

Stealing Home: Metaphor

The story ends with the words: "Baseball is about finding your way home", "It's a metaphor for life", and "It was the one thing they took from us that we were able to steal back".

The story talked about how baseball was a 'metaphor' – something that represents something else. In this story, baseball was used as a metaphor for community, fairness, and belonging.

Here are some discussion questions for your group:



Understanding the Metaphor

1. What does baseball represent in *Stealing Home*?
2. How does the baseball field change throughout the story, and what do those changes symbolize?
3. Why do you think the author chose baseball, instead of another sport or activity, as the central metaphor?
4. What does "home" mean to the characters – and how does that connect to the title *Stealing Home*?

Making Connections

5. How does baseball help the Japanese Canadian community feel a sense of belonging before the internment?
6. In what ways does the loss of the baseball field reflect what was happening to Japanese Canadians during World War II?
7. When the characters rebuild the baseball field, what message do you think the author is sending about hope and identity?

Personal Reflection

8. Can you think of something in your own life (a place, activity, or tradition) that helps you feel like you belong?
9. Have you ever lost something that represented a part of who you are? How did you rebuild or move forward, like the characters did?
10. How might baseball symbolize "home" not just for the characters, but for anyone who feels excluded or displaced?

Deeper Thinking

11. How does the metaphor of baseball help readers understand the emotional impact of the internment experience?
12. Do you think the metaphor of baseball still works for readers today? Why or why not?
13. What other metaphors or symbols did you notice in the story besides baseball?

Stealing Home: Perspective

Stealing Home uses **visual perspective** very intentionally to strengthen the storytelling and emotional impact. This means that some images are drawn close-up, from above, from down below, etc.

✿ Understanding What They See (Observation)

1. What do you notice about how the pictures are drawn from different angles – close-up, far away, above, or below?
2. Can you find a scene where the illustrator zooms in on a character? What might the illustrator want us to feel or notice there?
3. Where in the book do you see a wide or faraway view? What does that show about the setting or situation?
4. How does the illustrator show when a moment is important or emotional?



🎨 Making Meaning (Interpretation)

5. When we see a character from above, how does that make them look or feel? What might that tell us about their situation?
6. When we see a character from below, how does that change how we view them? Do they seem stronger, prouder, or more hopeful?
7. How does the way the illustrator draws the baseball field change throughout the story? What might that symbolize?
8. How do different perspectives help us understand what "home" means to the characters?

💡 Connecting and Thinking Deeper (Analysis)

9. How do the close-up scenes help us connect with the characters' emotions?
10. Why do you think the illustrator sometimes chooses to show the whole scene (like the community or the camp) instead of just one person?
11. What mood or feeling do you get from the high-angle scenes compared to the low-angle ones?
12. If the story had only been told with one kind of view (like only close-ups), how would that change how we experience it?

❤️ Personal and Creative Connections

13. If you were illustrating a story about your own life, when might you use a close-up or a zoomed-out view? Why?
14. How do you think the illustrator's choices help us "see" history in a more emotional or human way?
15. Which scene's artwork stood out to you the most, and what made it powerful?

Stealing Home: Contrast

Stealing Home incorporates a lot of contrast – detailed panels vs undetailed panels, characters who appear near versus characters who appear far, panels which are lighter versus panels which are darker, etc. *Stealing Home* uses **visual contrast** in many clever ways – between **light and dark**, **near and far**, and **detailed and simplified** – to deepen meaning and emotion.

Understanding Visual Contrast

(Observation)

1. What do you notice about how the illustrator uses black, white, and grey tones in the book?
2. When do you see very detailed drawings, and when are the drawings simpler or less detailed?
3. How does the artist use light and shadow in the story?
4. When are the pictures bright or open-looking, and when do they feel darker or closed in?



Making Meaning (Interpretation)

5. How does the contrast between black and white help show the mood of different scenes?
6. When the drawings are less detailed, what might that tell us about how the characters are feeling or remembering something?
7. How does showing something from far away versus up close change the emotion of the scene?
8. What might the illustrator be trying to say when the panels look calm and balanced versus when they look sharp or tense?

Connecting to Theme and Emotion (Analysis)

9. How does the use of light and dark reflect what's happening to the Japanese Canadian community?
10. When do you notice the pictures feel full and detailed, and when do they feel empty or lonely? What message does that send?
11. How does contrast help the reader see the difference between freedom and restriction, or hope and loss, in the story?
12. Can you find a scene where visual contrast helps show the difference between "home" and "away"?

