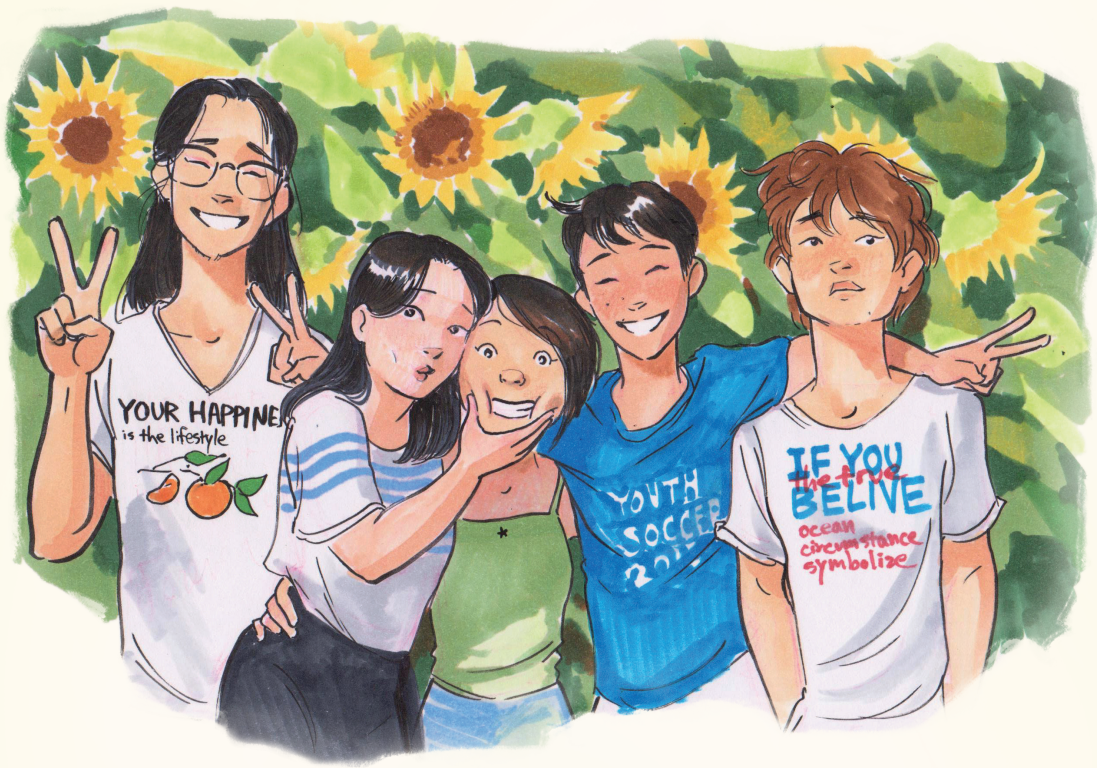
# A Teacher's Guide for Himalwari House

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WINNER: 2022 BOOK OF THE YEAR



## OVERVIEW

Nao has always struggled with her identity and fitting in with those around her. Born in Japan to a Japanese mother and American father—but having spent most of her life in the United States—she journeys back to Japan at the age of nineteen to live for a year and reconnect with her home country. Nao stays at Himawari House—a sharehouse for young international residents who quickly become her new friends and temporary family. Together, they navigate coming-of-age in a foreign country and all of the unfamiliar highs and struggles that come with it, including language barriers, relationships of all types, loneliness, and relentless discovery.

In *Himawari House*, the author and artist Harmony Becker invites us to know Nao and her roommates on deeply intimate levels as she reveals their deepest complexities, joys, and insecurities. Illustrated in a manga-like style with artistic eccentricities that highlight each character's inner thoughts, Becker creates fully realized characters who grapple with the trails of young adulthood and figuring out their place in a new country and the world. Diasporic experiences are treated with humor and nuance, and Becker uses Nao, Tina, and Hyejung to dissect the complexities of language and human relationships. *Himawari House* will connect with any reader who has walked the path of young adulthood and self-discovery, but it speaks especially closely to those who have left home and learned to make a new one.



