



Bake Sale

Sample lesson plan

Laura Murata is a university professor in Japan. She is also a divorced mother of Maya, a seven-year-old girl. Widower Kazu Mori is a dentist. He is raising his son, Max, on his own. The two parents meet at the holiday bake sale. Laura and Kazu like each other from the start, and soon their two families are spending time together. For Christmas Eve, the biggest date night of the year, Kazu asks Laura to dinner. Things are going so well! But will misunderstandings get in the way of their budding relationship?

You will encounter some vocabulary that you can discuss ahead of time:

abroad	dough	obsessive
absent-minded	dress rehearsal	PTA
anime	exquisite	refuge
applied	flattered	ruffled
big hurrah	guilt trip	self-conscious
bulbs	haiku	sequined
bundle	hamming it up	sheepish
chaotic	hygiene	shiver
chuckled	ingredient	tatami mat
clever	jump start	tidy
cluttered	kerchief	trousers
coffee klatch	matchmaker	tuck in
curtain call	motif	version
deception	mourning	vow
distress	nostalgia	went like hotcakes

Read out loud!

The teacher can model by reading the first paragraph of a chapter. Then, students can read one at a time or in groups, a chapter at a time. This can take several classes or sessions.

Here are a few videos to spark conversation:

A view of the streets of Tokyo in under 3 minutes (no dialogue).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9ekglTyDVY>

A short video of a Thai student learning English through baking by providing instructions on making chocolate cake. This is a good tool if you'd like to extend this text by having students share their own recipes and/or if you will use this as an opportunity to teach measurement math.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbvMbcmQ4ZI&list=PLJvYGlwk8ScaP7wpFHj5h62O6T9skXsgE&index=3>

Christmas is not a national holiday in Japan. This video has an enthusiastic narrator who accurately describes Christmas traditions in Japan. Consider using this video to have learners create Venn diagrams comparing Christmas in two countries.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZeJDyO76Yc&list=PLJvYGlwk8ScaP7wpFHj5h62O6T9skXsgE&index=4>

Discussion questions:

1. In Bake Sale, what type of relationship do Laura and Kazu have?
2. Who is Max? Why is he important to the story?
3. Do you think it's a good idea for two single-parents like Laura and Kazu to date? Explain your answer.
4. Laura and Kazu are from different countries. What are some advantages to dating a person from another country? What are some disadvantages?
5. What kind of challenges did Laura and Kazu face in their romance?
6. What is the moral of the story?
7. How is Christmas in Japan the same as in your country? How is it different?
8. This story is a romance. What makes a good romantic story?

Comprehension Multiple Choice questions:

1. Who asks Laura out on a date for Christmas Eve?
 - a) Kazu Mori
 - b) Maya Murata
 - c) Max Mori
 - d) Mrs. Tanaka

2. What is Kazu Mori's job?
 - a) Businessman
 - b) Chef
 - c) Dentist
 - d) Professor

3. What changes for the families when Laura and Kazu start dating?
 - a) They start to spend more time together.
 - b) The children move in together.
 - c) The relationship causes the children to fight at school.
 - d) The children fight with their parents.

4. How does Maya feel about her mother's new relationship with Kazu?
 - a) She feels left out and jealous.
 - b) She is excited and happy for them.
 - c) She is not interested in what her mom is doing.
 - d) She does not want them to be together.

5. Where do Laura and Kazu meet?
 - a) Tokyo Children's Hospital
 - b) A nearby park
 - c) At a bakery
 - d) Cherry Blossom International School

Geography extensions:

The story mentions several countries, states, and cities. What is the difference between a country, a state, and a city? Have students list some examples of each.

The locations mentioned in the book are Michigan, Portland, the United States, Japan, Tokyo, Poland, Roppongi, and Canada. Find the locations on the map. If you're teaching immigrants, consider having them mark other countries they've lived in on the map. To extend this further, students could research a place from the book, write 5 sentences about the area, and share with the class or group.

Math extensions:

1. Your recipe calls for 2 eggs and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar. How much sugar is needed to double the recipe? To triple the recipe?
2. You need to bake 4 dozen cookies with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of butter each. How much butter do you need in total?
3. My recipe calls for $\frac{1}{3}$ teaspoon of baking soda for each batch of cookies. How much baking soda do I need to make 3 batches of cookies?
4. Kazu's recipe calls for $\frac{1}{2}$ liter of milk. About how many cups is that?
5. You need to use 2 kilograms of flour for a baking project. How many pounds is that?

A note about Japanese names:

The Japanese names in the story may be unfamiliar to students. You can review them before they read each chapter.

It can reassure students to know that Japanese is a largely phonetic language. If they sound out the words the way they know how, their pronunciation will be reasonably correct. Consider sounding out some of the names together in class as phonetics practice.

What to read next:

Continuing reading about food with us!

- [The Orchard](#) (slightly higher)
- [Toast](#) (slightly lower reading level)

Continue your study of Japan with us!

- [Post Office on the Tokaido](#) (slightly higher reading level)
- [A Girls' Guide to the Islands](#) (one grade higher reading level)

Continue reading about relationships and families with us!

- [The Giant Baby](#) (half grade higher reading level)