



Cultural Conversations

Visual Prompt: How does this image express a culture to you?

Unit Overview

Culture is often difficult to define, but it influences everything from who you are as an individual to how you relate to other people at home and around the world. In this unit, you will explore different cultures by reading texts in a variety of genres that reflect on the connection between one's cultural heritage and his or her sense of identity. Using your own experiences and information in texts, you will write a reflection about cultural identity, as well as create an argument about the extent to which culture shapes an individual's perceptions of the world.

GOALS:

- To analyze how culture affects identity and perceptions
- To practice effective speaking and listening skills that build capacity for collaboration and communication
- To analyze the concept of voice in reading and writing
- To examine and apply the elements of argument
- To analyze and apply syntactic structures in writing

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

synthesis
perspective
argument
claim
counterclaim
concession
refutation

Literary Terms

voice
syntax
conflict
theme
thematic statement
allusion
symbol
image
figurative language

Contents

Activities

1.1	Previewing the Unit	4
1.2	Exploring Culture and Communication	5
1.3	Exploring Cultural Identity.....	8
	Informational Text: “What Is Cultural Identity?,” by Elise Trumbull and Maria Pacheco	
	Personal Essay: “Ethnic Hash,” by Patricia Williams	
1.4	Language and Writer’s Craft: Syntax	14
1.5	“Two Kinds” of Cultural Identity	17
	Novel: “Two Kinds,” from <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> , by Amy Tan	
1.6	Two Perspectives on Cultural Identity	27
	Biography: <i>Frida, a Biography of Frida Kahlo</i> , by Hayden Herrera	
	Art: <i>Self-Portrait on the Borderline Between Mexico and the United States</i> , by Frida Kahlo	
	>Introducing the Strategy: OPTIC	
	Poetry: “Legal Alien,” by Pat Mora	
1.7	Connecting Cultural Identity to Theme	34
	Memoir: “By Any Other Name,” by Santha Rama Rau	
1.8	Consulting with a Mentor (Text).....	41
	Interview/Essay: “Multiculturalism Explained in One Word: HAPA,” by Kristen Lee	
	Embedded Assessment 1: Writing About Cultural Identity	45
1.9	Previewing Embedded Assessment 2 and Preparing for a Writing Prompt	47
1.10	Colliding Worlds	50
	Essay: “Where Worlds Collide,” by Pico Iyer	
1.11	Perspectives on Heritage: Poetry	53
	Poetry: “My Mother Pieced Quilts,” by Teresa Palomo Acosta	
1.12	Perspectives on Heritage: Fiction	58
	Short Story: “Everyday Use,” by Alice Walker	
1.13	Perspectives on Heritage: Nonfiction	69
	Personal Essay: “Two Ways to Belong in America,” by Bharati Mukherjee	



1.14	Argumentation in “An Indian Father’s Plea”	74
	Essay: “An Indian Father’s Plea,” by Robert Lake	
1.15	Synthesis: Drafting Your Position	81
1.16	Synthesis: Presenting Your Position	83
	Embedded Assessment 2: Writing a Synthesis Paper	85

Language and Writer’s Craft

- Syntax (1.4)
- Colon and Semicolon (1.10)
- Phrases and Clauses (1.12)

Previewing the Unit

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Close Reading, Marking the Text, Think-Pair-Share, Summarizing, Paraphrasing, graphic organizer

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Preview the big ideas and the vocabulary for the unit.
- Identify and analyze the skills and knowledge required to complete Embedded Assessment 1 successfully.

Making Connections

In this unit, you will read poetry, short stories, and essays—all focusing on some element of cultural identity. What is your personal cultural identity, and how does it affect the way you see the world? Cultural perspectives are shaped by family, life experiences, and perceptions about the world around you. You will explore all of these as you prepare to write your reflective essay about your cultural identity.

Essential Questions

Based on your current knowledge, write your answers to these questions.

1. How do cultural experiences shape, impact, or influence our identity and perceptions?
2. How do we synthesize multiple sources of information into a cohesive argument?

Vocabulary Development

Go back to the Contents page and use a QHT strategy to analyze and evaluate your knowledge of the Academic Vocabulary and Literary Terms for the unit.

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 1

Read the following assignment for Embedded Assessment 1:

Your assignment is to write a reflective essay explaining your cultural identity.

Summarize in your own words what you will need to know to complete this assessment successfully. With your class, create a graphic organizer to represent the skills and knowledge you will need to complete the tasks identified in the Embedded Assessment. To help you complete your graphic organizer, be sure to review the criteria in the Scoring Guide on page 86.

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

In this unit, you will be exploring cultural identity. For your independent reading, find texts by authors who share your cultural ideas and make comparisons about shared experiences and experiences that are different.

Exploring Culture and Communication

ACTIVITY
1.2

Learning Targets

- Explore the concept of culture and the role it plays in personal perceptions.
- Analyze the communication process to develop collaborative discussion norms.

Defining Culture

1. When you see the word *culture*, what are your thoughts about what it means? Write your definition in the space below.

Culture is

2. Discuss your definition with a small group of peers. In the space below, record any new ideas you have about culture after your discussion.

3. What are some examples of culture? Create a word web around the word *Culture*, writing words or phrases that you associate with culture.



LEARNING STRATEGIES:

graphic organizer,
Discussion Groups,
Quickwrite, Word Sort,
Sharing and Responding

My Notes

Exploring Culture and Communication

My Notes

4. With these ideas about culture in mind, write down the impressions and associations evoked by the images your teacher shares with you.

Object/Image	My First Associations	Responses from Peers

5. Why did other students share some of your perceptions but differ with others?

6. In the box below, write five items you could bring to class tomorrow that would express something about your cultural identity. In the second column, write a description of what each item represents to you and your cultural connection (e.g., heritage, values, practices, experiences). Share some of your examples and how they connect to your culture in a class discussion.

Object	What do the objects reveal about you and your culture?

Writing Prompt: Explain how one of the items on your list reflects an aspect of your culture. Assume your reader has never seen the item. Be sure to:

- Vividly describe the object.
- Make a connection to your culture.
- Articulate the significance of the object to you.

Communicating Effectively

Our individual cultures affect the way we communicate. During this course, you will participate in discussions with partners and in groups. To make collaborative discussion groups productive, all members of a group need to communicate effectively as speakers and listeners.

7. What are the characteristics of effective communication?
8. What obstacles get in the way of effective communication, and how can we remove some of the barriers identified?
9. George Bernard Shaw once said, “The problem with communication ... is the *illusion* that it has been accomplished.” One of the goals of this unit is “to develop speaking and listening skills to communicate effectively” in collegial discussions. Identify two to three norms (set rules) you and your fellow classmates can follow to communicate effectively.

Class Norms

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Check Your Understanding

Explain why classroom communication norms are important for productive discussion.

My Notes

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Think-Pair-Share, Marking the Text, Word Maps, Discussion Groups

My Notes

Literary Terms

Voice is the way a writer or speaker uses words and tone to express ideas as well as the writer's persona or personality.

Learning Targets

- Compare and contrast how a theme or central idea of a text is developed in an academic and a literary nonfiction text.

Before Reading

1. Look at the picture on the opening page of this unit. What do you notice about the photo?

During Reading

2. Writers express their **voice** through their use of language. As you read the two texts in this activity, identify stylistic differences that establish one voice as academic and the other as informal.
3. As you read each text, underline or highlight information that helps to define the concept of cultural identity. Then use your Reader/Writer Notebook to consolidate a list of all the cultural terms and cultural elements introduced or discussed in the texts.

Informational Text

What Is Cultural Identity?

by Elise Trumbull and Maria Pacheco, Brown University

Children begin to develop a sense of identity as individuals and as members of groups from their earliest interactions with others (McAdoo, 1993; Sheets, 1999a). One of the most basic types of identity is ethnic identity, which entails an awareness of one's membership in a social group that has a common culture. The common culture may be marked by a shared language, history, geography, and (frequently) physical characteristics (Fishman, 1989; Sheets, 1999a).

Not all of these aspects need to be shared, however, for people to psychologically identify with a particular ethnic group. Cultural identity is a broader term: people from multiple ethnic backgrounds may identify as belonging to the same culture. For example, in the Caribbean and South America, several ethnic groups may share a broader, common, Latin culture. Social groups existing within one nation may share a common language and a broad cultural identity but have distinct ethnic identities associated with a different language and history. Ethnic groups in the United States are examples of this ...

Definitions of Culture and the Invisibility of One's Own Culture

Anthropologists and other scholars continue to debate the meaning of this term. García (1994) refers to culture as

[T]he system of understanding characteristics of that individual's society, or of some subgroup within that society. This system of understanding includes values, beliefs, notions about acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and other socially constructed ideas that members of the society are taught are "true." (p. 51)

Geertz (1973) asserts that members of cultures go about their daily lives within shared webs of meaning. If we link García and Geertz's definitions, we can imagine culture as invisible webs composed of values, beliefs, ideas about appropriate behavior, and socially constructed truths.

One may ask, why is culture made up of invisible webs? Most of the time, our own cultures are invisible to us (Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1996; Philips, 1983), yet they are the context within which we operate and make sense of the world. When we encounter a culture that is different from our own, one of the things we are faced with is a set of beliefs that manifest themselves in behaviors that differ from our own.

In this way, we often talk about other people's cultures, and not so much about our own. Our own culture is often hidden from us, and we frequently describe it as "the way things are." Nonetheless, one's beliefs and actions are not any more natural or biologically predetermined than any other group's set of beliefs and actions; they have emerged from the ways one's own group has dealt with and interpreted the particular conditions it has faced. As conditions change, so do cultures; thus, cultures are considered to be dynamic.

Individual Differences Within Cultures and the Dynamic Nature of Culture

Individual cultural identity presents yet another layer of complexity. Members of the same culture vary widely in their beliefs and actions. How can we explain this phenomenon? The argument for a "distributive model" of culture addresses the relationship between culture and personality (García, 1994; Schwartz, 1978). This argument posits that individuals select beliefs, values, and ideas that guide their actions from a larger set of cultural beliefs, values, and ideas. In most cases, we do not consciously pick and choose attributes from the total set; rather, the conditions and events in our individual lives lead us to favor some over others. In summarizing Spiro's concept of "cultural heritage," García (1994) draws a distinction between "cultural heritage" and "cultural inheritance." Cultural heritage refers to what society as a whole possesses, and a cultural inheritance is what each individual possesses. In other words, each individual inherits some (but not all) of the cultural heritage of the group.

We all have unique identities that we develop within our cultures, but these identities are not fixed or static. This is the reason that stereotypes do not hold up: no two individuals from any culture are exactly alike. While living inside a culture allows members to become familiar with the total cultural heritage of that society, no individual actually internalizes the entire cultural heritage. In fact, it would be impossible for any one person to possess a society's entire cultural heritage; there are inevitably complex and contradictory values, beliefs, and ideas within that heritage, a result of the conditions and events that individuals and groups experience. For example, arranged marriage has long been a cultural practice in India based on the belief that the families of potential spouses best know who would make a desirable match. More and more frequently, however, individuals reject the practice of arranged marriage; this is partly due to the sense of independence from family brought on by both men's and

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is meant by the "Invisibility of one's own culture"?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Explain the difference between "cultural heritage" and "cultural inheritance."

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Consider the authors' use of the words "static" and "dynamic" in this paragraph to explain the concept of cultural identity. What can the reader conclude about the authors' point, and how does that relate to cultural identity?

Exploring Cultural Identity

pick up the

My Notes

women's participation in a rapidly developing job market. The changing experience of work is shifting cultural attitudes towards family and marriage. These different experiences and the new values, beliefs, and ideas they produce contribute to the dynamic nature of culture.

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After Reading

4. Using the My Notes space, write an objective summary of each section of this text. How does each section contribute to the development of ideas about cultural identity? Be sure to note how ideas are developed and refined throughout the text.
5. What is your understanding of cultural identity based on this text?
6. Reflect on invisible aspects of your culture. What differences exist between you and your culture?
7. What are some examples of your culture? Explain how these aspects are dynamic.

Personal Essay

Ethnic Hash

by Patricia J. Williams from *Transition*

Recently, I was invited to a book party. The book was about pluralism. “Bring an hors d’oeuvre representing your ethnic heritage,” said the hostess, innocently enough. Her request threw me into a panic. Do I even have an ethnicity? I wondered. It was like suddenly discovering you might not have a belly button. I tell you, I had to go to the dictionary. What were the flavors, accents, and linguistic trills that were passed down to me over the ages? What are the habits, customs, and common traits of the social group by which I have been guided in life—and how do I cook them?

My last name is from a presumably Welsh plantation owner. My mother chose my first name from a dictionary of girls’ names. “It didn’t sound like Edna or Myrtle,” she says, as though that explains anything. I have two mostly Cherokee grandparents. There’s a Scottish great-grandfather, a French-Canadian great uncle, and a bunch of other relations no one ever talks about. Not one of them left recipes. Of course the ancestors who have had the most tangible influence on my place in the world were probably the West Africans, and I can tell you right off that I haven’t the faintest idea what they do for hors d’oeuvres in West Africa (although I have this Senegalese friend who always serves the loveliest, poufiest little fish mousse things in puff pastries that look, well, totally French).

Ethnic recipes throw me into the same sort of quandary as that proposed “interracial” box on the census form: the concept seems so historically vague, so cheerfully open-ended, as to be virtually meaningless. Everyone I know has at least three different kinds of cheese in their fondue. I suppose I could serve myself up as something like Tragic Mulatta Souffle, except that I’ve never gotten the hang of souffles. (Too much fussing, too little reward.) So as far as this world’s concerned, I’ve always thought of myself as just plain black. Let’s face it: however much my categories get jumbled when I hang out at my favorite kosher sushi spot, it’s the little black core of me that moves through the brave new world of Manhattan as I hail a cab, rent an apartment, and apply for a job.

Although it’s true, I never have tried hailing a cab as an *ethnic*. ...

So let me see. My father is from the state of Georgia. When he cooks, which is not often, the results are distinctly Southern. His specialties are pork chops and pies; he makes the good-luck black-eyed peas on New Year’s. His recipes are definitely black in a regional sense, since most blacks in the United States until recently lived in the Southeast. He loves pig. He uses lard.

My mother’s family is also black, but relentlessly steeped in the New England tradition of hard-winter cuisine. One of my earliest memories is of my mother borrowing my father’s screwdriver so she could pry open a box of salt cod. In those days, cod came in wooden boxes, nailed shut, and you really had to hack around the edges to loosen the lid. Cod-from-a-box had to be soaked overnight. The next day you mixed it with boiled potatoes and fried it in Crisco. Then you served it with baked beans in a little brown pot, with salt pork and molasses. There was usually

**WORD CONNECTIONS****Foreign Words**

Hors d’oeuvre is a French term that is often used to describe appetizers served before a meal.

