Literary Reading – Symbolism/Coming of Age

High School, 11\textsuperscript{th} Grade

Spring 2013

Project READI Curriculum Module
Technical Report CM #4

Jessica Chambers, Teresa Sosa,
Allison Hall and
Project READI Literature Team

With acknowledgment to members of the Project READI Literature Team: Carol D. Lee, Susan R. Goldman, Sarah Levine, MariAnne George, Rick Coppola, Courtney Milligan, and Angela Fortune.

Please send us comments, questions, etc.: info.projectreadi@gmail.com

Project READI was supported by the Reading for Understanding (RFU) initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences, U. S. Department of Education through Grant R305F100007 to the University of Illinois at Chicago from July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2016. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U. S. Department of Education.

Project READI operated as a multi-institution collaboration among the Learning Sciences Research Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago; Northern Illinois University; Northwestern University; WestEd’s Strategic Literacy Initiative; and Inquirium, LLC. Project READI developed and researched interventions in collaboration with classroom teachers that were designed to improve reading comprehension through argumentation from multiple sources in literature, history, and the sciences appropriate for adolescent learners. Curriculum materials such as those in this module were developed based on enacted instruction and are intended as case examples of the READI approach to deep and meaningful disciplinary literacy and learning.

©2016 Project READI
**Objective of Module: Relationship of symbolism to theme in literary texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literal Understanding</th>
<th>Symbolism</th>
<th>Thematic Inferences</th>
<th>Argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Gateways for relevant background knowledge | • CDS  
  • How do you know it is a symbol?  
  • How do you know what the symbol means?  
  • Interpreting symbolism support sheet  
  • Rules of Notice (Mr. BICEPS) | • Gateway for building criteria for coming of age theme  
  • CDS  
  • How do you know the larger meaning of the text?  
  • Close reading questions | • Gateway for understanding argument structure (claims, evidence warrants)  
  • Sentence stems  
  • Templates  
  • Academic language examples |

*This is the overarching module objective. All designed modules are guided by the six interrelated learning objective below.*

**Literature Learning Objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Engage in close reading of literary texts to construct interpretations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Synthesize within and across literary texts to construct generalizations about theme, characterization, structure, and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Construct claim-evidence relations based on evidence from texts, reader’s experiences, other texts, and literary constructs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Establish criteria for judging interpretations of theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Cultural Data Sets**
Connotations PPT and Flag symbol worksheet to introduce strategies for interpreting symbolism
Lyrics to "Titanium" to make process of interpreting symbolism in context explicit
• How do you know something is a symbol?
  Using rules of notice and criteria for a symbol
• Writing template to write argument paragraph

**Gateway Activity**
Coming of age scenarios to develop list of criteria for theme
• Generated criteria for argument of judgment through small group and whole class discussion
• Wrote basic argument of judgment

**Literary Texts: "Linoleum Roses" and "The Rose That Grew From Concrete"**
Main texts to practice literal understanding, symbolic interpretation, thematic inferences, and building arguments
• Identified and interpreted symbols in short texts
• Compared and contrasted use of symbols in two literary texts

**Literary Text: "Marigolds," short story**
Main text to practice literal understanding, symbolic interpretation, thematic inferences, and building arguments
• Annotated and answered close reading questions
• Constructed argument essay relating the symbol to the theme of coming of age

**Gateway Activity**
"Tiger Mom" video to explore concept of filial respect
• Discussed reactions to extreme style of parenting in Tiger Mom video

**Anchor text: "Two Kinds," chapter of Joy Luck Club**
• Main text to practice literal understanding, symbolic interpretation, thematic inferences, and building arguments
• Annotated and answered close reading questions
• Constructed argument essay relating the symbol to the theme of coming of age
I. Text Selection
Based on the school’s demographic, text selection emphasizes issues related to coming of age. These literary texts focus on a set of experiences that students may be able to connect to their own life experiences.

*Text sequence*
The sequence of texts begins from a younger coming of age perspective (closer to the age of the student population) and with experiences that may be more closely related to students’ experiences. The last text reflect an older coming of age perspective and cultural norms that may not be related to student experiences.

Poem “The Rose the Grew From Concrete”—Tupac Shakur, 1999.

II. Lessons

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR MODULE**

**THEMATIC QUESTIONS:**
- What experiences do you need to come of age?
- When you grow up, what parts of yourself do you have to leave behind?
- Have you “come of age”?
- How do authors’ view the worlds of immaturity and maturity? How do their views challenge yours?
- What role does family play in coming of age?
- How is coming of age impacted by racism and poverty? What are authors’ worldviews about that? How do they align with yours?

**QUESTIONS ABOUT RHETORICAL TOOLS IN LITERATURE:**
- What is a symbol, and what’s not? How do you know?
• What does symbolism do?
• How do you construct symbolic value?
• How does language work to create effects on a reader?
• How do authors use symbolism to represent childhood, maturity, and the act of “coming of age”?

QUESTIONS ABOUT STRUCTURAL GENERALIZATION:
• How does the author use language to convey what you think the symbol communicates?
  o Thick description, understatement, exaggeration, parallelism, contrasts
• How the author organizes details to convey what you think the symbol communicates?
  o Repetition, contrasting details, parallel details
DAY 1 -7 Introduction to Symbolism

Overview
- Introducing strategies for interpreting symbolic meanings through Cultural data sets.

Objectives
- Students will activate prior knowledge of strategies around detection and interpretation of symbolism using cultural data sets

Assessment
- Discuss role of symbolism in our everyday lives—in the classroom, what we wear, etc.
- Students’ list about strategies that help indicate something is symbolic
- Introduce academic language and templates

Guiding Questions
- What are symbols and how do they work?
- What helped you identify something as symbolic?
- Does the object/event/idea seem positive or negative or both? Why?” Move students toward qualities and characteristics of object.
- On what basis do you reject a literal interpretation?

Texts/Materials
- Powerpoint on Connotations
- Flag symbol detail support worksheet
- Song lyrics
- MR. BICEPS
- Language for Analyzing Author’s Technique
- Symbol Activity for getting at Lang-worksheet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT WE DESIGNED</th>
<th>Student Activities</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
<th>INTENDED OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connect strategies Ss use in real life to strategies used in texts</td>
<td>Awareness of unit</td>
<td>Intended to activate prior knowledge and provide a launching point for exploration of interpreting symbols.</td>
<td>Students will see that one foci of the unit getting at the broader messages of texts and how symbols can help us to determine those messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today we are starting a unit on symbolism and coming of age. We interpret symbols all the time. Can anyone give me an example of a symbol in our every day life? If Ss are unsure, cultural symbols like wedding bands can be provided.</td>
<td>Ss share examples of every day symbols.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are going to begin thinking about how we interpret symbols in texts. T: goes over the Power point, explaining the power of words and images and due to their connotations. T: passes out Flag Symbol worksheet and has Ss look at the images and decide whether positive or negative and why before starting discussion.</td>
<td>Ss look over the worksheet silently. Then they discuss as a whole class.</td>
<td>This is intended to have students connect everyday images/ texts to how they are intended to make one feel or think about.</td>
<td>Students will see the messages of texts in their everyday world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re going to be talking about different experiences of coming of age and determining what in texts may be symbolic for the next few weeks. We are going to be looking at how authors create images that may require more than a literal interpretation. We’re going to be figuring out how authors let us know that’s the case, and how reading these kinds of texts can add to our understanding of human nature (or if they can at all).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: passes out Language for Analyzing</td>
<td>Ss: construct their</td>
<td>This helps students to begin</td>
<td>Students will get practice in using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s Technique handout and after discussion of associations and connotations with each image, has students in groups focus on #3 in handout, where students use some of the language in the handout to discuss the effects of the image</td>
<td>sentences and share with whole class</td>
<td>thinking about academic language and writing in general</td>
<td>academic language and making claims related to connotations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T passes out song lyrics to “Titanium.” What I want you to do is read the lyrics silently. Once you are done, get into groups of 3 and follow the directions in the handout “Symbol Activity for getting at lang”—fill out one per group and discuss.</td>
<td>TLD: Here Ss should be able to explain how this song is not literally about titanium. On what basis do they reject a literal interpretation? They should also begin to discuss strategies that help to determine when something is symbolic.</td>
<td>This is a cultural data set intended for them to reveal the processes they are adept at using in determining when something in the text is symbolic.</td>
<td>Students will begin to come up with evidence as to why they are claiming that some aspects of the lyrics are symbolic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLD – 1. How did you figure out the symbols? In discussing the activity, the emphasis is on how students take into consideration what they know about relationships and about titanium (prior knowledge) to know what the song is about. The emphasis is also on the hints to symbols. Repeated words, titles, exaggeration, parallelism, contrasts, and affect, positive or negative, good or bad, etc. Structuring argument about symbolism using the song lyrics: How would you explain to someone who didn’t understand that titanium is a symbol?</td>
<td>Ss talk through their support handouts. Emphasis in on the template at the end of the worksheet, emphasizing how one way to support our claims is through how language is used.</td>
<td>This helps Ss to think about the structure of texts and how they convey meaning.</td>
<td>Students will practice focusing on language of text as evidence for symbolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TLD – students participate in identifying parts of argument</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(this is more practice beyond the template in the support handout)

| the claim (titanium is a symbol) and that all the statements they made about how they know it’s not a literal interpretation can serve as evidence. They should also remember that the third important part of an argument is the reasoning. | reflects the aforementioned. This activity will also assist students in developing warrants.) |
DAY 8 – 10 Introduction to Coming of Age Criteria

Overview
• Using short scenarios to detect criteria for coming of age in texts
• Using short scenarios for making an argument of judgment about the most important aspects that determine someone has come of age

Objectives
• Adding to list of criteria for coming of age in texts
• Practice in detecting criteria in texts
• Writing basic argument of judgment

Assessment
• Thematic statements
• Thesis and one body paragraph of argument based on criteria

Guiding Questions
• What experiences do you need to come of age?
• What role does family play in coming of age?
• Which are the most important aspects that show someone has come of age?

