

▶ THE BIG QUESTION

What can we learn from times of war? Think about heroes you have read about. What did they do that was heroic? What risks did they take? How does war bring out the worst and the best in people? Discuss with a partner.

▶ BUILD BACKGROUND

“In the Name of His Father” is a news article about a man named Chiune (chee-YOO-nay) Sugihara. During World War II, Sugihara lived in Lithuania and worked as a diplomat for Japan. At that time, the German dictator, Adolf Hitler, directed a major effort to kill the Jewish people of Europe. Hitler’s soldiers forced Jews to live in places called concentration camps, where they were treated cruelly and, in many cases, killed.

Sugihara knew what was happening. He found a way to help Jewish refugees and, in doing so, risked his own life. Sugihara saved the lives of thousands of people and has come to be considered a hero. Hitler was eventually defeated and World War II ended in 1945, but not before more than 6 million innocent Jewish people died.



▲ German poster of Adolf Hitler, 1930s



CHIUNE SUGIHARA

In the Name of His Father by Fred Tasker

Instructions

Read each box of text. Answer the questions in the right column in complete sentences. Remember to “echo” the question in your answer.

	Text of the story:	Your thoughts, notes, and reactions:
1	<p>It's with a certain awkwardness that Hiroki Sugihara, 63, travels the world to lecture about the heroic acts of his father during World War II. It violates a cultural sense of modesty. "For a Japanese, it sounds like you are showing off," he says.</p>	<p>Who is the character? Who is his father? Why is it awkward?</p>
2	<p>Yet he must. Too few in the world are aware of that heroism, he believes. Too few know what his father, Chiune Sugihara, "the Japanese Schindler," did in 1940 when, as a mid-ranking diplomat in Lithuania, against the orders of his own government, he wrote 6,000 exit visas to get desperate Polish Jews out of the way of the approaching Nazi Holocaust.</p>	<p>Who is Chiune Sugihara? What did he do? Why is this "heroism"?</p>
3	<p>"Thanks to him, I'm alive," says George Borenstein, then a 36-year-old Polish Army soldier, now 86, retired in Delray Beach, Florida. Borenstein had fled to Lithuania after the Germans defeated the Polish Army. And he knew the German Army was killing Jews and the Soviet Army was sending such refugees to Siberia. "They were starving in Siberia. I lost a brother there. But [Sugihara] got me a visa. I got out."</p>	<p>Who is George Borenstein? What is his relationship to Chiune Sugihara?</p>

4	<p>Ousted from the foreign ministry after the war, Sugihara lived in obscurity for decades, selling light bulbs, then importing oil, until an Israeli diplomat in Tokyo, another of the refugees he saved, sought him out and set about making things right.</p>	<p>What was Sugihara “sought out?” How could things be made right?</p>
5	<p>Now he has been honored by the Israeli government as one of the “righteous among nations”--non-Jews who helped save Jews during the Holocaust. It’s the same honor given German businessman Oskar Schindler and Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenburg, whose efforts to save Jews from death at the hands of the Nazis are far better known.</p> <p>Sugihara has been the subject of an Oscar-winning documentary, and on February 6, his family will be given a heroism award from the Immortal Chaplains’ Foundation.</p> <p>Finally, his story is being told.</p>	<p>Who are Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenburg? Why does the author mention them? Who is telling Sugihara’s story? How? Why?</p>
6	<p>Hiroki Sugihara remembers it well, even though he was not quite 4 when it happened. It was 1940. German troops invading Poland had expelled the country’s Jews, and hundreds were huddled in the square in Kaunas, Lithuania, where his father’s consulate stood, seeking permission to flee to any safe country that would take them. And the United States and Great Britain were balking at accepting new refugees.</p>	<p>Who is narrating?</p>

7	<p>"I asked my father why I couldn't go outside to play as usual," Sugihara says.</p> <p>"He told me it might be dangerous. The refugees were very agitated. I asked him what would happen to them, and he said they might be killed. I was concerned for the children, because some of them were my age. So I said, 'Why can't you help them?' And he said, 'I might.'"</p>	<p>What is going on between Hiroki and his father? Why is it dangerous to play outside? How can Hiroki's father "help them?"</p>
8	<p>For seven fevered weeks that July and August, the elder Sugihara worked 20 hours a day, writing an estimated 6,000 to 10,000 exit visas for the refugees. Three times he wired his government for permission to write more; three times he was told to stop. He kept writing.</p> <p>Even as he and his family boarded the train to leave Lithuania for Berlin on his government's orders, Sugihara kept writing visas, throwing them out the window to refugees running alongside. "We will never forget you," one of them called, according to one book on Sugihara's exploits.</p>	<p>What does Hiroki's father do to help? Who tries to stop him?</p>
9	<p>With documentation, the refugees were able to travel across Russia, take the Siberian express railway to Vladivostok and eventually reach Japan or other countries. There they were treated well during the war. Despite its alliance with Nazi Germany, [Japan] had little history of anti-Semitism.</p>	<p>Was Hiroki's father able to help?</p>
10	<p>"When there were shortages the [Japanese] people even shared their food with them," says Anne Akabori, the</p>	<p>Who is Anne Akabori?</p>