Personal and Creative Reflection

13. How do contrasts in the illustrations make you feel as a reader? Do they make some scenes more powerful or emotional?
14. If you were the illustrator, how might you use contrast (light/dark, near/far, detail/simple) to show change or emotion in a story from your own life?
15. Why do you think the illustrator chose to make the book mostly black and white instead of using lots of colour?

Stealing Home: Dialogue

Stealing Home's use (and absence) of dialogue is a major storytelling tool. The creators use words and silence to shape emotion, pace, and mood

🗨️ Understanding What's on the Page (Observation)

1. Where in the book do you notice a lot of dialogue between characters?
2. Where do you notice there's no dialogue at all — only pictures?
3. What kinds of moments tend to have lots of talking? What kinds of moments are silent?
4. How does the way the words are placed in speech bubbles affect how you read the scene?

👂 Thinking About Emotion and Tone (Interpretation)

5. How does the dialogue help you understand what the characters are feeling or thinking?
6. What happens to the mood of the story when there are no words — only images?
7. Why do you think the author and illustrator might have chosen silence instead of dialogue in some scenes?
8. How does the lack of words make you “slow down” or pay attention differently as a reader?
9. What emotions come through more strongly in the quiet or wordless scenes?



💡 Connecting to Theme and Meaning (Analysis)

10. How does silence reflect what's happening to the characters — for example, fear, loss, or isolation?
11. When there's no dialogue, how do the pictures tell the story instead? What clues do you notice?
12. How does the mix of dialogue-heavy scenes and wordless scenes help you understand the themes of home, belonging, or identity?
13. How do you think the story would feel different if it had dialogue in *every* panel?

❤️ Personal and Creative Reflection

14. Have you ever experienced a time when silence “said” more than words? How does that connect to what happens in the book?
15. If you were retelling one of the silent scenes, what words would you add — or would you keep it quiet? Why?
16. Do you think the silent panels help the story feel more real or emotional? Why or why not?

Stealing Home: Repetition

The repeated line “where he’s needed the most” is one of the most meaningful pieces of repetition in *Stealing Home*. It ties together the themes of belonging, displacement, and purpose — all central to the story. Repetition in the book (both in words and visuals) helps readers feel the rhythms of loss, memory, and homecoming.

Understanding the Repetition

1. Where in the book do you notice the line “where he’s needed the most” being repeated?
2. What is happening in the story each time this line appears?
3. How does the meaning of that line change each time it’s used?
4. Why do you think the author chose to repeat that particular phrase instead of using new words?

Thinking About Meaning and Emotion

5. What do you think “where he’s needed the most” means to the characters?
6. How does that line connect to the idea of “home” or “belonging”?
7. Do you think the line is meant to be comforting, sad, or hopeful — or maybe all three? Why?
8. How does hearing that line again and again affect the reader’s feelings about the story?

Looking at Other Repetition in the Book

9. What other things are repeated in *Stealing Home* — words, pictures, places, or actions?
10. How do those repeated images or ideas help you understand what matters most to the characters?
11. How does repetition help us see how the characters’ lives change — or stay the same — over time?
12. Why might repetition be an important storytelling tool in a book about memory, history, and identity?

Personal and Reflective Connections

13. Have you ever heard a phrase or saying that stayed with you because it was repeated by someone important in your life? How does that compare to this story?
14. If you had to choose a phrase that described “where you’re needed the most,” what might it be?
15. How does the repetition of that line connect to the book’s final message about community and resilience?



Stealing Home: Character Development

The father's portrayal in *Stealing Home* is complex: he's not exactly a villain, but he sometimes *feels* like an antagonist from the child's perspective. His role opens up rich discussions about **family, responsibility, identity, and survival** during hard times.

- **Perspective and misunderstanding:**

The story is told mostly from a child's viewpoint. The father's strictness or silence might seem harsh, but it could come from stress, fear, or trying to protect his family.

→ *how does perspective shape how we see someone's actions.*

- **Survival and sacrifice:**

The father is under enormous pressure — losing his home, livelihood, and dignity. His choices may look “bad,” but they might come from trying to survive or do what he thinks is best.

- **Generational differences:**

The father might represent the older generation trying to hold on to values like hard work and duty, while the children represent hope and belonging in Canada.