My Notes**KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

What does the metaphorical title suggest about Williams’s cultural identity? How else does she use food as a central idea to explore the balance between her cultural heritage and her cultural inheritance?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Williams’s style is relatively informal, creating a casual, engaging voice. What rhetorical strategies does she use that distinguish this from an academic voice?

Exploring Cultural Identity

pick up the

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Tone is the writer's or speaker's attitude toward a subject. What tone does Williams establish in the first few paragraphs? What stylistic choices contribute to this tone? How and where does the tone shift during the essay? Or does it?

some shredded cabbage as well, with carrots for color. And of course there was piccalilli—every good homemaker had piccalilli on hand. Oh, and hot rolls served with homemade Concord grape jelly. Or maybe just brown bread and butter. These were the staples of Saturday night supper.

We had baked chicken on Sundays, boiled chicken other days. My mother has recipes for how to boil a chicken: a whole range of them, with and without bay leaf, onions, potatoes, carrots. With boiled chicken, life can never be dull.

The truth is we liked watermelon in our family. But the only times we ate it—well, those were secret moments, private moments, guilty, even shameful moments, never unburdened by the thought of what might happen if our white neighbors saw us enjoying the primeval fruit. We were always on display when it came to things stereotypical. Fortunately, my mother was never handier in the kitchen than when under political pressure. She would take that odd, thin-necked implement known as a melon-baller and gouge out innocent pink circlets and serve them to us, like little mounds of faux sorbet, in fluted crystal goblets. The only time we used those goblets was to disguise watermelon, in case someone was peering idly through the windows, lurking about in racial judgment.

I don't remember my parents having many dinner parties, but for those special occasions requiring actual hors d'oeuvres, there were crackers and cream cheese, small sandwiches with the crusts cut off, Red Devil deviled ham with mayonnaise and chopped dill pickles. And where there were hors d'oeuvres, there had to be dessert on the other end to balance things out. Slices of home-made cake and punch. "Will you take coffee or tea?" my mother would ask shyly, at the proud culmination of such a meal. ...

QUADROON SURPRISE

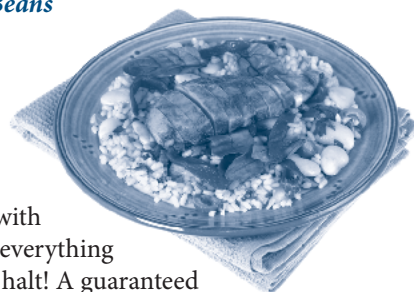
Some have said that too much salt cod too early in life hobbles the culinary senses forever. I have faith that this is not the case, and that any disadvantage can be overcome with time and a little help from Williams-Sonoma. Having grown up and learned that you are what you eat, I have worked to broaden my horizons and cultivate my tastes. I entertain global gastronomic aspirations, and my palate knows no bounds. After all, if Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben¹ can Just Get Over It, who am I to cling to the limitations of the past? Yes, I have learned to love my inner ethnic child. And so, I leave you with a recipe for the Twenty-first Century:

Chicken with Spanish Rice and Not-Just-Black Beans

- *Boil the chicken*
- *Boil the rice*
- *Boil the beans*

Throw in as many exotic-sounding spices and mysterious roots as you can lay your hands on—go on, use your imagination!—and garnish with those fashionable little wedges of lime that make everything look vaguely Thai. Watch those taxis screech to a halt! A guaranteed crowd-pleaser that can be reheated or rehashed generation after generation.

Coffee? Tea?



¹ African American advertising icons that some consider to be offensive.

After Reading

8. **Group Discussion:** With your group, discuss how Patricia Williams represents her cultural identity in her essay.
9. When you hear the term *academic voice*, what comes to mind? What are some conventions and stylistic features you associate with this style of writing?
10. Many readers associate academic voice with “dull, objective, and voiceless,” but it need not be that way. Revisit “What Is Cultural Identity?” to identify specific stylistic techniques the authors use to make the text both engaging and academic.
11. In contrast to academic voice, many writing situations and genres call for a more informal voice. Reread the opening paragraph of “Ethnic Hash,” and identify specific stylistic elements that establish a less formal though still highly literate voice.

Writing Prompt: Choose a characteristic of culture and use it to explain your cultural identity. Be sure to:

- Use an informal voice to engage your audience.
- Develop your response with vivid details and descriptions.
- Use diction and punctuation to create an appropriate tone.

Check Your Understanding

Annotate your writing to identify several stylistic choices that contribute to your informal voice.

My Notes

LEARNING STRATEGIES: Think-Pair-Share

My Notes

Literary Terms

Syntax refers to the arrangement of words and the order of grammatical elements in a sentence or the way in which words are put together to make meaningful elements, such as phrases, clauses, and sentences.

Learning Targets

- Identify different types of phrases and use them in writing.
- Revise writing to include phrases and parenthetical expressions.

Understanding Phrases

Consider sounds as the building blocks of language. Combined, they create words, or diction. When writers move those words around, they are playing with **syntax**. One essential element of syntax is the phrase. Understanding what a phrase is, how to punctuate it, and when to use this tool in your writing will help you make informed decisions about your syntax.

Phrases clarify meaning by adding information or by describing the subject, the action, or other nouns in the sentence. Standing alone, a phrase is not a complete sentence. Three types of phrases include *gerund phrases*, *participial phrases*, and *infinitive phrases*. Review their definitions in your Grammar Handbook, marking the text to highlight their function and the proper method of punctuating them within a sentence.

Highlight the gerund, participial, or infinitive phrases in the following sentences from the texts from this unit. Note the punctuation of each phrase. Then label the type of phrase.

1. "able to sit in a paneled office/drafting memos in smooth English,/able to order in fluent Spanish/at a Mexican restaurant ..."—Pat Mora, "Legal Alien"
2. "They rode away through our large garden, still bright green from the rains, and we turned back into the twilight of the house and the sound of fans whispering in every room."—Santha Rau, "By Any Other Name"
3. "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."—Amy Tan, "Two Kinds"
4. "Impressed with her, they worshiped the well-turned phrase, the cute shape, the scalding humor that erupted like bubbles in lye."—Alice Walker, "Everyday Use"
5. "The lessons were mostly concerned with reading and writing. ..."—Santha Rau, "By Any Other Name"

The beauty of recognizing types of phrases in writing rests in your ability to incorporate those syntactic structures in your own writing. Choose three of the previous sentences and use them as models to write original sentences using gerund, participle, and infinitive phrases.

1.

2.

3.

Prepositional and Appositive Phrases

Phrases come in more shapes and sizes than gerunds, participles, and infinitives. Prepositional phrases and appositives also add precision to writing; in fact, they provide critical information that helps us combine sentences rather than depend on multiple simple sentences.

Example: Sophomores take English. They study world cultures.

Revised with prepositional phrases: Sophomores study world cultures *in English class*.

Example: The study of grammar remains a critical skill. It is a lost art.

Revised with appositive phrase: The study of grammar, *a lost art*, remains a critical skill.

Find prepositional and appositive phrases in the following sentences, and then, using the mentor sentence as a model, practice writing sentences with those types of phrases.

1. “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.”
—Amy Tan, “Two Kinds”

Practice:

2. “I looked briefly at the children’s drawings pinned to the wall, and then concentrated on a lizard clinging to the ledge of the high, barred window behind the teacher’s head.”—Santha Rau, “By Any Other Name”

Practice:

My Notes

Language and Writer's Craft: Syntax

My Notes

Parenthetical Expressions

Parenthetical expressions can be effectively used to add **voice** to writing as they add editorial comments to the text. When you incorporate parenthetical expressions in your writing, set them apart from the rest of the sentence by placing commas around them. Practice writing your own sentences by emulating the style of the examples below.

1. "The headmistress had been in India, *I suppose*, fifteen years or so, but she still smiled her helpless inability to cope with Indian names."—Santha Rau, "By Any Other Name"

Practice:

2. "I tell you, I had to go to the dictionary."—Patricia Williams, "Ethnic Hash"

Practice:

Check Your Understanding

Revisit a piece of your writing from this unit and revise it to include various types of phrases, or revisit a reading passage from this unit to identify phrases that might be present. Highlight and label the phrases you find.

“Two Kinds” of Cultural Identity

ACTIVITY
1.5

Learning Target

- Analyze how two characters interact and develop over the course of a text to explain how conflict is used to advance the theme of a text.

Before Reading

Consider the following issues. As your teacher reads each statement, go to the area of the room that most corresponds to your response to the statement.

- My family’s cultural heritage is an ethnic hash.
 - My parents actively help me appreciate our family’s cultural heritage.
 - I sometimes feel in conflict with my parents because we define our cultural identities differently.
1. Brainstorm a list of factors that explain why you and your peers may differ strongly in your responses to these statements. What factors shape individual **perspectives** on cultural issues?

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Discussion Groups, Marking the Text, Brainstorming, graphic organizer, Questioning the Text

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

A **perspective** is an individual’s view or outlook on a topic.

My Notes

During Reading

2. As you read Amy Tan’s short story “Two Kinds,” look for evidence of **conflict** between two generations and two distinct perspectives about culture. Mark the text for answers to these questions:
 - What is the reason for the conflict?
 - How is it resolved?
 - How does the conflict connect to the meaning of the work as a whole?

Literary Terms

A **conflict** is a struggle or problem in a story. The central conflict of a fictional text sets the story in motion. An *internal conflict* occurs when a character struggles between opposing needs or desires or emotions within his or her own mind. An *external conflict* occurs when a character struggles against an outside force. This force may be another character, a societal expectation, or something in the physical world.

"Two Kinds" of Cultural Identity

pick up
fence

My Notes

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Tan was born in California in 1952, several years after her parents left their native China. A writer from a very young age, Tan experienced difficulty early in life resulting from the untimely deaths of her father and brother, a rebellious adolescence, and the expectations of others. Educated at a Switzerland boarding school as well as at San Jose State and Berkeley, Tan ultimately became a writer of fiction. She has written numerous award-winning novels, including her most famous *The Joy Luck Club*, from which "Two Kinds" is an excerpt. Tan resides in San Francisco with her husband and two dogs, Bubba and Lilli.

Novel Excerpt

Two Kinds

by Amy Tan

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is the relationship between Jing-mei and her mother at this point in the narrative? What textual evidence supports your response?

Chunk 1

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 liked 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.”

Chunk 2

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 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.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does Jing-mei’s perspective change in this section? What explains this change?



“Two Kinds” of Cultural Identity

GRAMMAR & USAGE Syntax

Notice the arrangement of words in the sentences beginning with “She got up ...” through the rest of the paragraph. What effect do the short, abrupt sentences have on your perception of the mother?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What conflicts are apparent in this conversation? What are the reasons for the conflicts?

Chunk 3

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.”



Chunk 4

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 than I thought, 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 chord, 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 rat 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."

**My Notes**

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the relationship between Jing-mei's mother and Auntie Lindo contribute to the conflict between Jing-mei and her mother in the story?

“Two Kinds” of Cultural Identity

pick up the

My Notes

“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.

Chunk 5

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. By 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 listened 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 the mother whispered, “Well, she certainly tried.”

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the narrator’s tone shift during this scene?

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 moustache who did a magic show and juggled flaming hoops while riding a unicycle. The breasted girl with white makeup who sang an aria from *Madama Butterfly* and got an honorable mention. And the eleven-year-old boy who won 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.

Chunk 6

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.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Skilled writers take poetic license and break rules of proper syntax. Why do you think Tan uses fragments to describe the acts in the show?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Colons and the word *but* often signal a shift in literature. What shift is happening here? How is it related to the central conflict in the story?



“Two Kinds” of Cultural Identity

pick up fast

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

To what is “Two Kinds” referring here? What conflicting perspectives on cultural identity are evident in this scene?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the sentence beginning “Unlike my mother, I did not ...” connect to the first paragraph of the story? Does this suggest that the conflict in the story is primarily internal or external?

“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 were 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 to 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.

Chunk 7

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.

For 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.

Chunk 8

After I had the piano tuned, I opened the lid and touched the keys. It sounded even richer than 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.

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.

What is significant about Jing-mei's discovery in the final paragraphs? What does it reveal about her perspective now? Does this bring resolution to the conflict(s) in the story or not?

My Notes

[illegible]

“Two Kinds” of Cultural Identity

pick up the

My Notes

Literary Terms

The **theme** of a work is the writer’s central idea or main message about life. The theme may be either implicit or explicit. A **thematic statement** is an interpretive statement articulating the central meaning of the text.

After Reading

3. Review your notes about the conflicts in “Two Kinds.” Complete the following graphic organizer analyzing Jim-mei’s internal conflict and her external conflict with her mother.

Mom’s perspective on cultural identity	
Jing-mei’s perspective on cultural identity	
The contrast with Waverly and Auntie Lindo	
How do the conflicts connect with the meaning of the work as a whole?	

Writing Prompt: Explain how Tan uses the central conflict between mother and daughter to develop the theme of the work. Be sure to:

- Build your essay around a clear focus (her perspective toward her cultural identity, toward her mother, toward America).
- Support your response with quotes and details from the text.
- Use an academic voice.

Check Your Understanding

How can the conflict between characters develop the theme of a work? With your group members, generate a list of possible themes and then craft a thematic statement for the theme you think is most central to the story.

Two Perspectives on Cultural Identity

ACTIVITY
1.6

Learning Targets

- Analyze a particular point of view regarding a cultural experience expressed in literature and art.
- Compare and contrast the representation of a subject in different media.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Close Reading,
Metacognitive Markers,
Discussion Groups, OPTIC

Before Reading

1. In preparation for a discussion on the life, art, and culture of Frida Kahlo, watch a short PBS film clip, *The Life and Times of Frida*. Take notes on the key ideas and details that help you understand Kahlo's life, art, and cultural identity.

During Reading

2. As you read a brief introductory excerpt from Hayden Herrera's biography, *Frida, a Biography of Frida Kahlo*, use metacognitive markers to mark the text. As you mark the text, focus on the details emphasized that help you understand Kahlo's life, art, and cultural identity.

My Notes

Biography

From *Frida, a Biography of* *Frida Kahlo*

by Hayden Herrera

In April, 1953, less than a year before her death at the age of forty-seven, Frida Kahlo had her first major exhibition of paintings in her native Mexico. By that time her health had so deteriorated that no one expected her to attend. But at 8:00 P.M., just after the doors of Mexico City's Gallery of Contemporary Art opened to the public, an ambulance drew up. The artist, dressed in her favorite Mexican costume, was carried on a hospital stretcher to her four-poster bed, which had been installed in the gallery that afternoon. The bed was bedecked as she liked it, with photographs of her husband, the great muralist Diego Rivera, and of her political heroes. Papier-mache skeletons dangled from the canopy, and a mirror affixed to the underside of the canopy reflected her joyful though ravaged face. One by one, two hundred friends and admirers greeted Frida Kahlo, then formed a circle around the bed and sang Mexican ballads with her until well past midnight.

