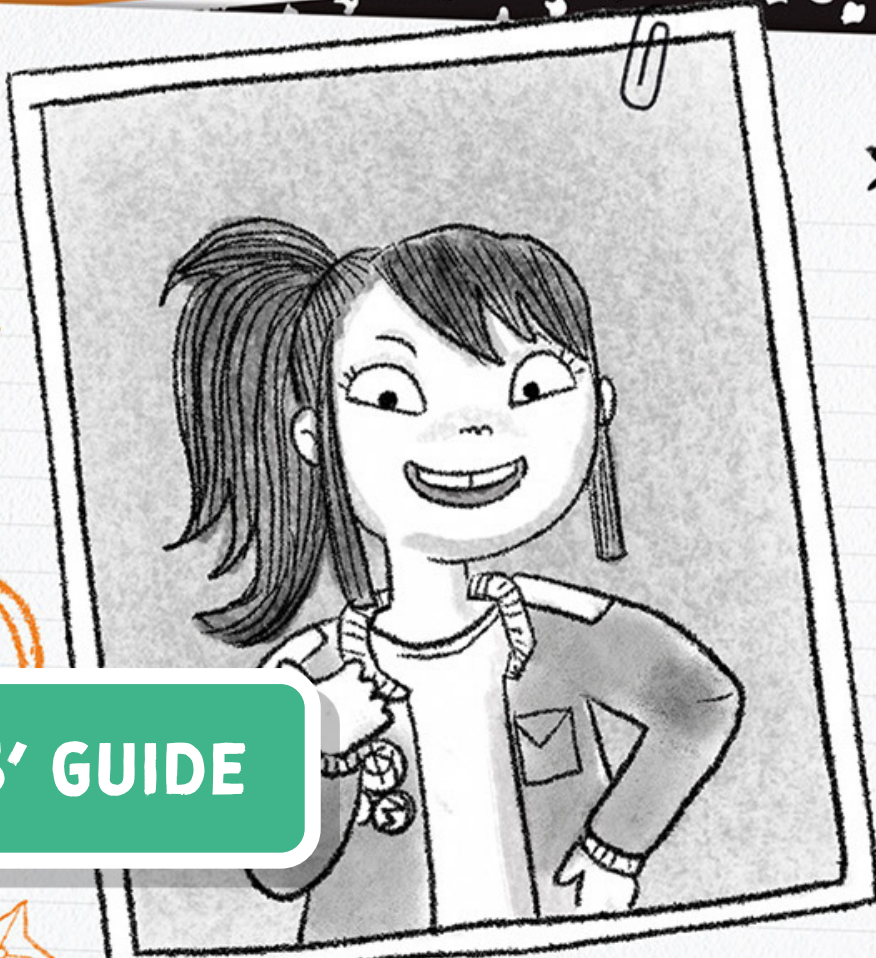


AIRI SANO

PRANKMASTER GENERAL



New School Skirmish



EDUCATORS' GUIDE

ABOUT THE BOOK



Meet Airi Sano. After spending her entire childhood moving from one military base to another, she's excited to be settling down for the long-term in Hawai'i. She's less excited about her new teacher, who's determined to make Airi like school. But she's got a plan: prank her teacher so hard that she gives up on even trying to get Airi to do any work—especially any reading.

But Mrs. Ashton won't give up, no matter what Airi does. Airi will need the help of her new classmates—who might even be her new friends—to get Mrs. Ashton to crack. It's time . . . for a prank war!

With fun and funny black-and-white illustrations throughout, *New School Skirmish* kicks off a brand-new series for readers to adore!

ABOUT THE CREATORS: ZOE TOKUSHIGE & JENNIFER NAALCHIGAR

Zoe Tokushige (she/they) originally hails from Southern California, but has spent the past decade on the East Coast. After attending NYU for a BS in media, culture, and communications, Zoe received an MFA in creative writing from Emerson College before returning to New York to work in publishing. Zoe currently works at Penguin Random House. When not writing, Zoe enjoys crafts, video games, and D&D. You can visit Zoe online at zoetokushige.com and follow her on Twitter and Instagram @zoetokushige.

Jennifer Naalchigar (she/her) is a British Japanese illustrator based in Hertfordshire, England. She has a love for quirky characters and enjoys experimenting with digital brushes. Jennifer can often be found listening to music and doodling with her tablet in a coffee shop. She also enjoys reading picture books to her kids and scanning anything she can get her hands on. After five years working as an art buyer for Oxford University Press, she decided that illustration was the career for her. You can follow Jennifer on Instagram @naalchidraws.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Common Core Standards push readers to look closer when reading a text including examining author's craft and analyzing word choice and narrative elements. Tokushige's novel *New School Skirmish*, includes a unique text structure, opportunities for character analyses, text features that are normally not found in fiction, and figurative language that allows the reader to deeply delve into the text. This teaching guide includes discussion questions and language arts activities to be used in grades 3-7 as this text is read as a whole group, small group, or a combination. This guide could also be modified to be used with a student who is reading the novel independently.