# THEMES

## Coming-of-Age and Finding Your Identity

While Nao, Tina, and Hyejung all have different reasons for coming to Japan, they have one underlying motivation in common: to discover more about themselves and their place in the broader world. The girls share the normal coming-of-age struggles, such as new jobs, romantic and familial relationships, and identifying exactly what they want to do with their futures—but with the added complexities of being away from their families and attempting to conquer a foreign language. Specifically, Nao grapples with her biracial identity and finding her place in either community. Through clothing, food, jobs, relationships, and hardships, the residents of Himawari House not only uncover their true selves but also take an active role in forming their new and authentic identities.

## Exploration and Discovery

Nao, Tina, and Hyejung are discontent staying in their home countries and thirst for new experiences. Throughout their time in Japan, they seek out new experiences, food, and relationships as they discover the intricacies of a new culture. Even when they are not actively exploring, discovery can sometimes be thrust upon them. The residents of Himawari House take pieces of each new discovery, adding them to their knowledge and identities, ultimately helping themselves navigate a foreign world.

## Language

*Himawari House* explores the complexities of language against the background of the residents' discoveries and the challenges of being immersed in Japanese—a language that each character has a unique relationship with. Nao arrives in Japan with basic skills for speaking Japanese. The more she learns, however, the more she discovers how cultures communicate in entirely different ways. At one point, Nao notes that “English is unafraid, English is the barefoot leap into cold water. Japan rations words like sugar in a war, sprinkling the tiny crystals lightly onto their intentions and folding them up small and quiet.” Through the main characters' ignorance of cultural communication practices, Becker puts all language and communication—spoken and unspoken—under a microscope, analyzing methods, practices, and effects.

## East Asian Cultures

*Himawari House* is a celebration of Japan and other East Asian communities. While the house residents immerse themselves in Japanese life and culture, they also learn about each other's customs, cooking Korean food, celebrating Chinese holidays, and more. Beyond these concrete representations, more elusive cultural themes are explored, such as societal expectations, familial relationships, and rules for interacting with the community. The residents are constantly surprised by the cultural idiosyncrasies they each bring to the house, but they revel in learning more about one another's deeply ingrained habits and practices.

## Family

The residents of Himawari House leave behind their given families for a journey of self-discovery, but they form a new family in the process. For Nao, Tina, and Hyejung, connections with their birth families carry the weight of cultural expectations—as well as a nostalgia for home and childhood. As they immerse themselves in Japan, however, the girls turn to one another for support, community, and laughter. For each of them, Himawari House becomes a home filled with a new kind of family that feels safe, enriching, and real, no matter how temporary.

## Home, Nostalgia, and Diaspora

The Himawari House residents struggle with the concept of “home.” Is it the place they come from, a place where their given or self-made family resides, or somewhere in between? Or is home just a feeling? Nao feels a nostalgia for her home in Japan, which fuels her desire to travel there. Although she dreams of her relatives’ house from her childhood, she grows to think of Himawari House as home. Hyejung is nostalgic for her former home but has no desire to return to it. Each character must grapple with their diasporic experience, having left their home countries for the unknown and uncomfortable. Can a place with such challenges feel like home?

## Romantic Connections

As with many young adults, romantic connections are a constant through-line for the Himawari House residents. Unlike many young adults, however, the housemates must navigate these connections with the added complexities of language barriers and cultural ignorance. Becker treats these relationships with honesty and complexity, describing emotions and situations that many young adults can authentically connect with. Even connections that many reduce to frivolity, such as adoration for a pop star, are handled with complexity and nuance.

# CHARACTERS

## Nao

*Himawari House* begins with Nao’s arrival in Japan and ends with her return to the United States. While the book has many chapters told from the perspectives of Tina and Hyejung, Nao is the main protagonist. Nao was born in Japan to a Japanese mother and American father, but she moved to the United States as a young child. At the age of 19, Nao decides to defer college for a year to live in Japan and reconnect with her heritage. She struggles with her mixed identity and looks to discover how she fits into the world. Although Nao used to speak Japanese as a child, she only remembers the basics, and she studies Japanese while staying at Himawari House.

