

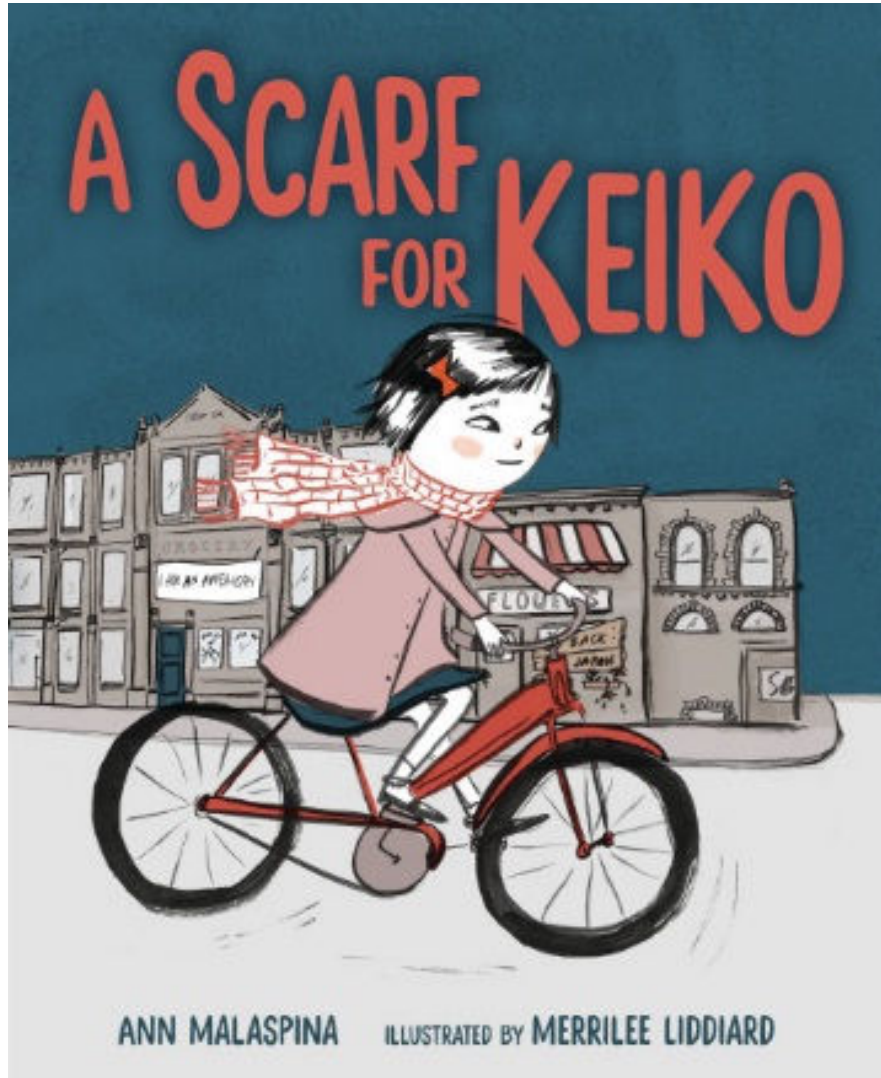
# KAR-BEN

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Resources for Teachers and Students



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## Why Read About Japanese American Internment?

During World War II, 120,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned in internment camps. The roundups began after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Shocked by the attack, the public turned against Japanese Americans, questioning their loyalty. Citing military necessity, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast.

Although they had broken no laws, Japanese Americans lost their homes, jobs, and possessions. They were sent to assembly centers and then to ten internment camps in remote areas. Two-thirds were American citizens born in the United States. Some 33,000 joined the armed forces in the war. But their constitutional rights were ignored. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed a formal apology and acknowledged that "a grave injustice had been done." The US gave reparations to the victims. The study of Japanese-American internment raises issues like prejudice, racism, loyalty, citizenship, and immigration. Stories about the experiences of children and families make that history relevant and meaningful to young people. They see the importance of friendship, generosity, and kindness, as well as fairness, equality, and democracy.

## How to Use This Activity Guide

The story of a Japanese American girl and a Jewish boy during World War II introduces students to what happens when fear and prejudice lead to injustice and suffering. *A Scarf for Keiko* shows how Japanese Americans were unfairly persecuted because of their race. In Europe, where Sam's relatives live, the German Nazis persecuted and killed six million Jewish people during the Holocaust. By walking in the shoes of Sam and Keiko, students learn empathy and understanding. They'll want to find out more about this dark time in history.

The book can be used for older students as a supplement to units about World War II, Japanese American internment, and immigration. They can think about how fictional stories are sparked by true events, and the ways picture books use illustrations and text to explore difficult issues. Perhaps they will be inspired to write and illustrate their own picture books about events in history.