The Common Core Anchor Standards in English Language Arts and National Core Art Standards Anchors that can be addressed using the discussion questions and activities in this guide are:

English Language Arts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structures of text, including how specific sentences, paragraph, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10

Read and comprehend complex literary texts independently and proficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

National Arts Standards

[Creating Anchor Standard 1](#)

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

[Creating Anchor Standard 2](#)

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

[Creating Anchor Standard 3](#)

Refine and complete artistic work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions as reading check-ins, writing prompts, or classroom discussions throughout *New School Skirmish*.

1. Airi says, on page 1, that her mother calls her a delinquent and shares on page 9 that she is known as a “problem kid.” How do you think these negative descriptions of Airi affect her behavior? Self-esteem? Why does she act like they don’t bother her?
2. Airi’s mom does not seem to find Airi funny, even when she is just being silly. Why do you think that is? How does her dad treat her differently? Do you think their differences in how they see Airi affect her view of each of them as a parent?
3. Airi’s favorite part in the new house is her room, and she shares with us what she loves about it (page 4). What makes YOUR room special? What would be your perfect room?
 - **Extension:** After students share their perfect room, have them draw it.
4. Airi collects her report cards and shares them with the reader (page 5). Do you think report cards give us a full picture of a person? Why/why not?
5. Why is school important? Look on page 6 for Airi’s thoughts and try to reassure her that school is helpful.
6. How did Airi feel in all of her past schools where she was the only Asian student (page 7)? How does she feel in her new school with a more diverse population (page 34)?
7. Throughout the book, including pages 11 and 38, Airi discusses names. Why is it so important to pronounce names correctly?
8. Do you think sixth grade should be in elementary school or middle school? Why?
9. Airi says her mom is always telling her to be respectful, and that it is her Mom’s favorite word (page 10). What is your adult’s favorite word or saying to say to you? What is your favorite word or saying? Why is it your favorite?
10. What do EJ’s and Airi’s differences when it comes to books (page 16, 102) teach us about readers?
11. If you had a signature sound (page 18), what would it be? What is your favorite sound (page 22)?
12. Do you think “making a scene” automatically equals bad (page 24)?
13. Airi never cared about having friends before. Why does she care about it now (page 30, 140)?
14. Why do you think “kids don’t get [Airi] most of the time (page 33)?”
15. Why, suddenly, do boys and girls tend to separate starting at a certain age (page 33)?
16. Airi says, “It’s always good to know who the bullies are (page 36).” Why do you think she believes this? Do you agree? Why/why not?

17. Airi doesn't get embarrassed by most things, but reading out loud does cause her embarrassment (53). What is the difference between when she acts out versus when she has to read aloud?
18. Airi says you can learn a lot from where people sit in the cafeteria (page 55) and bus (page 72). Do you agree? Why/why not?
19. How does Airi act differently in public versus how she acts in private, including when she is with Kaori (page 63)?
20. Airi says that adults do not like how she takes notes (page 106). Why does it matter how she takes notes? Why are Airi's notes different than other people's? How do you take notes?
21. Airi pulls up criticism of *The Secret Garden* (pages 109-112) to try to avoid reading, but Mrs. Ashton's response was not what she expected. How did she think Mrs. Ashton would respond? How did she?
 - **Extension:** What is another book, movie, or other piece of art that fits what they were discussing about *The Secret Garden*? In what ways does it align?
22. Airi says "Success depends on organization (page 193)," particularly when talking about pranks. What are some ways that both Airi and Mrs. Ashton prove this?
23. On page 194, Airi shares something she learned from *The Sims*. What have you learned from a video game?
24. Airi says she was never as mean as she was since they moved (page 240). Why do you think that is?
25. In what way did Airi go too far in the haunted house (page 272)? Why was Mrs. Ashton so stern with her? Why was Airi so upset with herself?
26. Mrs. Ashton believes that Airi has dyslexia which is a learning disability that affects a person's ability to read. What were some clues in the book that Airi may have dyslexia? Why is Airi mad at first that Mrs. Ashton feels this way? What changes Airi's mind when it comes to the diagnosis?
 - Pages to help with this question: 183, 188, 229, 281, 291.
27. In what ways did Mrs. Ashton surprise Airi versus her past teachers?
28. Airi starts the book not trusting adults. How do adults prove her wrong?
29. When does a joke or prank go too far?
30. What was your favorite prank from the book? Why was it your favorite?

