

Section One

Chapter 1

BACKGROUND AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

Commercial Agriculture and Custom Harvesting

The main character's family is part of a custom harvesting crew, which is employed to harvest a crop of wheat grains for someone else who planted and grew the wheat plants. Some farmers own equipment like combines, grain carts, and semis to harvest and transport grain from the field to storage, others hire teams of custom harvesters, like the one in this book, to harvest for them.

Usually, the custom harvester business owners own their equipment (combines, semi tractors and trailers, grain carts, pick-ups, etc.).

Farmers involved in commercial agriculture contract with custom harvesters because of the large scale of production of crops. Contracting means entering into a business agreement. Crops from commercial agriculture can be shipped to many different processors, to make food and other products around the country and the world.

VOCABULARY

Emanated – To flow out, issue, or proceed

Eradicated – To remove, to destroy utterly

Excruciating – Extremely painful, causing intense suffering

Harbingers – Anything that foreshadows a future event, omen, sign

Implemented – To fulfill, perform, carry out

Inadvertently – Unintentional

Malaria – Disease, transferred to the human bloodstream by a mosquito, which occupies and destroys red blood cells

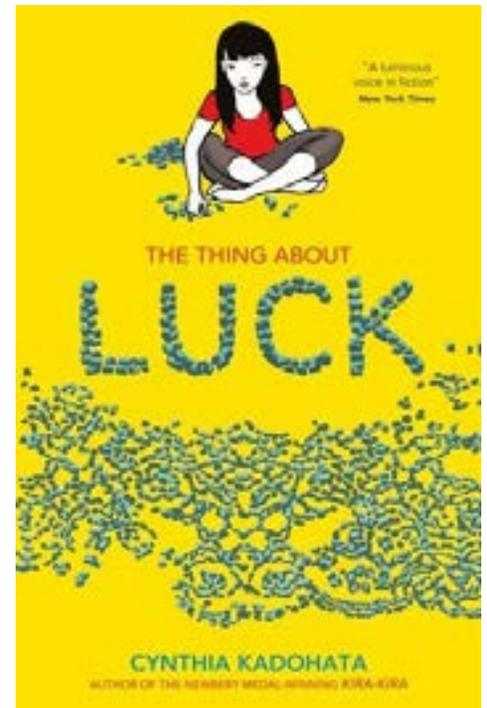
Mortgage – A conveyance of an interest of property as security for the repayment of money borrowed

Proactive – Tending to initiate change rather than reacting to events

Psychedelic – Having vivid colors and complex patterns popularly associated with the visual effects of psychedelic states

Rogue – No longer obedient, renegade

Sagely – Wise, judicious



INTEREST APPROACH

Before reading the story, ask the class these pre-reading questions which are topical to the main themes of the book:

- What do you know about luck?
- Describe a time in which a family event upset your regular routine. How did you deal with the situation? Looking back, would you do anything different today?
- Reflect on a time in which you felt used and/or demeaned by a peer. What did you do? If you didn't handle it well, how might you better handle the situation?

PROCEDURE

1. Pass out *The Thing About Luck* books.
2. Print and pass out copies of the close reading Thinkmarks with space for notes from the story on the front and close reading annotations on the back. Ask the students to observe what questions or thoughts come up as they listen to the first chapter. Ask them to track their interaction with the story using close reading annotations on Thinkmarks.
3. Refer students to the Close Reading Techniques anchor chart to explain the goals for this unit to teach them methods to dig deep into the text they read.
4. Refer students to the Close Reading Annotations anchor chart to provide a common system for noting their reactions to the text.
5. Print and pass out Working Journals, one copy per student. Explain that the Working Journal will be where they find assigned reading, questions for discussion, and assignments.
6. Communicate expectations for the unit study:
 - a. Students can expect to read some together, and some independently.
 - b. Encourage them to come each week ready to discuss. Taking notes on the Thinkmarks will assist discussion.
7. Invite the class to open their Working Journal to the page for Chapter 1. Invite the class to listen and follow along in their books and take notes in the working journal as you read aloud to them. Read Chapter 1 aloud for the class.
 - a. During reading, stop at *p. 3* and discuss – What has the author told us so far? (Characters, Japan, Kansas, Malaria, bad luck)
 - b. Stop reading at *p. 11* and discuss – What new information have we learned? (party) What are some character traits you noticed?
8. Ask for discussion. Questions:
 - a. What is Summer obsessed with?
 - b. Why? Who is telling the story?

9. Instruct the students to read Chapter 2 independently. Demonstrate close reading annotations with points below.
 - a. Reread the bottom of *p. 14* – discuss custom harvesting; if possible, share model combine, grain cart, bins, semi.
 - b. Share background information about commercial agriculture and custom harvesting with the class.
 - c. Ask students to make a prediction and record in accompanying Working Journal: How will Jaz’s meeting-party go?
10. Assign Chapters 2, 3, and 4 to read for next time.
 - a. Instruct students to keep a list of tricky words.
 - b. Task students to write down any questions they have to guide the discussion next week.
 - c. Encourage students to read with a pencil and use Thinkmarks to record words, questions, and close reading annotations with their reactions.