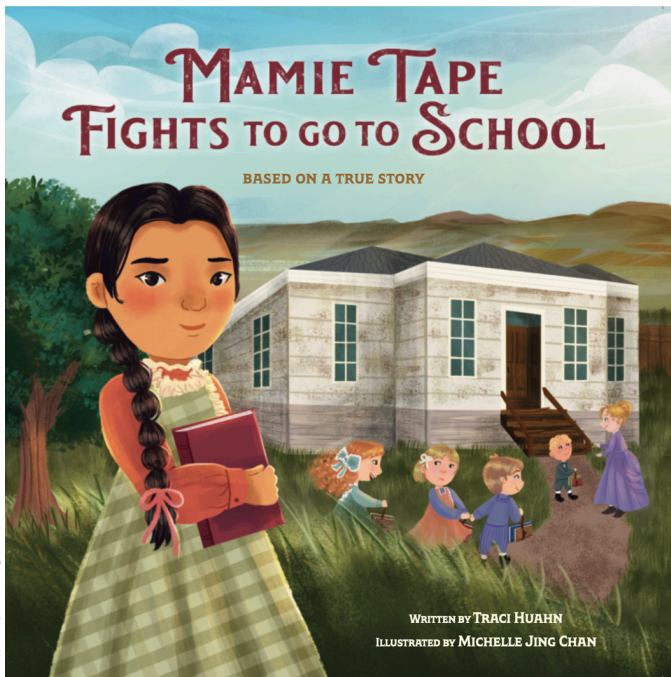


EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

MAMIE TAPE FIGHTS TO GO TO SCHOOL

Written by Traci Huahn | Illustrated by Michelle Jing Chan



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Age: 4-8 | Preschool–3rd

Reading Level: Lexile AD620L, Fountas & Pinnell P

Interest Level: Preschool–5th

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Traci Huahn, like Mamie Tape, is the daughter of Chinese immigrants and was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. A former attorney, she was inspired to write about Mamie

while researching Asian American civil rights cases. Traci used Chinese philosopher Laozi's proverb—a *journey of a thousand miles begins with a single*—to frame Mamie's story. It sums up the long journey of Mamie's fight to go to school and that of countless others who have fought for equality. She hopes that Mamie's story will inspire readers to become changemakers, even if it starts by taking just one small step. Connect with Traci at www.tracihuahn.com and on Instagram and Twitter/X @tracihuahn.

ABOUT THE BOOK

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step...

When Chinese children weren't allowed at school, Mamie Tape took her first step and showed up anyway. When she was turned away at the schoolhouse door, she and her parents took another step: they sued the San Francisco school board...and won! Their case *Tape v. Hurley* made its way up to the California Supreme Court, which ruled that children of Chinese heritage had the right to a free public school education. But even then, Mamie's fight wasn't over. This is the story of one young changemaker's brave steps on the long journey to end school segregation in California.

THEMES

Asian American Interest

Changemakers

U.S. & California History

Prejudice & Racism

School & Education

Courage, Determination



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Michelle Jing Chan is a queer Chinese American illustrator who grew up in Colorado and now lives in the Pacific Northwest. Ever since she could hold a pencil, she has loved creating art and bringing

her daydreams to life. Like Mamie, Michelle is the daughter of Chinese immigrants. While she didn't learn about Mamie in history class, Michelle hopes everyone will now learn about Mamie's landmark case. When she's not drawing, you can find her petting the neighborhood cats, curling up with a book, or binge-watching spooky TV shows. Connect with Michelle at www.michellejingchan.com and on Instagram, Twitter/X, and TikTok @michellieart.



Penguin
Random
House

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help educators use *Mamie Tape Fights to go to School* in English language arts (ELA), history, social studies, civics, math, geography, art, and physical education curricula for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Aligned for K-5 Common Core ELA Standards Reading: Literature

- **Kindergarten:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7;
- **1st Grade:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7
- **2nd Grade:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7
- **3rd Grade:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7
- **4th Grade:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3
- **5th Grade:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.7

VOCABULARY

- **barbarian:** a person believed to be uncivilized, without manners or respect; typically used to insult or be mean to someone.
- **court:** an official group of people in charge of making decisions related to laws.
- **heathen:** a disrespectful term for a person who is not religious; typically used to insult or be mean to someone.
- **journey:** travel from one to place to another.
- **judge:** a person on the court who makes decisions related to laws and justice.
- **lawyer:** a person whose job is to represent others in court or give advice related to the law.
- **pupil:** a child or young person in school; another word for student.
- **right:** something to which a person has a claim to.
- **school board:** a group of people in charge of local public schools.
- **school superintendent:** person in charge of a public school district.
- **segregated:** separated or divided by group membership, often based on racial identity.



