

***The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan** (Published by Vintage/Random House)

Approved for use in Honors Communication Arts II

Summary

The Joy Luck Club consists of sixteen interlocking stories about the lives of four Chinese immigrant women and their four American-born daughters. In 1949, the four recent immigrants to San Francisco meet at the First Chinese Baptist Church to eat dim sum, play mah jong, and talk. They call their group the Joy Luck Club. The stories told in the novel revolve around the Joy Luck Club women and their daughters.

Connection to the Curriculum

The Joy Luck Club offers a female, minority viewpoint of many universal themes and struggles to which the students can relate. The themes include the difficulty of assimilation of immigrants, intergenerational conflicts and misunderstandings, and the struggles of immigrant children to separate themselves from the culture that sets them apart from their peers/society. Moreover, the novel investigates the parent-child relationship and how it endures changes and struggles – personal, familial, social, and cultural.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.3.2- The student engages in connotative vocabulary practice.

1.4.10- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student identifies and describes different types of characters.

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and its influence on characters and events in the story.

2.1.3- The student analyzes and evaluates plot elements.

2.1.5- The student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates the use of literary devices in a text.

2.2.6- The student recognizes ways that literature from different cultures presents similar themes differently across various texts/genres.

Writing:

3.2.2- The student generates ideas through the writing process.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The novel traces the stories of four women and their daughters. The frank portrayal of their lives include some brief sexual references told in mostly detached tones of recollection. In addition, one of the mothers is forced to deal with the abandonment of her children in her homeland. These occurrences are limited but add to the reality of the women's stories. The conflicts created from the generational and cultural gaps between the mothers and daughters (with the daughters born and raised in America) provide rich discussion topics.

AP Connections

This book is taught at the Honors CA II level to expose students to various viewpoints and cultures, to develop the higher level reading skills required of the interlocking story structure, and to investigate the role that point of view plays in the telling of stories.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:
To be completed during future curriculum development activities