Texts/Materials
• Coming of age scenarios
• Public list of criteria for coming of age
• Thesis template guides
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT WE DESIGNED</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
<th>INTENDED OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>INTENDED OUTCOMES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to arguments of judgment through scenario activities as a tool that will engage students in learning defining strategies. Students decide the extent to which the behavior of the characters conforms to the requisite conditions of “coming of age.” T will introduce the activity by stating that students will be examining several situations in which they must determine whether someone has come of age or not. Here is it made explicit that in argument of judgment, we must determine criteria (how we measure or the rules we use) to make judgments. Continue with argument of judgment through scenarios. The handout includes four scenarios. First scenario is read aloud and TLD: Does this show coming of age or not? How do you know? What is our beginning list of criteria for coming of age?</td>
<td>Maybe students in pairs come up with ways they determine what makes a good scary movie or maybe a good teacher? Discussion of criteria and quick write up (argument) of claim that Ms. X is a good teacher. Students discuss and read first scenario as whole class then in groups of three they read the next three, deciding whether the actions of the characters show a coming of age and why or why not. Ss add to their list by providing criteria for coming of age. Students make judgments about people’s actions. This gateway activity should reveal the normative thought processes of evaluating scenarios.</td>
<td>Students will learn to make criteria for judgments explicit Students will make judgments based on criteria all the time Students will make explicit the criteria they pick out when judging actions and. Students should come away with the feeling that this process is something that occurs daily in their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole class discussion of answers to the questions and criteria for judging coming of age. Here the discussion focuses on using all of the information from the scenario and on using strong warrants convincing others of our claim.</td>
<td>Students share answers to the questions and the criteria used for determining a coming of age. Add to public list of criteria.</td>
<td>Students are able to see the criteria and determine whether an action must meet all criteria if deemed as a coming of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct students to write out a thesis and one body paragraph of argument on their chosen scenario and their list of criteria. Their aim is to choose a scenario that they believe has the strongest criteria for coming of age. Discuss basic writing format: first paragraph usually does what? Body paragraphs do what? (provide handout on thematic statements)</td>
<td>Students write an argument based on one scenario. Individual writing, using their criteria.</td>
<td>The use of thematic statements is also practice in thinking more globally about author’s generalizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T instructs students on how to peer review. They must first focus on the overall essay and whether or not it communicated a unified message about the action being courageous. The peer review focuses on the communication of meaning throughout the essay, rather than on grammar and form.</td>
<td>Students peer review each other’s work.</td>
<td>Students practice sharing and improving their work with their peers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DAY 11-14: “Linoleum Roses” & “The Rose That Grew From Concrete”

Overview
● The lesson will focus on practice of the strategies used to determine coming of age and symbolism
● This lesson will focus on argument writing and synthesis

Objectives
● Students will practice close reading skills
● Students will practice strategies for identifying symbols
● Students will practice constructing arguments about literature

Assessment
● Text annotations
● Partner and Whole Group Discussions
● Graphic Organizer
● Argument Writing

Guiding Questions
● What strategies do you use for identifying and interpreting symbols?
● On what basis do you determine that an object, event, image, etc. stands for more than the literal?
● How can we use our coming of age criteria to evaluate a literary text?

Text/Materials
● “Linoleum Roses”
● Graphic Organizer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT WE DESIGNED</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
<th>INTENDED OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct students that we will be reading and analyzing the second literary text, a vignette by Cisneros, of the unit and will be using the same strategies we have been working on to understand the story and determine symbols and coming of age criteria.</td>
<td>Awareness of purpose</td>
<td>Students will be aware of purpose for learning/engaging in work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct students to read “Linoleum Roses” silently. Ss then reread the poem and annotate text, focusing on aspects of the character: challenges and conflicts, what motivates the character, unusual things you notice about the character.</td>
<td>Ss work individually making sense of the text and narrator</td>
<td>Practice in annotating short texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair/Share: Instruct students to pair with a partner and discuss the text annotations. Share out discussions with whole group.</td>
<td>Ss work with a partner and the share with the class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLD: Now we’ll focus on possible symbols. What strategies did you use in identifying these symbols? How do we know the narrator isn’t just talking about flowers? Do these symbols seem to be positive or negative? How do these symbols help us to think about the character and her larger world?</td>
<td>Ss will identify possible symbols in whole class discussion. Ss will analyze what these symbols tell us about the character and her world.</td>
<td>Ss will continue to think about symbols and interpreting these symbols using reasoning and rules of notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide template that provides space for claim, evidence, and reasoning. This graphic organizer will require students to determine whether a character has come of age or not, citing specific evidence and reasoning for</td>
<td>Ss: Determine whether or not character has come of age, providing claims, evidence, and warrants.</td>
<td>Ss will identify claim, evidence, and reasoning and evaluate each before beginning to compose a short essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will continue to use criteria for coming of age to judge a literary text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLD: Has this character come of age? What coming of age criteria did you use to determine your response? What evidence from the text helped you to think about the character’s coming of age?</td>
<td>Ss practice defending interpretation of story, citing evidence and warrants</td>
<td>Ss will continue to think about coming of age criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct students to write introduction paragraph and one body paragraph using graphic organizer.</td>
<td>Ss will practice writing arguments of judgment based on “Linoleum Flowers”</td>
<td>Students will continue to practice writing arguments of judgment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DAY 15-22: “Marigolds”

Overview
• The lesson will focus on interpretation of symbols, coming of age, and argument writing

Objectives
• Students will practice close reading skills
• Students will practice paying attention to multiple things in text: plot and setting, characterization, symbols, coming of age criteria
• Students will practice constructing arguments about literature

Assessment
• Section questions
• Partner and Whole Group Discussions
• Graphic Organizers
• Argument Writing

Guiding Questions
• What are the multiple things that we as readers need to pay attention to in a text?
• How is “Marigolds” a coming of age story?

Text/Materials
• “Marigolds”
• Graphic Organizers: Symbolism Chart, Plot and Setting, Character Map
• Section questions based on Hillocks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT WE DESIGNED</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
<th>INTENDED OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>TEXT:</strong> This text is the first short story that requires more background knowledge of the world including racism and historical period. It also offers, arguably, the most complex themes we’ve approached so far. <strong>ACTIVITIES:</strong> Students should be ready to work through steps of analysis and argument more or less on their own here. The character map, following plot and section questions, along with symbolism graph should provide students with practice in attending to multiple aspects of the story that they can use to build their argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway Activity related to facing racism and Jim Crow</td>
<td>Students will be more independent about moving through a text to identify criteria, construct argument, and construct thematic statement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving to independent use of criteria by which to determine coming of age criteria and linking symbolism to what it tells us about the character and her world. Instruct students that they will be reading “Marigolds” and for the most part independently. Go over how the story has questions after particular sections; these are questions that they will be answering and that guide them to support worksheets they will fill in. The questions and handouts will help them understand the story and get a better sense of the narrator and techniques for indentifying symbols Also point out that the questions and worksheets will help students construct essays in which they argue the interpretation of a symbol and how this story is a coming of age story.</td>
<td>Students read silently. When done, they share their annotations and try to get a sense for the mood of the story</td>
<td>Silent reading and sharing of annotations useful for students to articulate strategies for understanding literal meanings. Students will get a little more practice in being metacognitive about reading comprehension strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct students to read first section and annotate parts that provide some ideas about the narrator’s emotions and feelings. Here the focus is on mood, how is the story written that provides this type of mood or tone?</td>
<td>Pair/share annotations and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct students to read the next section and jot down quick answers to the two questions. TLD: discuss Ss responses, focusing on how the setting influences the characters behavior and attitudes and examples from the story.</td>
<td>Read, respond to questions, and discuss</td>
<td>Work in pairs answering questions. Students will use begin gathering information about the character, plot/setting, and paying attention to heuristics for noticing symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct Ss to read the third section silently and to re-read before answering the questions and filling in the organizers. Have Ss pair/share their ideas about the following two questions from the section: In this section there is a contrast between the description of the marigolds and Ms. Lottie and her house. Why do you think the author makes such contrasts? What does the following quote from this section mean? “For some perverse reason, Ss should be getting a better sense of the narrator, the plot and paying attention to contrasts as heuristic for symbols. Enhancing skills Pair/share and then TLD</td>
<td>This section has students follow plot and characters but also helps them to think about the use of language in text: particularly the use of contrasts. It also helps them to get at author’s generalizations through the last question in this section.</td>
<td>The organizers and questions should provide students with practice in attending to multiple aspects of the story that they can use to build their argument.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
we children hated those marigolds. They interfered with the perfect ugliness of the place; they were too beautiful; they said too much that we could not understand; they did not make sense.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruct Ss to read the next section and fill in the organizer. Briefly discuss what happened in this section</th>
<th>Enhance skills Ss should be able to describe and add what happened in this section to their plot chart</th>
<th>This section is short but is important in knowing what happened that led the narrator to destroying the marigolds.</th>
<th>Ss will understand that this event is what drives the narrator to destroy the flowers but is also a realization of how life works—a coming of age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruct students to read final section and answer the questions and fill in organizers. Ss Pair/share Guide students in constructing thematic inference: – ask, how would you introduce a statement about your interpretation of the theme of this text? Ss can use the handout: “How do experts talk about theme”</td>
<td>Enhancing skills Practice writing thematic statements. Pairs of students write down one other way to introduce author’s worldview (sentence stems).</td>
<td>Begin connecting texts with author’s worldview</td>
<td>Students will learn how to use assessments of text’s sympathies to construct themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct students to write a rough draft answering one of the following questions. What does the marigolds symbolize in the story? What evidence from the story and what you know about the Depression era and racial tensions of the time support your claims? (AUTHOR’S GENERALIZATION) Coming of age is a theme in which “the protagonist is initiated into adulthood through knowledge, experience, or both, often by a process of disillusionment. Understanding comes after the dropping of preconceptions, a destruction of a false sense of security, or in some way the loss of</td>
<td>Ss will use their organizers and answers to section questions in building their argument.</td>
<td>Practice in writing arguments</td>
<td>Students will learn how to gather information from questions and organizers to build an argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocence.” How is “Marigolds” a coming of age story? (STRUCTURAL GENERALIZATION)</td>
<td>Exercises in revision, based on the weaknesses or problem areas in students’ drafts.</td>
<td>Practice responding to counter arguments by writing a paragraph using the template for responding to counter arguments</td>
<td>Practice revising work. Students will practice writing counterarguments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DAY 23-35: “Two Kinds”

Overview
● The lesson will focus on interpretation of symbols, coming of age, and argument writing (synthesis)

Objectives
● Students will practice close reading skills
● Students will practice paying attention to multiple things in text: plot and setting, characterization, symbols, coming of age criteria
● Students will practice constructing arguments about literature

Assessment
● Section questions
● Partner and Whole Group Discussions
● Graphic Organizers
● Argument Writing

Guiding Questions
● How is “Two Kinds” a coming of age story?
● How does the symbols in “Marigolds” and in “Two Kinds” compare in how they help us understand the characters and the world they live in?

