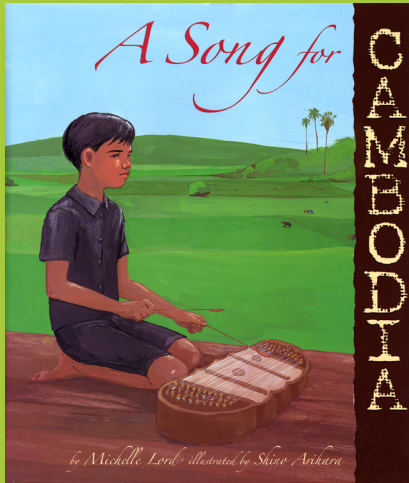


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

## A Song for Cambodia

written by Michelle Lord, illustrated by Shino Arihara

### About the Book

**Genre:** Nonfiction  
(Biography)

**\*Reading Level:** Grade 4

**Interest Level:** Grades 1–6

**Guided Reading Level:** Q

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:** 5.4/0.5

**Lexile™ Measure:** AD840L

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

**Themes:** War, Overcoming Obstacles and Adversity, Music, Discrimination, Coping with Death, Biography, Asian/Asian American Interest, Adoption, Poverty, Persistence and Grit, Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot, Cambodian Culture, Survival, Giving Back, Rebuilding, Human Rights Activism, Geography, History, Political Science, Refugees

### SYNOPSIS

When Arn was a young boy in Cambodia, his days were filled with love, laughter, and the sweet sounds of music. That all changed suddenly in 1975 when Arn's village was invaded by Khmer Rouge soldiers and his family was torn apart.

Nine-year-old Arn was taken to a children's work camp, where he labored long hours in the rice fields under the glaring eyes of threatening soldiers. Overworked, underfed, and in constant fear for his life, Arn had to find a way to survive. When guards asked for volunteers to play music one day, Arn bravely raised his hand—taking a chance that would change the course of his life.

*A Song for Cambodia* is the inspirational true story of Arn Chorn-Pond. His heartfelt music created beauty in a time of darkness and turned tragedy into healing.



## BACKGROUND

***A Song for Cambodia (adapted from the Foreword and Afterword):*** In 1975 rebel soldiers called the Khmer Rouge took hold of the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh. Led by Pol Pot, the soldiers wanted to make the Kingdom of Cambodia a communist country. Everything would belong to the government, and all citizens would benefit equally. However, this plan went terribly wrong. Rather than all citizens benefitting, the Khmer Rouge captured civilians and members of the old government, and tore families apart. They also destroyed markets and money, art and books, temples and monasteries, and schools and businesses.

The Khmer Rouge wanted Cambodia to be self-sufficient and not rely on other countries for food. To achieve this goal, soldiers set up work camps throughout the country to grow rice. Camp borders were surrounded with land mines and guards so no one could escape. All Cambodians—young and old, sick or starving—were forced into the hard labor of growing rice. They cleared land, built dikes, dug canals, planted seedlings, and harvested grain while former peasants watched over them. Children did not attend school but were trained to work and spy on their elders. Anyone who did not obey was beaten or killed.

The Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia until 1979, when the Vietnamese invaded and removed them from power. During Pol Pot's reign, approximately 1.7 million Cambodians died. Those who survived did so any way that they could.

Arn Chorn-Pond was one of those who survived. As *A Song for Cambodia* shows, he

worked in a rice camp and played revolutionary and marching songs on the khim, a wooden string instrument. After four years in the camp, when Arn was about twelve years old, the Khmer Rouge sent Arn and the other boys to fight the Vietnamese. Arn fled from the fighting, and ended up as a refugee in Thailand. Eventually, an American volunteer adopted Arn, and he moved to the United States.