## Hyejung

Hyejung is from South Korea, but she has lived at Himawari House for some time before Nao arrives. Hyejung struggles to answer the question of why she came to Japan in the first place, and she struggles with her relationship to home, but she nonetheless enjoys discovering herself away from her family and previous life. Hyejung speaks accented English and is studying Japanese.

## Tina

Tina, originally from Singapore, is already a Himawari House resident when Nao arrives. Tina is also studying Japanese and works at a local restaurant. She is a bright personality and does not like to show others when she is unhappy. She came to Japan to challenge herself, but she is unsure where that may lead her in the future.

## Shinichi

A Japanese resident of Himawari House, Shinichi sometimes serves as a guide to Japanese culture for Nao, Hyejung, and Tina. Shinichi takes the girls and his brother, Masaki, to festivals and restaurants, and he provides a comforting presence. Shinichi always has a cigarette in hand and speaks Japanese exclusively.

## Masaki

Shinichi's brother, Masaki, struggles with speaking and understanding spoken English, but he desperately wants to learn. His self-consciousness about the subject causes him to come off as reserved—and even rude at times—but he begins to reveal more about himself as Nao teaches him English.

## Obaasan

Referred to as Obaachan by the Himawari House residents, Obaasan (the Japanese word for grandmother or older woman) lives next door to Himawari House. She lives on her own but enjoys the presence of the young international residents of Himawari House.

## Nao's Extended Family

Nao has cousins, an aunt and uncle, and a grandmother in Japan that she visits twice throughout the book. These encounters ground Nao to her roots but also challenge her in new ways. These chapters also serve to measure Nao's growth in between her visits.



## Hyejung's Parents

While Nao, Tina, and Hyejung all struggle with different relationships, including with their families, Hyejung's broken relationship with her parents is central to her struggles and purpose in Japan. Hyejung traveled to Japan against her parents' wishes and has not spoken to them since. Near the end of the book, her mother visits, bringing uneasy emotions to the surface that both women must deal with.

## SETTINGS

### Himawari House

Translated as "Sunflower House," this is where much of the book takes place as the residents get to know one another, share their victories and failures, have meals together, and rest during their time in Tokyo.

### Tokyo Neighborhoods

The Himawari House residents spend much of their time adventuring through Tokyo's nearby festivals, restaurants, shops, parks, and more. Much of the book takes place in various locations around Tokyo that make up the new world the housemates inhabit. These neighborhoods also include Dawson's grocery store where Nao and Hyejung work, and the restaurant where Tina works.

### Haseda Japanese Language Institute

This is the school that Nao, Tina, and Hyejung attend to learn Japanese. As the girls study, they also learn more about themselves and their personal relationships to their homes and languages.

### Nao's Relatives' House

Twice Nao takes a train through the fields of Japan to stay overnight with her Japanese relatives. The memories she has of their house from her childhood inform much of her nostalgia for Japan.

### Various Flashbacks

Throughout *Himawari House*, Becker intersperses flashbacks from earlier parts of Nao, Tina, and Hyejung's lives. These inform each character's history in ways that crucially impact their experiences in Japan. Often these flashbacks are seamlessly integrated with the story, with little initial indication that they are from a previous time period.



## Japanese Vocabulary

*Himawari House* is littered with Japanese words and phrases, as well as various bits of Korean and Singlish (described by Tina as “English but deluxe flavor”). Meanings for many of the words below can be inferred from context clues, although some definitions may be more difficult to pinpoint than others. The list below can be given to students or used as a reference to check against student inferences.

**Bento (pg. 5, 72, 73)**—A Japanese-style packed lunch, consisting of such items as rice, vegetables, and sashimi (raw fish with condiments). (Oxford)

**Himawari (pg. 18)**—Sunflower. (Google Translate)

**Awa Odori (pg. 59)**—The most famous of many dance festivals held across Japan during the Obon season in mid-August. (Japan-guide.com)

**Obaasan/baasan** Grandmother. (Google Translate)

**Baito (pg. 72)**—Part-time job. (Google Translate). \*Author’s note: Short for *arubaito*, which comes from the German *arbeit* and is one example of a loan word from another language, always written in katakana—used to transcribe foreign words into Japanese.)