Text/Materials
● “Two Kinds”
● “Marigolds”
● Graphic Organizers: Symbolism Chart, Plot and Setting, Character Map
● Section questions based on Hillocks’ Taxonomy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT WE DESIGNED</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
<th>INTENDED OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gateway activities as intended to provide the information necessary to understand Asian cultural norms highlighted in this story</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Gateway Activity introducing emphasis in filial respect and obedience**
- Introduce Power point with a few common proverbs and Asian proverbs regarding filial respect and obedience.
- An ABC Nightline report “A New Breed of Moms” about Chinese parenting.
- Discussion explores the meanings of Asian proverbs about filial respect and obedience and reactions to the extreme style of parenting in the video clip.

**Student Activities**
- Ss will discuss first the proverbs and then after the video, discuss the extreme style of parenting.
- Students discuss Asian cultural norms related to obedience and respect.

**Gateway activities**
- Provide the information necessary to understand Asian cultural norms highlighted in this story.

**Moving to independent use of criteria by which to determine coming of age theme and linking symbolism to what it tells us about the character and her world.**

**Instruct students**
- That they will be reading “two Kinds” and for the most part independently. Go over how the story has questions after particular sections; these are questions that they will be answering and that guide them to support worksheets they will fill in. The questions and handouts will help them understand the story and get a better sense of the narrator and techniques for indentifying symbols.

**Also point out**
- That the questions and worksheets will help students construct essays in which they compare how the symbols in “Marigolds” and in “Two Kinds” are used.

**TEXT:**
- This text is the second short story that requires background knowledge of the world including Asian cultural norms. It also offers, complex themes that are different that those in “Marigolds.”

**ACTIVITIES:**
- Students should be ready to work through steps of analysis and argument more or less on their own here.

**The character map, following plot and section questions, along with symbolism graph should provide students with practice in attending to multiple aspects of the story that they can use to build their argument.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT WE DESIGNED</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
<th>INTENDED OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intended Outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kinds” help us understand the characters and the world they live in.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Instruct students to read first section and annotate parts that provide some ideas about the narrator’s emotions and feelings. Here the focus is on mood, how is the story written that provides this type of mood or tone?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Students read silently. When done, they share their annotations and try to get a sense for the mood of the story.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pair/Share:</strong> Instruct students to pair with a partner and share out their annotations, focusing on understanding something about the character and overall sense of the mood of the story. With same partner, students then are instructed to answer the section questions and fill in related charts and maps. TLD: go through questions and organizers, focusing on heuristics, mood, and characterization.</td>
<td><strong>Pair/share annotations and understandings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Work in pairs answering questions. Students will use begin gathering information about the character, plot/setting, and paying attention to heuristics for noticing symbols.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruct students to read the next section and answer the section questions, including adding to the character map</strong></td>
<td><strong>Read, respond to questions, and discuss</strong></td>
<td><strong>With discussing unusual things that happen in the texts, students can get a sense that ruptures are also hints to understanding the message of</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TLD: discuss Ss responses, focusing on What in this section is surprising or unusual Here Ss can be guided to considering the narrator’s want to put an end to her</strong></td>
<td>****</td>
<td>****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT WE DESIGNED</td>
<td>RATIONALE</td>
<td>INTENDED OUTCOMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>RATIONALE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother’s pride as unusual. What can be emphasized is why the mother is making the narrator try to be a prodigy</td>
<td>the text</td>
<td>This section has students think about the character but also helps them to see that once we associate objects or things that belong with the character, these can serve as good indicators or symbols that tell us something about the character and her/his world, or larger propositions of texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct Ss to read the third section silently and to re-read before summarizing the section and filling in the character map. Have TLD about what Ss have filled in the character map and about the things that belong with the character.</td>
<td>Ss should be able to summarize this section. Here, students should be guided to thinking of other aspects to think about in order to fill in the character map. For example, Ss can be guided to populate things that belong with the character: piano, prodigy Enhancing skills</td>
<td>This section is short but is important in helping kids to think about the importance of thinking about conflict and its resolution based on what has happened before and after and how the criteria for coming of age helps us to infer a resolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct Ss to read the fourth section and discuss their answers to the question. They will need to then share with the class some of their ideas and evidence for how they think the tensions in this section will be resolved.</td>
<td>Pair discussions. Ss will share with the class some of their ideas and evidence for how they think the tensions in this section will be resolved. Here we can guide students to coming of age criteria as possible hints (i.e., if the narrator is growing up and maturing, she may realize that her actions are childish and make amends with her mom)</td>
<td>The organizers and questions should provide students with practice in attending to multiple aspects of the story that they can use to build their argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct students to read final section and answer the questions and fill in organizers. Ss Pair/share</td>
<td>Enhancing skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT WE DESIGNED</td>
<td>STUDENT ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>RATIONALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Activities</td>
<td>Guide students in constructing the chart to follow the symbol “piano” in the text.</td>
<td>Practice following a symbol in a longer piece; practice linking symbol to character and her world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Here Ss are guided into comparing stories at their symbolic level. Ss are encouraged to look at their support handouts and their answers to the questions from each story before making a list.</td>
<td>Practice in comparing symbolism in two stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises in revision, based on the weaknesses or problem areas in students’ drafts through peer editing</td>
<td>Practice revising work and peer editing</td>
<td>Practice in improving written work and in writing counterarguments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PPT:
Slide 1

Words have power
(only because we give them power)

C U K F

Blurg

Slide 2

Words have connotations
Tara Leigh Patrick → Carmen Electra
Slide 3

Words have connotations
Carlos Irwin Estevez → Charlie Sheen

___________________________________
___________________________________
___________________________________
___________________________________
___________________________________

Slide 4

Words have connotations
Eric Bishop → Jamie Foxx

___________________________________
___________________________________
___________________________________
___________________________________
___________________________________
How the experts talk about language

- The word connotes __________.
- The word suggests __________.
- The word creates a sense of __________.
- The image of _____ creates a mood of _____.
- The word conveys the idea of __________.

How is language used to talk about YOU?

Which words suggest similar worldviews?
(Try positive / negative / why)
- “Teaching to the test”
- “Accountability”
- “Standards”
- “Seat work”
- “Drilling”
- “Fostering the whole child”
- “Factory education”
How the experts talk about language

- The word connotes ________.
- The word suggests ________.
- The word creates a sense of ________.
- The image of _____ creates a mood of ____.
- The word conveys the idea of ________.
Slide 9

Authors use symbols to reveal character and worldviews

POSITIVE ♦ NEGATIVE ♦ WHY

We thought that the shape of 3 stripes in Adidas might symbolize overcoming challenges, suggesting that even great obstacles can be conquered and goals achieved.

The apple is a reference from the Bible story of Adam and Eve, where the apple connotes knowledge and temptation. We also wanted to create a pun with the words 'byte/bite,' suggesting accessibility to that knowledge through technology.

Slide 10

Who decides what a worldview is? Or what symbols mean?

Analyze the worldviews of this photo using POSITIVE ♦ NEGATIVE ♦ WHY

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________
Slide 11

How to write about worldview (theme)

Positive

This text celebrates a world in which ________
The author praises those who ________
This author creates sympathy for those who ________

Negative

This text condems a world in which ________
The author blames those who ________
This author refuses to create sympathy for those who would ________

Slide 12

Authors use symbols to reveal character and worldview

• The fairy godmother tapped her golden wand, and on Cinderella's feet appeared two slippers made of the finest glass. Her tiny feet sparkled as she turned them this way and that. "Now you will dance with a Prince," said the fairy godmother.

• At the end of the evening, when the clock struck 12, Cinderella ran so fast that she lost her glass slipper on the stairs of the palace. The prince picked it up.

• The prince fit the glass slipper to Cinderella's foot. It fit perfectly. "You are my bride," he said.
Authors use symbols to reveal character and worldview

- The fairy godmother tapped her golden wand, and on Cinderella’s feet appeared two slippers made of the finest glass. Her tiny feet startled as she turned them this way and that. “Now you will dance with a Prince,” said the fairy godmother.

- At the end of the evening, when the clock struck 12, Cinderella ran so fast that she left her glass slipper on the stairs of the palace. The prince picked it up.

- The prince fit the glass slipper to Cinderella’s foot. It fit perfectly. “You are my bride,” he said.

How are we supposed to know what’s symbolic?

“Girl On Fire”
This girl is on fire...
This girl is on fire...
She’s walking on fire...

Looks like a girl, but she’s a flame
She’s walking, she’s on fire

Better look the other way
You can try but you’ll never forget her name

Hottest of the hottest girls say

Return of the hottest girl say
YOU CAN USE positive ↑ negative ↓ why TO SEE HOW SYMBOLS CREATE BIG IDEAS
1. Is the overall effect positive? negative? Both? Why?

