



Guided Reading with

## A Special Goodbye

Guided Reading: J

DRA: 18

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**Overview:** Mei learns how to cope with the closing of her parents' flower shop with the help of her best friends.

32 pages, 450 words + activity

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

### Focus:

- reading and following conversation
- following a longer story
- maintaining meaning
- sequencing events

### Supportive Text Features:

- familiar words and concepts
- narrative sentence and text form
- pictures support and extend the story

### High-frequency Words:

evening, parents, shared, bad, news, close, shop, said, father, family, owned, neighborhood, flower, store, knew, all, because, year, fewer, people, buy, came, couldn't, pay, rent, anymore, walking, noticed, restaurants, either, something, mother, started, second, brother, friends, visit, choose, customers, sitting, very, quiet, weeks, everyone, weekend, miss, going, school, after, happy, around, asked, sure, goodbye, felt, sad, think, wondered, remember, would, entered, boxes, everywhere, old, times, wonderful, neatly, wash, windows, needed, jokes, broom, served, tea, snacks, day, finished, cleaning, packing, sitting, kids, left, rest, give, neighbors, customers, joy

### Phonics:

- words ending in **-ed**
- words ending in **-ing**

### Common Core Standards:

- R.1, R.2, R.4, R.6, R.7
- RF.1, RF.2, RF.3
- W.2, W.3
- SL.1, SL.2, SL.3, SL.4
- L.1, L.4

### ELL/ESL

*Un adiós especial*

See last page

## Getting Ready to Read

### 1. Introduce the concept and vocabulary by asking open-ended questions:

- Are there any special places in your neighborhood that you like to visit? Why are they important to you? How do you feel about them?
- How do your friends support you when you're feeling sad?
- Have you been through challenging times with your family? What did you do to support one another?
- Has there been a time where a place that you loved in your neighborhood had to close? How did it make you feel?

### 2. Connect the children's past experiences with the book vocabulary:

- Call children's attention to the title: *A Special Goodbye*.
- Tell children that this book is about when Mei finds out her parents must close their flower shop due to rising rent, and how her friends and neighborhood support Mei and her family during these hard times.
- Show the back cover and read the copy. Ask children how they think Mei's friends support Mei and her family once they find out the flower shop must close.
- Have children suggest some words they might read in the story.



- Give children the book and have them look at the pictures. Ask them to tell what they see happening as they turn the pages.

### 3. Remind children of the strategies they know and can use with unfamiliar words:

- Ask them, “What will you do if you come to a word that you don’t know?”
- Encourage children to look for chunks of words they know and to blend the sounds quickly.
- Suggest that children continue reading beyond an unfamiliar word in order to use the context of the story to unlock the meaning of the word.

### 4. Be aware of the following text features:

- The story is told in three chapters. The book contains a table of contents and chapter headings.
- Page 1, the title page, has a picture that introduces all of the children in the story.
- Page 3, the contents page, has a picture of the neighborhood featured in the story.
- The book contains numerous high-frequency words and many other familiar words.
- The story is written in narrative form; dialogue is interspersed with narrative.
- All the sentences are different; there are no text patterns.
- There are different number of sentences on each page; many sentences require a return sweep.
- Exclamation points are used to emphasize action and responses.
- The pictures enhance the story, but most of the story is told in the text.
- The last page has several activities to inspire young people to get involved in their communities and make an impact.

### GUIDED READING NOTE:

Level J is the benchmark for the beginning of the second grade. Children reading at this level are moving into a fluent stage, and the focus emphasizes comprehension and independent reading. Most of the reading should be done silently. Children are also encouraged to: 1) independently apply their reading skills and strategies, 2) make connections between their own experiences and the story, and 3) “get” the author’s message and be able to discuss it with other readers. Most importantly, children should feel confident and eager to read. This is a time to build fluency and independence as children read a variety of genres and develop a sense of reading for different purposes.

## Reading the Book

**1. Set a purpose by telling children to find out how Mei’s family’s flower shop is closing and how her friends and community show Mei and her family love and support.**

**2. Have children read the story silently.** Each child should be reading at his or her own pace. Listen to children as they read by leaning close or bending down beside each child. After the group has read a few pages, check on understanding with simple questions, such as: “What is the story about?” or “Tell me how the story begins.” As they read, watch for indications of comprehension: changes in facial expression, giggles, audible comments, re-reading, turning back to a page. You may want to make notations about what you observe.

**3. Look for these reading behaviors during children’s first reading:**

- Do they have multiple sources for information? Have they begun to cross-check, using a variety of strategies, and self-correct?



- Do they rely less on pictures and more on print when reading?
- Do they have a strong sight vocabulary?
- Are they monitoring meaning and rereading when they lose meaning?
- Do they use beginning, middle, and ending sounds to read unknown words?
- Have they started to use punctuation to gain meaning?
- Do they easily move from page to page?
- Do they make accurate predictions? Do they confirm or revise their predictions while reading?
- Can they connect the text to their own experiences?
- Do they read more automatically and with fluency?
- Do they react to the text even though they are reading silently?
- Have they begun to draw conclusions and make inferences?