The occasion encapsulates as much as it culminates this extraordinary woman's career. It testifies, in fact, to many of the qualities that marked Kahlo as a person and as a painter: her gallantry and indomitable *alegria* in the face of physical suffering; her insistence on surprise and specificity; her peculiar love of spectacle as a mask to preserve privacy and personal dignity. Above all, the opening of her exhibition dramatized Frida Kahlo's central subject—herself. Most of the some two hundred paintings she produced in her abbreviated career were self-portraits. ...



KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does this opening image of reveal the biographer's attitude toward Kahlo?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Using context, determine the meaning of "*alegria*," as it applies to Kahlo's personality.

Two Perspectives on Cultural Identity

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Choose a line of text that best characterizes the biographer's opinion of Kahlo's art and explain your understanding of the opinion.

My Notes

She dressed in flamboyant clothes, greatly preferring floor-length native Mexican costumes to haute couture. Wherever she went she caused a sensation. One New Yorker remembers that children used to follow her in the streets. "Where's the circus?" they would ask; Frida Kahlo did not mind a bit. ... Frida flaunted her *alegría* the way a peacock spreads its tail, but it camouflaged a deep sadness and inwardness, even self-obsession.

"I paint my own reality," she said. "The only thing I know is that I paint because I need to, and I paint always whatever passes through my head, without any other consideration." What passed through Frida Kahlo's head and into her art was some of the most original and dramatic imagery of the twentieth century. Painting herself bleeding, weeping, cracked open, she transmuted her pain into art with remarkable frankness tempered by humor and fantasy. Always specific and personal, deep-probing rather than comprehensive in scope, Frida's autobiography in paint has peculiar intensity and strength—a strength that can hold the viewer in an uncomfortably tight grip.

The majority of her paintings are small—twelve by fifteen inches is not unusual; their scale suits the intimacy of her subject matter. With very small sable brushes, which she kept immaculately clean, she would carefully lay down delicate strokes of color, bringing the image into precise focus, making fantasy persuasive through the rhetoric of realism. ...

In the fall of 1977, the Mexican government turned over the largest and most prestigious galleries in the Palace of Fine Arts to a retrospective exhibition of Frida Kahlo's works. It was a strange sort of homage, for it seemed to celebrate the exotic personality and story of the artist rather more than it honored her art. The grand, high-ceilinged rooms were dominated by huge blow-up photographs of incidents in Frida's life, which made the jewel-like paintings look almost like punctuation points.

The art—the legend Frida herself had created—won out in the end, however. Because her paintings were so tiny in relation to the photographs and to the exhibition space, the spectator had to stand within a few feet of each one to focus on it at all. And at that proximity their strange magnetism exerted its pull. Taken from separate, poignant moments in her life, each was like a smothered cry, a nugget of emotion so dense that one felt it might explode. ...

After Reading

3. Organize your notes from both texts (the film clip and the informational text) so that you can come to the discussion prepared with well-reasoned, text-based responses to address Kahlo's life, art, and cultural identity.

Discussion Groups: What did you learn about Frida Kahlo's life, art, and cultural identity? What details are emphasized in each text to support your interpretation of this artist and how she depicts her cultural identity in her work? In your discussion, be sure to:

- Adhere to the class norms for discussions.
- Present thoughtful, well-reasoned ideas.
- Use textual evidence to support responses to questions or statements.

In 1930 Frida Kahlo's husband, Diego Rivera, received several commissions to paint murals in the United States, causing them to move from Mexico to this country. After three years in the United States, Frida was homesick and longed to return to Mexico. This tension between living in one world and longing to be in another inspired her painting *Self-Portrait on the Borderline Between Mexico and the United States*.



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OPTIC is an acronym for overview, parts, title, interrelationships, and conclusion. OPTIC is a strategy for analyzing visual texts—including paintings, photographs, advertisements, maps, charts, or graphs—and developing an interpretation regarding the meaning or theme(s) of the text.

- ## My Notes

Two Perspectives on Cultural Identity

	<p>Title of Piece: _____</p> <p>Artist: _____ Type of Artwork: _____</p>
Overview	<p>Look at the artwork for at least 10 seconds. Generate questions, e.g., What is the subject? What strikes you as interesting, odd, etc.? What is happening?</p>
Parts	<p>Look closely at the artwork, making note of important elements and details. Ask additional questions, such as the following: Who are the figures? What is the setting and time period? What symbols are present? What historical information would aid understanding of this piece?</p>
Title	<p>Consider what the title and any written elements of the text suggest about meaning. How does the title relate to what is portrayed?</p>
Interrelationships	<p>Look for connections between and among the title, caption, and the parts of the art. How are the different elements related?</p>
Conclusion	<p>Form a conclusion about the meaning/theme of the text. Remember the questions you asked when you first examined it. Be prepared to support your conclusions with evidence.</p>

5. How did the information about the artist's life help you to understand the artwork?
6. What is the conflict presented in the artwork? Provide examples from the text to support your analysis.
7. How does Frida Kahlo's painting *Self-Portrait on the Borderline Between Mexico and the United States* represent her cultural identity? Write an interpretive response and provide examples from the text, including Kahlo's **symbolism**, to support your analysis.

Literary Terms

A **symbol** is anything (object, animal, event, person, or place) that represents itself but also stands for something else on a figurative level.

My Notes

Before Reading

8. You will next read the poem "Legal Alien." Prior to reading the poem, define the following words:
Legal:
Alien:
9. Based on the title and the information about the author, what do you predict is the conflict expressed in the poem?

During Reading

10. Every writer has a unique voice. You have learned that **voice** is the distinctive use of a writer's language, achieved in part through diction and syntax, to convey persona or personality. The term *voice* is also used to express cultural identity. Read the poem several times and use metacognitive markers to examine the conflict, voice, and cultural identity emphasized in the text.

Two Perspectives on Cultural Identity

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

As you saw in Frida Kahlo's artwork, **juxtaposition** is the arrangement of two or more things for the purpose of comparison. Identify places where Mora juxtaposes two contrasting views, situations, or actions. How does she use this technique throughout the poem to create a sense of the speaker's conflict with others—or her conflicted sense of self?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does Pat Mora represent cultural identity in this poem?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pat Mora is a poet, writer, and social activist whose works explore issues of heritage and social inequality. An avid traveler, Mora wrote *Communion* (1991) about her experiences traveling in Cuba, India, and Pakistan. A year later, she published her first children's book about a beloved aunt who taught her to appreciate her own Mexican American heritage.

Poetry

Legal Alien

by Pat Mora

- Bi-lingual, Bi-cultural,
able to slip from "How's life?"
to "Me'stan volviendo loca,"
able to sit in a paneled office
- 5 drafting memos in smooth English,
able to order in fluent Spanish
at a Mexican restaurant,
American but hyphenated,
viewed by Anglos as perhaps exotic,
- 10 perhaps inferior, definitely different,
viewed by Mexicans as alien,
(their eyes say, "You may speak
Spanish but you're not like me")
an American to Mexicans
- 15 a Mexican to Americans
a handy token
sliding back and forth
between the fringes of both worlds
by smiling
- 20 by masking the discomfort
of being pre-judged
Bi-laterally.

After Reading

12. Discussion Groups: Share your annotated poem within your small group and address the following questions. Remember to follow the class norms for meaningful group discussions.

Create a diagram to synthesize information about the art and the poem as you answer these questions:

- What is emphasized in the art?
- What is emphasized in the poem?
- What ideas and images are present in the poem but absent from the art?
- What ideas and images are present in the art but absent from the poem?

13. Choose a common subject from Kahlo's painting and Mora's poem. Compare and contrast the ideas presented on that subject (e.g., cultural identity) in the artwork and the poem. What is similar and what is different? How does each person—artist and author—treat the subject?

Check Your Understanding

Now that you have studied the artwork and the poem, choose a medium of interest to you and respond to one of the prompts below.

Artistic Prompt: What would a self-portrait say about your perspective on your own cultural identity? Create an artistic work that portrays aspects of this identity. You might revisit your Perception Box work from Activity 1.2 as you consider objects to include in your self-portrait. Also, consider techniques and specific images you can use as evidence to depict and/or symbolize potential conflicts that arise when various aspects of your culture collide. Because artwork, like literature, speaks to an audience, keep in mind the message you want your audience to “read” as they view your work.

Creative Writing Prompt: Write a poem emulating the style of Pat Mora and exploring your perspective on a key component of your cultural identity. Be sure to:

- Focus on a specific culturally based conflict, which may be internal, external, or both.
- Structure the poem to use juxtaposition for effect at least once.
- Use diction, syntax, and imagery to present your own voice.

My Notes

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Predicting, Think-Pair-Share, Questioning the Text, Discussing, graphic organizer

My Notes

Learning Target

- Analyze cultural elements in a memoir in order to infer how cultural identity is central to the meaning of a work.

Before Reading

1. What do you already know about India, or *Bharatavarsha*, as its people refer to it in the Hindi language?

2. In what context have you heard the name *Gandhi*? To whom would you compare his methods and his contributions to society? After learning some key facts about India's history and Gandhi's role in restoring independence, predict the internal and external conflicts of an Indian child growing up during time of the nonviolent protest movement led by Gandhi. Think-Pair-Share a response with your partner.

During Reading

3. As you read the memoir "By Any Other Name" by Santha Rama Rau, mark the text for answers to the following questions about conflict:
 - What cultural elements are described that reveal a sense of the narrator's cultural identity?
 - What are the reasons for the conflict?
 - How are the conflicts resolved?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Santha Rama Rau was born in Madras, India, to politically active parents. She was the first Indian to be accepted at Wellesley College in the United States, where she graduated with honors in 1944. She became an instructor at Sarah Lawrence College and a freelance writer. Her short story “By Any Other Name” is widely studied in high schools and colleges.

Memoir

By Any Other Name

by Santha Rama Rau

At the Anglo-Indian day school¹ in Zorinabad² to which my sister and I were sent when she was eight and I was five and a half, they changed our names. On the first day of school, a hot, windless morning of a north Indian September, we stood in the headmistress’s study and she said, “Now you’re the *new* girls. What are your names?”

My sister answered for us. “I am Premila, and she”—nodding in my direction—“is Santha.”

The headmistress had been in India, I suppose, fifteen years or so, but she still smiled her helpless inability to cope with Indian names. Her rimless half-glasses glittered, and the precarious bun on the top of her head trembled as she shook her head. “Oh, my dears, those are much too hard for me. Suppose we give you pretty English names.

“Wouldn’t that be more jolly? Let’s see, now—Pamela for you, I think.” She shrugged in a baffled way at my sister. “That’s as close as I can get. And for *you*,” she said to me, “how about Cynthia? Isn’t that nice?”

My sister was always less easily intimidated than I was, and while she kept a stubborn silence, I said, “Thank you,” in a very tiny voice.

We had been sent to that school because my father, among his responsibilities as an officer of the civil service, had a tour of duty to perform in the villages around that steamy little provincial town, where he had his headquarters at that time. He used to make his shorter inspection tours on horseback, and a week before, in the stale heat of a typically post-monsoon day, we had waved good-by to him and a little procession—an assistant, a secretary, two bearers³, and the man to look after the bedding rolls and luggage. They rode away through our large garden, still bright green from the rains, and we turned back into the twilight of the house and the sound of fans whispering in every room.

¹ The *Anglo-Indian day school* was a non-boarding school with British administrators.

² *Zorinabad* is a village in northern India.

³ *Bearers* carry heavy loads of materials and supplies.

**KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

Identify the diction that gives evidence of a developing conflict between the girls and the headmistress.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What mood is created by the participial phrase “whispering in every room”?

Connecting Cultural Identity to Theme

GRAMMAR & USAGE Parallel Structure

Writers use parallel structure at the word, phrase, or sentence level. Notice the parallel structure in the underlined sentence. The clauses sound like steps (1, 2, 3) that the girls need to take to start school. They have a “matter of fact” tone to them, which belies the importance of leaving behind their language and religion.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What elements of culture are referenced in the story? How do these contribute to our understanding of the narrator’s confused sense of cultural identity during the scene?

Up to then, my mother had refused to send Premila to school in the British-run establishments of that time, because, she used to say, “You can bury a dog’s tail for seven years and it still comes out curly, and you can take a Britisher away from his home for a lifetime and he still remains insular.” The examinations and degrees from entirely Indian schools were not, in those days, considered valid. In my case, the question had never come up, and probably never would have come up if Mother’s extraordinary good health had not broken down. For the first time in my life, she was not able to continue the lessons she had been giving us every morning. So our Hindi⁴ books were put away, the stories of the Lord Krishna as a little boy were left in mid-air, and we were sent to the Anglo-Indian school.

That first day at school is still, when I think of it, a remarkable one. At that age, if one’s name is changed, one develops a curious form of dual personality. Accordingly, I followed the thin, erect back of the headmistress down the veranda to my classroom feeling, at most, a passing interest in what was going to happen to me in this strange, new atmosphere of School.

The building was Indian in design, with wide verandas opening onto a central courtyard, but Indian verandas are usually whitewashed, with stone floors. These, in the tradition of British schools, were painted dark brown and had matting on the floors. It gave a feeling of extra intensity to the heat.

I suppose there were about a dozen Indian children in the school—which contained perhaps forty children in all—and four of them were in my class. They were all sitting at the back of the room, and I went to join them. I sat next to a small, solemn girl who didn’t smile at me. She had long, glossy black braids and wore a cotton dress, but she still kept on her Indian jewelry—a gold chain around her neck, thin gold bracelets, and tiny ruby studs in her ears. Like most Indian children, she had a rim of black kohl⁵ around her eyes. The cotton dress should have looked strange, but all I could think of was that I should ask my mother if I couldn’t wear a dress to school, too, instead of my Indian clothes.

I can’t remember too much about the proceedings in class that day, except for the beginning. The teacher pointed to me and asked me to stand up. “Now, dear, tell the class your name.”

I said nothing. “Come along,” she said, frowning slightly. “What’s your name, dear?” “I don’t know,” I said, finally.



⁴ Hindi is the official language of India.

⁵ Kohl is a dark powder used as eye makeup in the Middle East and India.

The English children in the front of the class—there were about eight or ten of them—giggled and twisted around in their chairs to look at me. I sat down quickly and opened my eyes very wide, hoping in that way to dry them off. The little girl with the braids put out her hand and very lightly touched my arm. She still didn't smile.

Most of that morning I was rather bored. I looked briefly at the children's drawings pinned to the wall, and then concentrated on a lizard clinging to the ledge of the high, barred window behind the teacher's head. Occasionally it would shoot out its long yellow tongue for a fly, and then it would rest, with its eyes closed and its belly palpitating as though it were swallowing several times quickly. The lessons were mostly concerned with reading and writing and simple numbers—things that my mother had already taught me—and I paid very little attention. The teacher wrote on the easel blackboard words like “bat” and “cat,” which seemed babyish to me; only “apple” was new and incomprehensible.