2. Does the flag seem positive? negative? Both? Why?

3. Now try writing your same ideas in college-level form. “Plug in” what you wrote above as we code-switch to professional language:

The symbolic use of the flag creates a sense of ______

1. Is the overall effect positive? negative? Both? Why?

2. Does the flag seem positive? negative? Both? Why?

3. Now try writing your same ideas in college-level form. “Plug in” what you wrote above as we code-switch to professional language:

The symbolic use of the flag creates a sense of ______
COMMON AUTHOR’S TECHNIQUES:
MR. BICEPS

M  OTIF (anything that’s repeated: a repetition of image, words, object)
R  UPTURE (something that stands out, something unusual or contrasting)
B  BEGINNING (Titles, first words, first lines, opening scenes)
I  MAGERY (language that allows you to see, hear, taste, touch, smell)
C  HARCERIZATION (characters portrayed sympathetically or not)
E  ENDING (endings, last words, last lines)
P  OINT OF VIEW (who is telling the story? Young? Old? Reliable?)
S  YMBOL (an object or image that represents an idea)

TOPIC SENTENCES with TECHNIQUE and EFFECT

• The motif of _______________ emphasizes the idea that _________________.

• When we see _______________, it doesn’t seem to fit with the rest of the text. This rupture leads the audience to think about the idea of _________________.

• The beginning of ______ sets the stage for the ________________________.

• The imagery of _______________ enhances the sense of _________________.


• The author characterizes __________ as [identify the kind of person he is or what he does, concretely]. This choice helps the audience to feel sympathy/ lack of sympathy for those who ____________________________________________________________________________.

• Almost more than any other element, the ending of this text leads the audience to understand that ____________________________________________________________________________.

• The point of view (a.k.a voice) here is essential to creating a sense of __________.

• __________ acts as a symbol for ______________ and helps to reveal ____________________________________________________________________________.

"Titanium"

By David Guetta

You shout it out,
But I can't hear a word you say
I'm talking loud not saying much
I'm criticized but all your bullets ricochet
You shoot me down, but I get up

[Chorus:]
I'm bulletproof, nothing to lose
Fire away, fire away
Ricochet, you take your aim
Fire away, fire away
You shoot me down but I won't fall
I am titanium
You shoot me down but I won't fall
I am titanium

Cut me down
But it's you who'll have further to fall
Ghost town and haunted love
Raise your voice, sticks and stones may break my bones
I'm talking loud not saying much

[Chorus:]
I'm bulletproof, nothing to lose
Fire away, fire away
Ricochet, you take your aim
Fire away, fire away
You shoot me down but I won't fall
I am titanium
You shoot me down but I won't fall
I am titanium
I am titanium
I am titanium

Stone-hard, machine gun
Fired at the ones who run
Stone-hard as bulletproof glass

[Chorus:]
You shoot me down but I won't fall
I am titanium
You shoot me down but I won't fall
I am titanium
You shoot me down but I won't fall
I am titanium
You shoot me down but I won't fall
I am titanium
I am titanium

Group members: ____________________________________________
What is the song about?
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Read the first stanza. Are bullets being fired? Yes ____ No ____
How do you know? Focus on the first stanza and explain how you make sense of it.
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What symbols are used that help you know what the song is about?
___________________________________________________________ _________________________________
___________________________________________________________ _________________________________
___________________________________________________________ _________________________________

How did you know these were symbols (how did you know they have more than a literal meaning)?
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

If symbols tell us something about the main characters in stories, which symbols tell us something about the person singing? Are they telling us something positive or negative or both about the person? Positive ____ Negative ____ Both ____
Why? Explain
If multiple symbols, are they about one idea or different concepts or notions?

One idea _______    Multiple notions _______

What idea or multiple notions do these symbols represent?

Using the information above and the MR. BICEPS handout, make an argument about a symbol, providing evidence and reasoning.

In the “Titanium” song lyrics, __________________________ acts as a symbol for __________________________. This symbol helps reveal __________________________. One way we can tell that this is symbolic is through [use MR. BICEPS] __________________________ _______.
COMING OF AGE

1. Right around the time she turns fourteen, Hillary begins to see her neighbor, who is also fourteen, not just as someone to chase in the streets and make fun of, but someone that she thinks is cute. One day, they are both sitting on her front stoop, watching the cars pass by. Without even really knowing what she is doing, she leans over and kisses him.

Has Hillary “come of age”?

Why or why not?

Define coming of age based on your explanation above. “Coming of age means...”
2. A boy that Stephanie knows from class says hi to Stephanie as she is heading to class. The bell rings, and the boy tells Stephanie that she is pretty. A teacher passes by, saying, “Get to class.” Without really noticing the teacher, the boy grabs Stephanie’s breast. Stephanie says, “Stop it!” and slaps his hand away, but the boy grabs at Stephanie again. “Come on,” he says. The teacher sees this and angrily calls out to the boy, “Hey – she said ‘stop it.’ Turn around and give me your I.D.” The boy takes off up the stairs. The teacher turns to Stephanie, who is beginning to cry. “Tell me his name and I will find him,” the teacher says. Stephanie demurs, saying that “He does that to all the girls” and “He can’t help himself.” She refuses to give his name to the teacher.

Has Stephanie “come of age”?

Why or why not?

Define coming of age based on your explanation above. “Coming of age means...”

Martin is a freshman at Curie. Whenever he goes to the B building for gym, a group of older kids throw pennies him. At least once or twice a week, he encounters these kids. He has tried to avoid them; he is a peaceful kid. When he tells his father about it, his father
tells him to be a man and do something about it. He goes so far as to give his son a combination lock, telling him that the next time someone throws a penny at him, Martin should hit that kid in the head. Then his father tells him he doesn’t want to hear from him until he’s stepped up and been a man. The freshman follows his father’s advice and is suspended.

Has Martin “come of age”?

Why or why not?

Define coming of age based on your explanation above. “Coming of age means…

Lee has lived with his grandmother since he was seven and his mother was unable to care for him. Although his mother lives in a neighboring state, she has never come to visit Lee. Every year at New Year’s and on his birthday, his mother calls Lee, and every year she tells Lee that she plans to come to visit in the next month or two. Every year, Lee believes his mother. On his sixteenth birthday, Lee gets his regular call from his mother, who again tells him that she will be coming to visit soon. Lee starts shaking his head as his mother talks, and then begins to scream at her on the phone, yelling and crying, telling his mother he doesn’t believe her anymore, and that he hates her. Lee throws the phone across the room and breaks it. He never speaks to his mother again.

Has Lee “come of age”?

Why or why not?
Define coming of age based on your explanation above. “Coming of age means...”

ARGUING ABOUT A STRONGER CRITERIA FOR COMING OF AGE:

Although I agree that [identify criteria] __________________________ indicates a coming of age, I still insist that [identify criteria] __________________________ is a better indicator of having come of age. For example, in the scenario about [name of character] __________________________, we see that she/he shows a coming of age by

____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________.In another scenario about [name of character] __________________________, we also see a coming of age through

____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

However, [name of character] __________________________’s decision shows more maturity because

____________________________________________________________
Using Symbolism to Synthesize “Linoleum Roses” and “The Rose that Grew from Concrete”

Please answer all questions in complete sentences, using correct subject-verb agreement.

Identify the symbols in “Linoleum Roses.”

What might these symbols tell us about Sally?

What might these symbols tell us about Sally’s world?
What larger message about the nature of human beings might this symbol be pointing toward?

Use the expert language to help you write about the theme of the text.

Read and annotate the following text by Tupac Shakur.
You should use MR BICEPS to begin to identify the symbols.

“The Rose that Grew From Concrete”

Did you hear about the rose that grew
from a crack in the concrete?
Proving nature’s law is wrong it
learned to walk with out having feet.
Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,
it learned to breathe fresh air.
Long live the rose that grew from concrete
when no one else ever cared.

Identify and explain one of the symbols in “The Rose that Grew from Concrete” using MR BICEPS.
What might this symbol tell us about the narrator?

What might these symbols tell us about the narrator’s world?

What larger message about the nature of human beings might this symbol be pointing toward?

Use the expert language to help you write about the theme of the text.

Does the rose act similarly in “Linoleum Roses” and “The Rose that Grew from Concrete”? Introduce a claim and evidence from each text to explain your answer. Your answer should be at least one full paragraph.

**Using Symbolism to Synthesize “Linoleum Roses” and “The Rose that Grew from Concrete”**
Please answer all questions in complete sentences, using correct subject-verb agreement.

Identify the symbols in “Linoleum Roses.”

What might these symbols tell us about Sally?

What might these symbols tell us about Sally’s world?

What larger message about the nature of human beings might this symbol be pointing toward?

Use the expert language to help you write about the theme of the text.
Read and annotate the following text by Tupac Shakur. You should use MR BICEPS to begin to identify the symbols.

“The Rose that Grew From Concrete”

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete? Proving nature’s law is wrong it learned to walk with out having feet. Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams, it learned to breathe fresh air. Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else ever cared.

Identify and explain one of the symbols in “The Rose that Grew from Concrete” using MR BICEPS.

What might this symbol tell us about the narrator?

What might these symbols tell us about the narrator’s world?

What larger message about the nature of human beings might this symbol be pointing toward?
Use the expert language to help you write about the theme of the text.

Does the rose act similarly in “Linoleum Roses” and “The Rose that Grew from Concrete”? Introduce a claim and evidence from each text to explain your answer. Your answer should be at least one full paragraph.