**Konbini (pg. 73, 312)**—Convenience store. (Google Translate)

**Ohayou (pg. 75)**—Good morning. (Google Translate)

**Mochi (pg. 105)**—A Japanese dessert made of sweet glutinous rice flour. (allrecipes.com)

**Senpai (pg. 121)**—An honorific for an upperclassman or mentor figure. (dictionary.com)

**Shoujo Manga (pg. 56, 143)**—A genre of Japanese comics and animated films aimed primarily at a young female audience, typically characterized by a focus on personal and romantic relationships. (Oxford)

**Tadaima (Pg. 155, 248)**—Now (Google Translate). \*Author’s note: More commonly used as a greeting that one says upon returning home. The typical response is *okaeri* or *okaerinasai*, loosely translating to “You’ve returned.”)

**Aigoo (pg. 149 and 173)**—A Korean exclamation that is similar to the English expressions “Oh,” “Oh dear,” “Oh my,” “Geez,” etc. (learnkorean24.com) \*Author’s note: Hyejung says “*Aigoo, uri Naochan.*” *Uri* means “our” and is used in many situations when other languages would just use “my.” A linguistic example of the collective mentality that is very strong in Korean culture—you’d often say *uri nampyun*, “our husband,” instead of “my husband,” for example.)

**Ojamashimasu (Pg. 202)**—Excuse me (Google Translate). \*Author’s note: Literally translates as “I’m intruding” but is another common phrase, like *tadaima*, *okaeri*, or *itadakimasu*, that is said when entering someone else’s home.)

**Itadakimasu (Pg. 203)**—I’ll enjoy having this (Google Translate). \*Author’s note: A humble way to say “I am receiving this.” This phrase is always said before beginning a meal.)

**Kotatsu (pg. 173, 229)**—A way of staying warm in winter that Japanese people have used for centuries. It consists of a heat source under a table that has a skirt around it, usually a quilted futon or other heavy material, to prevent the warmth from escaping. (nippon.com)

**Hatsumoude (pg. 234)**—First visit of the year to a shrine. (Google Translate)

**Seijinshiki (pg. 235)**—Coming-of-age ceremony. (Google Translate) \*Author's note: A ceremony that takes place on the second Monday of January and celebrates those who have turned twenty, the age of maturity, between April 2 of the previous year and April 1 of the current year.)

**Hanami (pg. 314)**—The practice or custom of viewing cherry blossoms when they are in full bloom. (Oxford)

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

### Japanese Honorifics

In Japan, people refer to one another using a system of honorifics that can be confusing to those unfamiliar with Japanese culture. In this project, students prepare to read *Himawari House* by learning about honorifics in the Japanese language, finding them in Japanese media, and practicing using them.

- First, instruct students to research Japanese honorifics and read about their use. If teachers prefer, they can shorten this project by simply assigning students this article: <https://www.busuu.com/en/japanese/honorifics>.
- Next, instruct students to find a piece of Japanese media and record examples of the different honorifics used. Students might choose to watch one or two episodes of an anime series with English subtitles, read a volume of a manga series, play a Japanese video game with the original voice-over and English subtitles, or watch a Japanese film with English subtitles. Students should record the honorifics and note why each specific one was used.
- Finally, instruct students to create a chart with three columns. In the first column, they should record the names of ten people who they have different relationships with, such as friends, family members, co-workers, teachers, coaches, younger students, etc., and their relationship to them. In the second column, students should write how they would refer to those people using the system of Japanese honorifics. In the third column, they should rationalize why they used that specific honorific.

### Manga Art Tropes

In many ways, *Himawari House* is not written like a traditional manga (Japanese-style comic). This book is read front to back and left to right—as opposed to manga, which is read back to front and right to left—and the story is told from a Western perspective. The book does, however, take many artistic influences from manga. In this project, students explore other manga and note some artistic tropes to prepare them for the artistic and storytelling techniques they might find in *Himawari House*.