When it was time for the lunch recess, I followed the girl with braids out onto the veranda. There the children from the other classes were assembled. I saw Premila at once and ran over to her, as she had charge of our lunchbox. The children were all opening packages and sitting down to eat sandwiches. Premila and I were the only ones who had Indian food—thin wheat chapatis,⁶ some vegetable curry,⁷ and a bottle of buttermilk. Premila thrust half of it into my hand and whispered fiercely that I should go and sit with my class, because that was what the others seemed to be doing.

The enormous black eyes of the little Indian girl from my class looked at my food longingly, so I offered her some. But she only shook her head and plowed her way solemnly through her sandwiches.

I was very sleepy after lunch, because at home we always took a siesta. It was usually a pleasant time of day, with the bedroom darkened against the harsh afternoon sun, the drifting off into sleep with the sound of Mother's voice reading a story in one's mind, and, finally, the shrill, fussy voice of the ayah⁸ waking one for tea.

At school, we rested for a short time on low, folding cots on the veranda, and then we were expected to play games. During the hot part of the afternoon we played indoors, and after the shadows had begun to lengthen and the slight breeze of the evening had come up we moved outside to the wide courtyard.

I had never really grasped the system of competitive games. At home, whenever we played tag or guessing games, I was always allowed to “win”—“because,” Mother used to tell Premila, “she is the youngest, and we have to allow for that.” I had often heard her say it, and it seemed quite reasonable to me, but the result was that I had no clear idea of what “winning” meant.

When we played twos-and-threes⁹ that afternoon at school, in accordance with my training, I let one of the small English boys catch me, but was naturally rather puzzled when the other children did not return the courtesy. I ran about for what seemed like hours without ever catching anyone, until it was time for school to close. Much later I learned that my attitude was called “not being a good sport,” and I stopped allowing myself to be caught, but it was not for years that I really learned the spirit of the thing.

⁶ *Chapatis* are thin griddlecakes of unleavened bread eaten in northern India.

⁷ *Vegetable curry* is a pungent dish of vegetables cooked in a sauce with curry powder.

⁸ In India, an *ayah* is a native maid or nanny.

⁹ *Twos-and-threes* is a game similar to tag.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Explain the source of conflict during recess.

Connecting Cultural Identity to Theme

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the underlined description of Ayah differ from the one earlier in the story?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the evening conversation contribute to a conflict?

My Notes

When I saw our car come up to the school gate, I broke away from my classmates and rushed toward it yelling, “Ayah! Ayah!” It seemed like an eternity since I had seen her that morning—a wizened, affectionate figure in her white cotton sari,¹⁰ giving me dozens of urgent and useless instructions on how to be a good girl at school. Premila followed more sedately, and she told me on the way home never to do that again in front of the other children.

When we got home we went straight to Mother’s high, white room to have tea with her, and I immediately climbed onto the bed and bounced gently up and down on the springs. Mother asked how we had liked our first day in school. I was so pleased to be home and to have left that peculiar Cynthia behind that I had nothing whatever to say about school, except to ask what “apple” meant. But Premila told Mother about the classes, and added that in her class they had weekly tests to see if they had learned their lessons well.

I asked, “What’s a test?”

Premila said, “You’re too small to have them. You won’t have them in your class for donkey’s years.” She had learned the expression that day and was using it for the first time. We all laughed enormously at her wit. She also told Mother, in an aside, that we should take sandwiches to school the next day. Not, she said, that *she* minded. But they would be simpler for me to handle.

That whole lovely evening I didn’t think about school at all. I sprinted barefoot across the lawns with my favorite playmate, the cook’s son, to the stream at the end of the garden. We quarreled in our usual way, waded in the tepid water under the lime trees, and waited for the night to bring out the smell of the jasmine. I listened with fascination to his stories of ghosts and demons, until I was too frightened to cross the garden alone in the semidarkness. The ayah found me, shouted at the cook’s son, scolded me, hurried me in to supper—it was an entirely usual, wonderful evening.

It was a week later, the day of Premila’s first test, that our lives changed rather abruptly. I was sitting at the back of my class, in my usual inattentive way, only half listening to the teacher. I had started a rather guarded friendship with the girl with the braids, whose name turned out to be Nalini (Nancy, in school). The three other children were already fast friends. Even at that age it was apparent to all of us that friendship with the English or Anglo-Indian children was out of the question. Occasionally, during the class, my new friend and I would draw pictures and show them to each other secretly.

The door opened sharply and Premila marched in. At first, the teacher smiled at her in a kindly and encouraging way and said, “Now, you’re little Cynthia’s sister?”

Premila didn’t even look at her. She stood with her feet planted firmly apart and her shoulders rigid, and addressed herself directly to me. “Get up,” she said. “We’re going home.”

I didn’t know what had happened, but I was aware that it was a crisis of some sort. I rose obediently and started to walk toward my sister.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

The conjunction *but* often signals a shift. Predict the “crisis” at the heart of Premila’s quick departure from school.

¹⁰ A *sari* is a garment worn by Indian women. It consists of a long cloth wrapped around the body with one end draped over one shoulder or over the head.

“Bring your pencils and your notebook,” she said.

I went back for them, and together we left the room. The teacher started to say something just as Premila closed the door, but we didn’t wait to hear what it was.

In complete silence we left the school grounds and started to walk home. Then I asked Premila what the matter was. All she would say was “We’re going home for good.”

It was a very tiring walk for a child of five and a half, and I dragged along behind Premila with my pencils growing sticky in my hand. I can still remember looking at the dusty hedges, and the tangles of thorns in the ditches by the side of the road, smelling the faint fragrance from the eucalyptus trees and wondering whether we would ever reach home. Occasionally a horse-drawn tonga¹¹ passed us, and the women, in their pink or green silks, stared at Premila and me trudging along on the side of the road. A few coolies¹² and a line of women carrying baskets of vegetables on their heads smiled at us. But it was nearing the hottest time of day, and the road was almost deserted. I walked more and more slowly, and shouted to Premila, from time to time, “Wait for me!” with increasing peevishness. She spoke to me only once, and that was to tell me to carry my notebook on my head, because of the sun.

When we got to our house the ayah was just taking a tray of lunch into Mother’s room. She immediately started a long, worried questioning about what are you children doing back here at this hour of the day.

Mother looked very startled and very concerned, and asked Premila what had happened.

Premila said, “We had our test today, and she made me and the other Indians sit at the back of the room, with a desk between each one.”

Mother said, “Why was that, darling?”

“She said it was because Indians cheat,” Premila added. “So I don’t think we should go back to that school.”

Mother looked very distant, and was silent a long time. At last she said, “Of course not, darling.” She sounded displeased.

We all shared the curry she was having for lunch, and afterward I was sent off to the beautifully familiar bedroom for my siesta. I could hear Mother and Premila talking through the open door.

Mother said, “Do you suppose she understood all that?” Premila said, “I shouldn’t think so. She’s a baby.” Mother said, “Well, I hope it won’t bother her.”

Of course, they were both wrong. I understood it perfectly, and I remember it all very clearly. But I put it happily away, because it had all happened to a girl called Cynthia, and I never was really particularly interested in her.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Are you startled by Mother’s reaction to Premila’s news? Why or why not? What clues prepared you for Premila’s reaction to the teacher’s assumption?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Identify the conflicts in the story. How does this resolution address those conflicts?



¹¹ A *tonga* is a two-wheeled, horse-drawn vehicle.

¹² *Coolies* are workers hired at low wages for unskilled work.

Connecting Cultural Identity to Theme

My Notes

After Reading

4. Rau uses a variety of different approaches to draw attention to culture in this narrative. Using the culture web you generated in Activity 1.2 with your peers, map out specific cultural elements Rau describes, placing them into categories, such as clothing, food, language, and values.

Culture

5. Once you have mapped out the various cultural elements from the story, rank which ones seem most important to establishing the characters' cultural identity in a way that sets up the story's conclusion and resulting theme.

6. Which cultural elements do you think would best allow you to describe your own cultural identity to a reader? Why?

Check Your Understanding

Write a thematic statement that shows your understanding of the cultural conflict portrayed in "By Any Other Name."

Consulting with a Mentor (Text)

ACTIVITY
1.8

Learning Target

- Analyze a mentor text to determine how a writer describes a multiethnic, multicultural heritage.

Before Reading

1. What do you think the word *multicultural* means? Share ideas with a partner.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, SOAPSTone, Marking the Text, Discussion Groups, Jigsaw

During Reading

2. Read the following interview/essay to discover the thesis or central idea. Mark the text to locate supporting information (well-chosen, relevant details that support the thesis).

Interview/Essay

Multi-Culturalism Explained In One Word: Hapa

In a guest commentary, the program's outgoing intern, Kristen Lee, describes how she explains her multi-cultural roots, and why she embraces the term *HAPA* to describe her heritage.

LYNN NEARY, host:

Well, being a part of the Tell Me More team is a real workout for any young journalist. Our summer intern, Kristen Lee, could tell you that. She just recently ended her time with us and as part of our program's tradition, she finished her tenure with a commentary. And what's on Kristen's mind? Dealing with the curiosity and occasional ignorance of people confused by her multi-ethnic background.

KRISTEN LEE: What are you? People say this to me as a pickup line in a bar or a question to prove their own assumptions about my race. I answer with a formula. I'm a quarter Chinese and the rest is Swedish.

From my appearance, people assume I am Asian, but how could a quarter measurement define who I am? So can I just tell you? I am a hip-hop-loving piano-playing dancing diva who grew up on a ranch in rural Michigan with some horses, dogs and every kind of hand-sized pet imaginable.

I flaunt all of my cultural mix but so many people want me to pick a label. So if I have to choose, I'd choose "HAPA". It means half Asian and half another race. It's actually Hawaiian slang that I picked up in college. It's meant to be slightly derogatory but I embrace it as a source of empowerment.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the writer use a hook for her statement about her heritage?

Consulting with a Mentor (Text)

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the writer define her cultural identity?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the writer challenge other people's expectations related to her cultural identity?

Hawaii is one of the country's most multiracial states and when I studied there, I was viewed as a local because some of my racial features fit the Hawaiian template. I have almond-shaped eyes, fine dark hair and olive skin that turns butterscotch in the sun. I was a confident and proud HAPA in Hawaii, but when I came back to Michigan, my predominantly white peers still saw me as a model minority statistic, exotic foreigner, and a token Asian in the classroom.

My style is not as simple as those stereotypes. No, I don't clunk around in Swedish clogs, and no, I don't speak a Chinese dialect. And that can be a problem for Asian people who pressure me to prove the legitimacy of my Chinese heritage.

Still, I feel like I benefited from white privilege because of my lighter skin. I've avoided most racial discrimination, but I do face a different kind of prejudice when walking around with my black boyfriend, like the occasional hard stare, intimidating remark. I feel like a society that focuses on black and white doesn't recognize my unique multi-cultural experience. So how do I explain who I am and what being HAPA means to me?

I use the universal language of food, and particularly my Swedish mother's dessert dish: rice pudding. Just as the white rice is baked into the yellow pudding, I, too, am mixed into the U.S. melting pot. Yet, as the pudding bakes, the rice retains its consistency, like I keep my own unique HAPA identity.

And yeah, I'm tasty, too.

NEARY: Kristen Lee with Tell Me More summer interns. She recently graduated from Michigan State University majoring in journalism. That's our program for today. I'm Lynn Neary and this is Tell Me More from NPR News. Let's talk more tomorrow.

After Reading

3. How does the writer contrast internal and external elements of her identity? Give examples from the text.

4. What tone does the writer use?

My Notes

Speaker What does the reader know about the writer?	
Occasion What are the circumstances surrounding this text?	
Audience Who is the target audience?	
Purpose Why did the author write this text?	
Subject What is the topic?	
Tone What is the author's tone, or attitude?	

Consulting with a Mentor (Text)

pick up the

My Notes

6. Revisit the mentor text, and number each paragraph to help you analyze the organizational structure of the essay. Work with a partner to discuss the purpose of each paragraph, and note your thoughts in the My Notes section.

7. Although SOAPSTone can be used to analyze texts written to respond to particular contexts, it can also be used as a planning tool to construct such texts. To help you plan for your upcoming cultural identity essay, try to generate a real-world context for your essay. As with Lee, try to use a real-world incident to help you focus your text as a way to engage or challenge readers. Revisit your work in Activity 1.10 to consider what specific aspects of your culture you may want to include as part of your subject.

Speaker	
Occasion	
Audience	
Purpose	
Subject	
Tone	

Check Your Understanding

What besides race and ethnicity help define or characterize a culture?

Your assignment is to write a reflective essay explaining your cultural identity.

Planning/Prewriting: Take time to make a plan for your essay.

- How will you generate ideas about aspects of your culture that might help convey your sense of identity?
- How does your sense of cultural identity compare to that of your parents, your peers, or even strangers?
- How can a cultural conflict—either internal or external—clarify how your cultural identity influences your perspective?
- How might you use a particular cultural element (food, language, clothing, etc.) as a metaphor or central idea to focus your essay?
- What will you include in a preliminary outline of an organizational structure?

Drafting and Revising: Compose your reflective essay.

- How will you use your prewriting and outline to be sure you include all the components identified in your organizational structure, including an effective introduction and conclusion?
- How can you and your writing group peers use the Scoring Guide help you note areas in need of improvement such as cohesion of ideas, organizational structure, or use of language?
- How will you ensure that you make necessary changes to the draft as you refine your ideas?
- How can you revise for purposeful and clear use of language, including syntax patterns such as parallel structure and phrases?

Editing and Publishing: Prepare a final draft for publication.

- Which resources will you consult (dictionary, thesaurus, spell-check, grammar handbook, style guide) to ensure grammatically correct sentences, appropriate punctuation, correct spelling, and proper text citation?

Reflection

After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this task, and respond to the following:

- Which aspects of your cultural identity were you already aware of before you began this unit, and which did you discover through your study?
- What are some of the different cultural heritages represented in your class that you became aware of through class discussions or shared writing?

My Notes

Writing About My Cultural Identity

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has a clear and strongly maintained central idea (e.g., internal/external conflict or central metaphor/concept) to focus the essay uses a range of well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient evidence to create a vivid sense of personal cultural identity. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has an adequately maintained central idea to focus the topic uses a sufficient range of evidence to develop the explanation of cultural identity. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has an unclear or insufficiently maintained central idea and lacks focus uses vague, irrelevant, or insufficient evidence to develop the explanation of cultural identity. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is not coherent and does not clearly maintain a central focus provides little or no evidence to support or develop an explanation of cultural identity.
Structure	<p>The writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an effective organizational strategy that creates clarity and cohesion introduces ideas smoothly, links them logically, and provides a satisfying conclusion uses appropriate and varied transitions. 	<p>The writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate organizational strategy that creates a sense of completeness introduces ideas, links them adequately, and provides a conclusion uses some varied transitions. 	<p>The writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an inconsistent or confusing organization does not introduce, link, and/or conclude ideas uses weak, repetitive, or insufficient transitions. 	<p>The writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not organize ideas clearly does not link ideas uses weak or no transitions.
Use of Language	<p>The writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses precise language and appropriate vocabulary to create a distinctive tone or voice uses parallel structure and various types of phrases to convey meaning or add variety and interest demonstrates strong command of conventions of grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. 	<p>The writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses appropriate vocabulary and generally maintains an appropriate tone/voice uses parallel structure and various types of phrases correctly demonstrates adequate command of conventions; some minor errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, or spelling do not interfere with meaning. 	<p>The writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses simple or inappropriate vocabulary that does not maintain consistent tone/voice does not use parallel structure and/or varied types of phrases correctly demonstrates partial or insufficient command of conventions; errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling interfere with meaning. 	<p>The writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vague, imprecise vocabulary and does not maintain consistent or appropriate tone/voice uses no parallel structure or phrases, or uses them incorrectly demonstrates little command of conventions; numerous errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling interfere with meaning.

