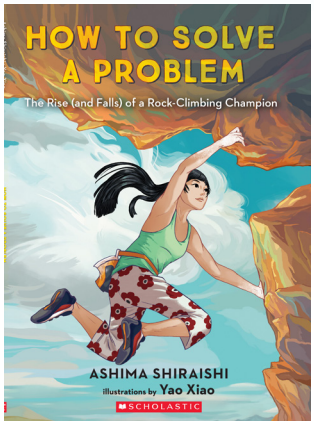


How To Solve a Problem

by Ashima Shiraishi and illustrated by Yao Xiao

From her first climbs at the age of six, Ashima Shiraishi has shown an extraordinary gift for rock climbing, and gradually gained fame and awards because of it. The way she "solves problems"—her way of thinking of a rock climb—makes it seem easy. But in this first-person narrative, Ashima describes the immense effort, imagination, and mental discipline that must be applied to each climb.

BEFORE THE READ-ALOUD

Have students consider the following question **as a class**:

Would you keep trying to do something even if you failed the first time? Why or why not? What would it take for you to feel ready to try again?

Invite students to share their answers.

Then have students **turn and talk** with a partner:

Think of something that often takes trial and error, like performing a science experiment or learning a new skill. How might it feel for the people who do those things when they finally achieve the results they are looking for?

Show the title and cover of the read-aloud book *How to Solve a Problem.*

In the book we are about to read, Ashima wants to climb the most challenging boulder she's ever seen since she started rock climbing. It's going to take a lot of skill and confidence to make it to the top.

Academic Vocabulary

boulders (p. 6) large rocks
slick (p. 10) smooth and slippery
bolts (p. 11) lengths of manufactured fabric, often in a roll
gravity (p. 19) force that attracts people and things toward Earth's center

DURING THE READ-ALOUD

As you read aloud the whole book, you may wish to pause and discuss the following questions, either as a whole class or through turning and talking between partners. These questions will allow the class to explore the library's themes as well as comprehension strategies.

pp. 4–7 *Ashima introduces herself by what she does. What does the line "I make [problems] mine" tell us about Ashima's personality? In what ways do you think climbing a boulder is "sort of the same" as solving a problem?* **(Make Inferences)**

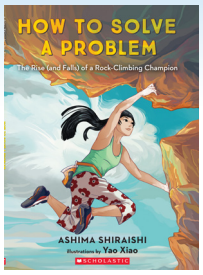
pp. 8–12 *Ashima remembers one of her biggest challenges. What do you think she means by saying that the problem "stretched into the sky?" How does categorizing the problem by things she's seen before help her understand the problem? How do the illustrations support Ashima's approach to the task she is facing?* **(Figurative Language, Picture Clues)**

pp. 13–19 *Ashima explains the mental preparation that goes along with her climb. Why do you think she shares her thought process? Why do you think the text on the page is written sideways as she falls?* **(Text Features, Make Inferences)**

pp. 20–25 *Ashima uses "the new information the fall had given" to try the climb again. Why do you think Ashima is still optimistic even after she's fallen? What new strategies do you think she used that helped her climb the wall?* **(Make Predictions)**

pp. 26–31 *Ashima succeeds in her next attempt at solving the problem and looks forward to what she will learn from each new climb. Why do you think Ashima enjoys rock climbing? What about it do you think is interesting or fun to her, based on how she describes it?* **(Make Connections)**

pp. 32–33 *The timeline follows Ashima from birth onward. Think about how she has changed as she's grown. How does rock climbing show Ashima what her strengths and limitations are? Think of a hobby or activity that challenges you. How does it feel to take on a challenge related to something you enjoy?* **(Make Connections)**



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AFTER THE READ-ALOUD

After completing the read-aloud, allow time for class discussion. Sit in a circle or in another configuration that is comfortable and allows for class interaction.

Acting as a facilitator, invite students to have *accountable discussions:* remind them to use evidence from the text, their own inferences, personal connections, and other text connections in order to learn from one another.

- *Climbing is something that Ashima does alone, but when she falls, her dad is there to help her up, sit with her, and give her something to eat. How does having the support of others around you help make your goals more manageable?* **(Building Relationships)**
- *When Ashima falls, she doesn't give up. Instead, she "listened to what the fall had told [her]" and tried climbing again. How can making the decision to reflect on past mistakes or experiences help you make better decisions in the future?* **(Making Decisions)**
- *Ashima falls several times in the book, but each time she takes a different perspective and tries something new. How does this ability to see the boulder in different ways help her achieve her goal? How can changing your perspective on a problem help you find a solution?* **(Managing Myself)**
- *Ashima tackles her problems in a way that is unique to her. She imagines the points of her climb to be shaped like things in her life. For example, one point reminds her of her father's elbow, while another point reminds her of the bolts of fabric in her mother's sewing room. This way of solving problems may not work for other climbers, but it works for her. Why is it important to acknowledge the unique ways in which someone chooses to work? What can we learn about others' strengths?* **(Respecting Others)**
- *Ashima is very passionate about rock climbing and is always up for the challenge. How does her confidence in her skill help her stay optimistic even when she fails? How do we know rock climbing gives her a sense of purpose? What is an ability you have that you feel confident about?* **(Understanding Myself)**

