

# A Study on the Teaching of Guided Reading of Foreign Literary Classics in Junior High School Chinese from the Perspective of Whole-Book Reading

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**Abstract:** Against the background of the Chinese Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition), which continuously emphasize Whole-Book Reading, cultural understanding, and the cultivation of core competencies in the Chinese subject, the Guided Reading section of Foreign Literary Classics in junior high school Chinese textbooks is increasingly becoming an important medium connecting in-class learning and extracurricular reading. Taking the Guided Reading section of Foreign Literary Classics in the unified edition of junior high school Chinese textbooks as the research object, this paper comprehensively adopts such methods as questionnaire survey, content analysis, interviews, and teaching observation to investigate its current teaching application. The survey subjects mainly came from junior high schools in Hangzhou, Wenzhou, Shaoxing, and other places, and a total of 97 valid student questionnaires and 48 valid teacher questionnaires were collected. The study finds that the current Guided Reading section has a relatively obvious basic guiding role in helping students understand the background of writers and works, grasp plot summaries, and extract character images and thematic ideas, and can reduce the threshold of reading foreign literature to a certain extent. However, it still has deficiencies in reading method guidance, support for cross-cultural understanding, the promotion of Whole-Book Reading, and the implementation of differentiated teaching. Based on this, the paper proposes that teaching should be optimized from such aspects as strengthening method guidance, supplementing cultural scaffolding, enhancing activity design, promoting whole-process connection, and implementing differentiated Guided Reading, so as to improve the exemplary significance and practical effectiveness of the Guided Reading section.

**Keywords:** Junior High School Chinese; Foreign Literary Classics; Guided Reading; Whole-Book Reading; Teaching Optimization

## 1. Introduction

The Chinese Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education emphasize that Chinese teaching should attach importance to the guidance of Whole-Book Reading and guide students to form language accumulation, aesthetic experience, and cultural understanding ability in extensive reading. As an important section connecting text learning and extracurricular reading in textbooks, Guided Reading of Literary Classics undertakes multiple functions such as stimulating reading interest, providing reading clues, guiding reading methods, and expanding cultural horizons.

Compared with Chinese classical literature and modern and contemporary literary works, Foreign Literary Classics have a more distinct cross-cultural nature in junior high school reading teaching. In the reading process, students often face such problems as unfamiliar cultural backgrounds, barriers caused by translated language, complex character relationships, and obvious differences in narrative rhythm. Precisely because of this, the Guided Reading section in textbooks should not merely be a simple summary of information about the works, but should become an important scaffold for students to enter classical texts, understand foreign cultures, and form reading methods[1-2].

From current teaching practice, teachers are generally able to realize the teaching value of the Guided Reading section, but its classroom application methods, its continuous support effect on students' Whole-Book Reading, and its in-depth functions at the levels of method guidance and cultural understanding still need further study. Based on this, this paper takes the Guided Reading section of Foreign Literary Classics in junior high school Chinese textbooks as the research object, and through

questionnaires and survey data, analyzes its current teaching application, existing problems, and puts forward targeted optimization paths[3-5].

## 2. Research Design

### 2.1 Research Object

This study takes the Guided Reading section of Foreign Literary Classics in the unified edition of junior high school Chinese textbooks as the research object, focusing on the analysis of the Guided Reading content and teaching application of such books as *The Insects*, *Jane Eyre*[6-8].

### 2.2 Research Methods

This study comprehensively adopts literature research, questionnaire survey, content analysis, interviews, and teaching observation. Among them, literature research is mainly used to sort out the relevant research results and theoretical basis of Guided Reading of Literary Classics; questionnaire survey is used to grasp teachers' and students' current use of the Guided Reading section, their understanding of problems, and their needs for improvement; content analysis mainly focuses on the Guided Reading texts in the textbooks; and interviews and teaching observation are used to supplement the questionnaire data and enhance the practical pertinence of the study.

### 2.3 Sources of Samples and Survey Content

The questionnaire subjects of this study mainly came from junior high schools in Hangzhou, Wenzhou, Shaoxing, and other places. A total of 97 valid student questionnaires were collected, including 46 from Grade Seven and 51 from Grade Eight; 48 valid teacher questionnaires were collected, covering teachers with different teaching years and teachers of different grades. The survey content mainly included students' perception of the role of the Guided Reading section, the main difficulties in reading Foreign Literary Classics, and their preferences for Guided Reading teaching methods; and teachers' degree of attention to the Guided Reading section, application methods, judgments of effect, and understanding of problems.