- First, collect multiple examples of student-friendly manga for students to explore. These can be acquired from your school or local library. Examples of student-friendly titles might include:
  - *My Hero Academia*
  - *Beastars*
  - *Naruto*
  - *Komi Can't Communicate*
  - *One Piece*
  - *Pokémon*
- Next, instruct students to look through the books and study the different examples of artwork. They do not need to read any of the books in their entirety, but they may wish to spend more time with certain books to get a sense of the story and context. If students are unfamiliar with manga, the teacher may need to frontload this activity with instruction on reading back to front and right to left.
- Next, have each student reflect on the following prompts:
  - Describe the art style(s) you saw.
  - Does the art style remain consistent throughout the book, or does it change during the story or from panel to panel? How does this affect your reading experience?
  - How does the art convey characters' emotions?
  - Would you describe the art you saw as realistic or stylized? How so?
  - How does the art affect your understanding of the story and the characters?
  - What was your favorite aspect about the artwork you studied?
  - What was your least-favorite aspect about the artwork you studied?

## Class Discussion

### Accents

In *Himawari House*, Becker writes characters—Tina, Hyejung, and Masaki specifically—with phonetically represented accents when they are speaking English. Becker, however, treats these characters differently than how other media might portray East Asian characters with accents. In this project, students contemplate East Asian characters' portrayal in popular media—specifically those with accents—before diving into *Himawari House*.

- To have students begin thinking about accents, pose the following questions for discussion in small groups:
  - Is there anyone in your life who has an accent? How do you feel about that person's accent?
  - Have you ever spoken a foreign language and struggled with your own accent? How did the people around you react?
- Next, instruct students to read the page in the back titled “On the Use of Accents in This Book.”
- Facilitate a class discussion about East Asian representation in the media—particularly when characters speak English with an accent. The following questions can be used as conversation starters:

- Where have you seen East Asian people with accents represented in the media?
- What was the purpose of their character?
- What purpose did their accent serve?
- Was this character humorous? Was the audience meant to laugh *with* this character or *at* this character? Was their accent part of the source of their humor?
- Would you consider this a well-rounded, authentically represented character? Why or why not?

Students may come up with a variety of examples of characters with accents, and use of those accents may make them feel different ways. Encourage them to dissect what makes each portrayal different, and why it makes them feel how they do.

- For further discussion, teachers may wish to play one or both of the following clips from stand-up comedy routines:
  - “Russell Peters, Mashed Potatoes,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bA2Zv9sYTI>.
  - “10 Minutes of Jimmy O. Yang Being Roasted by His Dad” (features strong language at and after 1:15), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aco3fvKWtI8>.

These clips can be paired with the following questions:

- When Jimmy Yang and Russell Peters imitate their parents’ accents, is it offensive? Does it depend on who is laughing and why?
- Why do we find accents funny?
- When is a portrayal of accents hurtful and to whom? When is it not hurtful?
- How does a person’s relationship to their own accent change depending on where they grew up, in what environment, and where they are now?
- Is being different offensive? Is pointing out difference offensive?
- Do you consider yourself to have an accent? Why or why not? How would you feel if people found everything you said funny, even when you didn’t mean for it to be funny?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Nao’s childhood treasure box reminded her of Japan. What items do you have that make you nostalgic for other times, places, or people?
- Have you ever felt a connection to a place? What did it feel like? How did you feel differently in that place compared to how you feel in your usual environment? Are you able to describe why?
- Have you ever been in a place or situation where you felt different than those around you? Did you adapt to fit in? Why or why not? If yes, how did you adapt? What effect, if any, did this have on your sense of identity?
- What is the purpose of the pages prior to chapter 1? Why doesn’t the author call that portion of the book chapter 1?

