

The Name Jar



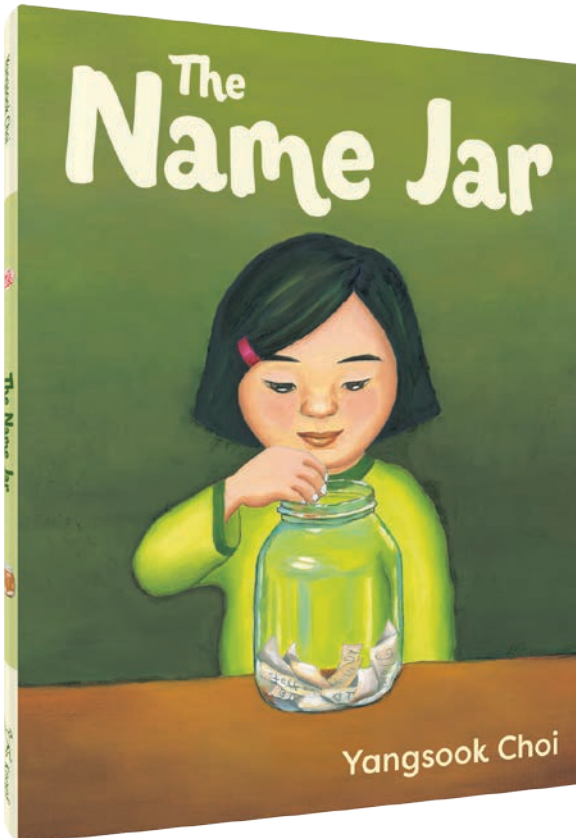
Yangsook Choi

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

RHTeachersLibrarians.com

The Name Jar

HC: 978-0-375-80613-1 • TR: 978-0-440-41799-6 • EL: 978-0-307-79344-7
Grades: K-3 • Yangsook Choi



About the Book

Being the new kid in school is hard enough, but what happens when nobody can pronounce your name? Having just moved from South Korea, Unhei is anxious about fitting in. So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she decides to choose an American name from a glass jar. But while Unhei considers being a Suzy, Laura, or Amanda, nothing feels right. With the help of a new friend, Unhei will learn that the best name is her own. From acclaimed creator Yangsook Choi comes a bestselling classic about finding the courage to be yourself and be proud of your background.

Themes: Growing Up, Self-Esteem, Immigrant Experience



About the Author

Yangsook Choi grew up in South Korea. She loved telling her grandma scary stories and started drawing at age four. After moving to New York to pursue her art, she wrote and illustrated many books for young readers. Her books have been acclaimed as Best of the Best by the Chicago Public Library, included in the American Library Association's Notable Books List, and received the International Reading Association's Children's Book Award.



Discussion Questions

1. Unhei's search for a new name begins when kids on the school bus mispronounce her name and tease her. How do you think Unhei felt in this moment? Why should we pronounce people's names correctly, and how can we make sure we do this?
2. Why do you think Unhei considered giving herself a new name? What are some reasons people may change their birth names?
3. Unhei's mother tells her that being different is a good thing. Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. Unhei's classmates create a name jar to share their ideas for an American name. Why is this a problem? How would you feel if someone asked you to go by a different name?
5. Can Unhei be an American name? Why or why not? How has our understanding of what makes a name American changed over time?
6. What influences Unhei to keep her name? Do you agree with her decision?
7. Joey takes the name jar because he wants Unhei to keep her name. Do you agree with Joey's actions? What are some ways he could have helped Unhei feel more confident without making decisions for her?



Classroom Activities

A Community Map

Unhei and her mother explore their new neighborhood and discover sights that are both new and familiar. Think about your own block or a nearby street. What places have you visited? What places might be interesting to explore? Draw a picture of your favorite street and label its businesses and buildings.

Standing Up to Bullies

Unhei is teased about her Korean name when she introduces herself on the bus ride to school. How might you feel if you were Unhei? What could you do or say to stop others from teasing? Consider how you might feel if you were another kid on the bus watching what was going on. How can you stand up for somebody when they are feeling uncomfortable or hurt? In small groups or as a class, come up with a list of things you can say or do to stop teasing or bullying when you see it happening. Practice using these words in different scenarios.

Art Connection

Create your own name stamp like Unhei's! You will need foam sheets, markers, scissors, glue, and small Styrofoam blocks (or any household object that can be used as a stamp base, such as a firm sponge or Lego). Use a marker to design your name on the foam sheet. You can draw your initials or design an image that represents you. For letters, you must draw them flipped, creating a mirror image, so that when cut and stamped, they will appear correctly. Carefully cut out and glue your foam design onto the stamp base. (It might be best to have a grown-up help you with this part!) Press carefully into an ink pad and have fun!