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BEFORE READING

Before reading *Mamie Tape Fights to Go to School*, introduce students to the book and its themes with these questions:

- Look at the front cover. What do you think this story is about? When do you think this story takes place? What do you think Mamie is thinking? What do you think the other students are thinking?
- Compare the illustrations on the front and back end papers of the book. What differences do you see? What do you think they might symbolize?
- Do you think this book is fiction or nonfiction? Point out to students that the cover says “Based on a True Story” and that this book is historical fiction. That means this book combines both facts and imagined elements, such as the dialogue.
- Why do you think someone might need to “fight” to go to school? Explain to students that the right to go to school has not always been promised in the United States. Throughout the county’s history, many families have had to struggle and challenge the rules in order to go to school. Many people still face inequality today in accessing public schools.
- Can you think of a time when you were brave? What happened? How did you feel? How did you show bravery? What helped you be brave?

READING FOR PURPOSE

- Have students pay attention to find out why Mamie needs to fight to go to school, and how she shows bravery throughout her journey.



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- A lot of people stood in the way of Chinese children being able to go to school, but there were also lots of helpers. Have students take note of all the people that helped Mamie and those who came before her in their fight to go to school.
- Have students pay attention to the illustrations and note the differences and similarities in clothing, games children played, and things inside a classroom compared to today.

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AFTER READING THE STORY

After reading the story, use these questions to further students' comprehension and discussion of the book and its themes.

- Mamie talks about her parents' bravery coming from China to begin new lives in America. What are some things that would have been different for them in a new country?
- Why was Mamie not allowed to go to school? Do you think this was fair? Why or why not?
- Why was there a separate school for Chinese children before Mamie was born? Why did the school board close it?
- Before Mamie, other people fought to allow Chinese children into schools. What happened when the white reverend fought on behalf of a Chinese boy? Why were the Chinese merchants always told "no" when they demanded schools for Chinese children?
- After Mamie finds out the school superintendent won't let her into Spring Valley Primary School, what does she feel like doing? What does she and her family do instead?
- How did newspapers portray Mamie?
- What does the jai that Mamie's family eats for Chinese New Year symbolize?
- Why do you think it was difficult for Mamie to get a vaccination certificate?
- When the principal tells Mamie she can wait for a spot to open up at Spring Valley Primary School, why do you think Mamie doesn't think one ever will?

- How does Mamie feel about attending the segregated school for Chinese children? How do her feelings change? How do you think Mamie might have felt on her first day going to the Chinese school?
- What do you think about the ending of the story? If you could rewrite history, how would you change the ending?
- Make a list of all the steps Mamie had to take fighting to go to school. Do you think any of these steps were unfair? What rules should be in place for children to go to school?
- What does the phrase *a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step* mean to Mamie? What does it mean to you?



AFTER READING THE AUTHOR'S NOTE

Read the Author's Note and ask students these questions to extend their learning.

- Even though Mamie didn't get to attend Spring Valley Primary School, why was her case important?
- Why did Mamie's family try to send her to Spring Valley Primary School even though they knew Chinese children weren't allowed?
- Even though Mamie and her family were unhappy that a separate Chinese school was being opened, why do you think they still sent Mamie and her brother Frank to that school?
- Who was Sylvia Mendez?
- Who was Linda Brown?
- What are some of the ways Mamie's parents, Joseph and Mary Tape, were brave?
- Why did the author use the phrase *a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step* to tell Mamie's story?

ACTIVITIES

ELA/History. Interview Mamie Tape. Have students imagine they get to interview Mamie Tape. They can pick any time frame for their interview (for example, when Mamie was 8-years-old, or perhaps when Mamie was 78-years-old and racially-segregated schools were finally ruled unconstitutional).

- Have students prepare a list of questions to ask Mamie.
- Students may also choose to write answers to their questions as if they were Mamie.

ELA/History/Art. Journalist for a Day. The illustration on the right is based on an actual newspaper article about Mamie Tape's case in 1885.

- Discuss with students how newspaper articles can be primary sources when they are written by journalists who witness the events being described.
- Have students pretend to be journalists and write down their observations about an activity or event during the school day, then have them write a short article or draw a picture about what they witnessed.



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ACTIVITIES (continued)

ELA/Civics. Write a Persuasive Letter. After Mamie's family finds out that the school board is reopening a segregated school for Chinese children, Mamma vows never to send Mamie there. In real life, Mamie's mom was so angry that she wrote a letter to the school board and school superintendent saying Mamie would never attend the Chinese school. Her letter was published in newspapers around the country.

- Have students think of a time when they have experienced or witnessed some form of unfairness, then write a persuasive letter about what should be changed.

ELA/Civics. Be a Changemaker. Activity Sheet A-1 at the end of this guide may be used for this activity.

- Mamie thinks it's unfair that she cannot go to school. What is something you've seen or experienced that you think is unfair? Write or draw about it.
- Mamie becomes a changemaker by taking small steps to fight for fairness. Encourage students to think about an example of unfairness that they have witnessed, then identify one step they have taken or can take to help change it.

ELA/Social Studies. Chinese Zodiac. Mamie's California Supreme Court case, *Tape v. Hurley*, was decided on March 3, 1885, during the Year of the Rooster in the Chinese zodiac.

