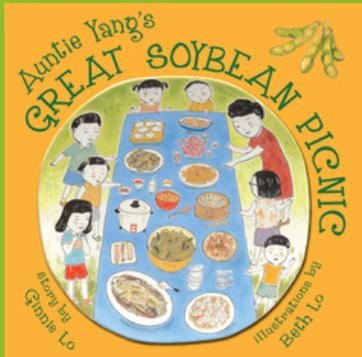


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS



# Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic

written by Ginnie Lo  
illustrated by Beth Lo

## About the Book

**Genre:** Historical Fiction

**\*Reading Level:** Grade 3–4

**Interest Level:** Grades 1–5

**Guided Reading:** Q

**Lexile™:** AD960L

**Accelerated Reader®**

**Level/Points:** 4.6/0.5

\* Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

**Themes:** Family, Food, Cultural Traditions, Community, Immigration, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Collaboration, Home, Identity, Farming, Citizenship, Asian/Asian American Interest

## SYNOPSIS

Jinyi and her little sister, Pei, love visiting their cousins outside Chicago. At Auntie and Uncle Yang's house, they have dumpling eating contests, go on adventures in the backyard, and pile into the car for Sunday drives. One weekend, while they're riding among the cornfields, Auntie Yang spots something she's never seen before in Illinois. Nestled among the corn is a field of leafy, green plants that look familiar, like one of their favorite foods when they lived in China. Could it be? *Mao dou*—soybeans!

Excited by their discovery, the two families have their very first soybean picnic. Every year after that, Auntie Yang invites more Chinese American families in the area to share the food and fun, and the picnic keeps growing. Pretty soon, more than two hundred friends and neighbors are gathering together to play games and eat soybeans together.

Unique glaze-on-ceramic illustrations lend a quirky charm to this lighthearted intergenerational story. *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic* is a delicious and satisfying celebration of family traditions, culture, and community building that will have readers asking for seconds, thirds, and more.



## BACKGROUND

**From the Afterword:** Soybeans, which are called *mao dou* in Chinese, are also known by the Japanese name *edamame*. Originally cultivated in northeastern China about five thousand years ago, soybeans arrived in North America in the late 1700s. At first the soybean cargo was not intended to be eaten. It was only used as a weight to balance the sailing ships. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, farmers in the United States began to plant soybeans as feed for their livestock. Today soybeans are a popular food that Americans of many backgrounds enjoy.

Soybeans are extremely nutritious and amazingly versatile. Rich in protein, they are an excellent substitute for meat. There are hundreds of ways soybeans can be consumed—from tofu to soy milk to spicy and sweet sauces. Cooking oil and baking flour are made from soybeans. Soybeans are also used to create industrial products such as ink, fabric, insulation, plastic, and fuel. Today the United States is the world's leading producer of soybeans, shipping millions of tons annually to the leading importer of soybeans: China.

**Yellow Mountain:** The Yellow Mountain, or Mt. Huangshan, is a mountain range located in the southern Anhui province in eastern China (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/547>). At its highest point, it is 1,864 meters (6,115 feet) tall. Because many of the mountaintops are above cloud level, the Yellow Mountain is well known for its scenic views of the clouds touching the mountainsides, as well as the ancient pine trees, waterfalls, caves, and natural stone pillars.

**Author's and Illustrator's Note:** This story of four Chinese American cousins who grew up “as close as four soybeans in a soybean pod” was inspired our childhood experiences. Auntie Yang was one of our mother's older sisters. In 1945, she and our mother bravely left their family behind in China to attend college overseas. Together they made the long and difficult journey to the United States, where they joined their husbands, who had already moved there to study at American universities. After earning their degrees, our parents moved to Indiana, while the Yangs settled in Illinois. We will never forget the weekend Auntie

Yang discovered soybeans near her house. What began as a small, spontaneous picnic for our two families grew into a large annual event. The soybean picnic quickly became an important Chicago area gathering for young Chinese immigrant families who had been displaced by the political upheaval in China during World War II. The picnic continued to grow over a span of forty years and was always one of the highlights of late summer. Today the fields where we picked soybeans are covered with shopping malls, and we buy frozen soybeans at the supermarket. But our happy memories of Auntie Yang's soybean picnics are with us still. Many a romance began over steaming plates of soybeans, and three generations of families who took part in the tradition remain lifelong friends.