### 2.4 Research Questions

This paper mainly revolves around the following three questions.

First, what practical roles does the Guided Reading section of Foreign Literary Classics in junior high school Chinese textbooks play in teaching?

Second, how do students and teachers respectively view the effect and problems of current Guided Reading teaching?

Third, how can the teaching application of the Guided Reading section be optimized under the background of Whole-Book Reading?

## 3. Practical Performance of the Teaching of Guided Reading of Foreign Literary Classics

### 3.1 The Guided Reading Section Has a Relatively Obvious Basic Guiding Role

*Table 1 Overall Helpfulness of the "Guide-reading" Section to Students' Reading*

Level	Number of Students	Percentage
No help at all	5	5.15%
2	5	5.15%
3	15	15.46%
4	38	39.17%
Very helpful	34	35.05%

From the student feedback(table 1), most students recognize that the Guided Reading section plays a positive role in reading. The questionnaire shows that students who believed that Guided Reading was "somewhat helpful," "quite helpful," or "very helpful" to reading accounted for 89.68% in total,

indicating that Guided Reading has already played a relatively good basic supporting role in students' psychological preparation before reading, information extraction, and overall perception.

Further, the help of Guided Reading to students' reading is mainly reflected at three levels: first, providing background knowledge of writers and works; second, helping students grasp plot summaries; and third, extracting character images and the themes of works. In the corresponding questionnaire, 82.47% of students chose "providing background knowledge of writers and works," 69.07% chose "providing plot summaries," and 64.95% chose "extracting character images and themes of works." Table 2 shows that the current textbook Guided Reading is relatively effective in information integration and key-point sorting, and can help students quickly establish a preliminary cognition of works and reduce the threshold of understanding in entering classical texts[9-10].

*Table 2 Specific Help Provided by the "Guide-reading" Section*

Item	Number of Students	Percentage
A. Provide background knowledge of authors and works	80	82.47%
B. Provide plot outline	67	69.07%
C. Summarize character images and thematic themes	63	64.95%
D. Provide reading method guidance	55	56.70%
E. Recommend similar books	76	78.35%

### **3.2 Students Still Face Multiple Obstacles in Reading Foreign Literary Classics**

Although Guided Reading has a certain effect in providing basic information, students still have obvious difficulties in actually reading Foreign Literary Classics. The survey shows that 53.60% of students believed that the reading difficulty of foreign literary works was "moderate and can be mastered through learning and thinking," 15.46% believed it was "a little difficult, and many contents are hard to understand," and 2.06% believed it was "very difficult and completely unreadable." Table 3 indicates that foreign literary works are not completely inaccessible, but students still need much support in the process of independent reading.

*Table 3 Perceived Difficulty of Foreign Literary Works in Textbooks*

Level	Number of Students	Percentage
A. Very easy and fully understandable	7	7.21%
B. Relatively easy and most can be understood	21	21.65%
C. Moderate and can be mastered through learning	52	53.60%
D. A bit difficult and many contents are hard to understand	15	15.46%
E. Very difficult and completely unreadable	2	2.06%

From the sources of difficulty, students' main obstacles are concentrated in the following aspects: 54.64% were unfamiliar with foreign cultural backgrounds, 47.42% thought the translated language was stiff and the names were difficult to remember, and 41.24% thought the plot was dull and difficult to understand. In addition, limited reading level and poor reading effect, and excessive length each accounted for 25.77%, and heavy academic burden and no time for reading accounted for 19.59%. These data show that students' demand for Guided Reading is not limited to content summary, but also requires specific support in reading methods, cultural understanding, and reading pace arrangement. Difficulties Encountered by Students in Reading Literary Classics is shown in table 4.