Learn About South Korea

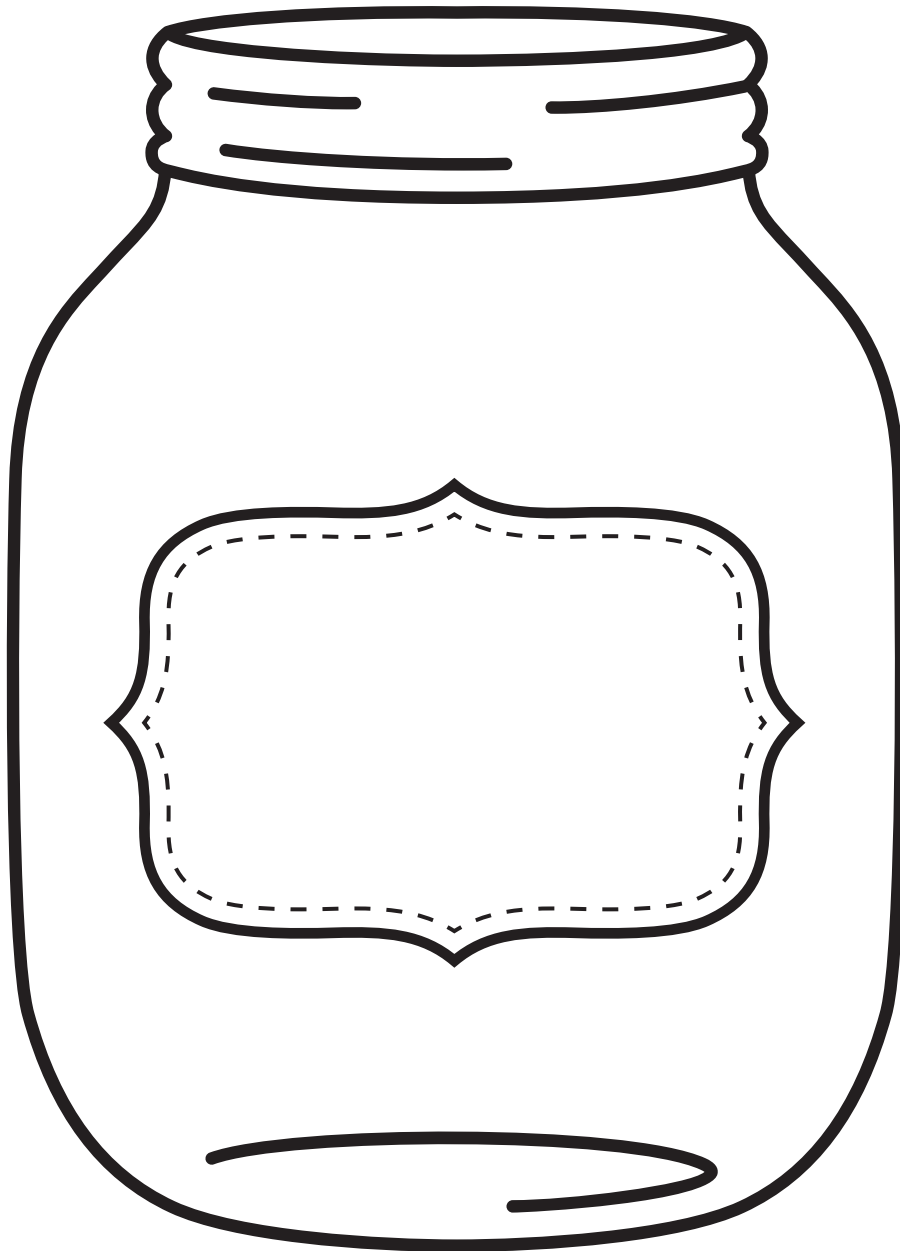
Unhei and her family immigrate to the United States from South Korea. Using the chart below, fill in the first column with everything you know about South Korea before reading the book. (It's okay if there isn't a lot!) After reading, add to the first column and fill in the second with any questions you have. Then explore a website or a nonfiction text about South Korea to answer all your questions, and fill in what you have learned in the third column.



Topic		Name	
K What I Know	W What I Wonder	L What I Learned	

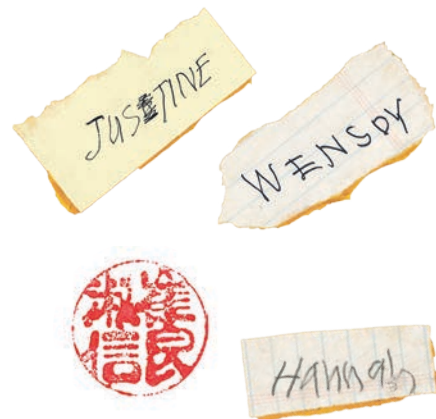
Make a Name Jar!

In the story Unhei's classmates make a name jar filled with new name suggestions, but she decides to keep her name because it's special and represents her best. Write and decorate your own name on the name jar below and fill the surrounding space with words or drawings of things that represent you. Think about things that make you special and make you feel most like you!



A Name Investigation

Names can mean something specific or hold special significance for a person or family. Mr. Kim recognizes that *Unhei* means grace, and Unhei's mother reminds her that her name was chosen by a name master. What is the story of your name? Who chose it and why? Complete this interview with your parents, family members, or caregivers to find out! You can also do some research about your name and other people who have had it!



1. What is your full name (first, middle, last)?

2. Who chose your name?

3. Why was this name chosen for you?

4. What does your name mean?

5. Do you think you “fit” your name? Why or why not?

6. What do you like about your name? What do you dislike about your name?

This educator's guide was prepared by Joanne Yi, PhD. Joanne is a former elementary teacher and an adjunct assistant professor of curriculum and instruction at Indiana University. She researches diversity and inclusion issues in children's literature.



Visit [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](https://www.rhteacherslibrarians.com), your online destination for all the resources you need for your school or library!



@RHCBEducators



@TheRandomSchoolHouse