Previewing Embedded Assessment 2 and Preparing for a Writing Prompt

ACTIVITY 1.9

Learning Targets

- Identify the knowledge and skills needed to complete Embedded Assessment 2 successfully.
- Deconstruct a writing prompt.

Making Connections

In the first part of this unit, you have been exploring ideas about cultural identity. In this next part, you will extend your understanding of cultural identity and will read and synthesize information to help you take a position about the extent to which one's culture influences one's view of the world.

Vocabulary Development

Return to the Contents page at the beginning of this unit and note the Academic Vocabulary and Literary Terms you have studied so far. Which words and terms can you now move to a new category on a QHT chart? Which could you now teach to others that you were unfamiliar with at the beginning of the unit?

Essential Questions

How would you answer these questions now?

1. How do cultural experiences shape, impact, or influence our identity and perceptions?
2. How do we synthesize multiple sources of information into a cohesive argument?

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 2

Read the assignment for Embedded Assessment 2: Writing a Synthesis Paper.

Your assignment is to collaborate with your peers to write an essay that responds to the following synthesis prompt:

To what extent does one's culture inform the way one views others and the world?

Be sure to support your claim with evidence from at least three different texts you have read, viewed, or listened to in this unit, as well as with personal experience and insights.

In your own words, summarize what you will need to know to complete this assessment successfully. With your class, create a graphic organizer to represent the skills and knowledge you will need to complete the tasks identified in the Embedded Assessment.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, Predicting, graphic organizer, QHT

My Notes

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

With help from your teacher, librarian, and peers, find a novel or memoir that explores a cultural perspective different from your own.

Previewing Embedded Assessment 2 and Preparing for a Writing Prompt



WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The word *structure* has a Latin root *struct-* (or *stru-*), meaning “to build.” This root also appears in *deconstruct*, *construction*, *instructor*, *destructive*, *obstruct*, *construe*, and *reconstruction*.

My Notes

Deconstructing a Writing Prompt

Writing prompts often contain many details but little direction. It is easy to get caught up in the details and forget the main task. You may write an excellent response with flawless syntax, but if you do not respond to the prompt, you will not receive a high score.

Five Parts of Every Writing Prompt

When considering any prompt, look for five basic parts. Most, if not all, of the parts will be present. Finding as many as you can will help you determine what you need to do and how to respond to the prompt correctly.

1. **Subject:** What is the subject you need to write about? A well-written prompt will identify the subject, but it may be vague. For example, a prompt might tell you to think of a childhood experience. What common themes or ideas (either implicit or explicit) are associated with the subject?
2. **Speaker:** Who is writing the answer? (You are, but are you writing it as a student, a citizen, an authority?) Use your inferencing skills to determine what perspective you should take as the writer.
3. **Type of Essay:** What kind of response are you writing—expository, persuasive, synthesis, personal narrative? An effective prompt indicates the type of writing you need to do. It may give you a choice. Choose wisely.
4. **Task:** What is the prompt asking you to do? For example, your task may be to take a stand on an issue and write a five-paragraph persuasive essay. Read the details carefully to identify exactly what you need to do.
5. **Hints:** Does the prompt give you suggestions to get started? The prompt may suggest ideas to think about or literary devices to identify and analyze.

After deconstructing the first prompt on the following page as a class, identify all five parts of the remaining prompts. You may use different colored markers to highlight different parts in each prompt or write responses to each component of the prompt in My Notes.

Prompt 1: Think of something at your school that you would like to change in order to create a more positive learning environment. The change could affect anything from a policy or procedure to an attitude or tradition. In a well-organized persuasive letter, write to an adult at your school presenting the problem, your solution to that problem, and why the environment would change.

Subject:

Speaker:

Type of Essay:

Task:

Hints:

Prompt 2: Contemporary life is marked by controversy. Choose a controversial local, national, or global issue with which you are familiar. Then, using appropriate evidence, write an essay that carefully considers opposing positions on this issue and proposes a solution or compromise.

Prompt 3: The following is a mock press release from *The Onion*, a publication devoted to humor and satire. Read the article carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the strategies used in the article to satirize how products are marketed to consumers.

Prompt 4: Your assignment is to collaborate with your peers to write an essay that responds to the following synthesis prompt: To what extent does one's culture inform the way one views others and the world? Be sure to support your claim with evidence from at least three different texts you have read, viewed, or listened to in this unit, as well as with personal experience and insights.

Check Your Understanding

What information can you identify in a prompt that can help you write an effective response?

My Notes

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, Predicting, Sketching, Marking the Text, Discussion Groups, Think-Pair-Share

My Notes

Literary Terms

An **allusion** is a reference to a well-known person, event, or place from history, music, art, or another literary work.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What **allusions** does Iyer use in the first paragraph?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Iyer begins the essay with “They come,” then “They see,” then “They have already.” What’s the effect of this progression in his depiction of the “arrivals”? What does it suggest about their changing perceptions?

Learning Target

- Analyze the structure of a text to explain how the author unfolds a series of ideas for effect.

Before Reading

- Have you ever found yourself in a completely new environment? Though you may have viewed pictures or a brochure depicting the location, suddenly you are taking it all in—in person! What was that experience like? Were you comfortable or uncomfortable? Overwhelmed or pleasantly surprised? Disappointed or overjoyed? Explain your experience in a quickwrite.

During Reading

- Read the essay entitled “Where Worlds Collide” by Pico Iyer. In this 1995 essay, Iyer describes what people experience as they enter a new environment. As you read, mark the text for **allusions** and details that suggest the perspective of the new arrivals.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pico Iyer is a British-born journalist, novelist, and travel writer of Indian descent who grew up in Britain and California. Unlike typical travel writing, Iyer’s works explore unusual or unexpected aspects of the places he visits. His book *Video Night in Kathmandu: And Other Reports from the Not-So-Far East* (1988) focuses on the West’s influence on Asian culture and daily life. Critics describe his writing style as both ironic and culturally sensitive.

Essay

Where Worlds Collide

by Pico Iyer

They come out, blinking, into the bleached, forgetful sunshine, in Dodgers caps and Rodeo Drive T-shirts, with the maps their cousins have drawn for them and the images they’ve brought over from *Cops* and *Terminator 2*; they come out, dazed, disoriented, heads still partly in the clouds, bodies still several time zones—or centuries—away, and they step into the Promised Land.

In front of them is a Van Stop, a Bus Stop, a Courtesy Tram Stop, and a Shuttle Bus Stop (the shuttles themselves tracing circuits A, B, and C). At the Shuttle Bus Stop, they see the All American Shuttle, the Apollo Shuttle, Celebrity Airport Livery, The Great American Stageline, the Movie Shuttle, the Transport, Ride-4-You, and forty-two other magic buses waiting to whisk them everywhere from Bakersfield to Disneyland.

They see Koreans piling into the Taeguk Airport Shuttle and the Seoul Shuttle, which will take them to Koreatown without their ever feeling they've left home; they see newcomers from the Middle East disappearing under the Arabic script of the Sahara Shuttle. They see fast-talking, finger-snapping, palm-slapping jive artists straight from their TV screens shouting incomprehensible slogans about deals, destinations, and drugs. Over there is a block-long white limo, a Lincoln Continental, and, over there, a black Chevy Blazer with Mexican stickers all over its windows, being towed. They have arrived in the Land of Opportunity, and the opportunities are swirling dizzily, promiscuously,¹ around them.

They have already braved the ranks of Asian officials, the criminal-looking security men in jackets that say "Elsinore Airport Services," the men shaking tins that say "Helping America's Hopeless." They have already seen the tilting mugs that say "California: a new slant on life" and the portable fruit machines in the gift shop.

They have already, perhaps, visited the rest room where someone has written, "Yes on Proposition 187. Mexicans go home," the snack bar where a slice of pizza costs \$3.19 (18 quetzals, they think in horror, or 35,000 dong), and the sign that urges them to try the Cockatoo Inn Grand Hotel. The latest arrivals at Los Angeles International Airport are ready now to claim their new lives.

Above them in the terminal, voices are repeating, over and over, in Japanese, Spanish, and unintelligible² English, "Maintain visual contact with your personal property at all times." Out on the sidewalk, a man's voice and a woman's voice are alternating an unending refrain: "The white zone is for loading and unloading of passengers only. No parking." There are "Do Not Cross" yellow lines cordoning off parts of the sidewalk and "Wells Fargo Alarm Services" stickers on the windows; there are "Aviation Safeguard" signs on the baggage carts and "Beware of Solicitors" signs on the columns; there are even special phones "To Report Trouble." More male and female voices are intoning³ continuously, "Do not leave your car unattended" and "Unattended cars are subject to immediate tow-away." There are no military planes on the tarmac here, the newcomers notice, no khaki soldiers in fatigues, no instructions not to take photographs, as at home; but there are civilian restrictions every bit as strict as in many a police state.

"This Terminal Is in a Medfly Quarantine Area," says the sign between the terminals. "Stop the Spread of Medfly!" If, by chance, the new Americans have to enter a parking lot on their way out, they will be faced with "Cars left over 30 days may be impounded at Owner's Expense" and "Do not enter without a ticket." It will cost them \$16 if they lose their parking ticket, they read, and \$56 if they park in the wrong zone. Around them is an unending cacophony of antitheft devices, sirens, beepers, and car-door openers; lights are flashing everywhere, and the man who fines them \$16 for losing their parking ticket has the tribal scars of Tigre across his forehead.

The blue skies and palm trees they saw on TV are scarcely visible from here: just an undifferentiated smoggy haze, billboards advertising Nissan and Panasonic and Canon, and beyond those an endlessly receding mess of gray streets. Overhead, they can see the all-too-familiar signs of Hilton and Hyatt and Holiday Inn; in the distance, a sea of tract houses, mini-malls, and high rises. The City of Angels awaits them.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Juxtaposition is the placement of words or ideas near each other for the purpose of comparison. What images does Iyer juxtapose? What is the effect of that juxtaposition?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Iyer withholds the actual location until the end of the fifth paragraph. What is the effect of doing so?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What shift does the underlined "but" in this paragraph signal? How do the images in the last two paragraphs affect your impression of "The City of Angels"?

¹ **promiscuously:** in an indiscriminate or loose manner

² **unintelligible:** difficult to understand, incomprehensible

³ **intoning:** speaking or reciting in a singing voice; changing or singing in monotone

Colliding Worlds

*pickups
fina*

My Notes

After Reading

3. Reread the passage to see the **allusions** you marked in the text. Write them in the My Notes space. What do you know about the origin of these specific references in history, in literature, or in art? Think-Pair-Share your ideas.
4. How does your understanding of the origin of this **allusion** affect your understanding of this passage? What is the effect of those **allusions**?

Language and Writer's Craft: Colon and Semicolon

Colons and semicolons may not be used often, but they do add to the tools a writer uses to structure language.

Use a colon to set off a series in a list, usually after a complete main clause.

Example: The picnic supplies are ready: paper plates, napkins, utensils, cups, and ice.

Use a semicolon to separate two independent clauses or to connect two clauses when one is preceded by a conjunctive adverb (*however, consequently*).

Example: Everyone is ready for a picnic; however, the rain has started.

PRACTICE: Look at the last paragraph of Iyer's essay, in which he uses a colon. How does the colon function in the sentence? Look at the texts you have read in this unit and find examples of the use of colons and semicolons.

Persuasive Writing Prompt: To what extent does one's background affect his or her perception of a given situation? Write a paragraph that answers this question using "Where Worlds Collide" as your primary source. Be sure to:

- Start with a TAG (title, author, genre) statement that presents your claim.
- Support your claim by referencing multiple pieces of textual evidence from the essay, including juxtaposed images and **allusions**.
- Emulate the complex syntactic structure that Iyer uses by using a semicolon to combine two related sentences.

Check Your Understanding

What are the elements of a good TAG statement, and why should you include one?

Perspectives on Heritage: Poetry

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How do the pieces of the quilt embody cultural heritage?

Poetry

my mother pieced quilts

by Teresa Palomo Acosta



they were just meant as covers
in winters
as weapons
against pounding january winds

5 but it was just that every morning I awoke to these
october ripened canvases
passed my hand across their cloth faces
and began to wonder how you pieced
all these together

10 these strips of gentle communion cotton and flannel
nightgowns
wedding organdies
dime store velvets

how you shaped patterns square and oblong and round

15 positioned
balanced
then cemented them
with your thread
a steel needle
a thimble
how the thread darted in and out
galloping along the frayed edges, tucking them in
as you did us at night
oh how you stretched and turned and rearranged

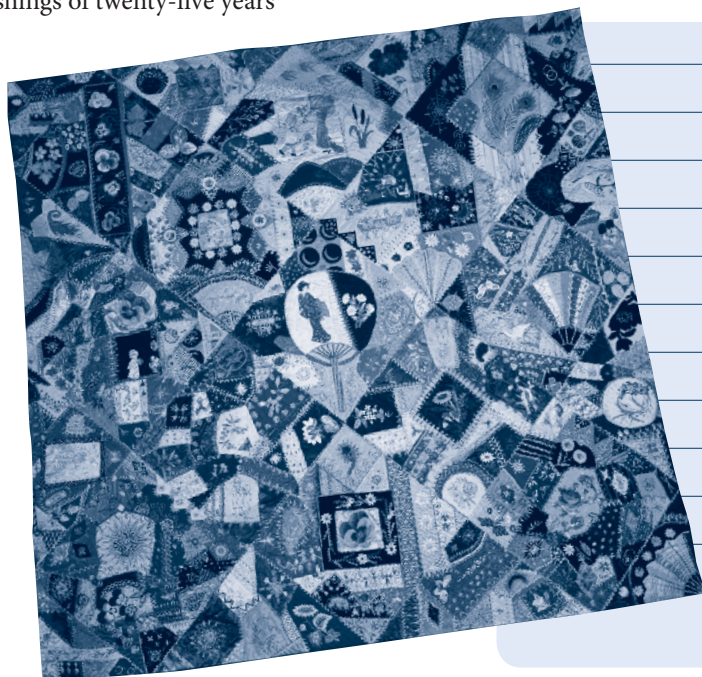
25 your michigan spring faded curtain pieces
my father's santa fe work shirt
the summer denims, the tweeds of fall
in the evening you sat at your canvas
—our cracked linoleum floor the drawing board

- 30 me lounging on your arm
and you staking out the plan:
whether to put the lilac purple of easter against the red
plaid of winter-going-
into-spring
- 35 whether to mix a yellow with blue and white and paint the
corpus christi noon when my father held your hand
whether to shape a five-point star from the
somber black silk you wore to grandmother's funeral
- You were the river current
- 40 carrying the roaring notes ...
forming them into pictures of a little boy reclining
a swallow flying
You were the caravan master at the reins
driving your thread needle artillery across the mosaic cloth bridges
- 45 delivering yourself in separate testimonies
oh mother you plunged me sobbing and laughing
into our past
into the river crossing at five
into the spinach fields
- 50 into the plainview cotton rows
into tuberculosis wards
into braids and muslin dresses
sewn hard and taut to withstand the thrashings of twenty-five years
- stretched out they lay
- 55 armed/ready/shouting/celebrating
knotted with love
the quilts sing on

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is the effect of the repeated prepositional phrases in this stanza?



