



Winnifred Eaton Reading Guide Assignment

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Introduction:

This assignment comes from an undergraduate course focused on transpacific literary and cultural exchanges in American literature and film. Students completed this assignment after reading Eaton's novel *A Japanese Nightingale* (1901). Students were assigned different eras (approximately 5-year periods) in Eaton's career. The assignment would work well for introductory-level students but can be expanded for upper-level courses as well.

This assignment can be used as a completion grade or to foster a larger, in-class discussion. It introduces students to the [Winnifred Eaton Archive](#) without being too overwhelming. Instructors can scale the assignment up by adding more reading material or additional questions. They could also scale the assignment up by using this guide as a scaffolding activity to later facilitate students writing a paper or doing a presentation on the materials they find.

Key words: Winnifred Eaton, reading guide, online archives, small group work, orientalism

Activities/Handouts/Discussion Questions:

Learning Outcomes:

- Learn to navigate and use the basic search function of an online archive
- Expand your understanding of Winnifred Eaton's biography, work, and the historical context of the time in which she lived
- Begin developing ideas related to archival materials that may develop into future paper or presentation topics in the course
- Work collaboratively with other students to develop ideas based on archival finds

Task: To complete this reading guide, you will need to visit the [Winnifred Eaton Archive](#). Be sure to read the "[About the WEA](#)" page and the "[Biographical Timeline](#)." Then, search the portion of the archive labeled "[Playing Japanese](#)," which compiles Winnifred Eaton's Japanese material written under the name "Onoto Watanna." Based on your group assignment for this guide (instructor will provide a date range for each group to explore), read 1 or 2 items (at least a few pages of material) that interest you. Take notes on what you read and answer the questions in Appendix A.

NOTE: Instructors will need to put students into small groups and assign each group a portion of the archive to explore ahead of time.

Purpose: Exploring the Winnifred Eaton Archive will help you gain a better understanding of Winnifred Eaton's life, her works, and the time in which she lived. In addition to helping you gain contextual knowledge, this activity will help guide you through using an online archive so you can start searching for future potential research topics on this subject.

Criteria/Grading: Students should include in-depth notes and responses on their reading guide (see Appendix A). This will be graded on a completion, P/F basis, and/or can be used to simply buttress a larger, in-class discussion after the assignment's completion.

Contextual Materials/Resources/Further Reading:

- Onoto Watanna (Winnifred Eaton), *A Japanese Nightingale*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1901. URL: <https://winnifredeatonarchive.org/JapaneseNightingale6.html>
- Winnifred Eaton Archive (selections from):

- About the WEA: <https://www.winnifreatonarchive.org/about.html>
- Biographical Timeline: <https://www.winnifreatonarchive.org/timeline.html>
- Playing Japanese: <https://www.winnifreatonarchive.org/Japan.html>

