
Educator's Guide
for the film by KAYO HATTA
FISHBOWL

written by
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GRADE LEVEL: 6-12th

SUBJECT AREAS: Social Studies, U.S. History

ESTIMATED DURATION: Each individual lesson plan, approximately 1 hour

FILM OVERVIEW

Fishbowl is a comic coming-of-age story about 13-year-old Lovey Nariyoshi, the rebellious granddaughter of immigrant sugar-cane workers in Hawai'i. Her best friend Jerry, is an effeminate boy with whom she shares her dream of finding a measure of respect in a plantation town where class and racial rivalries still run high. Lovey's quest to be anything but herself leads her through a series of comical, sometimes painful misadventures. Set in Hawai'i in the 1970s, Lovey is an outsider with an overactive imagination who must deal with the seemingly perfect leader of the most popular clique at school and her menacing teacher who ridicules her for speaking Pidgin English. Like so many other pre-teens, the two main characters, Lovey and Jerry, simply yearn to be accepted by their peers.

The film, based on Lois-Ann Yamanaka's novel, *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers*, is directed by Kayo Hatta, the Hawai'ian-born director of the award-winning film *Picture Bride*. "It's the whole thing of feeling like an outsider and not feeling good enough," the director explained. "That is a universal feeling. Then, that whole realization that you are good enough."

About the Guide

The guide consists of six lessons. The first lesson includes a pre-viewing warm up and activity examining questions of identity. The second and third lessons include the viewing and post-viewing activities. The final lessons provide teachers with learning extension possibilities and research ideas beyond the film. There are a number of themes touched upon in the film. These in-class exercises focus on two primary ones: a desire to fit in and pidgin English.

These activities are designed to help you enhance the viewing experience and build upon important themes that are introduced in the videotape. The lessons include probing questions that stimulate critical thinking and class discussion as well as creative class activities. Please view these lesson plans as guidelines only, and feel free to adapt them to your personal teaching style, and to the needs of your students. Also, you may wish to use "extension" activities in-class, and vice versa.

MATERIALS

A copy of the film, *Fishbowl* by Kayo Hatta. To purchase a copy of the film please contact the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) at distribution@asianamericanmedia.org. You can also visit the web site at <http://catalog.asianamericanmedia.org>.

1. <http://www.fishbowlfilm.com>
Access needed to internet for student research
2. <http://209.10.134.179/61/21/P0292100.html>
definition of pidgin English
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pidgin>
Wikipedia entry for pidgin English
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creole_language
Wikipedia entry for Creole
<http://www.e-Hawai'i.com/fun/pidgin/default.asp>
Hawai'in Pidgin Dictionary
3. <http://www.june29.com/HLP/lang/pidgin.html>
Pidgin English Dictionary, Papua New Guinea
<http://www.ngex.com/personalities/babawilly/dictionary/default.htm>
Pidgin English Nigeria
<http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-conflicts-periods/ww2/pidgin/05.htm>
Australia
<http://www.jamaicans.com/dictionary/template.php?t=display>
dictionary of Jamaican Creole
4. NPR broadcast entitled "Crossing East: Proud to Speak Pidgin, Brah"
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4773414>
5. <http://www.state.hi.us/about/history.htm>
Hawai'ian history
<http://www.Hawai'ihistory.com/>
<http://www.geocities.com/~olelo/homepage2.html>

Activity 1 – Pre-Viewing Activity: Personalizing the Story (30-45 min.)

- Before viewing the film, to personalize the experience, lead the students through a preliminary discussion (warm-up activity) that will help them understand that we are all "minorities" at some point or another. To demonstrate this, conduct the following survey. Invite volunteers from the class to record the responses on the blackboard. You will want to note how many children fit into each category: male vs. female, own a cat vs. dog, have three or more siblings, likes soccer vs. baseball, blue eyes vs. brown eyes, prefer chocolate chip cookies vs. oatmeal, pea soup vs.

chicken soup, etc. Feel free to use examples that best suit your class. The important idea for students to take away from this exercise is that we can all feel like we don't fit in at different times for a wide variety of reasons. Any one student may be in the "minority" based on responses to these questions.

- Tell the students that the film they are about to see is about Hawai'i. Ask the class to share what they know about Hawai'i. They might respond with the following: beautiful beaches, relatives who have gone on honeymoon, hula skirts and dancers, the 50th state, Pearl Harbor, etc.
- Explain that *Fishbowl* is a film that takes a fresh look at Hawai'i, which while most people associate it with exotic vacations, was founded on a sugar plantation economy that attracted an intense melting pot of world cultures. As seen in the film, the impact of turn-of-the-century Hawai'i continues to be felt on every level – socially, economically, culturally and linguistically. Explain to the class that the film takes place in the 1970s, a time of very different styles in fashion and music, and that the Captain and Tenille was a very famous singing duo at the time.