Marigolds
By Eugenia W. Collier

When I think of the hometown of my youth, all that I seem to remember is dust—the brown, crumbly dust of late summer—arid, sterile dust that gets into the eyes and makes them water, gets into the throat and between the toes of bare brown feet. I don’t know why I should remember only the dust. Surely there must have been lush green lawns and paved streets under leafy shade trees somewhere in town; but memory is an abstract painting—it does not present things as they are, but rather as they feel. And so, when I think of that time and that place, I remember only the dry September of the dirt roads and grassless yards of the shantytown where I lived. And one other thing I remember, another incongruency of memory—a brilliant splash of sunny yellow against the dust—Miss Lottie’s marigolds.
Whenever the memory of those marigolds flashes across my mind, a strange nostalgia comes with it and remains long after the picture has faded. I feel again the chaotic emotions of adolescence, illusive as smoke, yet as real as the potted geranium before me now. Joy and rage and wild animal gladness and shame become tangled together in the multicolored skein of fourteen-going-on-fifteen as I recall that devastating moment when I was suddenly more woman than child, years ago in Miss Lottie’s yard. I think of those marigolds at the strangest times; I remember them vividly now as I desperately pass away the time.

I suppose that futile waiting was the sorrowful background music of our impoverished little community when I was young. The Depression that gripped the nation was no new thing to us, for the black workers of rural Maryland had always been depressed. I don’t know what it was that we were waiting for; certainly not for the prosperity that was “just around the corner,” for those were white folks’ words, which we never believed. Nor did we wait for hard work and thrift to pay off in shining success, as the American Dream promised, for we knew better than that, too. Perhaps we waited for a miracle, amorphous in concept but necessary if one were to have the grit to rise before dawn each day and labor in the white man’s vineyard until after dark, or to wander about in the September dust offering one’s sweat in return for some meager share of bread. But God was chary with miracles in those days, and so we waited—and waited.

We children, of course, were only vaguely aware of the extent of our poverty. Having no radios, few newspapers, and no magazines, we were somewhat unaware of the world outside our community. Nowadays we would be called culturally deprived and people would write books and hold conferences about us. In those days everybody we
knew was just as hungry and ill clad as we were. Poverty was the cage in which we all were trapped, and our hatred of it was still the vague, undirected restlessness of the zoo-bred flamingo who knows that nature created him to fly free.

**incongruency**: inconsistency; lack of agreement or harmony  
**multicolored skein**: The writer is comparing her many feelings to a skein, or long coiled piece of many colored yarn.  
**amorphous**: vague, shapeless.  
**chary**: not generous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the beginning of this story, do you predict a happy or sad ending? How can you guess?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you learn about the narrator? Fill in character map</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you learn about Ms. Lottie? Fill in character map</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where and when does this story take place? Fill in plot/setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What in this section is surprising or unusual?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I think of those days I feel most poignantly the tag end of summer, the bright, dry times when we began to have a sense of shortening days and the imminence of the cold.

By the time I was fourteen, my brother Joey and I were the only children left at our house, the older ones having left home for early marriage or the lure of the city, and the two babies having been sent to relatives who might care for them better than we. Joey was three years younger than I, and a boy, and therefore vastly inferior. Each morning our mother and father trudged wearily down the dirt road and around the bend, she to her domestic job, he to his daily unsuccessful quest for work. After our few chores around the tumbledown shanty, Joey and I were free to run wild in the sun with other children similarly situated.

For the most part, those days are ill-defined in
my memory, running together and combining like a fresh watercolor painting left out in the rain. I remember squatting in the road drawing a picture in the dust, a picture which Joey gleefully erased with one sweep of his dirty foot. I remember fishing for minnows in a muddy creek and watching sadly as they eluded my cupped hands, while Joey laughed uproariously. And I remember, that year, a strange restlessness of body and of spirit, a feeling that something old and familiar was ending, and something unknown and therefore terrifying was beginning.

One day returns to me with special clarity for some reason, perhaps because it was the beginning of the experience that in some inexplicable way marked the end of innocence. I was loafing under the great oak tree in our yard, deep in some reverie which I have now forgotten, except that it involved some secret, secret thoughts of one of the Harris boys across the yard. Joey and a bunch of kids were bored now with the old tire suspended from an oak limb, which had kept them entertained for a while.

“Hey, Lizabeth,” Joey yelled. He never talked when he could yell. “Hey, Lizabeth, let’s go somewhere.”

I came reluctantly from my private world. “Where you want to go? What you want to do?”

The truth was that we were becoming tired of the formlessness of our summer days. The idleness whose prospect had seemed so beautiful during the busy days of spring now had degenerated to an almost desperate effort to fill up the empty midday hours.

“Let’s go see can we find some locusts on the hill,” someone suggested.

Joey was scornful. “Ain’t no more locusts there. Y’all got ‘em all while they was still green.”
The argument that followed was brief and not really worth the effort. Hunting locust trees wasn’t fun anymore by now.

“Tell you what,” said Joey finally, his eyes sparkling. “Let’s us go over to Miss Lottie’s.”

**Clarity:** *n.:* clearness.
**Inexplicable:** not explainable or understandable.

The idea caught on at once, for annoying Miss Lottie was always fun. I was still child enough to scamper along with the group over rickety fences and through bushes that tore our already raggedy clothes, back to where Miss Lottie lived. I think now that we must have made a tragicomic spectacle, five or six kids of different ages, each of us clad in only one garment—the girls in faded dresses that were too long or too short, the boys in patchy pants, their sweaty brown chests gleaming in the hot sun. A little cloud of dust followed our thin legs and bare feet as we tramped over the barren land.

**Questions:**
- What are the kids’ feelings about the summer?
- How does the setting influence the characters’ behavior and attitudes? Give examples from the story.

When Miss Lottie’s house came into view we stopped, *ostensibly* to plan our strategy, but actually to reinforce our courage. Miss Lottie’s house was the most ramshackle of all our ramshackle homes. The sun and rain had long since faded its rickety frame siding from white to a sullen gray. The boards themselves seemed to remain upright not from being nailed together but rather from leaning together, like a house that a child might have constructed from cards. A brisk wind might have blown it down, and the fact that it was still standing implied a kind of enchantment that was stronger than the elements. There it stood and as far as I know is standing yet—a gray, rotting
thing with no porch, no shutters, no steps, set on a cramped lot with no grass, not even any weeds—a monument to decay.

In front of the house in a squeaky rocking chair sat Miss Lottie's son, John Burke, completing the impression of decay. John Burke was what was known as queer-headed. Black and ageless, he sat rocking day in and day out in a mindless stupor, lulled by the monotonous squeak-squawk of the chair. A battered hat atop his shaggy head shaded him from the sun. Usually John Burke was totally unaware of everything outside his quiet dream world. But if you disturbed him, if you intruded upon his fantasies, he would become enraged, strike out at you, and curse at you in some strange enchanted language which only he could understand. We children made a game of thinking of ways to disturb John Burke and then to elude his violent retribution.

But our real fun and our real fear lay in Miss Lottie herself. Miss Lottie seemed to be at least a hundred years old. Her big frame still held traces of the tall, powerful woman she must have been in youth, although it was now bent and drawn. Her smooth skin was a dark reddish brown, and her face had Indian-like features and the stern stoicism that one associates with Indian faces. Miss Lottie didn't like intruders either, especially children. She never left her yard, and nobody ever visited her. We never knew how she managed those necessities which depend on human interaction—how she ate, for example, or even whether she ate. When we were tiny children, we thought Miss Lottie was a witch and we made up tales that we half believed ourselves about her exploits. We were far too sophisticated now, of course, to believe the witch nonsense. But old fears have a way of clinging like cobwebs, and so when we sighted the tumbledown shack, we had to stop to reinforce our nerves.
“Look, there she is,” I whispered, forgetting that Miss Lottie could not possibly have heard me from that distance. “She’s fooling with them crazy flowers.”

“Yeh, look at ‘er.”

**ostensibly**: seemingly; apparently.
**retribution**: n.: revenge.
**stoicism**: calm indifference to pleasure or pain.

Miss Lottie’s marigolds were perhaps the strangest part of the picture. Certainly they did not fit in with the crumbling decay of the rest of her yard. Beyond the dusty brown yard, in front of the sorry gray house, rose suddenly and shockingly a dazzling strip of bright blossoms, clumped together in enormous mounds, warm and passionate and sun-golden. The old black witch-woman worked on them all summer, every summer, down on her creaky knees, weeding and cultivating and arranging, while the house crumbled and John Burke rocked. For some perverse reason, we children hated those marigolds. They interfered with the perfect ugliness of the place; they were too beautiful; they said too much that we could not understand; they did not make sense. There was something in the vigor with which the old woman destroyed the weeds that **intimidated** us. It should have been a comical sight—the old woman with the man’s hat on her cropped white head, leaning over the bright mounds, her big backside in the air—but it wasn’t comical, it was something we could not name. We had to annoy her by whizzing a pebble into her flowers or by yelling a dirty word, then dancing away from her rage, reveling in our youth and mocking her age. Actually, I think it was the flowers we wanted to destroy, but nobody had the nerve to try it, not even Joey, who was usually fool enough to try anything.

“Y’all git some stones,” commanded Joey now and was met with instant giggling obedience as everyone except me began to gather pebbles from the
dusty ground. “Come on, Lizabeth.”

I just stood there peering through the bushes, torn between wanting to join the fun and feeling that it was all a bit silly.

“You scared, Lizabeth?”

I cursed and spat on the ground—my favorite gesture of phony bravado. “Y’all children get the stones, I’ll show you how to use ’em.”

I said before that we children were not consciously aware of how thick were the bars of our cage. I wonder now, though, whether we were not more aware of it than I thought. Perhaps we had some dim notion of what we were, and how little chance we had of being anything else. Otherwise, why would we have been so preoccupied with destruction? Anyway, the pebbles were collected quickly, and everybody looked at me to begin the fun.

“Come on, y’all.”

We crept to the edge of the bushes that bordered the narrow road in front of Miss Lottie’s place. She was working placidly, kneeling over the flowers, her dark hand plunged into the golden mound. Suddenly zing—an expertly aimed stone cut the head off one of the blossoms.

“Who out there?” Miss Lottie’s backside came down and her head came up as her sharp eyes searched the bushes. “You better git!”

We had crouched down out of sight in the bushes, where we stifled the giggles that insisted on coming. Miss Lottie gazed warily across the road for a moment, then cautiously returned to her weeding. Zing—Joey sent a pebble into the blooms, and another marigold was beheaded.
intimidated: v.: frightened.