Writing Activity

(with Graphic Organizer) In the left circle of a Venn diagram, write ways solving a problem is different from climbing a boulder. In the right circle of the Venn diagram, write ways climbing a boulder is different from solving a problem. In the middle, write ways solving a problem and climbing a boulder are the same. **(Making Decisions)**

Picture This

(Language Arts) Have students work in pairs to take turns using visualization to teach and learn a simple physical task—for example, putting on and zipping up a jacket or peeling and eating an orange. Challenge them to use only images for their instructions, not naming the actual object or its features. Ask teams to talk about the process. How did describing a familiar task through images affect how they viewed it? Did finding another way of expressing an action allow them to see that action from a new perspective? **(Respecting Others)**

Name: _____

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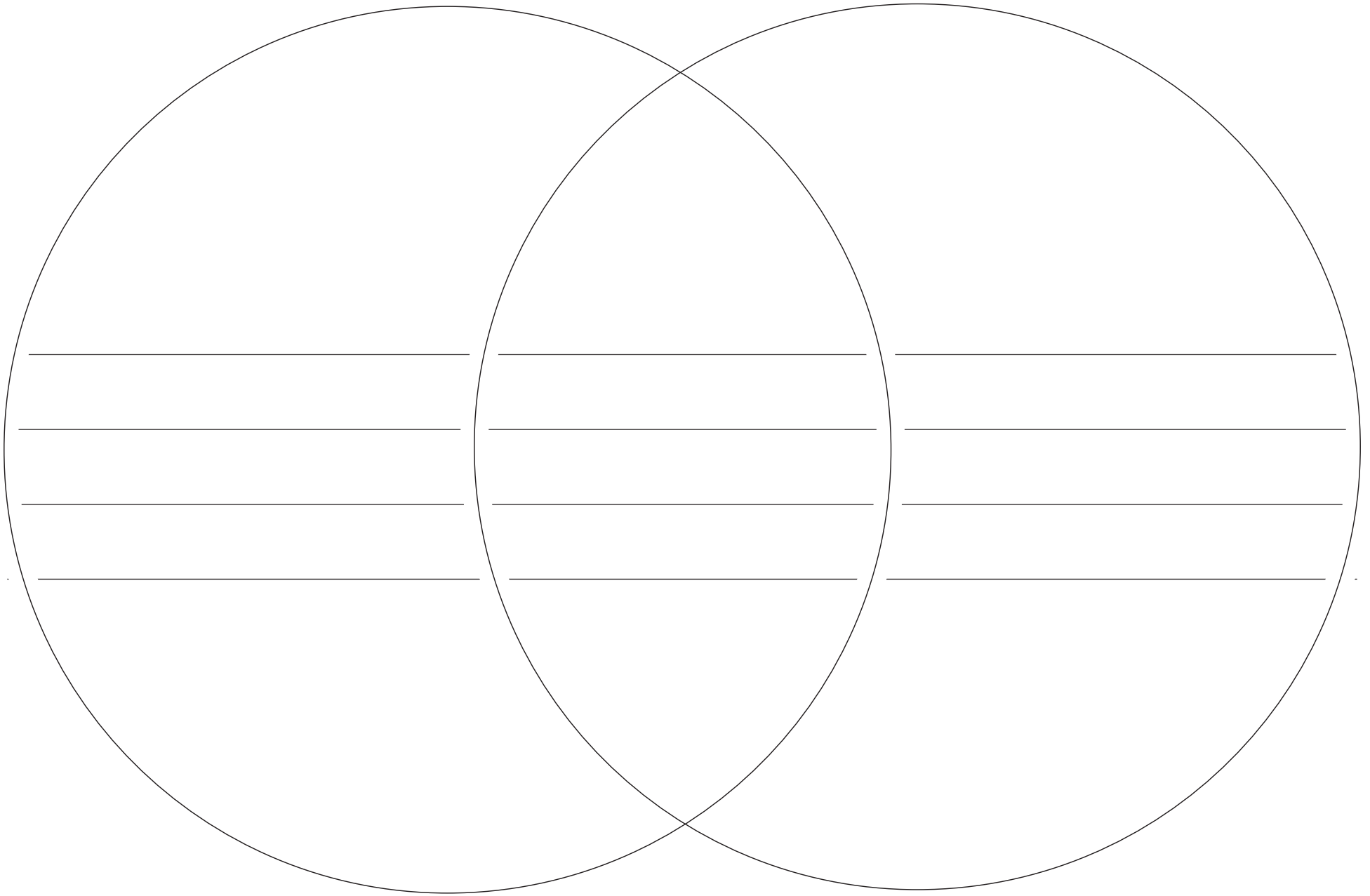

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