*Table 4 Difficulties Encountered by Students in Reading Literary Classics*

Item	Number of Students	Percentage
A. Stiff translation language and hard-to-remember names	46	47.42%
B. Dull plots and difficult comprehension	40	41.24%
C. Unfamiliarity with foreign cultural backgrounds	53	54.64%
D. Heavy academic burden and no time for reading	19	19.59%
E. Limited reading level and poor reading effect	25	25.77%
F. Excessively long length	25	25.77%
G. No difficulties	11	11.34%

### 3.3 Students Put Forward Stronger Demands for Interactivity and Practicality in Guided Reading Teaching

In terms of preferences for teaching methods, students are more inclined toward such methods as interesting activities, assistance from film and television clips, Guided Reading lessons analyzing works, and explanation of key points together with the distribution of materials. Among them, 56.70% liked “carrying out Guided Reading lessons to analyze works,” 52.58% liked “carrying out interesting activities,” 49.48% liked “introducing film and television clips to assist teaching,” and 47.42% liked “explaining key points and distributing related materials.” This indicates that students are not satisfied with static and summary-style Guided Reading, but expect more to transform Guided Reading into a teaching process that can be participated in, perceived, and transferred.

Table 5 shows that, on the one hand, students hope to improve reading interest with the help of situational and activity-based methods; on the other hand, they also hope that teachers can provide clearer reading method guidance and learning support. If Guided Reading teaching only stays at the superficial link of introducing works, it will be difficult to meet students’ real and diverse reading needs.

*Table 5 Preferred Teaching Methods for Foreign Literary Classic Guide-reading*

Item	Number of Students	Percentage
A. Make reading plans and require regular check-ins	27	27.84%
B. Conduct guide-reading lessons and analyze works	55	56.70%
C. Hold reading meetings for teacher-student exchanges	36	37.11%
D. Explain test points and distribute materials	46	47.42%
E. Organize interesting activities (role-play, debates, etc.)	51	52.58%
F. Introduce film and television clips for teaching assistance	48	49.48%
G. Others	0	0%

## 4. Basic Characteristics and Problems of Teachers’ Application of Guided Reading Teaching

### 4.1 Teachers Generally Attach Importance to the Teaching Value of the Guided Reading Section

Table 6 shows that the vast majority of teachers attach importance to the teaching of the Guided Reading section of Foreign Literary Classics in textbooks. Among them, the proportions of “attaching great importance” and “attaching relatively great importance” were 37.50% and 45.83%, respectively, totaling 83.33%. This shows that the teacher group has basically formed a positive cognition of the function of Guided Reading and realized its important role in stimulating reading interest, building a framework of understanding, and extending classroom reading.

*Table 6 Teachers' Attention to the "Guide-reading" Section*

Level	Number of Teachers	Percentage
A. Very important	18	37.5%
B. Relatively important	22	45.83%
C. General	7	14.58%
D. Not very important	1	2.08%
E. Completely ignored	0	0.00%

### 4.2 Guided Reading Shows a Trend of Diversified Application in the Classroom

From the perspective of classroom application methods, teachers mainly use Guided Reading for classroom introduction, guiding students’ independent reading, organizing special-topic discussions, and combining it with extracurricular extension. Among them, “as classroom introduction” accounted for 79.17%, “guiding students’ independent reading” accounted for 70.83%, “combining with extracurricular extension” accounted for 60.42%, and “designing special-topic discussions” accounted for 50.00%. This shows that Guided Reading has not simply been treated as marginal content of the textbook, but has gradually been integrated into different links of reading teaching, reflecting a relatively strong awareness of teaching integration.

However, this kind of wide application is not equal to deep application. From the practical effect, Guided Reading is more often used as a tool for introducing works, summarizing content, and assigning reading tasks, while its continuous functions in method guidance, reading process monitoring, and

reading achievement evaluation are still insufficient. Ways Teachers Use the "Guide-reading" Section in Teaching is shown in table 7.

*Table 7 Ways Teachers Use the "Guide-reading" Section in Teaching*

Item	Number of Teachers	Percentage
A. As classroom introduction	38	79.17%
B. Guide students' independent reading	34	70.83%
C. Design special discussions	24	50.00%
D. Combine with after-class expansion	29	60.42%
E. Others	3	6.25%

#### **4.3 The Effect of Guided Reading in Promoting Whole-Book Reading Is Limited**

Table 8 survey shows that the proportion of students who can truly complete Whole-Book Reading under the guidance of Guided Reading is not high. Among teachers, only 10.42% believed that "most students can complete whole-book reading," 37.50% believed that "about half of the students try reading," and those who believed that "a small number of students persist in finishing" and "very few students truly read the original work" together accounted for more than half. From this it can be seen that although Guided Reading has the function of starting reading, there is still an obvious break in transforming interest arousal into sustained reading behavior.