In 1984, Arn founded the Children of War Organization to teach teenagers in the United States about the horrors of war and hate. During the summers of 1986, 1987, and 1988, Arn returned to Cambodia to help rebuild his homeland and also himself. Almost a decade after Pol Pot's rule, Cambodia was still in shambles: millions of landmines riddled the countryside, and people struggled to rebuild their lives and the centuries of culture that had been destroyed.

Arn continued to try to make something good come from his tragedy. In the United States, he worked with gang members and other at-risk youth. He showed teens how to express their feelings through music, not violence. He was awarded the Spirit of Anne Frank Award in 1996 for his humanitarian work.

Despite these accomplishments, Arn still felt a void in his life. "I come from a family of performers," he said. "I am the only one left." So, in 1998, Arn created the Cambodian Living Arts program to revive the traditional art forms of Cambodia and also to inspire contemporary artistic expressions. Once again, he returned to Cambodia. This time he searched high and low for the musical masters of long ago. He found an old opera star digging



through trash. He found a percussionist trained at the Royal Palace wandering the streets, homeless. A master of wind instruments who was left partially deaf by gunfire was living in a crumbling shack. Other once-famous artists were working as taxi drivers or barbers. Arn brought them together to record their songs and to teach children traditional Cambodian music.

Today Arn Chorn-Pond continues his efforts to revive Cambodian classical arts, music, and instrument crafting. When Arn was a young boy, music literally saved his life. Now it is Arn's mission to save the music.

To hear Arn tell his story and see some of the important people and places in his life, go to <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/everyone-has-story>. In this video, Arn reveals some of the struggles he faced as one of the first Cambodian refugees in the United States. He also describes how empowering his first public speech was. He spoke in front of 10,000 people at St. John the Divine Cathedral in New York and realized that people cared about him and his story. He realized that his story could help others, and he learned to promote the message that everyone has a story that could be shared to help others.

Another excellent resource is Arn's Tedx talk about how music saved his life at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Crv9Bre\\_T2g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Crv9Bre_T2g).

Some topics you may want to research more to develop background information before teaching the book include the Cambodian genocide, the Killing Fields, traditional Cambodian music, and the plight of refugees.

## Additional LEE & LOW Titles to Teach about Refugees

***Passage to Freedom*** written by Ken Mochizuki, illustrated by Dom Lee  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/passage-to-freedom>

***All the Stars Denied*** written by Guadalupe García McCall  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/all-the-stars-denied>

***Grandfather's Story Cloth*** written by Linda Gerdner and Sarah Langford, illustrated by Stuart Loughridge  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/grandfather-s-story-cloth>

***Brothers in Hope*** written by Mary Williams, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/brothers-in-hope>

***Dia's Story Cloth*** written by Dia Cha, illustrated by Chue and Nhia Thao Cha  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/dia-s-story-cloth>

***The Three Lucys*** written by Hayan Chararam, illustrated by Sara Kahn  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-three-lucys>

***The Road to Santiago*** written by D.H. Figueredo, illustrated by Pablo Torrecilla  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-road-to-santiago>



## VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

### Content Specific

Khmer Rouge, Cambodia, Pol Pot, communist, sugar palms, Buddhist, gongs, temples, monks, work camps, rice paddies, khim, orange groves, mallets, tones, seedlings, Thailand, Sakeo Refugee Camp, adopt, khloy

### Academic

operas, village, plucked, grazed, herded, labored, blistered, mourned, muggy, scarce, comforting, murky, flood, communicated, relationship, shambles, lush, countryside, rebuild, centuries, survivors, suffering, express, humanitarian, traditional, culture

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What experiences do you have with music? What does music mean to you? In what ways can music be powerful?
2. What do you know about Cambodia? Find Cambodia on a world map, read a couple of age-appropriate and reliable sources about Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge (such as <https://www.britannica.com/place/Cambodia> or <http://www.american-historama.org/1945-1989-cold-war-era/khmer-rouge.htm>), and complete a KWL chart about the country.
3. What do you know about biographies? This story is non-fiction, meaning it is a true story. What other true stories have you read?
4. What is a refugee? How and why do people become refugees? What hardships do refugees encounter?
5. How does war impact a community? How does war affect people? How does it affect businesses and other places in the community, like schools? How does war affect families?