## About the Book

### About the Author

A former newspaper reporter, Ann Malaspina enjoys writing stories about history, social issues, and heroes like Keiko and Sam. She grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and attended Kenyon College, where she majored in English. After raising two sons and writing many books, she earned an M.F.A. in Writing for Children & Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. She lives with her husband in New Jersey. You can read more about her books on Ann's website, [www.annmalaspina.com](http://www.annmalaspina.com).

### About the Illustrator

Merrilee Liddiard grew up in a home filled with delightful artistic chaos and ample creativity. She is known for her love of kids' art design, toys and DIY crafts. Merrilee loves to travel, wander museums, sew, thrift, read and nap.

## Context

As the story begins, Sam joins with his classmates to shun Keiko because she is Japanese American and the U.S. is at war with Japan. Sam's mother worries about her relatives being persecuted for being Jewish in Europe. Sam realizes that Keiko should not be distrusted or hated because of her ancestry. A good neighbor, she is as American as Sam. By knitting her a scarf, Sam stands up for what he believes is right, even though others don't agree.

### Questions:

#### For Before Reading

1. Why does war cause disagreements between neighbors?
2. What does it mean to be an American? Do you have to be born here, or a certain race or religion?
3. Why are people afraid to disagree with their friends?
4. Why are neighbors important?
5. Why is it sometimes hard to stand up for what you believe in?

#### For Reading Together

1. How does Sam feel about knitting?
2. How has World War II affected Sam's and Keiko's families? What is the same, and what is different?
3. Why does Keiko have to sit alone at lunch?
4. What does she feel when a boy throws an egg at her?
5. Why doesn't Mike want Sam to talk to Keiko?
6. What do Sam's parents think about the internment camps?
7. Why does Sam decide to knit a scarf for Keiko?

#### For Post-reading Discussion

1. Do you think Sam should be nice to Keiko? Why or why not?
2. What do you think Sam's brother, who is a soldier, thinks about Keiko?
3. What does Keiko feel when she receives the scarf that Sam knit for her?
4. How does knitting Keiko's scarf make Sam feel better? Does it make up for his past behavior?
5. The Japanese-American internment was a terrible injustice. How do we make sure that it doesn't happen again for other groups of people?

## Suggested Activities

### Map a Family:

In this story, Keiko's family comes from Japan. Sam's family is from Poland. The two families live next door to each other in California. Make a map of the places your family or another family has lived over generations. Show how they travelled to where they are today.

### Make a Picture:

Objects can be symbols representing an idea. There are several objects in this story: Keiko's bicycle. Keiko's mother's tea set. The socks that Keiko knits for Mike. The scarf that Sam knits for Keiko. What ideas do the objects represent? Take a photograph or draw a picture of an object that is special to you.

### Interview a Classmate:

What does it mean to be American? Pair up with a classmate and ask each other questions. Where are their families from? What languages are spoken at home? Do they like to be called Jewish American or Japanese American, or simply American? If they were born in another country, how does it feel to be an immigrant? Have they ever felt like they don't belong? What can you do to understand each other better?

### Write a Story:

A Scarf for Keiko is a fictional story based on historical events. This kind of story is called historical fiction. Write your own story inspired by history. First research the history – and then think of characters, plot, and a theme to make the history come alive for your readers.

### Stand Up:

Sam has a hard time standing up for Keiko. It is easier to go along with his friends and be mean to her. Pick an issue that is important to you. Stand up for the issue by making a poster, raising funds, or speaking out. Then share how these actions make you feel.

### Give a Gift:

Keiko didn't expect Sam's scarf. She thought Sam couldn't knit! Gift giving is a simple act of friendship and generosity. When a gift is a surprise, it's even better. Make a gift for someone who doesn't expect it. The gift could be a handmade card, bookmark, self-portrait, or something else you like to make. Give the gift to a person when they least expect it. They will be surprised!

### Send a Letter:

A letter is a good way to share thoughts and feelings. People can say things in letters that they might not say face to face. In A Scarf for Keiko, Sam writes a letter to his brother at war. Keiko leaves a note for Sam when she must go away. Write a letter to a friend or family member. Tell them something important.

### Help a Neighbor:

Neighbors are important. Sam's and Keiko's families are good neighbors. When you help a neighbor, you make a stronger neighborhood. Do something nice for your neighbor. Shovel snow. Take their dog for a walk. Help them with a chore. Offer to do an errand. Take out their recycling. Say good-morning. Wave hello.

Write a Poem: Friendship isn't always easy. Sometimes friends disagree. Other times, friends help each other. How does Keiko show friendship with Sam? How does Sam show friendship with Keiko? Write a poem about friendship.

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