	Sacramento librarian who, in 1996, translated into English the book <i>Visas for 6,000 Lives</i> , written by Sugihara's wife, Yukiko.	
11	As the war ended, Sugihara, then posted in Romania, was captured by the Soviets and sent to a concentration camp with his wife and son for 18 months. Arriving back in Japan in 1947, he approached the country's postwar foreign ministry, hoping for a sympathetic reception and perhaps even a new assignment. Instead, they demanded his resignation.	Why was Sugihara forced to resign?
12	The world knew little of [Sugihara] until 1968, when Joshua Nisri, economic attache' to the Israeli embassy in Tokyo, sought him out. Nisri was a Polish teen in 1940, one of the refugees Sugihara saved. Since then, Sugihara's story has been slowly seeping into the world consciousness.	Who is Joshua Nisri? Why does he want to tell Sugihara's story?
13	In 1985, just a year before Sugihara died, the Israeli government honored him as "A Man of Justice of the Peoples of the World."	What is the relationship between the Israeli government and Sugihara? Why did the government honor him?
14	His story spread further after the fall of communism freed Lithuania and other Eastern European countries to express their true feelings. It was only in 1991,	Why was a monument erected?

	during a celebration of Lithuanian independence, that a monument was erected and a street named after Sugihara in Kaunas.	
15	<p>In 1996, Boston University religion Professor Lillel Levine published a book, <i>In Search of Sugihara</i> (The Free Press, \$25), calling Sugihara’s exploits braver even than those of Wallenberg and Schindler, both of whom also rescued thousands of Jews during the war.</p> <p>Wallenberg was sent to Hungary by the Swedish with its specific backing, Levine argued; Schindler had at least a partial economic motive, using the Jews he saved to work in his factories. Sugihara acted purely on principle, Levine said. Sugihara’s story became better known in the United States after 1994 when the movie <i>Schindler’s List</i> raised the world’s interest in those who had helped Jewish refugees during the war. In 1997, a documentary about Sugihara, <i>Visas and Virtue</i>, by Chris Tashima and Chris Donahue, won an Oscar in the Live Action Short Category.</p>	<p>Who is Lillel Levine? What is her relationship to Sugihara? Why does she call Sugihara’s exploits “braver even than those of Wallenberg and Schindler?”</p>
16	<p>More recently, Sugihara was honored by the Holocaust Oral History Project and the Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles at a ceremony attended by <i>Schindler’s List</i> filmmaker Stephen Spielberg.</p>	<p>How do you think Sugihara would feel today if he were still alive?</p>
17	<p>One of the first questions the younger Sugihara is asked during his lectures is why an obedient Japanese diplomat would take such a risk to himself and his</p>	<p>In your opinion, what was Sugihara’s motivation for taking a risk and helping strangers? Would Levine agree or disagree with you?</p>

	<p>family to help strangers.</p> <p>Levine’s book says survivors remember him as “the angel,” a kind of man who “treated them with respect, smiled at them, and offered a cup of tea.”</p>	
18	<p>Says Akabori, the Sacramento librarian: “I believe it was deeply rooted in the Japanese spirit called ‘bushido,’ which means reaching the highest level of physical, mental, and spiritual attainment. When you think something is right, you do it, without worrying about yourself.” After all, she says, Sugihara’s family is descended from Samurai, the ancient warrior caste to whom honor came before money or personal safety.</p>	<p>What does Akabori think was Sugihara’s motivation for taking a risk and helping strangers?</p>
19	<p>The younger Sugihara credits that explanation: “When he was growing up, he was taught that code. You have to sacrifice yourself to help somebody else.”</p>	<p>What does his son think was Sugihara’s motivation for taking a risk and helping strangers?</p>
20	<p>The elder Sugihara, in a speech in 1985, a year before he died, put it more simply: “It is the kind of sentiment anyone would have when he actually sees the refugees face to face, begging with tears in their eyes. He just cannot help but sympathize with them.”</p>	<p>Why does Sugihara say he took a risk and helped strangers?</p>

► VOCABULARY

Listening and Speaking: Key Words

Read these sentences aloud with a partner. Use the context to figure out the meaning of the **highlighted** words. Use a dictionary, the glossary, or a thesaurus to determine or confirm your answers. Then write each word and its meaning in your notebook.

1. Some of the American government workers who represent the United States in Italy work at the **consulate** in Milan.
2. The American **diplomat** represented the views of his country at the meeting with other countries in Germany.
3. The soldiers showed great **heroism** when they rescued the children in the village.
4. They **honor** people for brave deeds by awarding them a medal.
5. During the **lecture**, the professor told his class about great heroes of World War II.
6. The people who live in a country at war often lose their homes and become **refugees** who must move to a new place.

Key Words

consulate
diplomat
heroism
honor
lecture
refugees



Audio



Practice



Write the sentences in your notebook. Choose a word from the box above to complete each sentence. Then take turns reading the sentences aloud with a partner.

1. My family helped the _____ who arrived here after escaping from the war in their home country.
2. My father is going to work for the government at the _____ in Lyon, France.
3. The soldier gave a very interesting _____ about his experiences.
4. The Russian _____ spoke on behalf of his country at the conference.
5. They are going to _____ a soldier who fought in the Gulf War by naming a park after him.
6. The woman showed true _____ when she helped her elderly neighbors escape the fire.

United States Marines raise the American flag in Iwo Jima after capturing the island from the Japanese in 1945. ►