**4. As children read, note what they are doing.** Help them build independence by being available, but not intervening too quickly.

- Watch for changes in children’s facial expressions and use these as signals to ask questions, such as: “What made you smile?” or “Where do you need some help?”
- Encourage children’s attempts by making comments, such as: “I like how you are using a different strategy when the first one you tried didn’t work.”
- If children are struggling with deciding which strategy to use, suggest a specific strategy that will help them get meaning in the most efficient way, such as: “Did you think about

chunking the word?” or “Did you think about reading the rest of the sentence and then going back to the word?”

**5. Possible teaching points to address based on your observations:**

- Review how to find a known part or sound chunk in an unknown word.
- Show children how to use analogies from the known to the unknown when encountering new words.
- Work with inflectional endings: the “-ed” form of verbs.
- Work with tricky words that are present in the text, including: could, would, and should. Go over with students how these words are pronounced and how they don’t look like how they should sound. Consider putting up a phonetic chart with how to pronounce these words for students to reference.
- Explore the story grammar—characters, setting, problem, and solution.
- Review how to determine what is important in a picture or sentence.
- Model asking questions or making “I wonder...” statements to extend comprehension.
- Review using punctuation marks to guide the meaning-making process. Call attention to the use of quotation marks, commas, exclamation points, and question marks in dialogue.
- Model how to revisit the text to find specific examples or ideas in the story. Revisit *A Special Goodbye* to review how Mei and her family close their flower shop and what their friends and community do to help support them through challenging times.



### After the First Reading

- 1. Have children tell what they learned about why Mei and her family had to close their flower shop and how Mei's friends and community helped to honor their family's store.** Ask children to talk about how Mei feels during the story and what her friends and community do when they find out the flower shop needs to close.
- 2. Discuss how Mei finds out that their family flower shop needs to close and how her friends and community react.** How do Mei's friends react to Mei's news about the flower shop closing? What does the flower shop mean to Mei's friends? How do they want to help her?
- 3. Elicit children's ideas about how Mei's friends came up with ideas to honor the flower shop and to always remember it.** How did Mei's friends help Mei and her family with the closing of the flower shop? What ideas do they come up with to help remember the flower shop in the neighborhood?
- 4. Have children compare Mei's feelings about the closing of the flower shop in the beginning of the story versus the end of the story.** Discuss how Mei's feelings change over the course of the story, and different ways that she copes with her complicated emotions about the flower shop.
- 5. Make a list of the different suggestions that Mei and her friends came up with to honor the flower shop.** Afterwards, children can brainstorm different places that are special to them in their neighborhood or reflect on a time that a restaurant or place in their community had to close and how it made them feel.
- 6. Ask children to talk about anything in the story that surprised them.**

**7. Discuss the lesson in the story that could help children in their real lives.**

**8. Additional questions to ask:**

- What did Mei notice about other shops and restaurants in the neighborhood? Why did they have to close?
- How do Mei's parents tell her about the flower shop closing? How does Mei react?
- How did Mei feel about the flower shop? What did it make her think of?
- What were some of the ways that Mei's friends made her feel better? How do your friends make you feel better when you're feeling sad?
- When Mei's father tells her to think about the joy their flowers brought to people, why do you think he told her that?
- What do Mei and her friends do to help her family prepare with the closing of the flower shop? How do they help her feel happy, even on closing day?
- How does Mei want to honor the flower shop in her community? What do she and her friends do for the shop's customers?
- How did the different customers in the community remember the flower shop? What were some important events that they had flowers for?

### Second Reading

- 1. Have children reread the book silently or to a partner.**
- 2. This is a time for assessment.** Keeping notes on children's progress during a guided reading session will be a helpful resource for giving children on-



going feedback about themselves as readers as well as helping you record how they develop over time.

- While they are reading, watch what children do and what they use from the teaching time.
- You might also take a running record on one child as an assessment of the child's reading behavior.
- You might also listen in on each individual reader, observing as children use appropriate or inappropriate strategies. This information will be valuable for any additional strategy discussions after the second reading.

### Cross-Curricular Activities

**ART:** Think about all the stores and places in your neighborhood. Do you have a favorite, and why? Create a piece of artwork demonstrating what makes it special. Students can create a collage, painting, or other drawing with accessible classroom materials.

Find out places in the local neighborhood that need help or support. Consult the local library, public park or garden, or community youth center to assess their needs. Afterwards, students can create their own posters for a fundraiser or other effort to put around their school.

**LANGUAGE ARTS:** After students find out about places in their neighborhood that need support, have students write a letter to send home to families or to put up around the neighborhood about the different ways they can support their local establishments. Students can brainstorm different ways that they can help, such as donate books to a library in need, bring in treats for a bake sale to raise money, or pick up trash at the park. Work with students on the important elements that go into a

persuasive letter. What do students want to say to convince other friends and family to help?