*Table 8 Effect of "Guide-reading" on Guiding Students to Read Complete Books*

Item	Number of Teachers	Percentage
A. Most students can finish reading the whole book	5	10.42%
B. About half of the students try to read	18	37.50%
C. A few students insist on finishing reading	13	27.08%
D. Very few students really read the original	12	25.00%

The reasons for this are, on the one hand, that students' independent reading ability and reading time are limited; on the other hand, it is also related to the lack of systematic reading support from teachers in the later stage. If Guided Reading only stays at pre-class introduction, without supporting reading tasks, communication mechanisms, and process feedback, then its promoting role in Whole-Book Reading will be difficult to truly implement.

#### **4.4 Teachers' Main Questions about the Current Design of Guided Reading Are Concentrated at the Two Levels of Method and Culture**

Teachers generally believe that the current Guided Reading section has such problems as overly brief content, lack of reading method guidance, lack of connection with local cultural experience, and insufficient representativeness of selected texts. Among them, "lack of reading method guidance" had the highest selection rate, at 70.83%; "content is too brief" accounted for 62.50%; "lack of connection with local culture" accounted for 56.25%; and "insufficient representativeness of selected texts" accounted for 45.83%. Table 9 shows that what currently needs to be strengthened most in Guided Reading is not simply the addition of knowledge information, but the improvement of its teaching function as a reading scaffold.

*Table 9 Perceived Deficiencies of the Current "Guide-reading" Content Design*

Item	Number of Teachers	Percentage
A. Insufficient representativeness of selected texts	22	45.83%
B. Overly brief content	30	62.50%
C. Lack of reading method guidance	34	70.83%
D. Lack of connection with local culture	27	56.25%
E. Others	5	10.42%

At the same time, teachers also emphasized that students face strong cultural estrangement, barriers from translated language, complex character relationships, and vague understanding of themes in reading Foreign Literary Classics. Among them, "large cultural background differences make empathy difficult" accounted for 77.08%, "translated language is obscure or expression habits are different" accounted for 68.75%, and "lack of historical/social background knowledge" accounted for 58.33%. Table 10 shows that the current Guided Reading has not yet formed a sufficient connection with students' real reading difficulties.

Table 10 Main Difficulties for Students in Reading Foreign Literary Classics

Item	Number of Teachers	Percentage
A. Large cultural differences and difficulty in empathy	37	77.08%
B. Obscure translation language or different expression habits	33	68.75%
C. Complex character relationships and slow plot development	24	50.00%
D. Lack of historical and social background knowledge	28	58.33%
E. Vague understanding of thematic themes	21	43.75%
F. Others	4	8.33%

## 5. Main Problems Existing in Current Guided Reading Teaching

Combining the survey results from both students and teachers, the teaching of the Guided Reading section of Foreign Literary Classics in current junior high school Chinese textbooks mainly has the following problems.

### 5.1 Emphasis on Content Introduction, Neglect of Method Guidance

At present, the Guided Reading section is relatively sufficient in writer introduction, plot summary, and theme extraction, but insufficient at the level of how to read. Students know what the work writes about, but do not know clearly how to enter the text, sort out characters, grasp themes, and understand cultural differences. This causes Guided Reading to stay more at the level of knowledge transmission, and it has not yet effectively been transformed into the cultivation of reading ability.

### 5.2 Emphasis on Pre-reading Introduction, Neglect of Process Support

Guided Reading is usually arranged before reading begins and undertakes the function of introduction and prompt, but after students enter Whole-Book Reading, there is a lack of continuous task design and process support. Mechanisms such as reading plans, stage exchanges, reading feedback, and question tracking are insufficient, resulting in a phenomenon of “warm at the beginning and cold later” between Guided Reading and Whole-Book Reading.