—Ginnie Lo and Beth Lo

### Additional titles about food and family:

***Cora Cooks Pancit*** written by Dorina Lazo Gilmore, illustrated by Kristi Valiant  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2840>

***Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji*** written by F. Zia, illustrated by Ken Min  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2749>

***Sweet Potato Pie*** written by Kathleen D. Lindsey, illustrated by Charlotte Riley-Webb  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2459>

***The Have a Good Day Café*** written by Frances Park and Ginger Park, illustrated by Katherine Potter  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2402>

***The Wakame Gatherers*** written by Holly Thompson, illustrated by Kazumi Wilds  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2901>

***Hiromi's Hands*** by Lynne Barasch  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2404>



## VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

### Content Specific

crickets soybeans, soybean pod, mahjong, croquet mallets, dumplings, cornstalks, opera, *mao dou*, stir-fried, fireflies, emperor, province, trailer, chopsticks, porcelain, rice bowls, bamboo ladle, universities, Yellow Mountain

### Academic

peered, impatiently, noisily, chirped, boiled, tromped, pleaded, blushed, pride, ladled, screechy, bundle, clusters, dangled, fuzzy, plunked, scooped, fortunate, steaming, famous, squealed, homesick, eagerly, chattered, cozily

**NOTE:** A glossary guide at the back of the book provides an explanation of English and Chinese words that may be unfamiliar, including pronunciation for Chinese words that approximate how they are said in Mandarin.

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. Take a look at the front and back covers. Take a picture walk. Ask students to make a prediction. Do you think this book will be fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think so? What clues do the author and illustrator give to help you know whether this book will be fiction or nonfiction?
2. What do you know about soybeans? Have you even seen or eaten soybeans? Do you know any other names for soybeans? What other foods do you think might be similar to soybeans?
3. Share a time you made a meal or dish with your family. What did you choose to make and why? How is this food special to you and your family?
4. What do you know about China? Where is it located? What is the geography like? What are some Chinese foods or dishes?
5. What do you know about farming? Have you ever been to a farm? What are some different types of farms?
6. Why do you think I chose this book for us to read today?

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think the title, *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic*, means. Then ask them what and whom they think this book will most likely be about. What situations might be talked about in the text? What do you think might happen? What information do you think you might learn? What makes you think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, illustrations, author's and illustrator's note, photographs, glossary, and dedications.



## Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- why soybeans are special to Auntie Yang and her family
- how cultural traditions are important to immigrant families
- how food brings people together

Encourage students to consider why the author, Ginnie Lo, and her sister, illustrator Beth Lo, would want to share this story with young people.

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3 and Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strand 4)

- From what point of view, or perspective, is this story told?
- Where does Jinyi live? Where do Auntie Yang and Uncle Yang live? How far away is Jinyi's house from Auntie Yang's house?
- Why did Auntie and Uncle Yang and Mama and Baba immigrate to the United States? Why did they decide to stay and not return to China?
- What does Mama miss about her home in China?
- What does Mama mean when she says she wants the cousins to grow up "as close as four soybeans in a soybean pod"?
- What do Jinyi and her three cousins do together and learn on their visits to Auntie Yang's house?
- Whose turn is it to help Auntie Yang and Mama fix dinner? What shape do the pork-and-spinach dumplings resemble? What does Auntie Yang think of Jinyi's cooking?
- Who wins the dumpling-eating contest? How many dumplings do Pei and Ginger eat? Ping? Jinyi? How many more dumplings does Jinyi eat than Pei and Ginger?
- What does Auntie Yang see on their Sunday drive? What does she call it?
- Why are Auntie Yang and her family so happy to find soybeans in the United States? For what were soybeans in Illinois grown and used? What were they grown and used for in China?
- When Auntie Yang asks the farmer if they can pick some of his soybeans, how does he react? What does the farmer say?
- From the author's and illustrator's descriptions, what do the soybeans look like? Describe their color, texture, size, and shape.
- List the steps that Auntie Yang and her family followed for cooking soybeans. According to Mama and Auntie Yang, what is "the best way to eat soybeans"?
- What does it mean if you get a four-bean pod? A five-bean pod?
- What are some of the different ways people prepare and eat soybeans? How do Auntie Yang and her family like them best?
- What does it mean when Jinyi says that their "empty soybean pods piled almost as high as the famous Yellow Mountain"?
- Who does Auntie Yang invite to the second soybean picnic? Who is invited to the third soybean picnic? How does Auntie Yang make sure she has enough soybeans to feed all of the families?
- At the third soybean picnic, what other Chinese dishes and foods are served? What do Jinyi and Pei squeal at?