Encourage students to think about their favorite place in their neighborhood. Why is this an important place to them (for example, the library or park)? How does it make them feel? Afterwards, students can write a reaction essay about the importance of this place and why it's special to them. Students can also accompany the writing piece with an illustration or collage of found materials.

Read *Destiny's Gift* ([leeandlow.com/books/destiny-s-gift](http://leeandlow.com/books/destiny-s-gift)) alongside *A Special Goodbye*. In *Destiny's Gift*, Destiny loves words, and her favorite place in the world is Mrs. Wade's bookstore. She finds out that Mrs. Wade has to close her store, and as she works to help keep the store open, she also creates an imaginative gift for Mrs. Wade that captures the warmth and special magic of the store forever. After reading aloud *Destiny's Gift*, have students think about the following questions: what did these places mean to the characters in the books? How are different establishments in our community meaningful to people? Why is it important to honor them if they have to close? What kinds of feelings do the characters experience throughout the book?

Family businesses are important. Read other books featuring family businesses, including *Mama and Papa Have a Store* ([leeandlow.com/books/mama-and-papa-have-a-store](http://leeandlow.com/books/mama-and-papa-have-a-store)) and *Quinito's Neighborhood/El Vecindario de Quinito* ([leeandlow.com/books/quinito-s-neighborhood-el-vecindario-de-quinito](http://leeandlow.com/books/quinito-s-neighborhood-el-vecindario-de-quinito)). Compare the different businesses featured in each story and ask students the following guiding questions: why are these family businesses important? How are they honored in their community? How do these places make a difference in their neighborhood?



Compare Mei's experiences with Xochitl from *Xochitl and the Flowers/Xochitl, la Niña de las flores* ([leeandlow.com/books/xochitl-and-the-flowers-xochitl-la-nina-de-las-flores](http://leeandlow.com/books/xochitl-and-the-flowers-xochitl-la-nina-de-las-flores)). Xochitl has to leave her family's flower shop when she goes from El Salvador to the United States. Have students answer the following questions: how do Mei and Xochitl feel about their family businesses closing? What are the different reasons that their family business has to shut down? What do flowers mean to their neighborhoods and communities?

**WRITING:** Mei and her family are going through a big change. How do Mei's friends help support her and her family in the story? Write about ways that you can support your friends if they're feeling sad or need your help.

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** Learn about why places in communities, particularly small businesses, have to close. Provide students excerpts from articles, like *The New York Times'* "After Enduring a Pandemic, Small Businesses Face New Worries" ([nytimes.com/2022/07/26/business/economy/small-business-recession.html](http://nytimes.com/2022/07/26/business/economy/small-business-recession.html)). Have students reflect on different reasons a small business might have to close, and what they learned from reading different news articles and *A Special Goodbye*.

Research different flower shops in students' neighborhood. Have they ever visited the shop? What kinds of flowers did they purchase there? Who owns the flower shop? What goes into running a flower shop? If possible and in walking distance from the school, have students go on a field trip and visit the flower shop. With permission from the owner, students can ask different questions pertaining to running a small business.

**SCIENCE:** Flowers have a lot of meaning and are used for different events, as demonstrated in *A Special Goodbye*. Learn about different types of popular flowers in the United States and what you can buy in a flower shop (<https://www.1800flowers.com/blog/flower-facts/flower-types/>). Ask students if they have a favorite flower and conduct a research study on that flower. Where does it grow? Can you buy it in a flower shop?



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## English Language Learner Teaching Activities With **A Special Goodbye**

The focus of the teacher's support should be on building comprehension, fluency, confidence, and independence. These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign English Language Learners to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Children can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each child write three questions about the story. Then let children pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on children's level of English proficiency, after the second reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have children retell what is happening on each page orally, then in writing.
  - Have children work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask children to write a short summary or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have children give a short talk about how Mei's friends supported her after she told them her family's flower shop needed to close.
5. The book contains several words that may be unfamiliar to children. Based on children's prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have children make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word 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.
6. *A Special Goodbye* also has a Spanish edition, *Un adiós especial* ([leeandlow.com/books/un-adios-especial](http://leeandlow.com/books/un-adios-especial)). If possible, have students read *Un adiós especial*. Students can compare both editions, if possible. What was it like to read a Spanish version of *A Special Goodbye*, and vice versa?

**Guided Reading** Guided reading levels were assigned by literacy experts and certified Reading Recovery® teachers using the guidelines identified in Guided Reading and Matching Books to Readers by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell.

**INT. (Intervention)** Intervention levels were assigned by literacy experts and certified Reading Recovery® teachers and are intended for use in early intervention and one-on-one tutorial programs, including Reading Recovery®. These levels are not officially authorized by Reading Recovery®. Reading Recovery® is a registered servicemark of The Ohio State University.

**DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)** and **EDL (Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura)** DRA and EDL levels were determined using information in the Developmental Reading Assessment Resource Guide and EDL Resource Guide by Joetta Beaver.

All level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

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