- How does Nao feel when she first arrives in Japan? Why does she feel this way? What is your evidence from the text or images?
- At the end of chapter 1, what are your first impressions of Hyejung and Tina? Are they similar to or different from Nao's first impressions?
- Becker uses many variations in her artistic style, such as small doodles in the margins of a panel or panels with completely different art styles. Is this reminiscent of any other media you have consumed? What is the purpose and effect of these varied styles? How do they help communicate the story and themes?
- Why does Becker wait until chapter 2 to introduce Masaki and Shinichi? Why doesn't she introduce these characters with the other Himawari House residents?
- What does Nao mean by "humble pie" on page 43?
- Why does Nao cry at the end of chapter 2? Why does Becker choose to add a flashback to Nao's childhood at this particular moment?
- How would you describe Nao's experience at the festival in chapter 3? What is she feeling? How do you know?
- In chapter 4, how does Becker's combination of English and Japanese help you understand Tina's experience? How does Becker's panel layout and art style help you understand Tina's experience? Do you empathize with Tina? Why or why not?
- Becker periodically switches narrators throughout the book, with Tina and Hyejung both narrating in first person. How does this affect the reading experience? Why does Becker do this, rather than have Nao be the sole narrator?
- Becker sometimes abruptly shifts to a flashback, or another time or place, without explicitly indicating this to the reader. Does this help or hinder your understanding of the story? Why?
- What inferences can you make about Korean or Singaporean culture based on Tina's and Hyejung's characters? Specifically, what inferences can you make about family, school, and popular culture in those countries? What evidence in the text and images leads you to these conclusions?
- Both Tina and Hyejung struggle with what they want to do or be in the future. How do you think this makes them feel? Can you relate to this sentiment?
- How would you describe the moment between Hyejung and her parents as shown on pages 101 to 103? Have you ever experienced a similar moment? How did it make you feel? Do you think Hyejung knew this would affect her parents so much? Why or why not? What do you think Becker is trying to communicate with the imagery of the ladder?
- Summarize chapter 6. What is Hyejung's experience like? What drives her emotional breakdown?
- How do you think Nao has changed between arriving in Japan and the beginning of chapter 7?
- In chapter 7, how are Masaki's inner thoughts different from his outward appearance? Do you think he presents himself this way on purpose? Why or why not?



- In what ways does the language barrier between the residents of Himawari House enhance and/or detract from their relationships with one another?
- In chapter 8, Nao describes how she feels seeing white people fetishize and imitate Japanese culture—*her* culture. What was your reaction to Nao’s feelings on the subject? Why don’t you think Tina and Hyejung relate? How does this tie into the book that Masaki buys from the bookstore?
- Describe Masaki’s understanding of English and his feelings about English. What evidence from the images and text makes you think this?
- In chapter 9, why does Becker choose to pair the anecdote about Hyejung learning to cook with Nao’s visit to her extended family?
- In chapter 10, what is Tina experiencing at the restaurant? Why are her inner thoughts different from what she says out loud? How does her experience at the restaurant relate to her love for Tetsuya Tachibana?
- What kind of relationship does Tina have with Tetsuya Tachibana and his music? What does this relationship provide for her, and what doesn’t it provide for her? Compare and contrast this relationship to her relationship with Shinichi.
- What is happening in the beginning of chapter 11? How does Becker structure this chapter? Why does she structure it this way? How would you describe Obaachan’s feelings throughout the chapter?
- On page 217, Nao says, “My heart belongs here, but does this place even want me?” Then she says, “I feel like I’m always arming myself against everyone who has ever made me feel like I’m not enough of anything for anywhere.” Do you relate to either one of her statements? What caused you to feel this way? How does this affect the way you navigate the spaces where you feel unwelcome?
- How does chapter 15 add depth to Hyejung’s character? Does it change how you view her? How does it expand upon her reasons for coming to Japan and her backstory in chapter 5? How would you describe Hyejung’s emotions in this chapter? In what ways is she conflicted about her emotions?
- When Tina finds out that she failed her exams, how are her outward emotions different from her inner feelings? At the end of chapter 17, how would you describe Tina’s view of her life? What evidence from the images or text makes you think this?
- What does Tina mean when she says that the best thing Shinichi ever gave her was his silence?
- What do chapters 16 and 17 say about language, specifically Japanese compared to other languages?
- Where is the disconnect between Nao and Masaki in chapter 18? How do their inner feelings differ from the feelings they express? Is their difficulty in communication based in language, culture, or something else?
- Do you think Nao’s thoughts about her mother have changed while she’s been in Japan? Why or why not?
- What is Hyejung’s mother feeling throughout their conversation chapter 19? What is Hyejung feeling? Hyejung thinks, “At times, a question or an answer was too painful to say out loud, and the silence weighed heavy on our heads, keeping us from looking at each other. But by the end our hearts felt washed clean from crying, and I felt like I had let go of a breath that I had held on to for a very long time.” Have you ever had a conversation that felt like this? How did you feel before, during, and after that conversation?