★ “The pleasure of finding unexpected links between a new country and the old suffuses this autobiographical outing.”

–*Kirkus Reviews, starred review*

★ “Historical fiction, at its best, makes the specific universal . . . This heartfelt story (based on the authors’ childhoods) is absolutely delicious. . .

The afterword, with photos, is a bonus.”

–*Booklist, starred review*

★ “This is a stellar title that will rest comfortably next to acclaimed picture-book memoirs by Allen Say, Peter Sís, and Uri Shulevitz.”

–*School Library Journal, starred review*

19. Auntie Yang’s annual soybean picnic involves a lot of collaboration. Describe two or three examples of collaboration in this story.
  20. Eventually the soybean picnic grows too large to be held in Auntie Yang’s backyard. Where does the annual soybean picnic move to and about how many Chinese families attend each year?
  21. Why aren’t Jinyi, Pei, Ginger, and Ping able to attend the annual soybean picnic some years?
  22. What is Auntie Yang’s and Mama’s dream? How does Auntie Yang’s and Mama’s dream come true? Who visits them?
  23. What do the visiting relatives from China think of the American soybeans? How do they react while eating them?
  24. Why does Auntie Yang say she is “luckier than the emperor of China”?
  25. What soybean picnic does Jinyi refer to as “the greatest soybean picnic ever”?
- 
- Extension/Higher Level Thinking**  
*(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1 and 3, Craft & Structure, Strand 4–6, & Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)*
1. At the beginning of the story, Jinyi says Mama and Auntie Yang made sure their two families visited often because there were very few Chinese families in the Midwestern United States back then. Why do you think there were so few Chinese families? Why is it important to Mama and Auntie Yang to visit often?
  2. Auntie Yang, Mama, and the others chose to stay in the United States after graduating from college because the war in China made it too dangerous to return. To which war are they referring? What years did this war take place? Using this information, estimate the time period in which this story takes place.
  3. Why do Auntie Yang and Mama give the four cousins Chinese lessons, engage them in Chinese games, and let them help cook traditional Chinese dishes? What are they hoping to teach the girls? Why is it important for the children to learn these traditions?
  4. When Auntie Yang thinks she sees *mao dou*, Uncle Yang does not believe it and says it is because “This is America, not China.” What does he mean? To what is he referring? How is being in America or China significant to finding *mao dou*?
  5. When Auntie Yang asks the farmer permission to pick his soybeans, why does the farmer ask Auntie Yang if she has a pig at home? What do you think the farmer does with his soybeans?
  6. Why does Auntie Yang laugh when the farmer asks if she bought another little pig? What does the reader know that the farmer does not?
  7. Why do you think Auntie Yang and her family decide to have an annual soybean picnic and invite other Chinese American families? What purpose does the annual soybean picnic serve? Why is it important to Auntie Yang and the other families?



