

Grades: 4-5

Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum,
“I am Catherine the Great / I am Tomioka Tessai”

Inspired by the best-selling kids book series, Ordinary People Change the World, by New York Times bestselling author Brad Meltzer and illustrator Christopher Eliopoulos, XAVIER RIDDLE AND THE SECRET MUSEUM follows the adventures of Xavier, Yadina and Brad as they tackle everyday problems by doing something extraordinary: traveling back in time to learn from real-life inspirational figures like Marie Curie, Harriet Tubman and Jackie Robinson when they were kids. Each adventure will help young viewers make the connection between the skills that made these historical figures heroes and those same qualities within themselves, helping them discover that they, too, can change the world.

I am Catherine the Great Brad shows up ready for day camp with a pep in his step and a smile on his face, until he finds out that he's going without Xavier or Yadina. Uh oh. Brad can't possibly go without his best friends! Who will he play with? Xavier and Yadina are sure Brad will make new friends at camp, but Brad isn't so sure - he doesn't know how. To the Secret Museum! Our heroes go back in time to meet someone who made all kinds of friends: Catherine the Great. They find Catherine wandering outside her castle walls, simply so she can make some new friends to play with. Watching Catherine meet new kids, and ask them questions about themselves, shows Brad that getting to know people is a great way to make friends. I am Tomioka Tessai Yadina isn't sure if she should take her old family quilt in for show and tell; she loves it and all, but it's old and has a lot of holes -what if she feels embarrassed to show people? To the Secret Museum! Our heroes go back in time to meet someone who was deeply connected to the stories of his ancestry: Tomioka Tessai. They find the young artist as he's trying to decide what he should paint to share with his art class. While thinking it over, Tomioka takes our trio on a tour of his family's garden, and proudly tells the story of the cherry tree he planted there with his father and grandfather, helping both Tomioka and Yadina realize they should each present their class with something that's special to their family, because sharing stories about their family makes them feel proud.

After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning

Question Box 1

- What clues can you point to in the program to explain the author's purpose? What is the intent or purpose of the writer?

- What is your analysis of the program? What evidence did you identify to support your analysis of the TV show?
- What is the central idea? How is the central idea developed?
- Cite evidence from the TV Show to support your determination of the central idea.
- Provide an objective summary of the program.
- What interaction influenced future events? Provide evidence.

Question Box 2

- What's the most important thing you learned from the TV show? Why do you think so?
- What do you want to learn more about this topic, and why?
- What in the program made you curious? Explain.
- What did you learn from the program?
- What resources will you need to learn more about this topic?
- What do you believe could have been done differently to help you learn this topic easier?
- Where did you encounter struggles understanding the topic, and how did you deal with it?

Box 3 (Tasks)

- Create a storyboard of the show
- Research more about Catherine the Great. What did you learn?
- Research more about Tomioka Tessai. What did you find?

Box 4 (Enrichment)

- How do you make friends? How would you like someone to make friends with you?
- Share a story about your family that makes you feel proud?
- Calligraphy is decorative handwriting or lettering. Watch this video to learn how to write letters <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hO-rTqTYm4A>

Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)

- How is the modern-day government in Russia different than during the reign of Catherine the Great?