

Being a Stranger

ACTIVITY
1.19

ACTIVITY 1.19

PLAN

Materials: DVD: *Edward Scissorhands* by Tim Burton or another film of your choice
Suggested Pacing: 1 50-minute class period plus homework

TEACH

1 Read the Preview and the Setting a Purpose for Reading sections with your students. Help them understand what to annotate by modeling with an example from the beginning of the text. Explain that they will explore the “stranger in the village” theme after reading the text the first time.

2 FIRST READ: Based on the complexity of the passage and your knowledge of your students, you may choose to conduct the first reading in a variety of ways:

- independent reading
- paired reading
- small group reading
- choral reading
- read aloud

 **Text Complexity**

Overall: Accessible

Lexile: 590L

Qualitative: Moderate Difficulty

Task: Moderate (Analyze)

Learning Targets

- Analyze the thematic concept of “being a stranger in the village” in text and film.
- Write and present a reflective essay that explores a personal experience.

Preview

In this activity, you will explore the thematic concept of “being a stranger in the village” by closely reading and analyzing an excerpt from a novel and viewing a film clip. Then you will apply this theme in your own writing and presenting.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- As you read the novel excerpt, underline words, phrases, or sentences that reveal the narrator’s ideas about Chinese and American culture.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in 1952 in Oakland, California, Amy Tan is the author of several critically acclaimed novels, including *The Kitchen God’s Wife* and *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, as well as short stories and children’s books. Her first novel, *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), was an international bestseller that became an award-winning film. Tan’s fiction often deals with tensions between Chinese immigrants and their Americanized children. Praised for her lucid images and gripping storylines, she believes her first career as a business writer helped her develop her simple yet forceful style.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Think-Pair-Share, Graphic Organizer, Brainstorming

My Notes

Novel

Lindo Jong: DOUBLE FACE from *The Joy Luck Club*

by Amy Tan

- 1 My daughter wanted to go to China for her second honeymoon, but now she is afraid.
- 2 “What if I blend in so well they think I’m one of them?” Waverly asked me. “What if they don’t let me come back to the United States?”
- 3 “When you go to China,” I told her, “you don’t even need to open your mouth. They already know you are an outsider.”
- 4 “What are you talking about?” she asked. My daughter likes to speak back. She likes to question what I say.
- 5 “Aii-ya,” I said. “Even if you put on their clothes, even if you take off your makeup and hide your fancy jewelry, they know. They know just watching the way you walk, the way you carry your face. They know you do not belong.”

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Focus Standards:

W.11–12.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 11–12.)

SL.11–12.4a: Plan and deliver a reflective narrative that: explores the significance of a personal experience, event, or concern; uses sensory language to convey a vivid picture; includes appropriate narrative techniques (e.g. dialogue, pacing, description); and draws comparisons between the specific incident and broader themes. (11th or 12th grade) CA

Additional Standards Addressed:

RL.11–12.1; RL.11–12.3; RL.11–12.10; W.11–12.3b; W.11–12.10; L.11–12.5b

3 As students are reading, monitor their progress. Be sure they are engaged with the text and annotating details that reflect the narrator’s ideas about Chinese and American culture. Evaluate whether the selected reading mode is effective.

4 Based on the observations you made during the first reading, you may want to adjust the reading mode. For example, you may decide for the second reading to read aloud certain passages, or you may group students differently.

5 SECOND READ: During the second reading, students will be returning to the text to answer the text-dependent comprehension questions. You may choose to have students reread and work on the questions in a variety of ways:

- independently
- in pairs
- in small groups
- together as a class

6 Have students answer the text-dependent questions. If they have difficulty, scaffold the questions by rephrasing them or breaking them down into smaller parts. See the Scaffolding the Text-Dependent Questions box for suggestions.

7 Direct students’ attention to the Grammar & Usage feature and have them review the information on punctuation. Have them make note of Tan’s use of dialogue to enhance the presentation of ideas, theme, and conflict between the two characters. Lead students in a discussion to consider the dialogue’s function, use, and effect on the reader. Ask them to provide examples of quotations that effectively convey a character’s point of view and sense of belonging to one culture or another.

Being a Stranger

ACTIVITY 1.19
continued

GRAMMAR & USAGE Punctuating Dialogue

Writers use **dialogue**—the exact words of the characters—to reveal and develop character, advance the plot, and add life to writing. Direct dialogue is enclosed in quotation marks and set off from the rest of a sentence with a comma, a question mark, or an exclamation point. Commas and periods are always placed inside the quotation marks:

“Finish your coffee,” I told her yesterday. “Don’t throw your blessings away.”

Question marks and exclamation points from the dialogue are placed inside the quotation marks:

“What if I blend in so well they think I’m one of them?” Waverly asked me.

As you read, notice the way punctuation is used to set off dialogue from the surrounding text. Notice when dialogue is used purposefully to develop the conflict between characters and illuminate the theme.

My Notes

6 My daughter did not look pleased when I told her this, that she didn’t look Chinese. She had a sour American look on her face. Oh, maybe ten years ago, she would have clapped her hands—hurray!—as if this were good news. But now she wants to be Chinese, it is so fashionable. And I know it is too late. All those years I tried to teach her! She followed my Chinese ways only until she learned how to walk out the door by herself and go to school. So now the only Chinese words she can say are *shsh*, *houche*, *chr fan*, and *gwan deng shweijyau*. How can she talk to people in China with these words? Pee-pee, choo-choo train, eat, close light sleep.

