In this story by Ina R. Friedman, an American sailor and a Japanese woman in World War II Japan learn the proper way to eat food in each other’s cultures. Once they are married, they practice both customs with their daughter.

Before Reading

Preview and Predict  Display and describe the cover: Here is an American sailor. He is in Japan. He is talking to a Japanese woman. What do you think he’ll learn about Japan? Will she learn something about America? Let’s read How My Parents Learned to Eat to find out.

Relate to Prior Experience  Ask: Have you ever visited or lived in a place with unfamiliar customs? What things were different? How did you feel? What did you do?

Preview Vocabulary  Display the Key Words:
- chopsticks, page 3
- fork, page 6
- knives, page 3
- restaurant, page 8
- taught, page 28

Identify the Key Words in the text. Read the words aloud and have students echo. Use gestures, props, and story images to help define and clarify each word. Then tell students to add these and other new words to My Vocabulary Notebook.

Vocabulary Strategy: Use a Dictionary  Review that a dictionary shows how to divide words into syllables and pronounce them. Model looking up sukiyaki and using the syllables to say it. Have students look up and say chopsticks and restaurant.

Literary Analysis: Plot  Distribute the story map. Remind students that the plot is what happens in a story. Help them recall the plot of “Martina, the Beautiful Cockroach.” Then have them complete the story map for How My Parents Learned to Eat. Remind them to introduce the characters and setting in the Beginning box.

Read the Book

Set a Purpose  Tell students that they will read to see what a young man and woman do about differences between their cultures.

Have students read their assigned leveled book silently or aloud. Use the Guided Reading Routine if this book is at students’ instructional level. Use the Independent Reading Support if this book is at students’ independent level.
After Reading

Read and Talk

Use questions as students discuss *How My Parents Learned to Eat* with their group. Encourage students to use *Key Words* in their answers.

1. **Confirm Predictions**  *What was your prediction about the man and woman in the story? Was your prediction correct? Explain.*

2. **Plot**  *What happens in the story?*  
   In the beginning, ______ is afraid that ______, and ______ is afraid that ______. In the middle, ______. At the end, ______.

3. **Make Connections**  *What do you eat with at home? Did you ever use chopsticks or teach someone how to use them?*

4. **Big Question**  *How do John and Aiko honor each other’s traditions?*

Share and Compare

Organize students into heterogeneous groups. Use these strategies and questions to support all proficiency levels in the discussion.  
Distribute BLM 1.3. Encourage students to use *Key Words* in their responses.

1. Have students take turns summarizing their books.

Multi-Level Strategies for Sharing

**BEGINNING**

Have students conduct a picture walk of *A Picnic in October.*

**INTERMEDIATE**

Have students use their own words to retell *How My Parents Learned to Eat.*

**ADVANCED**

Have students summarize *The Big Catch.*

2. **What did you learn about traditions?**

3. **How are the books alike? How are they different?**

4. **Big Question**  *How important are traditions?*

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

“How My Parents Learned to Eat
by Ina R. Friedman

Write About It

Provide the following options for writing.

1. Study the picture on page 13 and the foods and tools on the table. Then draw a table and what you might have on it at home or in a restaurant. Label each food, tool, and utensil. Write a caption for your illustration.

2. Write a paragraph to summarize the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Begin by telling where the story takes place and who John and Aiko are.

3. Imagine that you are interviewing Aiko after she moves to America with her new husband, John. Write questions to ask her, such as what she finds strange about the U.S. Then write answers Aiko might give.

Connect to Grammar: Subject-Verb Agreement

Display the following sentences. To review, have students circle the verb that agrees with the compound subject.

1. To Aiko, a western café or *restaurant* is/are strange.

2. Their *forks* and *knives* am/is/are hard for Aiko to use.

3. Either a fork or *chopsticks* pick/picks up meat.

Have students edit their writing. Focus on subject-verb agreement.