### 5.3 Emphasis on Text Information, Neglect of Cultural Understanding

The reading difficulty of Foreign Literary Classics often lies not only in the plot itself, but in the cultural context, social customs, and differences in values behind the works. Although the current Guided Reading provides a certain amount of background knowledge, it mostly stays at the level of static explanation and lacks effective connection with students’ real-life experience and local cultural cognition, making it difficult to truly help students achieve cross-cultural understanding.

### 5.4 Emphasis on Unified Presentation, Neglect of Differentiated Guidance

Different students have large differences in reading foundation, reading interest, and acceptance ability, but the current Guided Reading teaching often adopts the method of unified explanation and unified requirements, lacking differentiated support for students at different levels. For students with weaker foundations, Guided Reading may still seem abstract; for students with stronger reading ability, Guided Reading may be too shallow and unable to form deeper thinking challenges.

## 6. Paths for Optimizing the Teaching of Guided Reading of Foreign Literary Classics

### 6.1 Shift from “Telling Students What to Read” to “Guiding Students How to Read”

To truly bring the exemplary role of Guided Reading into play, teachers should further shift the teaching focus from work introduction to reading method guidance. For example, in Guided Reading, teachers can clearly prompt students how to grasp key plots, how to sort out character relationships, how to understand character behavior in combination with background information, and how to annotate and think around central questions. Only when students master methods of entering classical texts can Guided Reading be upgraded from information explanation to an ability scaffold.

### ***6.2 Supplement Necessary Cultural Scaffolding and Strengthen Cross-cultural Understanding***

In view of the problem of unfamiliar cultural backgrounds generally reflected by students, teachers can appropriately supplement the historical background, social customs, values, and typical cultural images related to the works in Guided Reading teaching, and help students build channels of understanding through such methods as comparison between Chinese and foreign cultures and connection with life experience. Such cultural scaffolding is not simply adding knowledge points, but serving students' reading understanding and emotional resonance.

### ***6.3 Strengthen Activity Design and Improve Participation in Guided Reading Teaching***

Students prefer such forms as role-playing, reading exchanges, debate activities, and assistance from film and television resources, which shows that Guided Reading teaching should move from one-way explanation to interactive construction. Teachers can set tasks around character evaluation, plot judgment, and theme discussion, and with the help of activities transform the static information in Guided Reading into students' reading experience and expressive practice, thereby improving reading interest and classroom engagement.

### ***6.4 Strengthen the Connection between Guided Reading and the Whole Process of Whole-Book Reading***

Guided Reading should not only be the starting point of Whole-Book Reading, but should also become a key link in the whole-process teaching chain. After Guided Reading, teachers can continue to match it with such activities as reading plans, stage check-ins, question sheets, book sharing, and achievement display, so as to form a continuous mechanism of "Guided Reading-reading-communication-feedback," and help students turn short-term interest into sustained reading behavior.

### ***6.5 Implement Differentiated Guided Reading to Meet the Reading Needs of Different Students***

In view of the differences in students' reading ability, teachers can design Guided Reading tasks at different levels, including basic, improvement, and extension levels. Basic tasks focus on understanding plots and characters, improvement tasks focus on theme analysis and cultural comparison, and extension tasks can guide students to conduct comparative reading with other works. Through differentiated Guided Reading, it is possible both to take care of the reading entry of students with weak foundations and to meet the in-depth inquiry needs of students with stronger reading ability.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Guided Reading of Foreign Literary Classics is an important bridge in junior high school Chinese textbooks connecting in-class learning and extracurricular Whole-Book Reading. From the results of this survey, it has already played a relatively obvious basic role in reducing the threshold of reading, providing background support, and helping students grasp works as a whole. But at the same time, there is still much room for improvement in reading method guidance, support for cultural understanding, and the promotion of Whole-Book Reading.

Under the teaching background of the continuous deepening of Whole-Book Reading, teachers should re-understand the functional positioning of Guided Reading. It should not be regarded as an auxiliary and introductory section, but should be regarded as an important scaffold for cultivating students' reading ability, cross-cultural understanding ability, and literary appreciation ability. Only by promoting Guided Reading from a content-introduction type to a method-guidance type, and from a pre-class prompt type to a whole-process support type, can its exemplary significance and reading application value truly be implemented.

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