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. Talk about the title of the book, *A Song for Cambodia*. Ask students what the title could mean. Then ask students what and whom they think this book will most likely be about. Have students look at the cover. What do they notice? What do they wonder? Where do they think the story takes place—can they describe the setting? What kind of tone do they think the story will have—happy, sad, thoughtful, hopeful, etc.?
2. Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, foreword and afterword, title page, author and illustrators' dedications,





the acknowledgement, and illustrations. Have students predict what they think happens in this story. What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that? When do they think the story took place?

## Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how Arn Chorn-Pond used music to survive the horrors of war and to help others
- what life was like for a child in a war-torn country
- how power can be abused
- how refugees rely on courage, strength, determination, and the help of others to survive and make new lives
- how Arn and Cambodia changed from the beginning to the end of the story

Encourage students to consider why the author, Michelle Lord, would want to share this story with young people about war in Cambodia. Also encourage students to consider why the illustrator, Shino Arihara, chose the colors and images for each page spread.

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What did Arn's father teach the older children in the evenings?
2. How was music a part of Arn's life before the war? Find all the passages describing the different sounds and music Arn had in his life before the war.
3. In 1975, who changed Cambodia? How did this person/group change Cambodia?
4. What did the soldiers do to Arn when they arrived at his house? How did this change his life?
5. How did Arn work for the soldiers?
6. Describe life in the children's work camp.
7. What was Arn's life like before the war? What is his life like during the war? Describe what his environment, community, and daily life look like.
8. Why did the soldiers ask for musical volunteers?
9. What musical instrument did Arn learn to play?
10. Why was it important for Arn to play his best?
11. What happened to Arn's music teacher?
12. How did music allow Arn to escape his painful reality?
13. Arn did not feel safe to cry or seek comfort from others. What was one way he processed his feelings and coped with the events?
14. How long did Arn stay in the work camp? Why did he leave?
15. What did Arn eat after he left the work camp?
16. Where did Arn go after he ran away?
17. Compare the children's work camp to the refugee camp. How was daily life similar and different?
18. Who adopted Arn?



“A sensitive reconstruction... *A Song for Cambodia* effectively captures the terror and tension of life under the Pol Pot regime.”

—**Kirkus Reviews**

“Amazing and inspiring, this biography is an excellent choice for multicultural studies.”

—**Booklist**

“*A Song for Cambodia* offers an age-appropriate view of a subject rarely visited in children’s books.”

—**Publishers Weekly**

19. How old was Arn when he arrived in the United States?
20. What were some of the things Arn had to get used to in the United States that were different from his life in Cambodia?
21. How did Arn begin to heal?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3; and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Why did the Khmer Rouge take over Cambodia? What did they want to accomplish? Why do you think the soldiers treated Arn and the others the way that they did?
2. Why do you think the Khmer Rouge took art, religion, and music away from the people? What effect would this have on a community?
3. Why would the soldiers at the children’s work camp seek out and teach young musicians? How does music affect the soldiers and children?
4. How did war change Cambodia? What else was going on in the world between 1975–1979?
5. What do you notice about the illustrator’s—Shino Arihara’s—choices with color and

images? How do they help establish the tone for the story arc?

6. What character trait do you think best describes Arn? What image in the book do you think best illustrates this character trait?
7. How would you describe the story arc—circular, following a story mountain, etc? Can you plot the highs and lows of the story?
8. Survival is one of the main themes of *A Song for Cambodia*. What word choices did Michelle Lord use to develop this theme? What other themes did you notice? How were they developed?
9. How does Arn use music differently throughout *A Song for Cambodia*?
10. How does music save Arn’s life? How is Arn’s preservation of Cambodian music tradition and performance abroad a form of defiance and example of courage?
11. How was music both a punishment and gift to Arn?
12. Arn’s father said Cambodian music existed only in memory and is passed down from parents to children. What effect would separating families and stopping music, art, and religion have on future generations and a culture?



