

# Teacher's Guide

## *Kimiko Murakami: A Japanese-Canadian Pioneer*



### TRAILBLAZING CANADIANS SERIES



Written and developed by Haley Healey.  
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## ABOUT THE BOOK

“Ganbaru” is a Japanese word that means to keep going during hard times and never give up. This picture book introduces young readers to **Kimiko Murakami** (1904–1997), a brave and determined woman whose life embodied the ganbaru spirit.

Born in the village of Steveston, BC, and raised on Salt Spring Island, Kimiko was part of a long tradition of Japanese-Canadian families who made their livings by fishing and farming.

During the Second World War, she was among the 22,000 Japanese Canadians who were sent to live in internment camps because they were seen as “enemy aliens.” The camps were dirty and crowded, but worst of all, they robbed Japanese Canadians of their basic rights and freedoms.

Following the war, Kimiko and her family were allowed to return to Salt Spring Island and had to rebuild their farm and their life from scratch. Through it all, Kimiko—a pioneer and survivor—never lost hope.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**HALEY HEALEY** is a high school counsellor, registered clinical counsellor, and the bestselling author of *On Their Own Terms: True Stories of Trailblazing Women of Vancouver Island*, *Flourishing and Free: More Stories of Trailblazing Women of Vancouver Island*, and *Her Courage Rises: 50 Trailblazing Women of British Columbia and the Yukon*. She enjoys local history and exploring Vancouver Island’s trails, waters, and wilderness.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**KIMIKO FRASER** is an illustrator and historian-in-training. She grew up constantly making—drawing, painting, knitting, sculpting, bookbinding, etc.—and has never learned how to stop. She is the illustrator of *Her Courage Rises: 50 Trailblazing Women of British Columbia and the Yukon*. She holds a bachelor of arts (honours History, major Visual Arts) from the University of Victoria. She works with many mediums to create her illustrations, including watercolour, digital, ink, and tea. Most of her work is inspired by her interest in plants, history, and folktales.



## NOTE OF RECONCILIATION

This book was written on the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. Some of the story takes place on the traditional territory of the Saanich (WSÁNEĆ), Cowichan (Quw'utsun), and Chemainus (Stz'uminus) First Nations.

Haley Healey, the author of the book and writer of this teacher's guide, fully and completely supports truth and reconciliation and recognizes her own role in truth and reconciliation.

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

### → LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Reading Skills and Reading Strategies
- Visual literacy
- Reading Comprehension

### → SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

### → SOCIAL STUDIES

### AGE & GRADE SUITABILITY

- This guide is accessible for Kindergarten to Grade 5, although it could be adapted for older students.
- Reading comprehension is ages 4–8, as indicated by the publisher.

## BEFORE TEACHING

This guide is designed for teachers, librarians, caregivers, and parents to lead lessons and conversations about topics in the book.

The guide is designed for students to use with adult guidance. Some topics may be upsetting and trigger strong emotional reactions for some students. Age appropriate frontloading and debriefing may be helpful.

The University of Victoria's Landscapes of Injustice has some things to consider before teaching in the "Cautions and Guidelines" section. It can be accessed at <https://loi.uvic.ca/elementary/background.html>.



## LITERACY &amp; READING COMPREHENSION

## Pre-Reading Questions

1. What do you think the book is about based on its title and cover illustrations?
2. What do you wonder before reading the book?
3. What does it mean to be Japanese-Canadian?
4. What does the word pioneer mean? (settler, or one of the first people to settle in an area)



## Post-Reading Questions

5. Did anything in the book remind you of anything in your own life?
6. What feelings did you have while hearing the story?
7. What are some words you would use to describe Kimiko Murakami? Why?
8. Was there anything in the book you were confused or still wondering about?
9. How did Kimiko Murakami and her family help their community?

## SOCIAL STUDIES QUESTIONS

10. Where is Steveston, British Columbia located? How far away is it from where you live?
11. Where is Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, located? How far away is it from where you live?
12. What jobs did the Murakami family do on Salt Spring Island?
13. Why did the Murakami family leave their home on Salt Spring Island?
14. Why did the Canadian government force Japanese-Canadians to leave their home?
15. What can be done to change laws that are unfair? Who can you contact?





## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) ACTIVITY

Books can help teach people how to understand the emotions and thoughts of others. We can guess how someone is feeling by their body language, their facial expressions, and their situation. It's possible for people to feel several things at the same time. These are only guesses because we can't know for sure how someone is feeling unless they tell us.

Pick an illustration in the book and ask students how they think the person in it is feeling and how they know.



### SOME POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- Kimiko Murakami was proud/content/relaxed/happy when feeding the chickens, because she was smiling and standing tall.
- Kimiko Murakami was sad/worried/scared when she was in the sugar beet field because she is frowning.

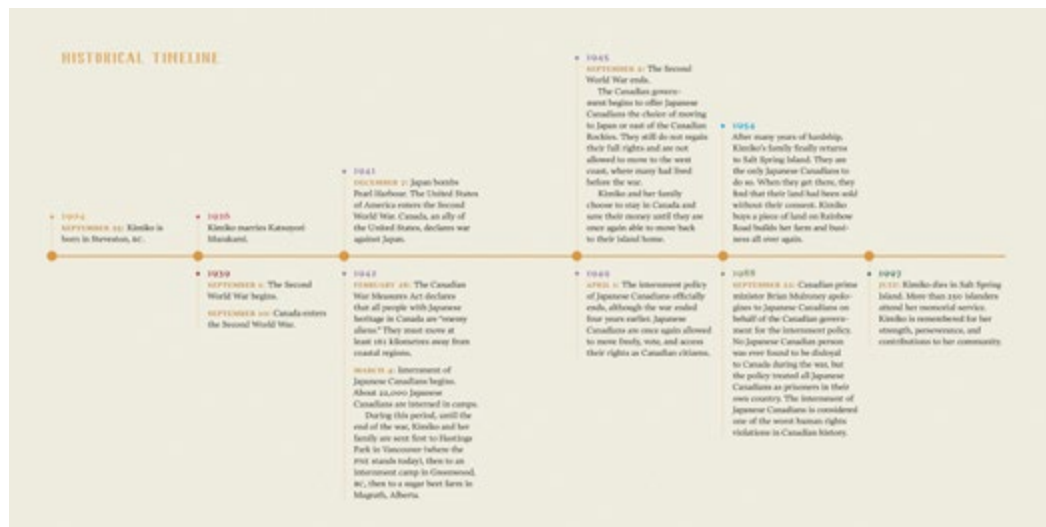
## WRITING ACTIVITY

Give students a sheet of paper and ask them to write or draw events in the story in the order they occurred. After, have students pair and share their retelling with a partner.

Put the story sequences up in the classroom.

## WRITING/DRAWING ACTIVITY

The historic timeline at the end of the book shows important events in Kimiko Murakami's life.



Write or draw your own historic timeline showing important events in your own life.

These could include your birthday, times your family has moved, when you started school, or getting a pet. Try to include both difficult events and happy ones on your timeline.