8. Why do you think Auntie Yang decides to invite only other Chinese American families to the annual soybean picnic? What is significant about the soybean picnic in the Midwest to immigrant Chinese families at the time of the story?
9. Why do you think Jinyi and her cousins do not speak Chinese well? Why might the other Chinese American children speak Chinese badly too?
10. How does the soybean festival serve as a catalyst in creating a community of people? Who does it bring together and how?
11. Why do you think it took so long for Auntie Yang's and Mama's relatives to visit the United States? Why might they not have been able to visit?
12. What does Oldest Uncle mean when he says Auntie Yang is "luckier than the emperor of Chicago too"? What does this statement signify about Auntie Yang's adjustment to living in the United States?
13. Food is a special connector among people and different cultures. How does food bring people together in this story?
14. At the end of the story, Auntie Yang and Mama say they aren't as homesick as they used to be. Why do you think this is? What has changed for Auntie Yang and Mama?
15. How does the author, Ginnie Lo, create a sense of the passage of time in this story?
16. What do you notice about the illustrations in this story? What media are utilized in creating the illustrations? Why do you think the illustrator, Beth Lo, chose this approach for the illustrations? What significance does it have to the story?

### Reader's Response

*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)*

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Jinyi and her cousins participate in Chinese lessons, watercolor and folding paper activities, and help prepare many different Chinese dishes at Auntie Yang's house. What are some cultural traditions that you and your family participate in? How are these traditions important to you and your family? How do they bring people together?
2. Jinyi and her cousins are given the responsibility of helping prepare and cook Chinese dishes. Describe a time you wanted more responsibility or you were given more responsibility. How did you feel in that situation? What did you learn? How did your parents or guardians show you they were proud of you?
3. Soybeans have a special cultural significance to Auntie Yang and her family. What foods bring your family together? Who makes them? When do you eat them? What is the "best way" to eat them?
4. Describe a time you prepared and made a dish. Why did you pick that particular food? Who helped you prepare the dish? What challenges did you face? With whom did you share the final result? What advice would you give others learning to cook?
5. Family members sometimes move away or do not live nearby. Do you have family that live in different cities, states, or countries? How do you stay in touch with them? How often do you get to visit them?



6. Auntie Yang lives in a rural area outside Chicago, Illinois. How does your neighborhood compare to Auntie Yang's? How might where you live impact the types of foods and community resources available to you?
7. Auntie Yang and Mama were very homesick when they first immigrated to the United States. Think about how you felt when you moved to a new town or changed schools and/or when you met someone who just moved or was new to your school. How did you or the other person feel? Did you or the other person feel welcomed in your new town or school? What was exciting about it? What was difficult?

### ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies

*(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)*

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the book with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the text. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the book or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about why cultural traditions, like the annual soybean picnic, are important to groups of people and how they bring people together.

5. The story contains some content-specific words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

*(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Student who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)*

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### Science/STEM

*(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9 and Range of Reading & Level of Text Complexity, Strand 10)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–5)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strand 6)*

1. Have students explore the Illinois Soybean Association SoyCam archived photos and field notes to learn about soybean farming and production from Illinois farmers ([www.podtoplate.org/pod-to-plate/soycam/](http://www.podtoplate.org/pod-to-plate/soycam/)). How do farmers prepare their fields for soybeans? What are some factors that impact soybean growth? Then have students grow their own soybeans in plastic bags using the Wisconsin Agriculture In the Classroom Soybeanie Baby activity (<http://wisagclassroom.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Soybeanie-Baby.pdf>).