- Why does Tina react the way she does when Hyejung asks her what her dreams of the future are on page 353? Do you relate with Tina? Why or why not?
- Compare the relationship you have with your parents to the relationships the characters in the book have with their parents. How are they the same? How are they different?
- Does *Himawari House* make you consider language differently? If yes, how so? How does the book describe language? How do the characters interact with language, and is it similar to or different from how you interact with language?
- Do the characters feel different to you depending on what language they are speaking? Why or why not?
- Why did Becker decide to include text from other languages? How does this change your reading experience? Do you feel differently about Japanese or Korean after reading this book? Why or why not?
- How does Nao change throughout *Himawari House*?
- What does *Himawari House* say about the concept of “home”? Is it the place that you come from, a place where your given or self-made family resides, or somewhere in between? Is home just a feeling? Is a home made or given?

## PROJECT IDEAS

### Theme Chart

*Himawari House* has many themes woven throughout its narrative, such as those noted earlier in this guide. In this project, students practice identifying those themes (or themes not identified in this guide) and describe how they develop throughout the book using descriptions, text, and images from the book.

- First, prepare and display a chart that has the following columns:
  - Theme
  - Theme’s first appearance
  - Other appearances and development of theme
  - Author’s message around this theme
- Next, fill in the chart using one of the themes listed earlier in this guide. In the second, third, and fourth columns, be sure to cite evidence from the text (including page numbers).
- After filling in using the chart, allow students to work in groups to identify more themes from *Himawari House*. Go around the room to identify a good example of a student-chosen theme.
- Ask the group with a specific example to share their theme. Working together with the class, take suggestions as to how they might fill out the second, third, and fourth columns of the chart for that theme.

- Next, instruct students to work independently or in groups to identify two to four other themes of *Himawari House* and continue filling out the chart for those themes. If students are working in groups, each student can take ownership of one theme.
- Finally, students should transfer the information from their chart to a visual presentation, such as a Power-Point. Each slide can feature a different theme and the information from the chart about that theme. Finally, students can add images to each slide of panels or pages from *Himawari House* that illustrate that theme. If students are working in groups, each student can take ownership of one slide/theme.
- If time allows, have students present their work to the class.

## Language Analysis

In *Himawari House*, Becker takes great care to write the dialogue in authentic ways. She often breaks the conventions of written English while doing this, but she does so purposefully to communicate specific feelings and personalities. In this project, students analyze the differences between so-called proper English and spoken vernacular, and how the two types of language communicate.

- First, give each student an index card. Ask students to identify a topic of interest or importance to them that they could speak at length about. Instruct students to write their topic on the index card. Examples could range from hobbies, to politics and social justice, to sports, to the arts, etc.
- Ask students to form pairs and hand their card to their partner. Instruct them to think of three to five questions they have for their partner about that topic. Students can write these questions on the back of the index card.
- Next, taking turns, instruct students to have a casual, three- or four-minute conversation with their partner about their topic using their pre-generated questions as prompts if needed. As they are conducting conversations, they should use a smartphone or other recording device to record audio of the conversations. Instruct students to be their full, authentic selves when answering their partner's questions (for this project, it may be beneficial to pair students with others that are their friends or that they are comfortable with).
- Using their own recording as an example, the teacher should transcribe the first half of the recording, taking care to accurately represent speech patterns, tone, grammar, etc., by intentionally breaking the rules of written English. Punctuation may be added in unconventional places to represent pauses or intonation, random words may be capitalized to show emphasis, sentences may be incomplete, etc. After preparing the example, the teacher should allow the class to help transcribe the rest of the recording.
- Instruct students to transcribe their partner's recordings following the teacher's example.
- After students have completed their transcription, ask them to transcribe their partner's recording again, this time adhering to the conventional rules of written English, including punctuation, grammar, etc.
- Finally, ask students to write a paragraph or short essay analyzing the differences between the two transcriptions. How are they similar, and how are they different? What does each transcription communicate, and how does it do so? What is the takeaway from each transcription? Ultimately, students should answer the questions: When might a writer choose to use the rules of written English? When might they choose to break them? Why might they make this choice?