- **Emotional distance:**

The dad's silence could symbolize the emotional weight of racism and displacement — how trauma can make people withdraw.

- **Redemption and empathy:**

By the end, students can reflect on whether their feelings toward the father change, and why. It's a great chance to experience *empathy* in storytelling.



Discussion Questions

About the father's character

1. How is the father shown in the beginning of the story? What words or images make you feel that way about him?
2. What choices does he make that affect his family? Why might he have made those choices?
3. Do you think he's meant to be seen as a “bad guy”? Or is he someone trying his best in a bad situation?
4. How do you think the father feels about being forced to leave his home? How might those feelings affect how he treats others?
5. How does the father change — or not change — over the course of the story?

About perspective and empathy

6. How might the story feel different if it were told from the father's point of view?
7. What pressures do you think he's under as a parent, worker, and Japanese Canadian man during that time?
8. What moments in the story help you understand him better or see his side?
9. How does the author make readers question their first impression of him?

Connecting to larger themes

10. What does the father's character tell us about how people cope differently with fear, loss, or injustice?
11. In what ways does the father represent the experience of many adults during the internment?
12. How does his relationship with baseball reflect his attitude toward home, identity, or belonging?

Stealing Home: Setting

In *Stealing Home*, the internment camps are **not** shown in great detail. Instead, the story focuses more on **what happens before and after**, and on the emotional effects — *the loss of home, community, and belonging* — rather than the day-to-day life inside the camps.

Understanding What's Shown (and What's Not)

1. What parts of the story show the family's life before the internment camps? What parts show life after?
2. What do we actually learn about the internment camps themselves?
3. What do we *not* see or hear about? Why do you think the author and illustrator chose to leave some details out?
4. How does the story help us understand what the camps were like, even without showing everything?



Interpreting the Author's Choices

5. Why do you think the author decided not to focus closely on life inside the camps?
6. What might the author want readers to think about instead?
7. How does focusing on the family's home, baseball field, and community change the way we understand the impact of internment?
8. How might the story feel different if it showed more scenes from inside the camps?

Connecting to Emotion and Theme

9. How do the illustrations and dialogue help us feel the *emotional* impact of being sent away, even if we don't see it directly?
10. What does this storytelling choice teach us about memory — how people remember or choose to tell painful parts of history?
11. How does the story show loss and displacement without showing harsh or violent scenes?
12. What do we learn about resilience and rebuilding when the focus is on what happens *after* the camps instead of *inside* them?

Deeper Thinking and Comparison

13. How might this story be different from a history textbook description of Japanese Canadian internment?
14. Do you think the author left out some details on purpose to make the story accessible to younger readers?
15. If you were creating a story about this time, what moments would you include or leave out — and why?

Stealing Home: Parallels / Connections

In *Stealing Home*, the mother and father's relationship quietly mirrors the larger conflicts in their world: **loss of control, displacement, fear, and the struggle to hold a family together under pressure.** Their dynamic also reflects different ways of coping — the father turns inward and rigid, while the mother shows quiet endurance and emotional strength. There is subtle tension between the parents, that parallels the dynamics of what is going on around them.



Understanding the Relationship

1. How would you describe the mother and father's relationship at the beginning of the story?
2. What kinds of moments show tension or disagreement between them?
3. How does each parent respond to the challenges their family faces?
4. What do you notice about how they speak to (or avoid speaking to) each other?
5. Do you think they want the same things for their family, or do they see things differently?

Making Connections to Historical Context

6. How might the stress of losing their home and being sent away affect their relationship?
7. How do the father's worries about work, pride, or identity influence the way he acts toward his wife and family?
8. How does the mother show strength during these difficult times? What kinds of strength are different from the father's?
9. How does the parents' relationship reflect the pressures faced by many Japanese Canadian families during the internment period?

Exploring Parallels and Symbolism

10. How does the tension between the parents mirror the tension in the community or country at that time?
11. Could the father and mother represent two different ways of coping with injustice or loss? If so, how?
12. Are there moments when the parents seem divided but still united by love or shared purpose?
13. How does their relationship change over time — and what might that say about resilience and hope?

Personal Reflection and Empathy

14. How does seeing the parents' struggles help you understand the emotional impact of the internment on families?
15. Have you ever seen or experienced people reacting to the same problem in different ways — like the parents do?
16. What do you think the author wants readers to feel or understand about family love under pressure?