Extended Discussion Questions

Use these questions, that could be extended with research, to dig even deeper into *New School Skirmish*.

31. Airi mentions that in ancient times, bathing was scarce (page 124). Why was that? Is it a good excuse for Airi to not bathe?
32. Airi's mother suffers from "bad days (page 142)," particularly since Kaori was born. How do her symptoms fit a diagnosis of post-partum depression?
33. What did you learn about Hawai'i while reading?
 - **Extension:** Why does the author include a Land Acknowledgement at the end of the book?

CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS

Use these activities to extend your students' thinking and experience with *New School Skirmish*.

Text Structure

New School Skirmish is written as a mixture of prose and excerpts from notebooks.

- First, ask students why they think the author chose to write the book in this way. Make sure to purposefully ask about the mixture of journal entries, notes, drawings, and prose as well as the footnotes.
- Have students use the book as a mentor text for their own writing. Have them create their own Personnel Files for themselves and their friends (Airi's Personnel File is on page viii).
- Then have them brainstorm an obstacle or event (good or bad) they are going to face in the next day or so. Have them write a Situation Report (example on page 12) setting up what they are anticipating and an After-Action Report (example on page 32) about what occurred.
 - Students can also take a page out of Airi's book by taking their After-Action Report and turning it into a comic like Airi's on page 103.
- Airi included a lot of text features in her notes. This is a great opportunity to discuss text features and how they enhance the text. Look at some of the text features like Airi's diagram of her room (page 4), the map of where she lived (page 13), her class seating chart (page 40), diagram of her classroom (page 44), and diagram of food (page 120) and discuss what they add to the text.
 - **Extension:** As a class, you can combine all of the discussion into a Circle Map or Web sharing what text features are and why they are important.
- Students can then create their own maps, diagrams, etc. like Airi does.
- For a fun activity, have students create their own treasure map (like Airi's on page 227) to share with the class to go on a treasure hunt.

Food

Food is a large part of Airi's story.

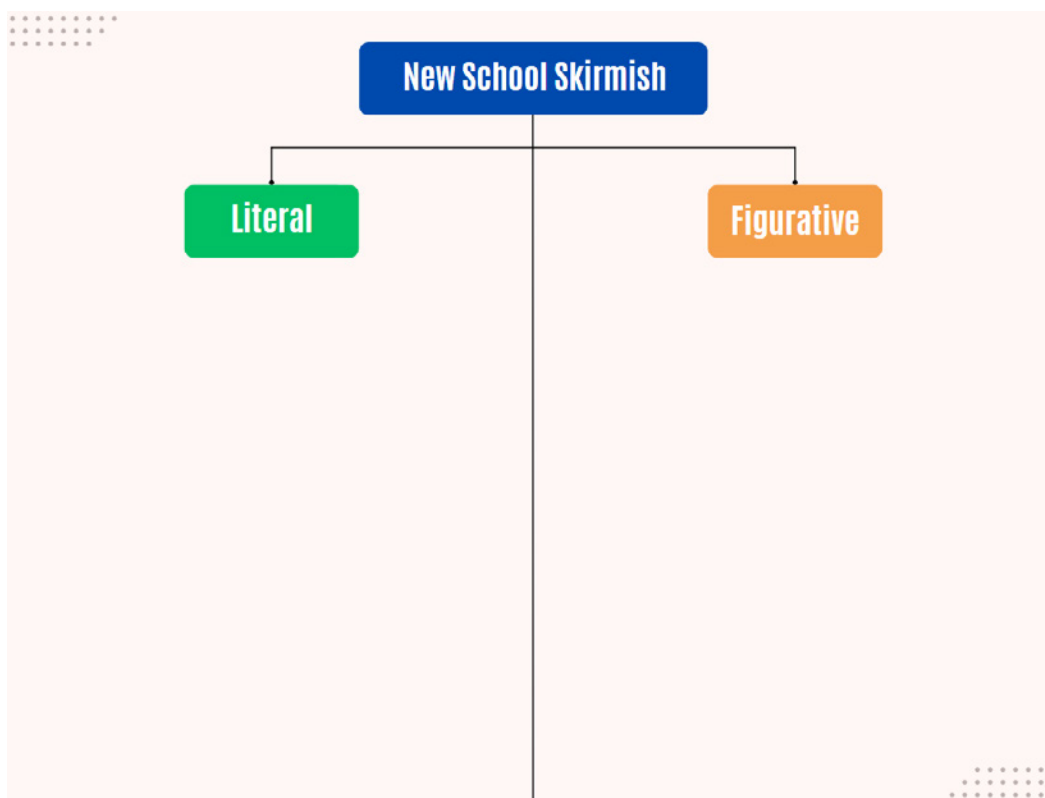
- As students read, have them use post-it notes or a sheet of notebook paper to track when the book makes them hungry. After they finish reading, have them pick a passage where food was mentioned and have them explore how imagery was created in the passage using this graphic organizer:

Food described, Page Number				
Sight	Smell	Taste	Sound	Touch
Words used in the passage that added to the sight imagery.	Words used in the passage that added to the smell imagery.	Words used in the passage that added to the taste imagery.	Words used in the passage that added to the sound imagery.	Words used in the passage that added to the touch imagery.
How did these words help add to the imagery of this passage?				
Why did this passage over others that talked about food specifically make you hungry?				

- Some pages where food is mentioned are: 14, 15, 16, 28, 58, 70, 88, 120, 156, 195, 242
- Extension activities:**
 - Airi shares her go-to party food on page 14. What are you or your family's go to party foods?
 - Airi creates diagrams of some of the food her family eats. Take one of your favorite dishes and create a diagram of it, like Airi's on page 15.

Metaphor/Simile

- Throughout the book, the author uses figurative language, primarily metaphors and similes. If new to your students, define and discuss figurative language, metaphors & similes, imagery, and personification. Then share the examples from the book found on pages iv and 20:
 - Her face gets all red like a pepper...
 - Mom says I'm a force of nature.
- Have students find examples of simile and personification in the text on their own.
 - Some examples can be found on pages 37, 60, 131, 148, 158, 159, 167, 216, and 257.
- Have students each pick their favorite example of figurative language they found and draw a literal interpretation and figurative interpretation.



- When done, have students share why they believe authors use imagery either through a discussion or a written response.

EJ versus Airi

- EJ and Airi are very different characters. While reading, have your students compare and contrast them using a compare/contrast note-taker or graphic organizer.
- When done with the book, have students take their notes and complete a comparison and contrast essay summarizing how the two characters are different.

Puns

- In Chapter 1, Airi tells a bunch of color jokes, all puns. Use this as an opportunity to introduce your students to puns.
- Take each of Airi's color jokes and discuss how they are puns.
- Allow students to create their own jokes using puns.
 - **Extension:** Have your students ask the adults in their lives for their favorite pun joke then allow for joke-sharing time!

Logos

- Airi keeps track of all of the airplane logos she sees (page 32).
- Teach students about what a logo is, what its purpose is, and brainstorm famous logos as a class.
- Then, have students create a logo notebook by taking a few sheets of paper, folding them in half, and stapling it. Have students keep track of all the logos they see in a set time frame.
- Have students share their logo notebook with each other after they are complete.
- Have students answer: Why do companies make logos? How do you think logos help a business?

Japanese & Hawai'ian Words

- Airi and her family are multilingual, and the author includes Japanese and Hawai'ian words throughout the book. (Some examples on pages 36, 90, 99, 120, and 142.)
- First, ask students why they think the author included multiple languages in the book and how it adds to the overall experience of the book.
- Students may notice that the author was very purposeful in including pronunciations of the words. Ask students why they think the author thought this was important.
- Have students, as they read the book, keep a list of the Japanese or Hawai'ian words they encounter. When finished, have your students create a glossary for the book.
 - Or, for fun, your students can even make flashcards to learn the words!

Mrs. Ashton's Activities

- Use Mrs. Ashton's activities throughout the book in your classroom.
- Activities can be found on pages 42, 50, 76, 141, 164, 169, 200, 202, and 266

Playlist

- On page 254 Airi shares that she has an all-Japanese Rock playlist as well as a K-pop playlist, each of which fits a different mood.
- Have students choose an emotion and create their own playlist for that emotion.
- For fun: As a class, create playlists for different situations that can then be listened to in the classroom.

Airi

- Airi changes tremendously throughout the book. Have students look at how Airi talks about herself at the beginning of the book (page iv) versus the end (page 289) then write a character analysis paragraph or essay sharing how Airi has changed, including textual evidence to support their analysis.

This guide was created by Kellee Moyer, a middle school teacher-librarian in Orlando, FL. Kellee is the author of various teaching guides for all levels; the co-author of the blog [Unleashing Readers](#); a past committee member & chair of the Schneider Family Book Award and Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award; on the 2016-2018 ALAN Board of Directors; and a member of NCTE, ALAN, and ALA. Kellee can be reached at Kellee.Moye@gmail.com.