Miss Lottie was enraged now. She began struggling to her feet, leaning on a rickety cane and shouting, “Y’all git! Go on home!” Then the rest of the kids let loose with their pebbles, storming the flowers and laughing wildly and senselessly at Miss Lottie’s impotent rage. She shook her stick at us and started shakily toward the road crying, “Git ‘long! John Burke! John Burke, come help!”

Then I lost my head entirely, mad with the power of inciting such rage, and ran out of the bushes in the storm of pebbles, straight toward Miss Lottie, chanting madly, “Old witch, fell in a ditch, picked up a penny and thought she was rich!” The children screamed with delight, dropped their pebbles, and joined the crazy dance, swarming around Miss Lottie like bees and chanting, “Old lady witch!” while she screamed curses at us. The madness lasted only a moment, for John Burke, startled at last, lurched out of his chair, and we dashed for the bushes just as Miss Lottie’s cane went whizzing at my head.

Questions:
- What are the narrator’s feelings about Ms. Lottie?
- What do you learn about Ms. Lottie? Fill in character map
- What happens in this section? Fill in plot/setting
- In this section there is a contrast between the description of the marigolds and Ms. Lottie and her house. Why do you think the author gives such contrasting descriptions?
- What does the following quote from this section mean? “For some perverse reason, we children hated those marigolds. They interfered with the perfect ugliness of the place; they were too beautiful; they said too much that we could not understand; they did not make sense.”

I did not join the merriment when the kids gathered again under the oak in our bare yard. Suddenly I was ashamed, and I did not like being ashamed. The child in me sulked and said it was all in fun, but the woman in me flinched at the thought of the malicious attack that I had led. The mood lasted all afternoon. When we ate the beans and rice that was
supper that night, I did not notice my father’s silence, for he was always silent these days, nor did I notice my mother’s absence, for she always worked until well into evening. Joey and I had a particularly bitter argument after supper; his exuberance got on my nerves. Finally I stretched out upon the pallet in the room we shared and fell into a fitful doze.

When I awoke, somewhere in the middle of the night, my mother had returned, and I vaguely listened to the conversation that was audible through the thin walls that separated our rooms. At first I heard no words, only voices. My mother’s voice was like a cool, dark room in summer—peaceful, soothing, quiet. I loved to listen to it; it made things seem all right somehow. But my father’s voice cut through hers, shattering the peace.

“Twenty-two years, Maybelle, twenty-two years,” he was saying, “and I got nothing for you, nothing, nothing.”

“It’s all right, honey, you’ll get something. Everybody out of work now, you know that.”

“It ain’t right. Ain’t no man ought to eat his woman’s food year in and year out, and see his children running wild. Ain’t nothing right about that.”

“Honey, you took good care of us when you had it. Ain’t nobody got nothing nowadays.”

“I ain’t talking about nobody else, I’m talking about me. God knows I try.” My mother said something I could not hear, and my father cried out louder, “What must a man do, tell me that?”

“Look, we ain’t starving. I git paid every week, and Mrs. Ellis is real nice about giving me things. She gonna let me have Mr. Ellis’s old coat for you this winter—"
impotent: adj.: powerless; helpless.
pallet: small bed or cot.

“Damn Mr. Ellis’s coat! And damn his money!
You think I want white folks’ leavings?

“Damn, Maybelle”—and suddenly he sobbed,
loudly and painfully, and cried helplessly and
hopelessly in the dark night. I had never heard a man
cry before. I did not know men ever cried. I covered
my ears with my hands but could not cut off the sound
of my father’s harsh, painful, despairing sobs. My
father was a strong man who could whisk a child upon
his shoulders and go singing through the house. My
father whittled toys for us, and laughed so loud that the
great oak seemed to laugh with him, and taught us
how to fish and hunt rabbits. How could it be that my
father was crying? But the sobs went on, unstifled,
finally quieting until I could hear my mother’s voice,
deep and rich, humming softly as she used to hum to a
frightened child.

The world had lost its boundary lines. My
mother, who was small and soft, was now the strength
of the family; my father, who was the rock on which the
family had been built, was sobbing like the tiniest child.
Everything was suddenly out of tune, like a broken
accordion. Where did I fit into this crazy picture? I do
not now remember my thoughts, only a feeling of great
bewilderment and fear.

Long after the sobbing and humming had
stopped, I lay on the pallet, still as stone with my
hands over my ears, wishing that I too could cry and
be comforted. The night was silent now except for the
sound of the crickets and of Joey’s soft breathing. But
the room was too crowded with fear to allow me to
sleep, and finally, feeling the terrible aloneness of 4
A.M., I decided to awaken Joey.
“Ouch! What’s the matter with you? What you want?” he demanded disagreeably when I had pinched and slapped him awake.

“Come on, wake up.”

“What for? Go ‘way.”

I was lost for a reasonable reply. I could not say, “I'm scared and I don’t want to be alone,” so I merely said, “I’m going out. If you want to come, come on.”

The promise of adventure awoke him. “Going out now? Where to, Lizabeth? What you going to do?”

I was pulling my dress over my head. Until now I had not thought of going out. "Just come on,” I replied tersely.

I was out the window and halfway down the road before Joey caught up with me.

“Wait, Lizabeth, where you going?”

I was running as if the Furies were after me, as perhaps they were—running silently and furiously until I came to where I had half known I was headed: to Miss Lottie’s yard.

The half-dawn light was more eerie than complete darkness, and in it the old house was like the ruin that my world had become—foul and crumbling, a grotesque caricature. It looked haunted, but I was not afraid, because I was haunted too.

Questions:
• What do you learn about the narrator and about her family? Fill in plot/setting

“Lizabeth, you lost your mind?” panted Joey.
Furies: in Greek and Roman mythology, spirits who pursue people who have committed crimes, sometimes driving them mad.

I had indeed lost my mind, for all the smoldering emotions of that summer swelled in me and burst—the great need for my mother who was never there, the hopelessness of our poverty and degradation, the bewilderment of being neither child nor woman and yet both at once, the fear unleashed by my father's tears. And these feelings combined in one great impulse toward destruction.

“Lizabeth!”

I leaped furiously into the mounds of marigolds and pulled madly, trampling and pulling and destroying the perfect yellow blooms. The fresh smell of early morning and of dew-soaked marigolds spurred me on as I went tearing and mangling and sobbing while Joey tugged my dress or my waist crying, “Lizabeth, stop, please stop!”

And then I was sitting in the ruined little garden among the uprooted and ruined flowers, crying and crying, and it was too late to undo what I had done. Joey was sitting beside me, silent and frightened, not knowing what to say. Then, “Lizabeth, look!”

I opened my swollen eyes and saw in front of me a pair of large, calloused feet; my gaze lifted to the swollen legs, the age-distorted body clad in a tight cotton nightdress, and then the shadowed Indian face surrounded by stubby white hair. And there was no rage in the face now, now that the garden was destroyed and there was nothing any longer to be protected.

“M-miss Lottie!” I scrambled to my feet and just stood there and stared at her, and that was the moment when childhood faded and womanhood
began. That violent, crazy act was the last act of childhood. For as I gazed at the immobile face with the sad, weary eyes, I gazed upon a kind of reality which is hidden to childhood. The witch was no longer a witch but only a broken old woman who had dared to create beauty in the midst of ugliness and sterility. She had been born in squalor and lived in it all her life. Now at the end of that life she had nothing except a falling-down hut, a wrecked body, and John Burke, the mindless son of her passion. Whatever verve there was left in her, whatever was of love and beauty and joy that had not been squeezed out by life, had been there in the marigolds she had so tenderly cared for.

Of course I could not express the things that I knew about Miss Lottie as I stood there awkward and ashamed. The years have put words to the things I knew in that moment, and as I look back upon it, I know that that moment marked the end of innocence. Innocence involves an unseeing acceptance of things at face value, an ignorance of the area below the surface. In that humiliating moment I looked beyond myself and into the depths of another person. This was the beginning of compassion, and one cannot have both compassion and innocence.

The years have taken me worlds away from that time and that place, from the dust and squalor of our lives, and from the bright thing that I destroyed in a blind, childish striking out at God knows what. Miss Lottie died long ago and many years have passed since I last saw her hut, completely barren at last, for despite my wild contrition she never planted marigolds again. Yet, there are times when the image of those passionate yellow mounds returns with a painful poignancy. For one does not have to be ignorant and poor to find that his life is as barren as the dusty yards of our town. And I too have planted marigolds.

**Contrition:** *n.* deep feelings of guilt and repentance.
Questions:
• How has the narrator changed? Why has she changed? Fill in character map
• What happens in this section? Fill in plot/setting
• Now that you have read to the end of the story, is the story overall positive or negative? Why do you say so?
• How are the tensions in the story resolved? Who or what “wins” in this story? Who or what loses? Why do you say so?
• What connections do you see between the beginning and end of the story?
• Choose an image from the story that you think is key to understanding the story. Fill in Symbolism chart

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________ Text:
________________________________

Character Map
What do we know about the character?

Age: Gender:

Physical attributes:

Feelings, emotions:

Type of person he/she is:

What motivates the character?

Change: Coming of Age? Y/N

Criteria:
1.
2.
3.

Challenges/Conflicts

With others:

With self:

Things that belong with the character

Beginning:

Middle:

End:

Sympathetic/Unsympathetic/Why?

Beginning:

Middle:

End:

Is the character in tension with others

Yes No

Who?

What are these tensions?

Relationships with other characters

Beginning:

Middle:

End:
Important Event 1 ➔ Important Event 2 ➔ Important Event 3 ➔ Important Event 4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tensions Introduced/ OR Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tensions Introduced/ OR Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensions Introduced/ OR Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensions Introduced/ OR Setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name: ___________________________  Date: ____________________  Text: ___________________________
Plot & Setting
My mother believed you could be anything you wanted to be in America. You could open a restaurant. You could work for the government and get good retirement. You could buy a house with almost no money down. You could become rich. You could become instantly famous. "Of course, you can be a prodigy, too," my mother told me when I was nine. "You can be best anything. What does Auntie Lindo know? Her daughter, she is only best tricky." America was where all my mother's hopes lay. She had come to San Francisco in 1949 after losing everything in China: her mother and father, her home, her first husband, and two daughters, twin baby girls. But she never looked back with regret. Things could get better in so many ways.

