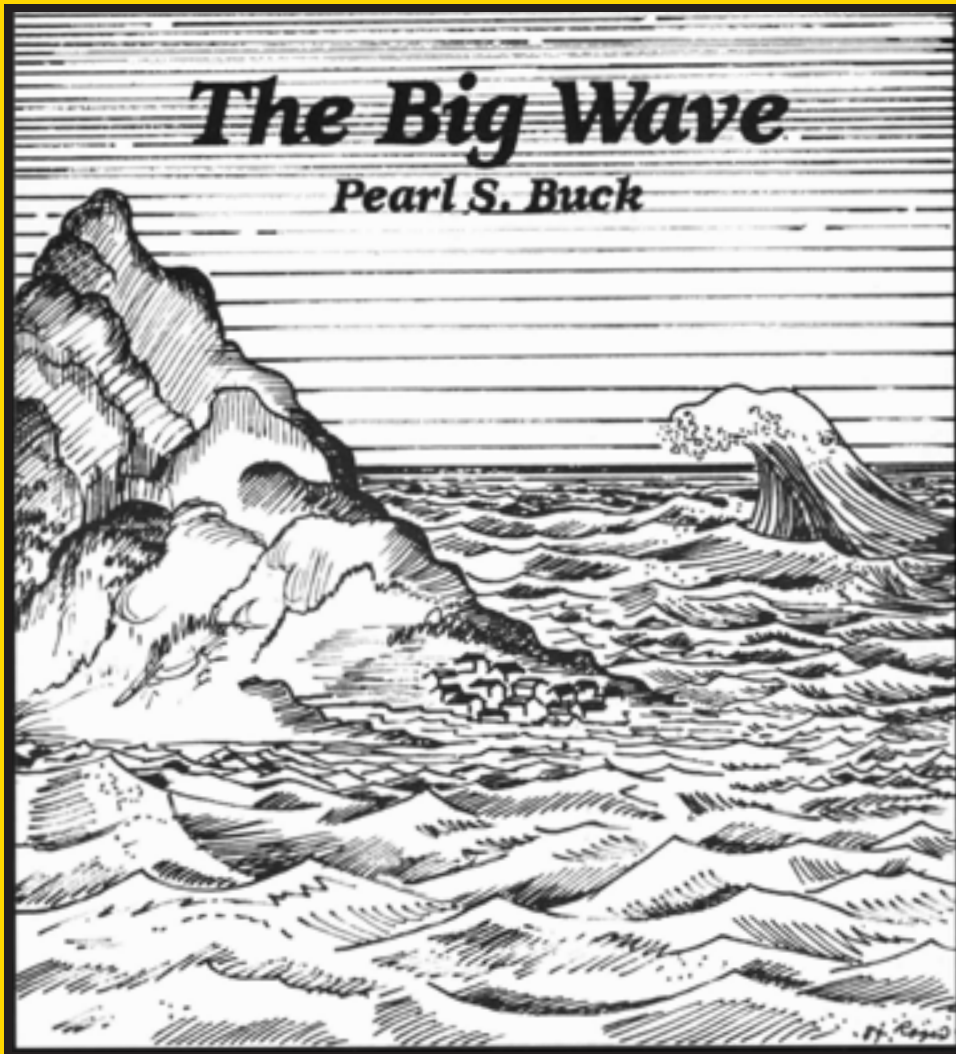


Novel·Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the novel *The Big Wave*, by Pearl S. Buck, consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its own reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: JAPAN

Geography

Japan has a long, rocky coastline and many mountains, valleys, rivers, and lakes. There are 196 volcanoes of which thirty are active. They cause frequent earth tremors and occasional earthquakes. No part of Japan is more than seventy miles from the sea and mountains are within view everywhere.

With numerous fault lines throughout the islands of Japan, destructive earthquakes are commonplace. The Japanese have learned to live with disaster, to accept earthquake and typhoon and flood as part of their routine existence. They have a great capacity to dig themselves out after such catastrophes and start afresh.

Weather

One outstanding feature of Japanese weather is the series of great cyclonic storms, called typhoons, which devastate parts of the country in late summer and early autumn. These storms hit the sea coasts hardest.

People who live along the sea coast have known for generations that earthquakes and volcanic eruptions may be followed by a series of huge waves. These waves may bring about more destruction than the earthquakes that caused them. Historically, people relied on legends to recognize signs that a *tsunami* may occur. In the book *The Big Wave*, a watchman rings a bell to warn villagers of a *tsunami*. Through modern technology, seismometers detect seismic activity during earthquakes and ocean buoys measure pressure changes on the ocean floor. This data provides nearly instant information about a probable *tsunami*, providing time to notify and evacuate coastal communities.

Agriculture

Rice is Japan's staple food and her chief agricultural product. Because Japan is mountainous, arable land is very limited. Farms are small and terraced fields are often carved out of the side of mountains.

Fishing

An island nation, Japan has one of the world's major fishing fleets. Boats range in size from small boats for coastal fishing to 1,000 tons for deep-sea trawling.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

- Cooperative Learning Activity:** Work with a small cooperative learning group to discuss the effect of geography and nature on the way people live. For example, consider the different ways people might live in a high mountainous area compared to those in an arctic region. Choose one person to be the recorder and create a chart to compare the way people live inland with the way people live near the sea. Be sure to compare their homes, occupations, food, recreation, and family life. Share your conclusions with those of other groups in your classroom.
- Social Studies Connection:** Study the map on page four of this study guide and discuss how the people of Japan might be affected by their distinctive geography.
- Have a discussion with your classmates about the opposite concepts of “tradition” and “change.” First make a list of activities that your classmates do that are based on family, school, or national tradition. Then make a list of activities that you do that your grandparents or parents did not do in their youth. Compare those two lists with classmates to determine whether ours is a society of tradition or change. As you read the book, compare our society with the rural Japanese society described in *The Big Wave*. Is Japan’s society one of tradition or change?
- Some people think that it is fate or chance that shapes our lives; others think that it is our own will that determines what happens to us in our lifetime. What do you think is the greater influence—fate or self-determination? Give specific examples to support your opinion. As you read, decide which had the greater influence on the lives of the people in the rural Japanese village described in *The Big Wave*.
- Social Studies Connection:** Before you read the novel, prepare a report on one of the following aspects of Japanese culture: traditional clothing, food, houses, family life, occupations, recreation, or religion.
- Take a class poll to find out your classmates’ answers to the following questions:
 - What would you do if you were offered the opportunity to live with an elderly stranger who offered you great wealth, an excellent education, and the possibility of being his heir?
 - Would you accept this offer if it meant leaving your parents or guardians?
- Science Connection:** Consult an encyclopedia, a science book, or go online to find answers to the following questions about volcanoes and tidal waves:
 - Where are they most likely to occur?
 - What damage might they do?
 - What conditions cause them to occur?
 - How might people protect themselves from their force?