Perspectives on Heritage: Poetry

pick up the

My Notes

3. Use the graphic organizer below to analyze the poem using the SIFT strategy. As you closely read the poem for examples of symbolism, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme, be sure to write the actual words from the poem and your interpretation of their significance.

SIFT	Textual Detail	Analysis or Interpretation
Symbols		
Images		
Figures of Speech		
Tone/ Theme	Tone:	Theme:

After Reading

For Embedded Assessment 2, you will write a **synthesis** essay.

You have already used **synthesis**, even if you do not realize it. Throughout this unit, you have combined new and various pieces of information with your existing ideas. You were synthesizing the pieces. A **synthesis prompt** asks you to write a composition that develops a position on an issue and then to synthesize, or incorporate, information from multiple sources, including your own experiences.

In order to synthesize information, you need a focusing idea or question for which you gather ideas from multiple texts or sources of information.

For example, what if you were asked to respond to one of the following questions:

- How do parents influence our perspectives on our culture?
- How do writers use symbolism to convey theme?

4. How would you approach this task? In the space below, write down a plan for how you would do so.

Synthesis Writing Prompt: Working with a partner, choose one of the questions above that you think you can best answer. Revisit the texts you have read in this unit, and choose at least one other text (besides “My Mother Pieced Quilts”) that would serve as good evidence to support a response to the question. Be sure to:

- Write a thesis statement for your essay responding to the question.
- Write an outline for your response.
- Explain why you chose the structure you outlined.

Possible outlines/organizations:

Check Your Understanding

How can you use multiple texts as evidence to support a thesis?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Synthesis refers to the act of combining ideas from different sources to create, express, or support a new idea.

My Notes

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Revisiting Prior Work, Think-Pair-Share, Predicting, Close Reading, SIFT, Quickwrite, Group Discussion, Jigsaw

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze a work of fiction to determine and explain the **theme** of the work.
- Compare and contrast how two different authors explore similar subjects and themes.

Before Reading

1. **Quickwrite:** Imagine a cultural anthropologist—a person who studies human societies and cultures—is visiting your house. Describe an object that he or she might think gives insights into your family’s culture, and explain what those insights might be. Use the My Notes space.

During Reading

2. As you read the story, apply the skills you used in the previous activity to analyze the author’s development of tone and theme. Annotate the text for symbols, images, figurative language, and tone. Additionally, pay attention to the different perspectives represented by the characters, and consider how the characters themselves might be considered symbols of these perspectives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alice Walker (b. 1944) is a novelist, poet, and essayist who established her reputation with the publication of *The Color Purple* (1982), which won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award. The novel tells of a young woman’s efforts to overcome the obstacles posed by racism, sexism, and poverty. Critics have praised Walker’s sensitivity to the points of view and problems of characters from different walks of life.

Short Story

Everyday Use

by Alice Walker

I will wait for her in the yard that Maggie and I made so clean and wavy yesterday afternoon. A yard like this is more comfortable than most people know. It is not just a yard. It is like an extended living room. When the hard clay is swept clean as a floor and the fine sand around the edges lined with tiny, irregular grooves, anyone can come and sit and look up into the elm tree and wait for the breezes that never come inside the house.

Maggie will be nervous until after her sister goes: She will stand hopelessly in corners, homely and ashamed of the burn scars down her arms and legs, eyeing her sister with a mixture of envy and awe. She thinks her sister had held life always in the palm of one hand, that “no” is a word the world never learned to say to her.



You've no doubt seen those TV shows where the child who has "made it" is confronted, as a surprise, by her own mother and father, tottering in weakly from backstage. (A pleasant surprise, of course: What would they do if parent and child came on the show only to curse out and insult each other?) On TV mother and child embrace and smile into each other's faces. Sometimes the mother and father weep; the child wraps them in her arms and leans across the table to tell how she would not have made it without their help. I have seen these programs.

Sometimes I dream a dream in which Dee and I are suddenly brought together on a TV program of this sort. Out of a dark and soft-seated limousine I am ushered into a bright room filled with many people. There I meet a smiling, gray, sporty man like Johnny Carson and he shakes my hand and tells me what a fine girl I have. Then we are on the stage, and Dee is embracing me with tears in her eyes. She pins on my dress a large orchid, even though she had told me once that she thinks orchids are tacky flowers.

In real life I am a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands. In the winter I wear flannel nightgowns to bed and overalls during the day. I can kill and clean a hog as mercilessly as a man. My fat keeps me hot in zero weather. I can work outside all day, breaking ice to get water for washing; I can eat pork liver cooked over the open fire minutes after it comes steaming from the hog. One winter I knocked a bull calf straight in the brain between the eyes with a sledgehammer and had the meat hung up to chill before nightfall. But of course all this does not show on television. I am the way my daughter would want me to be: a hundred pounds lighter, my skin like an uncooked barley pancake. My hair glistens in the hot bright lights. Johnny Carson has much to do to keep up with my quick and witty tongue.

But that is a mistake. I know even before I wake up. Who ever knew a Johnson with a quick tongue? Who can even imagine me looking a strange white man in the eye? It seems to me I have talked to them always with one foot raised in flight, with my head turned in whichever way is farthest from them. Dee, though. She would always look anyone in the eye. Hesitation was no part of her nature.

"How do I look, Mama?" Maggie says, showing just enough of her thin body enveloped in pink skirt and red blouse for me to know she's there, almost hidden by the door.

"Come out into the yard," I say.

Have you ever seen a lame animal, perhaps a dog run over by some careless person rich enough to own a car, sidle up to someone who is ignorant enough to be kind to him? That is the way my Maggie walks. She has been like this, chin on chest, eyes on ground, feet in shuffle, ever since the fire that burned the other house to the ground.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Aside from a list, what does the colon signal in the sentence beginning "I am the way my daughter ..."? What new information does it provide?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the word "but" function in this paragraph?

Perspectives on Heritage: Fiction

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Make a generalization about the characters of Dee and Maggie based on details the narrator presents about them.

My Notes

Dee is lighter than Maggie, with nicer hair and a fuller figure. She's a woman now, though sometimes I forget. How long ago was it that the other house burned? Ten, twelve years? Sometimes I can still hear the flames and feel Maggie's arms sticking to me, her hair smoking and her dress falling off her in little black papery flakes. Her eyes seemed stretched open, blazed open by the flames reflected in them. And Dee. I see her standing off under the sweet gum tree she used to dig gum out of, a look of concentration on her face as she watched the last dingy gray board of the house fall in toward the red-hot brick chimney. Why don't you do a dance around the ashes? I'd wanted to ask her. She had hated the house that much.

I used to think she hated Maggie, too. But that was before we raised the money, the church and me, to send her to Augusta to school. She used to read to us without pity, forcing words, lies, other folks' habits, whole lives upon us two, sitting trapped and ignorant underneath her voice. She washed us in a river of make-believe, burned us with a lot of knowledge we didn't necessarily need to know. Pressed us to her with the serious ways she read, to shove us away at just the moment, like dimwits, we seemed about to understand.

Dee wanted nice things. A yellow organdy dress to wear to her graduation from high school; black pumps to match a green suit she'd made from an old suit somebody gave me. She was determined to stare down any disaster in her efforts. Her eyelids would not flicker for minutes at a time. Often I fought off the temptation to shake her. At sixteen she had a style of her own: and knew what style was.

I never had an education myself. After second grade the school closed down. Don't ask me why: In 1927 colored asked fewer questions than they do now. Sometimes Maggie reads to me. She stumbles along good-naturedly but can't see well. She knows she is not bright. Like good looks and money, quickness passed her by. She will marry John Thomas (who has mossy teeth in an earnest face), and then I'll be free to sit here and I guess just sing church songs to myself. Although I never was a good singer. Never could carry a tune. I was always better at a man's job. I used to love to milk till I was hooked in the side in '49. Cows are soothing and slow and don't bother you, unless you try to milk them the wrong way.

I have deliberately turned my back on the house. It is three rooms, just like the one that burned, except the roof is tin; they don't make shingle roofs anymore. There are no real windows, just some holes cut in the sides, like the portholes in a ship, but not round and not square, with rawhide holding the shutters up on the outside. This house is in a pasture, too, like the other one. No doubt when Dee sees it she will want to tear it down. She wrote me once that no matter where we "choose" to live, she will manage to come see us. But she will never bring her friends. Maggie and I thought about this and Maggie asked me, "Mama, when did Dee ever have any friends?"

She had a few. Furtive boys in pink shirts hanging about on washday after school. Nervous girls who never laughed. Impressed with her, they worshiped the well-turned phrase, the cute shape, the scalding humor that erupted like bubbles in lye. She read to them.

When she was courting Jimmy T, she didn't have much time to pay to us but turned all her faultfinding power on him. He *flew* to marry a cheap city girl from a family of ignorant, flashy people. She hardly had time to recompose herself.

When she comes, I will meet—but there they are!

Maggie attempts to make a dash for the house, in her shuffling way, but I stay her with my hand. “Come back here,” I say. And she stops and tries to dig a well in the sand with her toe.

It is hard to see them clearly through the strong sun. But even the first glimpse of leg out of the car tells me it is Dee. Her feet were always neat looking, as if God himself shaped them with a certain style. From the other side of the car comes a short, stocky man. Hair is all over his head a foot long and hanging from his chin like a kinky mule tail. I hear Maggie suck in her breath. “Uhhnnh” is what it sounds like. Like when you see the wriggling end of a snake just in front of your foot on the road. “Uhhnnh.”

Dee next. A dress down to the ground, in this hot weather. A dress so loud it hurts my eyes. There are yellows and oranges enough to throw back the light of the sun. I feel my whole face warming from the heat waves it throws out. Earrings gold, too, and hanging down to her shoulders. Bracelets dangling and making noises when she moves her arm up to shake the folds of the dress out of her armpits. The dress is loose and flows, and as she walks closer, I like it. I hear Maggie go “Uhhnnh” again. It is her sister’s hair. It stands straight up like the wool on a sheep. It is black as night and around the edges are two long pigtails that rope about like small lizards disappearing behind her ears.

“Wa-su-zo-Tean-o!” she says, coming on in that gliding way the dress makes her move. The short, stocky fellow with the hair to his navel is all grinning, and he follows up with “Asalamalakim, my mother and sister!” He moves to hug Maggie but she falls back, right up against the back of my chair. I feel her trembling there, and when I look up I see the perspiration falling off her chin.

“Don’t get up,” says Dee. Since I am stout, it takes something of a push. You can see me trying to move a second or two before I make it. She turns, showing white heels through her sandals, and goes back to the car. Out she peeks next with a Polaroid. She stoops down quickly and lines up picture after picture of me sitting there in front of the house with Maggie cowering behind me. She never takes a shot without making sure the house is included. When a cow comes nibbling around in the edge of the yard, she snaps it and me and Maggie and the house. Then she puts the Polaroid in the back seat of the car and comes up and kisses me on the forehead.

Meanwhile, Asalamalakim is going through motions with Maggie’s hand. Maggie’s hand is as limp as a fish, and probably as cold, despite the sweat, and she keeps trying to pull it back. It looks like Asalamalakim wants to shake hands but wants to do it fancy. Or maybe he don’t know how people shake hands. Anyhow, he soon gives up on Maggie.

“Well,” I say. “Dee.”

“No, Mama,” she says. “Not ‘Dee,’ Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo!”

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does Dee’s appearance contrast with the appearances of the mother and Maggie? How does this affect your perceptions of Dee? What perspective on cultural heritage does she seem to represent?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Dee takes many pictures of her family and home. How does her mother feel about that? How does the syntax of the underlined sentence express her feelings? What is Dee’s motivation for capturing these images?



Perspectives on Heritage: Fiction

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Where else in this unit have you seen a name change? How is this situation similar or different?

My Notes

“What happened to ‘Dee?’” I wanted to know.

“She’s dead,” Wangero said. “I couldn’t bear it any longer, being named after the people who oppress me.”

“You know as well as me you was named after your aunt Dicie,” I said. Dicie is my sister. She named Dee. We called her “Big Dee” after Dee was born.

“But who was *she* named after?” asked Wangero.

“I guess after Grandma Dee,” I said.

“And who was she named after?” asked Wangero.

“Her mother,” I said, and saw Wangero was getting tired. “That’s about as far back as I can trace it,” I said. Though, in fact, I probably could have carried it back beyond the Civil War through the branches.

“Well,” said Asalamalakim, “there you are.”

“Uhhnnh,” I heard Maggie say.

“There I was not,” I said, “before ‘Dicie’ cropped up in our family, so why should I try to trace it that far back?”

He just stood there grinning, looking down on me like somebody inspecting a Model A car. Every once in a while he and Wangero sent eye signals over my head.

“How do you pronounce this name?” I asked.

“You don’t have to call me by it if you don’t want to,” said Wangero.

“Why shouldn’t I?” I asked. “If that’s what you want us to call you, we’ll call you.”

“I know it might sound awkward at first,” said Wangero.

“I’ll get used to it,” I said. “Ream it out again.”

Well, soon we got the name out of the way. Asalamalakim had a name twice as long and three times as hard. After I tripped over it two or three times, he told me to just call him Hakim-a-barber. I wanted to ask him was he a barber, but I didn’t really think he was, so I didn’t ask.

“You must belong to those beef-cattle peoples down the road,” I said. They said “Asalamalakim” when they met you, too, but they didn’t shake hands. Always too busy: feeding the cattle, fixing the fences, putting up salt-lick shelters, throwing down hay. When the white folks poisoned some of the herd, the men stayed up all night with rifles in their hands. I walked a mile and a half just to see the sight.