13. Why do you think Michelle Lord wrote this book?
14. Do you think Arn's story is relevant to young readers today? Why or why not?
15. What has happened in your life that relates to Arn's story?
16. Michelle Lord wrote this book in 3rd person. How would the story be different if it were written in 1st person?
17. Why do you think *A Song for Cambodia* is the title? Can there be multiple meanings? What other titles can you think of for this book?
18. In what ways is Arn's story difficult to hear? In what ways is it inspiring?
19. What do you think is the most important event in *A Song for Cambodia*? Why? How would Arn's life be different if that event never happened?
20. What message does this story send about survival and healing?

### Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Arn Chorn-Pond hid his feelings in order to survive in the work camp. Have you ever hidden your feelings or not told someone what you were really feeling? If so, why? What did you hope to accomplish by doing so?
2. Make a text-to-self, text-to-text, or text-to-world connection. What kinds of connections did you make from this book to your own life,

another book or story, or real-life? Why did this book make you think of that?

3. Compare this book to other books about war, music, and refugees. What is alike and different?
4. Michelle Lord wrote this book in 3rd person. This means the narrator described what happened to Arn in the story. Try rewriting a section in 1st person. This means pretend to be Arn and describe the scene as if you were him. You words like "I," "my", and "our."
5. Write a letter to Arn Chorn-Pond and tell him how his story affected you.
6. Write a found poem by using words directly from *A Song for Cambodia*. This means finding words and phrases in the book and using them to create a new text. You can add spaces, rearrange, and add or delete text to create new meaning.
7. In the Afterword, we learn that Arn Chorn-Pond received awards for his humanitarian work. This is work that tries to help human welfare. How do you think he managed to do this work? Have you ever considered doing humanitarian work? If so, what would you like to do? If not, what are some ways you can give back to the world?

### ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about a poem of their choosing. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.



3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about the different ways music influenced Arn's life. Additionally, students may want to share how music is meaningful to them.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
6. Link concepts of survival and music to students' background knowledge and native language by asking students if they can relate to the themes in the book with their own culture.
7. Complete frequent checks of understanding by having students reiterate main ideas and/or asking questions. You can also check their responses for comprehension.
8. Have students find a song that expresses their reaction to *A Song for Cambodia* in some way. Have students explain why they chose the song/what it represents.

### Social and Emotional Learning

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships (Adapted from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/Re/itfogsocemoddev.asp>)

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

- In *A Song for Cambodia*, Arn cannot display emotions while working in the labor camp under the Khmer Rouge because if he cries, soldiers could kill him. How do these buried feelings resurface later?
- Music is one way to deal with trauma. What are some other, non-violent ways to heal? What do you think happens to people when they don't deal with trauma they have endured?
- Listen to some traditional Cambodian music. What feelings do you hear come through the notes? How would you describe them?
- Choose an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, love, joy, surprise, trust, faith, hope, hopelessness, envy, insecurity, nervousness, determination, disgust, shame, indignation, and so on. Illustrate or act out what that emotion looks like to you. What would make you feel that way? How would you deal with that emotion? How does Arn deal with that emotion during the book? How does he cope or handle his feelings?





## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. During the initial read aloud, have students predict the end of the story. Stop at one of the major turning points, such as when the Khmer Rouge sent Arn and other boys to fight at the border. Have students work individually or with a partner to write an end to the story. Have them share their predictions and explain why they think their predictions are plausible—which details from earlier in the book allowed them to make these predictions?
2. Have students create word clouds based on different sections of the book (<https://worditout.com/word-cloud/create>). Divide the class into groups. Allow each group to choose a different section of *A Song for Cambodia*. Have each group type in their section to Word It Out and share their images with the class.
3. Have students create a Venn Diagram for *A Song for Cambodia* with one of the following titles: *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/brothers-in-hope>), *Memories of Survival*, *Baseball Saved Us* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/baseball-saved-us>), and *The Lotus Seed*. How are the stories similar? How are they different? Then, have students write a compare and contrast essay based on their findings.