Activity 2 – Post-Viewing Activity: Overcoming Personal Challenges

In order to stimulate class discussion about fitting in, interpersonal relationships and overcoming personal challenges, ask any of the questions below:

- At the end of the movie, Lovey felt empowered to speak up. What do you think gave her the courage to finally speak up to the head of the *Ray of the Rising Dawn*?
- Why do you think the teacher was smiling at the end?
- Do you think the *Ray of the Rising Dawn* is a good name for the girls' clique?
- Do you think Lovey wanted to fit into the group?
- Have you experienced a time when you wanted to fit in, even if you knew it really wasn't the best thing for you?
- Have you ever experienced having just the right thing to say – after the fact – when it was too late?
- What did you think about the friendship between Lovey and Jerry?
- Do you think it helped Lovey cope with the *Ray of the Rising Dawn* clique?
- Do you think Jerry's feminine characteristics were an added cause for ridicule?
- Do you think that there are friendships that are so genuine, so strong, that they can stand up to all outside pressures?
- Why do you think the movie is called *Fishbowl*?

Writing Assignment:

Have the students write about a time when they felt empowered to do something they had previously been afraid of. This could be in a social situation, like finally telling a bully to leave them alone, or it could be overcoming a fear of something more physical, like climbing to the top of a mountain despite a fear of heights, or trying something new.

Direct the students to include the following elements:

- The fear: Describe the fear or perhaps when they remember experiencing it for the first time.
- How it felt: Did their fear get in the way or make things difficult?
- Action taken: What empowered them to take action and overcome it?
- The outcome: What was the final outcome of the experience?

Ask volunteers to share their experiences with the class.

Activity 3 – Post-Viewing Discussion: Hawai’ian Pidgin English

Lead a discussion about what the students thought about the language spoken in the film.

- Do you find it hard to understand?
- Do you think the teacher was right to try and make his students speak “standard” English?
- Do you think the teacher should have criticized the way Lovey spoke?
- Does it remind you of any times you’ve heard English spoken in a different way?

The students may be interested to know that the actors in the film are actually mostly local kids who have never acted before. Tell them that one of the unusual things about *Fishbowl* is the language used. The voiceover and dialogue is spoken entirely in Hawai’ian Pidgin English, a rich and vibrant American Creole that evolved out of plantation culture, where diverse cultures had to create a new language to communicate with each other. This is an American vernacular that rightfully takes its place alongside America’s host of regional dialects that speaks to its diversity and history. Long regarded as a social and cultural impediment, local educators have historically sought to eradicate Pidgin and implement Standard English among Hawai’ian contemporary youth. *Fishbowl* celebrates the poetry and power of Hawai’ian Pidgin English.

Divide the class into five groups based on the letters of the alphabet – for example: A-D, E-H, I-L, M-P, Q-U, V-Z – for a team research activity that will also include some creative brainstorming. Share the article about the definition of Hawai’ian pidgin (or listen to the NPR broadcast noted above). Then direct each group to the websites listed above (#2). Each group will be researching five terms from Hawai’ian pidgin, within their letter range. Then have the students make up five of their own pidgin terms, renaming five items generally found in the classroom: desk, chair, pencil, blackboard and computer. Once you’ve reassembled as a full class, invite volunteers from each group to share their words and write them on the board. Look at some of the terms and see if they’re similar in any way. Then, have the class share their made-up terms and vote on their favorite ones. You can create labels for the winning terms, and even try to use the new words with your class over the next few weeks.

Activity 4 – Extension Activity: Compare Creole Languages

Divide the class into three or four groups. Using the dictionary websites listed above as resources (#2, 3) have each group research the same five to ten terms. Have the students look for common words like money, business, food, car, child, etc. Then re-group as a class and compare the words from the different languages. Are there similarities? Differences?

Activity 5 – Extension Activity: Listen to a Radio Broadcast

Help your students get a greater understanding of pidgin English by listening to an audio postcard from National Public Radio (NPR) discussing Hawai’ian pidgin English. Hear from Lee Tonouchi, who wrote his master’s thesis in pidgin, and others who believe being “bi-lingual” in Hawai’i represents the best of both worlds. Lee A. Tonouchi is a pidgin author and activist. He is the author of a short story collection, *Da Word*, from Bamboo Ridge Press, co-editor of *Hybolics*, and editor of the in-progress community pidgin dictionary project *Da Kine Dictionary* from Bess Press. Other books by Lee Tonouchi: *Living Pidgin: Contemplations on Pidgin Culture*. Reference website #4 above.

Activity 6 – Extension Activity: The Fiftieth State

Have the students do a small research project about Hawai’i. Include some of the following topics: modern history, the people, culture, climate, etc. Reference websites #5 above.