Hakim-a-barber said, “I accept some of their doctrines, but farming and raising cattle is not my style.” (They didn’t tell me, and I didn’t ask, whether Wangero—Dee—had really gone and married him.)

We sat down to eat and right away he said he didn’t eat collards, and pork was unclean. Wangero, though, went on through the chitlins and corn bread, the greens, and everything else. She talked a blue streak over the sweet potatoes. Everything delighted her. Even the fact that we still used the benches her daddy made for the table when we couldn’t afford to buy chairs.



“Oh, Mama!” she cried. Then turned to Hakim-a-barber. “I never knew how lovely these benches are. You can feel the rump prints,” she said, running her hands underneath her and along the bench. Then she gave a sigh, and her hand closed over Grandma Dee’s butter dish. “That’s it!” she said. “I knew there was something I wanted to ask you if I could have.” She jumped up from the table and went over in the corner where the churn stood, the milk in it clabber by now. She looked at the churn and looked at it.

“This churn top is what I need,” she said. “Didn’t Uncle Buddy whittle it out of a tree you all used to have?”

“Yes,” I said.

“Uh huh,” she said happily. “And I want the dasher, too.”

“Uncle Buddy whittle that, too?” asked the barber.

Dee (Wangero) looked up at me.

“Aunt Dee’s first husband whittled the dash,” said Maggie so low you almost couldn’t hear her. “His name was Henry, but they called him Stash.”

“Maggie’s brain is like an elephant’s,” Wangero said, laughing. “I can use the churn top as a centerpiece for the alcove table,” she said, sliding a plate over the churn, “and I’ll think of something artistic to do with the dasher.”

When she finished wrapping the dasher, the handle stuck out. I took it for a moment in my hands. You didn’t even have to look close to see where hands pushing the dasher up and down to make butter had left a kind of sink in the wood. In fact, there were a lot of small sinks; you could see where thumbs and fingers had sunk into the wood. It was beautiful light-yellow wood, from a tree that grew in the yard where Big Dee and Stash had lived.

After dinner Dee (Wangero) went to the trunk at the foot of my bed and started rifling through it. Maggie hung back in the kitchen over the dishpan. Out came Wangero with two quilts. They had been pieced by Grandma Dee, and then Big Dee and me had hung them on the quilt frames on the front porch and quilted them. One was in the Lone Star pattern. The other was Walk Around the Mountain. In both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty and more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell’s paisley shirts. And one teeny faded blue piece, about the size of a penny matchbox, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra’s uniform that he wore in the Civil War.

“Mama,” Wangero said sweet as a bird. “Can I have these old quilts?”

I heard something fall in the kitchen, and a minute later the kitchen door slammed.

“Why don’t you take one or two of the others?” I asked. “These old things was just done by me and Big Dee from some tops your grandma pieced before she died.”

“No,” said Wangero. “I don’t want those. They are stitched around the borders by machine.”

“That’ll make them last better,” I said.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is Dee’s attitude toward her culture (home, belongings, family)? How is it similar to or different from what you expected?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What is the significance of the dasher and the butter churn as symbols? What is revealed about the contrasting perspectives on cultural heritage?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Recall the significance of the quilt in the previous activity. What connection can you make between these quilts and the ones in “My Mother Pieced Quilts”?

My Notes

Perspectives on Heritage: Fiction

pick up
the

My Notes



“That’s not the point,” said Wangero. “These are all pieces of dresses Grandma used to wear. She did all this stitching by hand. Imagine!” She held the quilts securely in her arms, stroking them.

“Some of the pieces, like those lavender ones, come from old clothes her mother handed down to her,” I said, moving up to touch the quilts. Dee (Wangero) moved back just enough so that I couldn’t reach the quilts. They already belonged to her.

“Imagine!” she breathed again, clutching them closely to her bosom.

“The truth is,” I said, “I promised to give them quilts to Maggie, for when she marries John Thomas.”

She gasped like a bee had stung her.

“Maggie can’t appreciate these quilts!” she said. “She’d probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use.”

“I reckon she would,” I said. “God knows I been saving ‘em for long enough with nobody using ‘em. I hope she will!” I didn’t want to bring up how I had offered Dee (Wangero) a quilt when she went away to college. Then she had told me they were old-fashioned, out of style.

“But they’re *priceless*!” she was saying now, furiously; for she has a temper. “Maggie would put them on the bed and in five years they’d be in rags. Less than that!”

“She can always make some more,” I said. “Maggie knows how to quilt.”

Dee (Wangero) looked at me with hatred. “You just will not understand. The point is *these* quilts, these quilts!”

“Well,” I said, stumped. “What would you do with them?”

“Hang them,” she said. As if that was the only thing you *could* do with quilts.

Maggie by now was standing in the door. I could almost hear the sound her feet made as they scraped over each other.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

As in “Two Kinds,” the title is explicitly referenced here. Explain its meaning in the context of the story.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Dee has a different sense of the value of the quilts than her mother and Maggie. Explain their conflicting viewpoints.

“She can have them, Mama,” she said, like somebody used to never winning anything or having anything reserved for her. “I can ’member Grandma Dee without the quilts.”

I looked at her hard. She had filled her bottom lip with checkerberry snuff, and it gave her face a kind of dopey, hangdog look. It was Grandma Dee and Big Dee who taught her how to quilt herself. She stood there with her scarred hands hidden in the folds of her skirt. She looked at her sister with something like fear, but she wasn’t mad at her. This was Maggie’s portion. This was the way she knew God to work.

When I looked at her like that, something hit me in the top of my head and ran down to the soles of my feet. Just like when I’m in church and the spirit of God touches me and I get happy and shout. I did something I never had done before: hugged Maggie to me, then dragged her on into the room, snatched the quilts out of Miss Wangero’s hands, and dumped them into Maggie’s lap. Maggie just sat there on my bed with her mouth open.

“Take one or two of the others,” I said to Dee. But she turned without a word and went out to Hakim-a-barber.

“You just don’t understand,” she said, as Maggie and I came out to the car.

“What don’t I understand?” I wanted to know.

“Your heritage,” she said. And then she turned to Maggie, kissed her, and said, “You ought to try to make something of yourself, too, Maggie. It’s really a new day for us. But from the way you and Mama still live, you’d never know it.”

She put on some sunglasses that hid everything above the tip of her nose and her chin.

Maggie smiled, maybe at the sunglasses. But a real smile, not scared. After we watched the car dust settle, I asked Maggie to bring me a dip of snuff. And then the two of us sat there just enjoying, until it was time to go in the house and go to bed.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the description of this closing scene encourage you to feel toward Dee/Wangero? Toward Maggie? Toward Mama? Which characters’ perspectives and values does this encourage you to see as preferable? How?

My Notes



Perspectives on Heritage: Fiction

*pick up
fence*

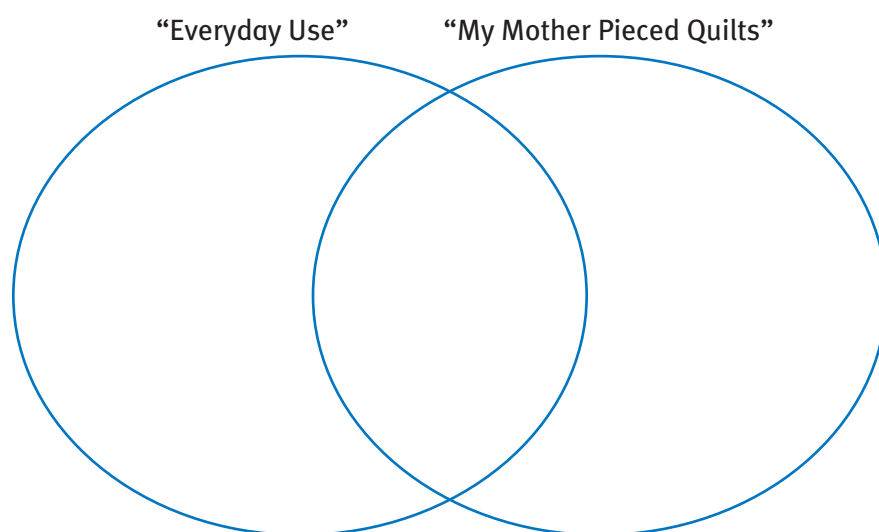
After Reading

3. Complete the SIFT chart with your group members, keeping in mind that a few of the prereading words may show up on your chart.

Symbols		
Images		
Figures of Speech		
Tone/Theme		

Comparing Texts

4. The quilts in “Everyday Use” and “My Mother Pieced Quilts” take on symbolic significance. What does the quilt in each story represent? How does each quilt convey the family’s heritage? Use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast how the two texts explore a similar question.



My Notes

Comparing Claims

For Embedded Assessment 2, you will be constructing an **argument**. One key element of argumentation that differentiates it from mere persuasion is that, in addition to presenting **claims**, arguments present **counterclaims**. A counterclaim asserts a different—sometimes conflicting—interpretation, explanation, or position. Both should be supportable with evidence, although you might use evidence to refute the counterclaim.

Consider the topic for Embedded Assessment 2: To what extent does one’s culture influence the way one views others and the world? Study the sample claim and counterclaim below, and then create your own claim and counterclaim, using “Everyday Use” or “My Mother Pieced Quilts.”

Potential Claim: In Harper Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, most of the characters in the novel are afflicted with Maycomb’s “usual disease,” racism, showing that culture strongly influences a person’s views of what is right or wrong in the world.

Possible Counterclaim: While racism may be widespread, Scout’s character shows that a person’s family more strongly influences a person’s views of others than the broader culture does.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

An **argument** is a set of statements, each supporting the other, that presents a position or viewpoint.

A **claim** is a position taken on an arguable viewpoint.

A **counterclaim** is an opposing viewpoint.

Perspectives on Heritage: Fiction

pickups
fcha

My Notes

Language and Writer's Craft: Phrases and Clauses

As you continue to refine your writing skills, keep in mind that using phrases and clauses to achieve specific effects will contribute to your command of language—whether you are speaking or writing.

You have used many phrases in your past writing, such as noun, verb, and prepositional phrases. Some other types of phrases include adverbial, adjectival, and absolute phrases.

An *adverbial phrase* functions as an adverb, modifying a verb, adjective, or another adverb.

Example: The man moved *rather slowly*, perhaps because of the cast on his foot. (modifies the verb *moved*)

An *adjectival phrase* functions as an adjective, modifying either a noun or a pronoun.

Example: The door *on the left* is the one leading to the hallway. (modifies the noun *door*)

An *absolute phrase* consists of a noun and its modifiers. An absolute phrase may precede, follow, or interrupt the main clause.

Example: *Their eyes glued to the television screen*, the fans watched every moment of play. (modifies *fans*)

Check Your Understanding

Writing Prompt: Write a **claim** and a **counterclaim** responding to the Embedded Assessment 2 prompt and using Maggie and Dee/Wangero as your subjects. Then develop each into a paragraph.

- Use a TAG statement to introduce new claims and texts.
- Develop each claim with supporting evidence and commentary.
- End each paragraph with a concluding statement.

Perspectives on Heritage: Nonfiction

ACTIVITY
1.13

Learning Targets

- Compare and contrast characters in a nonfiction text.
- Draw conclusions about individuals' responses to culture and explain conclusions in a timed essay.

Before Reading

1. **Quickwrite:** Respond to the following quotation from Mukherjee's "Two Ways to Belong in America" before sharing with your partner.

"The price that the immigrant willingly pays, and that the exile avoids, is the trauma of self-transformation."

During Reading

2. As you read Mukherjee's "Two Ways to Belong in America" with your collaborative discussion team, you will take on the alternating roles of reader, responder, and listener. After one individual reads, the next will respond to the reading by summarizing, questioning, clarifying, or connecting with the text. The responder will then become reader, the reader will become the listener, and so on until the article is read in its entirety.
3. In addition to responding to the Key Ideas and Details questions in the margin, keep the following question in mind as you read the text: How does Mukherjee use the metaphor of marriage to convey the different relationship each sister has with America?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bharati Mukherjee was born in India in 1940 to wealthy parents. Reading and writing by the age of three, she knew she wanted to write professionally by the age of 10. Mukherjee attended the University of Calcutta, the University of Baroda, and the University of Iowa, where she met her husband. Both writers, they reside in California where Bharati Mukherjee is a professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, Think-Pair-Share,
Close Reading

My Notes

Perspectives on Heritage: Nonfiction

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Here are the first references to marriage. What perspective on marriage is presented?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How is juxtaposition apparent in the underlined sentences? What is its effect?

Personal Essay

Two Ways to Belong in America

by Bharati Mukherjee

IOWA CITY—This is a tale of two sisters from Calcutta, Mira and Bharati, who have lived in the United States for some 35 years, but who find themselves on different sides in the current debate over the status of immigrants.

I am an American citizen and she is not. I am moved that thousands of long-term residents are finally taking the oath of citizenship. She is not.

Mira arrived in Detroit in 1960 to study child psychology and pre-school education. I followed her a year later to study creative writing at the University of Iowa. When we left India, we were almost identical in appearance and attitude. We dressed alike, in saris; we expressed identical views on politics, social issues, love and marriage in the same Calcutta convent-school accent. We would endure our two years in America, secure our degrees, then return to India to marry the grooms of our father's choosing.

Instead, Mira married an Indian student in 1962 who was getting his business administration degree at Wayne State University. They soon acquired the labor certifications necessary for the green card of hassle-free residence and employment.

Mira still lives in Detroit, works in the Southfield, Mich., school system, and has become nationally recognized for her contributions in the fields of pre-school education and parent-teacher relationships. After 36 years as a legal immigrant in this country, she clings passionately to her Indian citizenship and hopes to go home to India when she retires.

In Iowa City in 1963, I married a fellow student, an American of Canadian parentage. Because of the accident of his North Dakota birth, I bypassed labor-certification requirements and the race-related "quota" system that favored the applicant's country of origin over his or her merit. I was prepared for (and even welcomed) the emotional strain that came with marrying outside my ethnic community. In 33 years of marriage, we have lived in every part of North America. By choosing a husband who was not my father's selection, I was opting for fluidity, self-invention, blue jeans and T-shirts, and renouncing 3,000 years (at least) of caste-observant, "pure culture" marriage in the Mukherjee family. My books have often been read as unapologetic (and in some quarters overenthusiastic) texts for cultural and psychological "mongrelization." It's a word I celebrate.

Mira and I have stayed sisterly close by phone. In our regular Sunday morning conversations, we are unguardedly affectionate. I am her only blood relative on this continent. We expect to see each other through the looming crises of aging and ill health without being asked. Long before Vice President Gore's "Citizenship U.S.A." drive, we'd had our polite arguments over the ethics of retaining an overseas citizenship while expecting the permanent protection and economic benefits that come with living and working in America.