7 How can she think she can blend in? Only her skin and her hair are Chinese. Inside—she is all American-made.

8 It’s my fault she is this way. I wanted my children to have the best combination: American circumstances and Chinese character. How could I know these two things do not mix?

9 I taught her how American circumstances work. If you are born poor here, it’s no lasting shame. You are first in line for a scholarship. If the roof crashes on your head, no need to cry over this bad luck. You can sue anybody, make the landlord fix it. You do not have to sit like a Buddha under a tree letting pigeons drop their dirty business on your head. You can buy an umbrella. Or go inside a Catholic church. In America, nobody says you have to keep the circumstances somebody else gives you.

10 She learned these things, but I couldn’t teach her about Chinese character. How to obey parents and listen to your mother’s mind. How not to show your own thoughts, to put your feelings behind your face so you can take advantage of hidden opportunities. Why easy things are not worth pursuing. How to know your own worth and polish it, never flashing it around like a cheap ring. Why Chinese thinking is best.

11 No, this kind of thinking didn’t stick to her: She was too busy chewing gum, blowing bubbles bigger than her cheeks. Only that kind of thinking stuck.

12 “Finish your coffee,” I told her yesterday. “Don’t throw your blessings away.”

13 “Don’t be so old-fashioned, Ma,” she told me, finishing her coffee down the sink. “I’m my own person.”

14 And I think, How can she be her own person? When did I give her up?

Second Read

- Reread the novel excerpt to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. Key Ideas and Details: Describe the relationship between the narrator and her daughter. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

The relationship between the narrator and her daughter is full of friction. She hints that her daughter is disrespectful because she “likes to speak back” and question what her mother says. The narrator seems disapproving of and disappointed in her daughter. She notes the “sour American look” on her daughter’s face and mocks her for wanting to be Chinese now that “it is so fashionable.” RL.11–12.1

2. Craft and Structure: What is the narrator’s attitude toward America?

The narrator admires “American circumstances.” She likes that there is no shame in being born poor in the U.S. No one in America is expected to be kept down by bad luck, religion, or other circumstances you were born with. RL.11–12.6

SCAFFOLDING THE TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

1. Key Ideas and Details (RL.11–12.1) Describe the relationship between the narrator and her daughter. Support your answer with evidence from the text. Look not only at the characters’ direct speech, but also the narrator’s reflections. What do they reveal about her point of view? What do we know about the daughter’s point of view?

2. Craft and Structure (RL.11–12.6) What is the narrator’s attitude toward America? How does the narrator contrast American life with

life in China? What are some of the bases of comparison? What does this tell you about what the narrator values?

3. Key Ideas and Details (RL.11–12.1) What did the narrator try to teach her daughter about “Chinese character”? Why didn’t this kind of thinking “stick” to her daughter? What reason does the narrator give for these lessons not sticking? What does she really mean by those words?

ACTIVITY 1.19 continued

12 Have students respond to the Check Your Understanding question in a **quickwrite**.

13 Next ask students to read the directions for the writing prompt and **draft** an essay in which they relate a time they were excluded or treated like a stranger. Emphasize that they may choose to use this draft as a basis for the Embedded Assessment, so they may want to reread the Embedded Assessment assignment and Scoring Guide.

14 After students have drafted their essays, have them present theirs to a partner and solicit feedback. Encourage students to offer suggestions for revision based on the Presenting Scoring Guide found in the Resources section of the student edition. Provide time for students to consider the suggestions from their peers and revise accordingly.

ASSESS

Responses to the Check Your Understanding should indicate that students have a working understanding of the concept of “stranger in the village.” This will help them formulate a response to the writing prompt in this activity, as well as support their comprehension of James Baldwin’s essay in the next activity. Evaluate students’ responses to the writing prompt and check that they have addressed each of the “be sure to” points.

ADAPT

If students need further help understanding the concept of “stranger in the village,” consider showing them additional examples from contemporary film or television programs with which they are familiar. To help students practice punctuating dialogue, consider creating a poster with the punctuation rules for dialogue to hang in the classroom. For students who need additional practice presenting their reflective essays, you might ask them to record their presentation on a smartphone or digital camera and share it with you for feedback.

Being a Stranger

ACTIVITY 1.19
continued

My Notes

Check Your Understanding

Based on the texts you have read so far and the film clip you viewed, what does it mean to be a stranger in the village?

Drafting the Embedded Assessment

Think about a time when you were excluded or treated like a stranger. What were your feelings at the time? How did you respond? In what ways did that event shape or change you as an individual? In a draft essay, examine the experience of being treated like a stranger, explain how you responded or felt at the time, and reflect on the ways in which that event has shaped your life. Be sure to:

- Include a clear event, response, and reflection conveyed through a smooth, but not necessarily chronological, progression.
- Incorporate dialogue with correct punctuation.
- Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another coherently.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the experience of being treated like a stranger.

Presenting Your Reflective Essay

After drafting your reflective essay, present it out loud to a partner. Use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation. Then solicit feedback from your partner about your delivery and about the content of your essay. Does it address the prompt clearly and thoroughly? Is dialogue used appropriately? Does the story unfold in a clear and coherent sequence? Revise your draft and practice your delivery again, incorporating your partner’s feedback.

*pick up
few*