4. Identify main events with students. Photocopy some of the illustrations throughout the book. Challenge students to sequence the events and place them according to beginning, middle, and end. Then, have them describe the main events from *A Song for Cambodia*.
5. Research about Arn Chorn-Pond. Using pre-selected sites, have students view videos, read articles, and other books about Arn Chorn-Pond. A great place to start is PBS's trailer for *The Flute Player* ([www.pbs.org/pov/thefluteplayer/](http://www.pbs.org/pov/thefluteplayer/)). Have students choose an angle about Arn's life that they find interesting and have them write an informational essay about it.
6. Write creatively about *A Song for Cambodia* and give students different options to choose from. Students can use their imaginations to write creatively in response to the text. Some suggestions include developing interview questions as if they were going to interview Arn Chorn-Pond, writing a diary entry as if they were working in the rice field with Arn, or writing an Op-Ed to urge the United States to end the maltreatment of young Cambodians under the Khmer Rouge.
7. Have students write a reaction piece to *A Song For Cambodia*. Then, have them listen to one another's reactions. Practice the art of listening by repeating and rephrasing a peer's reaction to the story. The initial speaker should confirm or clarify as necessary.

### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present



Knowledge, Strands 7–9; and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

1. Have students construct a timeline of Arn's life and events surrounding it. Provide students with a timeline that starts at 1966 and continues to the present. Note a few key dates in Arn's life on the timeline. For example, in 1966, Arn was born, in 1975 The Khmer Rouge took hold of the Cambodian capital, and in 1988 Arn created the Cambodian Living Arts program to revive the traditional art forms of Cambodia. Have students re-read *A Song for Cambodia* to identify important dates in Arn's life. Have them write these dates on the top of the timeline along with a brief summary of what happened, and research other important events in history that happened in the same years. Afterwards, students can summarize them below the timeline.
2. Map out Arn's journey. Provide students with a blank map of the world. In partners, have students label and color their maps with important places in Arn's life. At minimum, these should include Cambodia, Thailand, and the United States. You can decide how many additional places you want students to identify and to what depth, like noting key places such as northern Cambodia, where Arn was born. Students should include a map key to identify any colors and symbols they included.
3. Conduct a research project on Cambodia. Stimulate student interest in Cambodian culture by inviting them to research about one aspect of the country that piques their curiosity. This could be the country's history, economy, culture, economic development, political system, or something else entirely. Consider dividing students into groups and have them focus on the aforementioned topics and share their findings. How do their reports compare to the Cambodia described in *A Song for Cambodia*?

4. Explore the Refugee Project (<http://www.therefugeeproject.org/#/1975>). Have students read other refugee stories and explore data about where, when, and why refugees have fled and settled since 1975. Supplement this exploration with other books on refugees, such as *Dia's Story Cloth* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/dia-s-story-cloth>), *Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story*, (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/passage-to-freedom>), *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/brothers-in-hope>) and *Calling the Water Drum* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/calling-the-water-drum>).

### Arts/Performing Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)  
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)  
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Have students try out or listen to various traditional Cambodian instruments. If possible, bring in some Cambodian instruments and allow students to play some music on them. If that is not possible, play some music or show a video—one example of a girl playing a khim can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7aiv-PRo6w>. Have students describe the sound using five words or less.
2. Hold a discussion on the benefits of art. Have students think about and discuss how art helps individuals and groups to express their history, frustrations, and hopes for the future. Arn used music to do so. What other artistic methods are available? Is one better than the other? Why or why not?
3. Study the illustrations. Have students study the illustrations and determine who has the most detail added to them. Students should notice



that some faces are vague while others are painted with facial expressions. Have students infer why this is the case. In particular, they should note how this affects the reader's reactions to those images.