## Visualizing Self-Discovery

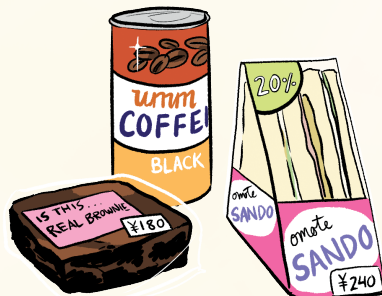
Traveling internationally, especially alone, can be one of the most valuable experiences of self-discovery a person can have. For many students—especially those who may assume this is not a possibility for them—visualizing and researching such an experience can be the first step to making it happen. In this project, students plan a solo international experience, including funding, transportation, housing, experiences, etc.

- First, ask students to think of a country they have never been to but they would like to visit. They may need time to research possibilities before making a decision.
- Next, ask students to plan a theoretical six-month trip. They should conduct thorough research to discover real-world possibilities and answer the following questions:
  - How will they finance their travel for the trip (work, scholarships, grants, study abroad, etc.)?
  - Where will they live while abroad?
  - How will they pay for living expenses while abroad (groceries, rent, etc.)?
  - Overall, how much money will they need for the trip?
  - What tasks must be completed before embarking on the trip (passports, visas, immunizations, etc.)?
  - What obstacles might they face while preparing for the trip?
  - What are five experiences they would like to have while abroad? Why do they want to have these experiences?
  - What obstacles might they face while on the trip?
  - What do they hope to learn or gain from the trip?
- Instruct students to answer these questions in a format of their or the teacher's choosing, such as a written essay, visual presentation, comic, etc.
- If time allows, have students present their projects to the class.

## FURTHER PAIRINGS

- *American Born Chinese*, graphic novel by Gene Luen Yang (New York: First Second, 2006).
- *The Artful Escape*, video game developed by Beethoven & Dinosaur (Annapurna Interactive, 2021).
- *Check, Please!*, graphic novel by Ngozi Ukazu (New York: First Second, 2018).
- *Choir Boy*, play by Tarell Alvin McCraney (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2015).
- *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, film written and directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert (A24, 2022).
- *Florence*, video game developed by Mountains (Annapurna Interactive, 2018).
- *Komi Can't Communicate*, manga series by Tomohito Oda (Viz Media, 2016).
- *Ms. Marvel*, television series created by Bisha K. Ali (Disney+, 2022).
- *The Namesake*, novel by Jhumpa Lahiri (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003).
- *Night in the Woods*, video game developed by Infinite Fall and Secret Lab (Finji, 2017).


- *Our Flag Means Death*, television series created by David Jenkins (HBO, 2022).
- *Ramy*, television series created by Ramy Youssef, Ari Katcher, and Ryan Welch (Hulu Original, 2019).
- *Satoko and Nada*, manga series by Yupechika (Seven Seas, 2018).
- *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, novel by Ann Brashares (New York: Delacorte Press, 2001).
- *They Called Us Enemy*, graphic novel by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott, and Harmony Becker (Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions, 2019).
- *Turning Red*, film written by Domee Shi, Julia Cho, and Sarah Streicher; directed by Domee Shi (Disney, 2022).



# COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

The reading of this graphic novel in combination with a thoughtful analysis through writing, presentation, or discussion (such as the projects and discussion questions within this guide), can promote the teaching or reinforcement of the following ninth- through twelfth-grade Reading: Literature and Language Common Core Standards, as well as various Reading: Foundational Skills, Writing, History/Social Studies, and Speaking & Listening Common Core Standards.

Reading: Literature Grades 9–10	Reading: Literature Grades 11–12	Language: Grades 9–10	Language: Grades 11–12
<p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1</b> Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2</b> Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3</b> Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4</b> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5</b> Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6</b> Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.</p>	<p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1</b> Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2</b> Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3</b> Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4</b> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5</b> Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6</b> Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).</p>	<p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3</b> Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.</p>	<p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1.A</b> Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3</b> Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.</p> <p><b>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3.A</b> Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Virginia Tufte's <i>Artful Sentences</i>) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.</p>

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