We didn't immediately pick the right kind of prodigy. At first my mother thought I could be a Chinese Shirley Temple. We'd watch Shirley's old movies on TV as though they were training films. My mother would poke my arm and say, "Ni kan. You watch." And I would see Shirley tapping her feet, or singing a sailor song, or pursing her lips into a very round O while saying "Oh, my goodness." "Ni kan," my mother said, as Shirley's eyes flooded with tears. "You already know how. Don't need talent for crying!" Soon after my mother got this idea about Shirley Temple, she took me to the beauty training school in the Mission District and put me in the hands of a student who could barely hold the scissors without shaking. Instead of getting big fat curls, I emerged with an uneven mass of crinkly black fuzz. My mother dragged me off to the bathroom and tried to wet down my hair. "You look like a Negro Chinese," she lamented, as if I had done this on purpose. The instructor of the beauty training school had to lop off these soggy clumps to make my hair even again. "Peter Pan is very popular these days" the instructor assured my mother. I now had bad hair the length of a boy's, with curly bangs that hung at a slant two inches above my eyebrows. I like the haircut, and it made me actually look forward to my future fame.

In fact, in the beginning I was just as excited as my mother, maybe even more so. I pictured this prodigy part of me as many different images, and I tried each one on for size. I was a dainty ballerina girl standing by the curtain, waiting to hear the music that would send me floating on my tiptoes. I was like the Christ child lifted out of the straw manger, crying with holy indignity. I was Cinderella stepping from her pumpkin carriage with sparkly cartoon music filling the air. In all of my imaginings I was filled with a sense that I would soon become perfect: My mother and father would adore me. I would be beyond reproach. I would never feel the need to sulk, or to clamor for anything. But sometimes the prodigy in me became impatient. "If you don't hurry up and get me out of here, I'm disappearing for good," it warned. "And then you'll always be nothing."

Every night after dinner my mother and I would sit at the Formica topped kitchen table. She would present new tests, taking her examples from stories of amazing children that she read in *Ripley's Believe It or Not* or *Good Housekeeping, Reader's digest*, or any of a dozen other magazines she kept in a pile in our bathroom. My mother got these magazines from people whose houses she cleaned. And since she cleaned many houses each week, we had a great assortment. She would look through them all, searching for stories
about remarkable children. The first night she brought out a story about a three-year-old boy who knew the capitals of all the states and even the most of the European countries. A teacher was quoted as saying that the little boy could also pronounce the names of the foreign cities correctly. "What's the capital of Finland? My mother asked me, looking at the story. All I knew was the capital of California, because Sacramento was the name of the street we lived on in Chinatown. "Nairobi!" I guessed, saying the most foreign word I could think of. She checked to see if that might be one way to pronounce Helsinki before showing me the answer.

The tests got harder - multiplying numbers in my head, finding the queen of hearts in a deck of cards, trying to stand on my head without using my hands, predicting the daily temperatures in Los Angeles, New York, and London. One night I had to look at a page from the Bible for three minutes and then report everything I could remember. "Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance and...that's all I remember, Ma," I said.

And after seeing, once again, my mother's disappointed face, something inside me began to die. I hated the tests, the raised hopes and failed expectations. Before going to bed that night I looked in the mirror above the bathroom sink, and I saw only my face staring back - and understood that it would always be this ordinary face - I began to cry. Such a sad, ugly girl! I made high - pitched noises like a crazed animal, trying to scratch out the face in the mirror. And then I saw what seemed to be the prodigy side of me - a face I had never seen before. I looked at my reflection, blinking so that I could see more clearly. The girl staring back at me was angry, powerful. She and I were the same. I had new thoughts, willful thoughts - or rather, thoughts filled with lots of won'ts. I won't let her change me, I promised myself. I won't be what I'm not.

So now when my mother presented her tests, I performed listlessly, my head propped on one arm. I pretended to be bored. And I was. I got so bored that I started counting the bellows of the foghorns out on the bay while my mother drilled me in other areas. The sound was comforting and reminded me of the cow jumping over the moon. And the next day I played a game with myself, seeing if my mother would give up on me before eight bellows. After a while I usually counted only one bellow, maybe two at most. At last she was beginning to give up hope.

Two or three months went by without any mention of my being a prodigy. And then one day my mother was watching the Ed Sullivan Show on TV. The TV was old and the sound kept shorting out. Every time my mother got halfway up from the sofa to adjust the set, the sound would come back on and Sullivan would be talking. As soon as she sat down, Sullivan would go silent again. She got up - the TV broke into loud piano music. She sat down - silence. Up and down, back and forth, quiet and loud. It was like a stiff, embraceless dance between her and the TV set. Finally, she stood by the set with her hand on the sound dial. She seemed entranced by the music, a frenzied little piano piece with a mesmerizing quality, which alternated between quick, playful passages and teasing, lilting ones. "Ni kan," my mother said, calling me over with hurried hand gestures. "Look here." I could see why my mother was fascinated by the music. It was being pounded out by a little Chinese girl, about nine years old, with a Peter Pan haircut. The girl had the sauciness of a Shirley Temple. She was proudly modest, like a proper Chinese Child. And she also did a fancy sweep of a curtsy, so that the fluffy skirt of her white dress cascaded to the floor like petals of a large carnation. In spite of these warning signs, I wasn't
worried. Our family had no piano and we couldn't afford to buy one, let alone reams of sheet music and piano lessons. So I could be generous in my comments when my mother badmouthed the little girl on TV. "Play note right, but doesn't sound good!" my mother complained "No singing sound." "What are you picking on her for?" I said carelessly. "She's pretty good. Maybe she's not the best, but she's trying hard." I knew almost immediately that I would be sorry I had said that. "Just like you," she said. "Not the best. Because you not trying." She gave a little huff as she let go of the sound dial and sat down on the sofa. The little Chinese girl sat down also, to play an encore of "Anitra's Tanz," by Grieg. I remember the song, because later on I had to learn how to play it.

Three days after watching the Ed Sullivan Show my mother told me what my schedule would be for piano lessons and piano practice. She had talked to Mr. Chong, who lived on the first floor of our apartment building. Mr. Chong was a retired piano teacher, and my mother had traded housecleaning services for weekly lessons and a piano for me to practice on every day, two hours a day, from four until six.

When my mother told me this, I felt as though I had been sent to hell. I whined, and then kicked my foot a little when I couldn't stand it anymore. "Why don't you like me the way I am?" I cried. "I'm not a genius! I can't play the piano. And even if I could, I wouldn't go on TV if you paid me a million dollars!" My mother slapped me. "Who ask you to be genius?" she shouted. "Only ask you be your best. For you sake. You think I want you to be genius? Hnnh! What for! Who ask you!"? "So ungrateful," I heard her mutter in Chinese, "If she had as much talent as she has temper, she'd be famous now."

Mr. Chong, whom I secretly nicknamed Old Chong, was very strange, always tapping his fingers to the silent music of an invisible orchestra. He looked ancient in my eyes. He had lost most of the hair on the top of his head, and he wore thick glasses and had eyes that always looked tired. But he must have been younger that I though, since he lived with his mother and was not yet married. I met Old Lady Chong once, and that was enough. She had a peculiar smell, like a baby that had done something in its pants, and her fingers felt like a dead person's, like an old peach I once found in the back of the refrigerator: its skin just slid off the flesh when I picked it up. I soon found out why Old Chong had retired from teaching piano. He was deaf. "Like Beethoven!" he shouted to me: We're both listening only in our head!" And he would start to conduct his frantic silent sonatas.

Our lessons went like this. He would open the book and point to different things, explaining, their purpose: "Key! Treble! Bass! No sharps or flats! So this is C major! Listen now and play after me!" And then he would play the C scale a few times, a simple cord, and then, as if inspired by an old unreachable itch, he would gradually add more notes and running trills and a pounding bass until the music was really something quite grand. I would play after him, the simple scale, the simple chord, and then just play some nonsense that sounded like a cat running up and down on top of garbage cans. Old Chong would smile and applaud and say Very good! But now you must learn to keep time!" So that's how I discovered that Old Chong's eyes were too slow to keep up with the wrong notes I was playing. He went through the motions in half time. To help me keep rhythm, he stood behind me and pushed down on my right shoulder for every beat. He balanced pennies on top of my wrists so that I would keep them still as I slowly played scales and
arpeggios. He had me curve my hand around an apple and keep that shape when playing chords. He marched stiffly to show me how to make each finger dance up and down, staccato, like an obedient little soldier.

He taught me all these things and that was how I also learned I could be lazy and get away with mistakes, lots of mistakes. If I hit the wrong notes because I hadn't practiced enough, I never corrected myself; I just kept playing in rhythm. And Old Chong kept conducting his own private reverie. So maybe I never really gave myself a fair chance. I did pick up the basics pretty quickly, and I might have become a good pianist at the young age. But I was so determined not to try, not to be anybody different, and I learned to play only the most ear-splitting preludes, the most discordant hymns.

Over the next year I practiced like this, dutifully in my own way. And then one day I heard my mother and her friend Lindo Jong both after church, and I was leaning against a brick wall, wearing a dress with stiff white petticoats. Auntie Lindo's daughter, Waverly, who was my age, was standing farther down the wall, about five feet away. We had grown up together and shared all the closeness of two sisters, squabbling over crayons and dolls. In other words, for the most part, we hated each other. I thought she was snotty. Waverly Jong had gained a certain amount of fame as "Chinatown's Littlest Chinese Chess Champion." "She bring home too many trophy." Auntie Lindo lamented that Sunday. "All day she play chess. All day I have no time do nothing but dust off her winnings."