- Have students find out what the current Chinese zodiac year is, as well as the zodiac year they were born in.
- Have students research and/or discuss with students the characteristics associated with the zodiac animals for those years.

ELA/Social Studies. Lucky Jai. In the book, Mamie eats a lucky dish called jai in hopes that it will help her get into school. Although that's not what really won Mamie her case, jai is a lucky food eaten during Lunar New Year in Chinese culture. It's made with ingredients such as lily buds, fat choy (a kind of edible fungus), bamboo shoots, tofu, vegetables, and mung bean noodles. Many cultures have lucky foods.

- Have students share a lucky food from their family's traditions or research a lucky food and its cultural origins.



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ACTIVITIES (continued)

Geography. Mapping Mamie's Journey. Activity Sheet A-2 at end of guide may be used for this activity. Have students look at the provided map and locate the below locations from Mamie's journey. Then, starting at Mamie's House, have students draw a path to each location and answer the questions on the activity sheet.

- Mamie's House
- Spring Valley Primary School
- San Francisco Superior Court
- California Supreme Court

Math. Timeline of Court Cases. Mamie's case, *Tape v. Hurley*, took place in 1885.

- Have students calculate how long ago that was.
- After reading the Author's Note, calculate how long ago the cases *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947) and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) were.
- Make a timeline of these cases up until today's date and discuss how change can often take a long time.

Math. Comparing Class Sizes. The principal tells Mamie and Mamma that no more than sixty pupils are allowed in each class at Spring Valley Primary School, yet the school allowed sixty-two and seventy white children into the classes for eight-year-olds.

- Have students calculate how many extra students were allowed into each class.
- Have students write a math equation explaining their thinking, and use the information to make an argument for why the principal's decision was unfair.

Art. A Journey of a Thousand Miles. Create a visual or performing art piece interpreting the phrase, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Physical Education. Stepping Forward and Back. In the story, Mamie's journey takes many figurative steps forward and back.

- Write numbers 1-10 and place them in a box.
- Draw a number and have students take that many steps forward.
- Draw another number and have students take that many steps back.
- Continue this game for several rounds.
- Ask students what it felt like having to take so many steps forward and back.



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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- **History. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.** The Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted in 1882, just two years before Mamie began her fight to go to school. It banned Chinese laborers from immigrating to the United States. Many other laws and policies that discriminated against Chinese Americans were also put in place, such as the school board rule that Mamie and her parents fought against. Have students learn more about the Chinese Exclusion Act and some of the other discriminatory laws of that time.
- **History/Civics. The Long Fight for School Desegregation.** Even though Mamie won her case, the school board was able to force her to go to a segregated school because the law at the time allowed for racially-segregated schools as long as they were considered “equal.” But in reality, the schools for non-white children were of inferior quality. It took many decades and many people both before and after Mamie’s fight to change these laws. Have students learn about other children who were changemakers for school rights and compare how their experiences were similar to or different from that of Mamie Tape. Some examples include Sarah Roberts, Roberto Alvarez, Sylvia Mendez, Linda Brown, and Ruby Bridges.
- **ELA/Media Literacy. Bias in the Media.** In the book, Mamie wishes that people reading newspaper stories about her could know her like her friends did. At the time of Mamie’s case, there was a lot of anti-Chinese racism and journalists reporting on Mamie’s case often reflected that bias. Discuss with students what implicit bias is—beliefs, attitudes, or judgments that we have but might not even be aware of—and how even journalists reporting the news can have biases. Share articles from a variety of student-friendly news sources and have students spot where there might be implicit bias.

This guide was prepared by the book’s author, Traci Huahn, in collaboration with Ashley Chu, a curriculum developer and former classroom teacher with a passion for equity and diversity in children’s literature. Like Mamie Tape, Ashley was born and raised in San Francisco by Chinese immigrant parents.



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Be a Changemaker!

Mamie thinks it's unfair that she cannot go to school.

What is something you've seen or experienced that you think is unfair? Write or draw about it.



Mamie becomes a changemaker by taking small steps to fight for fairness.

**What is one step you have taken or can take to help make a change?
Write or draw about your idea!**



Mapping Mamie's Journey

Instructions: Start at Mamie's House and draw a path for Mamie to go to each place on the map. Go in the order the places are numbered. Then return to Mamie's House.

How many blocks is it from Mamie's House to Spring Valley Primary School? _____

How many blocks is it from Mamie's House to the Chinese Primary School? _____

Which school is closer? _____

San Francisco 1885

#1 Start Here
Mamie's House

#2
Spring Valley Primary School
School that turned Mamie away

#3
San Francisco Superior Court
First court where Mamie won her case

#4
California Supreme Court
Final court where Mamie won her case

#5
Chinese Primary School
Segregated school that Mamie was forced to attend

Streets shown: Union Street, Green Street, Gough Street, Franklin Street, Van Ness Avenue, Larkin Street, Jackson Street, Stone Street, Post Street, Park Avenue, Market Street.