4. Add to the illustrations. Have students find an illustration that stands out to them. Then, have the students recreate the illustration with watercolor and add themselves to the image. Students should consider color and placement of where they are and why they chose to put themselves where they did.

### Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Encourage students to look through their own books and videos to search for biographies of people. How many biographies do they own or have read? In the future, students can be mindful of the genres they are choosing to read at home—is it mostly fiction or nonfiction? Do they have a steady diet of mystery and humor? Can they mix it up at all to become a more well-rounded reader?
2. Interview family members about their knowledge of Cambodia. Have students ask their family what they know about Cambodia and how it relates to Arn's story. If families don't know anything about Cambodia, students can share what they learned in class, and the families can learn more together. Students can then share new knowledge with their classmates. You can also send home copies of Michelle Lord's *Little Sap and Monsieur Rodin* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/little-sap-and-monsieur-rodin>) to develop deeper background knowledge of Cambodian culture.
3. Have students share their family histories. Students can ask family members for their story of when they came to America and why. Have them discuss what America offered and how it compares to Arn's journey. Were any students adopted like Arn?
4. You can also focus this discussion on the theme of adoption and send home copies of adoption stories such as *Bringing Asha Home* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/bringing-asha-home>), *The Story I'll Tell* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-i-ll-tell>), and *Journey Home* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/journey-home>) to jumpstart discussions about what adoption is like.
5. Have students interview a family member or caregiver about music in their lives. Is there a song or poem that has been shared between generations? What song or music reminds them of their family or childhood? How has music helped them express themselves or made them feel better? Students should write down responses to share in class. Encourage students to bring in a song that is meaningful to their family.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Michelle Lord** is the author of Lee & Low's *Little Sap and Monsieur Rodin*, a Bank Street College Best Children's Book of the Year. She fell in love with Cambodian culture when she traveled there to adopt her youngest daughter, and first learned about Arn Chorn-Pond from the documentary *The Flute Player*. Lord lives in New Braunfels, Texas, with her husband and their three children.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Shino Arihara** is a full-time illustrator who was born in the United States and grew up in Japan. She felt an immediate connection to Arn Chorn-Pond's story because a close friend, and fellow artist, went through a similar experience when he lived in Cambodia. "I wanted to do this book for him," says Arihara. She lives with her husband, a musician, in California.

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

**LEE & LOW BOOKS** is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](http://leeandlow.com).

## ORDERING INFORMATION

### On the Web:

[www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](http://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering) (general order information)

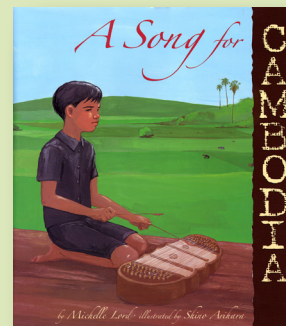
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/a-song-for-cambodia> (secure online ordering)

**By Phone:** 212-779-4400 ext. 25 | **By Fax:** 212-683-1894

**By Mail:** Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

## Book Information for

*A Song for Cambodia*



\$9.95, PAPERBACK

978-1-62014-228-8

32 pages, 8-1/2 X 10-1/2

\*Reading Level: Grade 4

Interest Level: Grades 1-6

Guided Reading Level: Q

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:  
0.5/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: AD840L

**THEMES:** War, Overcoming

Obstacles and Adversity, Music, Discrimination, Coping with Death, Biography, Asian/Asian American Interest, Adoption, Poverty, Persistence and Grit, Khmer Rouge, Pol Pot, Cambodian Culture, Survival, Giving Back, Rebuilding, Human Rights Activism, Geography, History, Political Science, Refugees

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/a-song-for-cambodia>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.