2. Ask students to watch the soybean video *Busy Beans* to learn how soybeans are used as a renewable source for food, fuels, and other biobased products ([www.soybiobased.org/busy-beans](http://www.soybiobased.org/busy-beans)). Then have students research renewable soybean biobased products and their impact on the environment. What are the various benefits (environmental, economic, health) of using biobased soybean products?
  3. Check out Into the Outdoor's Soy Savvy video series ([www.intotheoutdoors.org/topics/soybean-science/](http://www.intotheoutdoors.org/topics/soybean-science/)) to learn about the science and history of soybeans with the accompanying classroom discussion guide.
  4. Have students play Illinois Soybean Association's interactive Pod to Plate online game to learn about soybean production, transportation, processing, products, and exports (<http://podtoplate.org/pod-to-plate/games/pod-to-plate/>). Explore the Pod to Plate teacher's guide for other ideas and resources.
- ### Social Studies/Geography
- (Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)*  
*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)*  
*(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)*
1. Ask students to compare and contrast the United States and China using a Venn Diagram. Have students think about how these countries are both different and similar based on location, geography, size, climate, population, demographics, language, government, and economy.
  2. Provide students with a world map and ask them to locate and mark China and Chicago, Illinois. Ask students to research and calculate the overall distance between Chicago and China, and estimate how long a one-way flight would be from China to Chicago, or vice versa.
  3. Have students research how World War II impacted the immigration of Chinese people to the United States. How did the United States and China's relationship change during World War II? What law was repealed in 1943 and how did this affect Chinese immigration?
  4. In small groups, assign students to research George Washington Carver or William Morse and how he influenced the production of soybeans in the United States. Who was he? How was his role significant in shaping the American history of soybeans? Then ask students to share and present their findings.
  5. Investigate the impact of World War II and the revolution in China on soybean production in the United States. How were the 1940s a major turning point in the American production of soybeans? Why was there an increased demand for soybeans at this time? How were farmers motivated to grow more soybeans?
  6. Have students research and identify the many uses of soybeans in the United States using a web diagram or graphic organizer. Using information collected in their graphic organizer, ask students to identify pros and cons of soybean products, utilization, and their impact on the environment.
  7. Ask students to break down myths and stereotypes about immigration with the "Immigration Myths" lesson plan from Teaching Tolerance ([www.tolerance.org/lesson/immigration-myths](http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/immigration-myths)).
  8. Have students explore what it is like to be an outsider in another country with the "You Have to Live in Somebody Else's Country to Understand" lesson plan from PBS ([www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/foreducators\\_lesson\\_plan\\_01.html](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/foreducators_lesson_plan_01.html)).



## English Language Arts/Writing

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9)

1. Have students write a thank you letter from Auntie Yang to the farmer for letting her pick and buy his soybeans. Encourage students to think about the following questions when writing their thank you letters: How was finding the farmer's farm and his soybeans significant to Auntie Yang and her family? How did the farmer play a role in Auntie Yang's soybean picnic? How was the farmer's generosity important to the start of the annual soybean picnic?
2. Ask students to write an opinion essay about whether or not they think soybeans are the most important part of the annual soybean picnic to Auntie Yang and the other families. If not, what is the important thing about the soybean picnic? Support your claim with examples from the story.
3. If possible, cook boiled soybeans for students to taste ([www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/edamame-cooked-fresh-soybeans-recipe.html](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/edamame-cooked-fresh-soybeans-recipe.html)). Ask students to imagine that they are a food reviewer visiting the annual soybean picnic and have students write a review of Auntie Yang's soybean dish. What do you like/dislike about the dishes and why? Encourage students to use descriptive language to describe the taste, texture, smell, temperature, appearance, and portion sizes. Provide students with examples of food reviews for research and reference.
4. Ask students to imagine that they are a reporter for the local Chicago, Illinois, newspaper reporting on the annual soybean picnic in present day. What is the annual soybean picnic? How did it start? How has it changed over the years? Why has it been a

success? How many people attend each year?

Where is the location? What can people expect to see at the soybean picnic? How can people find out more information?

5. Using information gathered from the second Science/STEM activity, have student write a persuasive essay for or against soybean biobased products. What are the pros and cons? What is the impact on human health, the environment, and the economy?
6. Have students read *Cora Cooks Pancit* ([www.leeandlow.com/books/2840](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/2840)) and *Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji* ([www.leeandlow.com/books/2749](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/2749)) which also feature culturally influenced foods. As students reflect on each story, ask them to compare and contrast what each book teaches about family, food, and cultural traditions. What is the central idea of each book? How are food and culture portrayed and connected in each story? How do these books compare to *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic*?
7. Have students read the interview with author Ginnie Lo and illustrator Beth Lo. Ask students to imagine that they are going to interview Ginnie Lo and Beth Lo and have students write a list of interview questions that they would like to ask them. What thoughts and questions about the story, characters, or themes in *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic* do you have? What was their inspiration for the story? What do you want to know about their writing or illustrating process?

## Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

1. Jinyi and her cousins practice paper folding, or origami, on visits to Auntie Yang's house. Provide students with origami paper, verbal and visual instructions, and a video tutorial and have



students practice folding paper into different shapes and objects.