She threw a scolding look at Waverly, who pretended not to see her. "You lucky you don't have this problem," Auntie Lindo said with a sigh to my mother. And my mother squared her shoulders and bragged: "our problem worser than yours. If we ask Jing-mei wash dish, she hear nothing but music. It's like you can't stop this natural talent." And right then I was determined to put a stop to her foolish pride.

A few weeks later Old Chong and my mother conspired to have me play in a talent show that was to be held in the church hall. But then my parents had saved up enough to buy me a secondhand piano, a black Wurlitzer spinet with a scarred bench. It was the showpiece of our living room. For the talent show I was to play a piece called "Pleading Child," from Schumann's Scenes from Childhood. It was a simple, moody piece that sounded more difficult than it was. I was supposed to memorize the whole thing. But I dawdled over it, playing a few bars and then cheating, looking up to see what notes followed. I never really listed to what I was playing. I daydreamed about being somewhere else, about being someone else.

The part I liked to practice best was the fancy curtsy: right foot out, touch the rose on the carpet with a pointed foot, sweep to the side, bend left leg, look up, and smile. My parents invited all the couples from their social club to witness my debut. Auntie Lindo and Uncle Tin were there. Waverly and her two older brothers had also come. The first two rows were filled with children either younger or older than I was. The littlest ones got to go first. They recited simple nursery rhymes, squawked out tunes on miniature violins, and twirled hula hoops in pink ballet tutus, and when they bowed or curtsied, the audience would sigh in unison, "Awww, and then clap enthusiastically.

When my turn came, I was very confident. I remember my childish excitement. It was as if I knew, without a doubt, that the prodigy side of me really did exist. I had no fear whatsoever, no nervousness. I remember thinking, This is it! This is it! I looked out over the audience, at my mother's blank face, my father's yawn, Auntie Lindo's stiff-lipped smile, Waverly's sulky expression. I had on a white
dress, layered with sheets of lace, and a pink bow in my Peter Pan haircut. As I sat down, I envisioned people jumping to their feet and Ed Sullivan rushing up to introduce me to everyone on TV.

And I started to play. Everything was so beautiful. I was so caught up in how lovely I looked that I wasn't worried about how I would sound. So I was surprised when I hit the first wrong note. And then I hit another and another. A chill started at the top of my head and began to trickle down. Yet I couldn't stop playing, as though my hands were bewitched. I kept thinking my fingers would adjust themselves back, like a train switching to the right track. I played this strange jumble through to the end, the sour notes staying with me all the way.

When I stood up, I discovered my legs were shaking. Maybe I had just been nervous, and the audience, like Old Chong had seen me go through the right motions and had not heard anything wrong at all. I swept my right foot out, went down on my knee, looked up, and smiled. The room was quiet, except for Old Chong, who was beaming and shouting "Bravo! Bravo! Well done!" By then I saw my mother's face, her stricken face. The audience clapped weakly, and I walked back to my chair, with my whole face quivering as I tried not to cry, I heard a little boy whisper loudly to his mother. "That was awful," and mother whispered "Well, she certainly tried."

And now I realized how many people were in the audience - the whole world, it seemed. I was aware of eyes burning into my back. I felt the shame of my mother and father as they sat stiffly through the rest of the show. We could have escaped during intermission. Pride and some strange sense of honor must have anchored my parents to their chairs. And so we watched it all. The eighteen-year-old boy with a fake mustache who did a magic show and juggled flaming hoops while riding a unicycle. The breasted girl with white make up who sang an aria from *Madame Butterfly* and got an honorable mention. And the eleven-year-old boy who was first prize playing a tricky violin song that sounded like a busy bee.

After the show the Hsus, the Jongs, and the St. Clairs, from the Joy Luck Club, came up to my mother and father. "Lots of talented kids," Auntie Lindo said vaguely, smiling broadly. "That was somethin' else," my father said, and I wondered if he was referring to me in a humorous way, or whether he even remembered what I had done.

Waverly looked at me and shrugged her shoulders. "You aren't a genius like me," she said matter-of-factly. And if I hadn't felt so bad, I would have pulled her braids and punched her stomach. But my mother's expression was what devastated me: a quiet, blank look that said she had lost everything. I felt the same way, and everybody seemed now to be coming up, like gawkers at the scene of an accident to see what parts were actually missing. When we got on the bus to go home, my father was humming the busy-bee tune and my mother kept silent. I kept thinking she wanted to wait until we got home before shouting at me. But when my father unlocked the door to our apartment, my mother walked in and went straight to the back, into the bedroom. No accusations, No blame. And in a way, I felt disappointed. I had been waiting for her to start shouting, so that I could shout back and cry and blame her for all my misery.

I had assumed that my talent-show fiasco meant that I would never have to play the piano again. But two days later, after school, my mother came out of the kitchen and saw me watching TV. "Four clock," she reminded me, as if it were any other day. I was stunned, as though she were asking me to go through the talent-show torture again. I planted myself more squarely in front of the TV.
"Turn off TV," she called from the kitchen five minutes later. I didn't budge. And then I decided, I didn't have to do what mother said anymore. I wasn't her slave. This wasn't China. I had listened to her before, and look what happened she was the stupid one. She came out of the kitchen and stood in the arched entryway of the living room. "Four clock," she said once again, louder. "I'm not going to play anymore," I said nonchalantly. "Why should I? I'm not a genius." She stood in front of the TV. I saw that her chest was heaving up and down in an angry way. "No!" I said, and I now felt stronger, as if my true self had finally emerged. So this was what had been inside me all along. "No! I won't!" I screamed. She snapped off the TV, yanked me by the arm and pulled me off the floor. She was frighteningly strong, half pulling, half carrying me towards the piano as I kicked the throw rugs under my feet. She lifted me up onto the hard bench. I was sobbing by now, looking at her bitterly. Her chest was heaving even more and her mouth was open, smiling crazily as if she were pleased that I was crying. "You want me to be something that I'm not!" I sobbed. "I'll never be the kind of daughter you want me to be!" "Only two kinds of daughters," she shouted in Chinese. "Those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind! Only one kind of daughter can live in this house. Obedient daughter!" "Then I wish I weren't your daughter, I wish you weren't my mother," I shouted. As I said these things I got scared. It felt like worms and toads and slimy things crawling out of my chest, but it also felt good, that this awful side of me had surfaced, at last. "Too late to change this," my mother said shrilly. And I could sense her anger rising to its breaking point. I wanted see it spill over. And that's when I remembered the babies she had lost in China, the ones we never talked about. "Then I wish I'd never been born!" I shouted. "I wish I were dead! Like them." It was as if I had said magic words. Alakazam!-her face went blank, her mouth closed, her arms went slack, and she backed out of the room, stunned, as if she were blowing away like a small brown leaf, thin, brittle, lifeless.

It was not the only disappointment my mother felt in me. In the years that followed, I failed her many times, each time asserting my will, my right to fall short of expectations. I didn't get straight As. I didn't become class president. I didn't get into Stanford. I dropped out of college. Unlike my mother, I did not believe I could be anything I wanted to be, I could only be me. And for all those years we never talked about the disaster at the recital or my terrible declarations afterward at the piano bench. Neither of us talked about it again, as if it were a betrayal that was now unspeakable. So I never found a way to ask her why she had hoped for something so large that failure was inevitable. And even worse, I never asked her about what frightened me the most: Why had she given up hope? For after our struggle at the piano, she never mentioned my playing again. The lessons stopped. The lid to the piano was closed shutting out the dust, my misery, and her dreams.

So she surprised me. A few years ago she offered to give me the piano, for my thirtieth birthday. I had not played in all those years. I saw the offer as a sign of forgiveness, a tremendous burden removed. "Are you sure?" I asked shyly. "I mean, won't you and Dad miss it?" "No, this your piano," she said firmly. "Always your piano. You only one can play." "Well, I probably can't play anymore," I said. "It's been years." "You pick up fast," my mother said, as if she knew this was certain. "You have natural talent. You could be a genius if you want to." "No, I couldn't." "You just not trying," my mother said. And she was neither angry nor sad. She said it as if announcing a fact that could never be disproved. "Take it," she said. But I didn't at first. It was enough that she had offered it to me. And after that, every time I saw it in my parents' living room, standing in front of the bay window, it made me feel proud, as if it were
a shiny trophy that I had won back.

Last week I sent a tuner over to my parent's apartment and had the piano reconditioned, for purely sentimental reasons. My mother had died a few months before and I had been getting things in order for my father a little bit at a time. I put the jewelry in special silk pouches. The sweaters I put in mothproof boxes. I found some old Chinese silk dresses, the kind with little slits up the sides. I rubbed the old silk against my skin, and then wrapped them in tissue and decided to take them home with me. After I had the piano tuned, I opened the lid and touched the keys. It sounded even richer that I remembered. Really, it was a very good piano. Inside the bench were the same exercise notes with handwritten scales, the same secondhand music books with their covers held together with yellow tape. I opened up the Schumann book to the dark little piece I had played at the recital. It was on the left-hand page, "Pleading Child." It looked more difficult than I remembered. I played a few bars, surprised at how easily the notes came back to me. And for the first time, or so it seemed, I noticed the piece on the right-hand side. It was called "Perfectly Contented." I tried to play this one as well. It had a lighter melody but with the same flowing rhythm and turned out to be quite easy. "Pleading Child" was shorter but slower; "Perfectly Contented" was longer but faster. And after I had played them both a few times, I realized they were two halves of the same song.

Using MR. BICEPS handout, make an argument, providing evidence and reasoning about a possible symbol in “Two Kinds”

In the story “Two Kinds,” __________________________ acts as a symbol for __________________________. This symbol helps reveal __________________________. One way we can tell that this is symbolic is through [use MR. BICEPS]__________________________

__________________________

__________________________
An example of this is______________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______
This detail helps create an understanding that _______________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
This ______________________ ultimately helps us to see that ______________________ has more than a literal meaning, because ______________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______.