2. The illustrator, Beth Lo, created the art for the story by painting on handmade porcelain plates. Provide each student with an uncoated paper plate and watercolor or other paints and encourage them to create their own unique illustrations depicting Auntie Yang's annual soybean picnic or one of the traditional Chinese foods or dishes on the paper plate.
3. Ask students to imagine how Auntie Yang might today use social media to inform others and spread the word about her annual picnic. In small groups, have students create a private classroom Instagram, Twitter, and/or Facebook accounts to promote the annual soybean picnic. Encourage them to consider the following: How will they inform the public of the festival? What types of pictures or images should they use? What kind of information should they include in their posts? What #hashtags should they create?
4. Give each student a 4" x 4" square of cardstock. Ask students to draw something that represents their culture or heritage on the square, such as a flag, traditional object, or traditional piece of clothing. Have students present their squares to the class, explaining how their creations represent their culture or heritage. Punch holes around each square and use string to link each students' square together to create a classroom heritage quilt.

### Home-School Connection

*(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3)*

*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strand 7)*

1. Host a classroom international picnic and ask students to bring in a dish or food that is representative of their culture or heritage. As students try each other's dishes, have each student explain the origin(s) of the dish and how it is important in their culture. Along with

their cultural dish, ask students to bring in the recipe they used or a recipe that uses the food they brought and create a classroom cookbook. If possible, make copies of all of the students' recipes so each student can take home a personal cookbook.

2. Ask students to interview a family member about their family. What countries did your family emigrate from? When did your family first arrive in the United States? Why did they immigrate to the United States? Where did they settle and what was life like once they arrived in this country? Have students bring in one or two items (clothing, recipe, photo, postcard, etc.) for a classroom cultural share. For additional activity and lesson ideas, check out the "Family Ties and Fabric Tales" lesson plan from Teaching Tolerance ([www.tolerance.org/supplement/family-ties-and-fabric-tales-elementary-grades](http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/family-ties-and-fabric-tales-elementary-grades)).
3. Ask students to interview someone who immigrated to the United States. When did they immigrate to the United States? How long have they lived in the U.S.? Why did they come to this country? How did they travel here? What was their journey like? What were their first impressions when they arrived in the US? What challenges did they face? How is their homeland different from and similar to the United States?
4. There are many different ways to eat soybeans. Encourage students to try out this recipe for chilled edamame and spring pea soup or another soybean-based recipe with a parent or guardian: [https://www.leeandlow.com/images/pdfs/soybean\\_recipe.pdf](https://www.leeandlow.com/images/pdfs/soybean_recipe.pdf).



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Ginnie Lo** is a retired computer science professor who taught at the University of Oregon for many years. She enjoys hiking, international folk dancing, and traveling—especially taking family trips to China. The mother of two grown children, she lives with her husband in Eugene, Oregon.

Ginnie Lo and Beth Lo are the creators of *Mahjong All Day*, which won the Marion Vannett Ridgway Award for an outstanding picture book debut. Like their first book, *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic* is inspired by the sisters' memories of growing up Chinese American in the Midwest.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Beth Lo** is an award-winning ceramic artist who has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and United States Artists. As an art professor at the University of Montana, she also plays bass in two bands. She has one grown son, and she and her husband live in Missoula, Montana. Her website is [bethlo.com](http://bethlo.com).

Awards and honors for *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic* include:

- **Charlotte Zolotow Award, Highly Commended Title**, Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)
- **Best Children's Books of the Year**, Bank Street College
- **Original Art Show**, Society of Illustrators
- **"Choices,"** Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)

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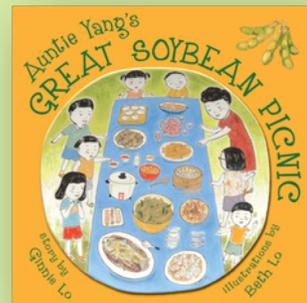
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## Book Information for *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic*



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\*Reading Level: Grades 3–4

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## RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

Learn more about *Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic* at:

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