Like well-raised sisters, we never said what was really on our minds, but we probably pitied one another. She, for the lack of structure in my life, the erasure of Indianness, the absence of an unvarying daily core. I, for the narrowness of her perspective, her uninvolvedness with the mythic depths or the superficial pop culture of this society. But, now, with the scapegoating of “aliens” (documented or illegal) on the increase, and the targeting of long-term legal immigrants like Mira for new scrutiny and new self-consciousness, she and I find ourselves unable to maintain the same polite discretion. We were always unacknowledged adversaries, and we are now, more than ever, sisters.

“I feel used,” Mira raged on the phone the other night. “I feel manipulated and discarded. This is such an unfair way to treat a person who was invited to stay and work here because of her talent. My employer went to the I.N.S. and petitioned for the labor certification. For over 30 years, I’ve invested my creativity and professional skills into the improvement of this country’s pre-school system. I’ve obeyed all the rules, I’ve paid my taxes, I love my work, I love my students, I love the friends I’ve made. How dare America now change its rules in midstream? If America wants to make new rules curtailing benefits of legal immigrants, they should apply only to immigrants who arrive after those rules are already in place.” To my ears, it sounded like the description of a long-enduring, comfortable yet loveless marriage, without risk or recklessness. Have we the right to demand, and to expect, that we be loved? (That, to me, is the subtext of the arguments by immigration advocates.) My sister is an expatriate, professionally generous and creative, socially courteous and gracious, and that’s as far as her Americanization can go. She is here to maintain an identity, not to transform it.

I asked her if she would follow the example of others who have decided to become citizens because of the anti-immigration bills in Congress. And here, she surprised me. “If America wants to play the manipulative game, I’ll play it too,” she snapped. “I’ll become a U.S. citizen for now, then change back to Indian when I’m ready to go home. I feel some kind of irrational attachment to India that I don’t to America. Until all this hysteria against legal immigrants, I was totally happy. Having my green card meant I could visit any place in the world I wanted to and then come back to a job that’s satisfying and that I do very well.”

In one family, from two sisters alike as peas in a pod, there could not be a wider divergence of immigrant experience. America spoke to me—I married it—I embraced the demotion from expatriate aristocrat to immigrant nobody, surrendering those thousands of years of “pure culture,” the saris, the delightfully accented English. She retained them all. Which of us is the freak?

Mira’s voice, I realize, is the voice not just of the immigrant South Asian community but of an immigrant community of the millions who have stayed rooted in one job, one city, one house, one ancestral culture, one cuisine, for the entirety of their productive years. She speaks for greater numbers than I possibly can. Only the fluency of her English and the anger, rather than fear, born of confidence from her education, differentiate her from the seamstresses, the domestics, the technicians, the shop owners, the millions of hard-working but effectively silenced documented immigrants as well as their less fortunate “illegal” brothers and sisters.

Nearly 20 years ago, when I was living in my husband’s ancestral homeland of Canada, I was always well-employed but never allowed to feel part of the local Quebec or larger Canadian society. Then, through a Green Paper that invited a national referendum on the unwanted side effects of “nontraditional” immigration, the Government officially turned against its immigrant communities, particularly those from South Asia.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Explain the meaning and significance of the sentence beginning “We were always unacknowledged ...”.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the reference to a “long-enduring, comfortable yet loveless marriage” deviate from the earlier references?

My Notes

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Syntax

Commas are often used to separate thoughts or to separate items in a list. Notice that in the sentence beginning “Mira’s voice ...” Mukherjee uses many commas to speed up the pacing and to emphasize the single focus of her experience.

Perspectives on Heritage: Nonfiction

My Notes

I felt then the same sense of betrayal that Mira feels now. I will never forget the pain of that sudden turning, and the casual racist outbursts the Green Paper elicited. That sense of betrayal had its desired effect and drove me, and thousands like me, from the country.

Mira and I differ, however, in the ways in which we hope to interact with the country that we have chosen to live in. She is happier to live in America as an expatriate Indian than as an immigrant American. I need to feel like a part of the community I have adopted (as I tried to feel in Canada as well). I need to put roots down, to vote and make the difference that I can. The price that the immigrant willingly pays, and that the exile avoids, is the trauma of self-transformation.

After Reading

4. Revisit the quickwrite at the beginning of this activity. How has your understanding of these words changed now that you have read the text? Do a Think-Pair-Share to discuss your understanding.
5. Revisit the text to complete the chart below to help you analyze the two different approaches to belonging in America.

Bharati		Mira
	Birthplace	
	Citizenship	
	Dress	
	Area of Study	
	Marriage	
	Views on Heritage	
	Attitudes Toward "Citizenship U.S.A." Drive	
	Attitude Toward Living in America	

- ## Check Your Understanding

- Choose an organizational structure suitable to your subject.
- Write a clear thesis that identifies your chosen set of characters and their similarities or differences.
- Include textual quotations to support your explanations.
- Cite the author of the work you are quoting in parentheses following the quotation.



The word *assimilate* comes from the Latin “assimilare,” which means to “make similar.” *Assimilate* is a verb, and it means to adopt the ways of another culture or to become part of a different society or country. Other words with the same root include *similar* and *simulate*.

[illegible]

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Think-Pair-Share, Marking the Text, graphic organizer, Discussion

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

A **concession** is accepting something as true. A **refutation** is proof that an opinion is wrong or false.

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze the structure of an argument.
- Construct an argument effectively in a persuasive letter.

Before Reading

1. What relationship may exist between culture and argumentation? How might the concept of culture require the skill of argumentation? Think-Pair-Share with your partner. (You may want to consider works you have previously read in this unit.)

The Structure of an Argument

Although arguments are varied in their structure, content, and context, five key elements are almost always found in an effective argument.

The Hook

- The hook grabs the reader’s attention.
- It often establishes a connection between reader and writer and provides background information.
- It can be, but is not limited to, an anecdote, an image, a definition, or a quotation.

The Claim

- The claim comes in the opening section of your paper.
- It states your belief and what you wish to argue.
- It can be straightforward and clear, for example, “I believe that ...”.

Support: Reasons and Evidence

- Your support is the reasoning behind your argument.
- You provide supporting evidence for your claim (data, quotes, anecdotes, and so on) and use support to create logical appeals.

Counterclaims: Concessions and Refutations

- A **concession** recognizes the arguments made by the other side.
- A concession builds your credibility by objectively discussing the other side and granting that the other side has some validity.
- Following the concession, a **refutation** argues at length against the opposing viewpoint by proving your side has MORE validity.

Concluding Statement

- A concluding statement draws your argument to a close, restates your claim, and makes a final appeal.
- Avoid repeating information, but sum up your argument with a few final facts and appeals.

During Reading

2. As you read “An Indian Father’s Plea” by Robert Lake, mark the text and write the elements of argumentation in the My Notes section of your text.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A member of the Seneca and Cherokee Indian tribes, Robert Lake is an associate professor at Gonzaga University’s School of Education in Spokane, Washington. His tribal name is Medicine Grizzlybear.

Essay

AN INDIAN FATHER’S PLEA

by Robert Lake (Medicine Grizzlybear)

Wind-Wolf knows the names and migration patterns of more than 40 birds. He knows there are 13 tail feathers on a perfectly balanced eagle. What he needs is a teacher who knows his full measure.

Dear teacher, I would like to introduce you to my son, Wind-Wolf. He is probably what you would consider a typical Indian kid. He was born and raised on the reservation. He has black hair, dark brown eyes, and an olive complexion. And like so many Indian children his age, he is shy and quiet in the classroom. He is 5 years old, in kindergarten, and I can’t understand why you have already labeled him a “slow learner.”

At the age of 5, he has already been through quite an education compared with his peers in Western society. As his first introduction into this world, he was bonded to his mother and to the Mother Earth in a traditional native childbirth ceremony. And he has been continuously cared for by his mother, father, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and extended tribal family since this ceremony.

From his mother’s warm and loving arms, Wind-Wolf was placed in a secure and specially designed Indian baby basket. His father and the medicine elders conducted another ceremony with him that served to bond him with the essence of his genetic father, the Great Spirit, the Grandfather Sun, and the Grandmother Moon. This was all done in order to introduce him properly into the new and natural world, not the world of artificiality, and to protect his sensitive and delicate soul. It is our people’s way of showing the newborn respect, ensuring that he starts his life on the path of spirituality.

My Notes**KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

How does this paragraph establish the speaker’s position?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the speaker keep his audience in mind with the support for his argument?

Argumentation in “An Indian Father’s Plea”

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What element of an argument is displayed in the sentence beginning “Although you in Western society ...”?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What do you notice about the kind of evidence the author uses to make his claim?

The traditional Indian baby basket became his “turtle’s shell” and served as the first seat for his classroom. He was strapped in for safety, protected from injury by the willow roots and hazel wood construction. The basket was made by a tribal elder who had gathered her materials with prayer and in a ceremonial way. It is the same kind of basket that our people have used for thousands of years. It is specially designed to provide the child with the kind of knowledge and experience he will need in order to survive in his culture and environment.

Wind-Wolf was strapped in snugly with a deliberate restriction upon his arms and legs. Although you in Western society may argue that such a method serves to hinder motor-skill development and abstract reasoning, we believe it forces the child to first develop his intuitive faculties, rational intellect, symbolic thinking, and five senses. Wind-Wolf was with his mother constantly, closely bonded physically, as she carried him on her back or held him in front while breast-feeding. She carried him everywhere she went, and every night he slept with both parents. Because of this, Wind-Wolf’s educational setting was not only a “secure” environment, but it was also very colorful, complicated, sensitive, and diverse. He has been with his mother at the ocean at daybreak when she made her prayers and gathered fresh seaweed from the rocks, he has sat with his uncles in a rowboat on the river while they fished with gill nets, and he has watched and listened to elders as they told creation stories and animal legends and sang songs around the campfires.

He has attended the sacred and ancient White Deerskin Dance of his people and is well-acquainted with the cultures and languages of other tribes. He has been with his mother when she gathered herbs for healing and watched his tribal aunts and grandmothers gather and prepare traditional foods such as acorn, smoked salmon, eel, and deer meat. He has played with abalone shells, pine nuts, iris grass string, and leather while watching the women make beaded jewelry and traditional native regalia. He has had many opportunities to watch his father, uncles, and ceremonial leaders use different kinds of colorful feathers and sing different kinds of songs while preparing for the sacred dances and rituals.

As he grew older, Wind-Wolf began to crawl out of the baby basket, develop his motor skills, and explore the world around him. When frightened or sleepy, he could always return to the basket, as a turtle withdraws into its shell. Such an inward journey allows one to reflect in privacy on what he has learned and to carry the new knowledge deeply into the unconscious and the soul. Shapes, sizes, colors, texture, sound, smell, feeling, taste, and the learning process are therefore functionally integrated—the physical and spiritual, matter and energy, conscious and unconscious, individual and social.

This kind of learning goes beyond the basics of distinguishing the difference between rough and smooth, square and round, hard and soft, black and white, similarities and extremes.

For example, Wind-Wolf was with his mother in South Dakota while she danced for seven days straight in the hot sun, fasting, and piercing herself in the sacred Sun Dance Ceremony of a distant tribe. He has been doctored in a number of different healing ceremonies by medicine men and women from diverse places ranging from Alaska and Arizona to New York and California. He has been in more than 20 different sacred sweat-lodge rituals—used by native tribes to purify mind, body, and soul—since he was 3 years old, and he has already been exposed to many different religions of his racial brothers: Protestant, Catholic, Asian Buddhist, and Tibetan Lamaist.

It takes a long time to absorb and reflect on these kinds of experiences, so maybe that is why you think my Indian child is a slow learner. His aunts and grandmothers taught him to count and know his numbers while they sorted out the complex materials used to make the abstract designs in the native baskets. He listened to his mother count each and every bead and sort out numerically according to color while she painstakingly made complex beaded belts and necklaces. He learned his basic numbers by helping his father count and sort the rocks to be used in the sweat lodge—seven rocks for a medicine sweat, say, or 13 for the summer solstice ceremony. (The rocks are later heated and doused with water to create purifying steam.) And he was taught to learn mathematics by counting the sticks we use in our traditional native hand game. So I realize he may be slow in grasping the methods and tools that you are now using in your classroom, ones quite familiar to his white peers, but I hope you will be patient with him. It takes time to adjust to a new cultural system and learn new things.



He is not culturally “disadvantaged,” but he is culturally “different.” If you ask him how many months there are in a year, he will probably tell you 13. He will respond this way not because he doesn’t know how to count properly, but because he has been taught by our traditional people that there are 13 full moons in a year according to the native tribal calendar and that there are really 13 planets in our solar system and 13 tail feathers on a perfectly balanced eagle, the most powerful kind of bird to use in ceremony and healing.

But he also knows that some eagles may only have 12 tail feathers, or seven, that they do not all have the same number. He knows that the flicker has exactly 10 tail feathers; that they are red and black, representing the directions of east and west, life and death; and that this bird is considered a “fire” bird, a power used in native doctoring and healing. He can probably count more than 40 different kinds of birds, tell you and his peers what kind of bird each is and where it lives, the seasons in which it appears, and how it is used in a sacred ceremony. He may have trouble writing his name on a piece of paper, but he knows how to say it and many other things in several different Indian languages. He is not fluent yet because he is only 5 years old and required by law to attend your educational system, learn your language, your values, your ways of thinking, and your methods of teaching and learning. So you see, all of these influences together make him somewhat shy and quiet—and perhaps “slow” according to your standards. But if Wind-Wolf was not prepared for his first tentative foray into your world, neither were you appreciative of his culture. On the first day of class, you had difficulty with his name. You wanted to call him Wind, insisting that Wolf somehow must be his middle name. The students in the class laughed at him, causing further embarrassment.

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

What element of an argument is displayed in the underlined sentences? How do they improve the effectiveness of the speaker’s claim?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the speaker utilize juxtaposition for effect?

Argumentation in “An Indian Father’s Plea”

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does the tone shift at this point in the essay? How does the author achieve this shift? In terms of argumentative structure, what is the author doing here?

My Notes

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Notice how the speaker incorporates direct quotations in this example rather than simply talking “about” the incident. How do precise words further an argument?

While you are trying to teach him your new methods, helping him learn new tools for self-discovery and adapt to his new learning environment, he may be looking out the window as if daydreaming. Why? Because he has been taught to watch and study the changes in nature. It is hard for him to make the appropriate psychic switch from the right to the left hemisphere of the brain when he sees the leaves turning bright colors, the geese heading south, and the squirrels scurrying around for nuts to get ready for a harsh winter. In his heart, in his young mind, and almost by instinct, he knows that this is the time of year he is supposed to be with his people gathering and preparing fish, deer meat, and native plants and herbs, and learning his assigned tasks in this role. He is caught between two worlds, torn by two distinct cultural systems.

Yesterday, for the third time in two weeks, he came home crying and said he wanted to have his hair cut. He said he doesn’t have any friends at school because they make fun of his long hair. I tried to explain to him that in our culture, long hair is a sign of masculinity and balance and is a source of power. But he remained adamant in his position.

To make matters worse, he recently encountered his first harsh case of racism. Wind-Wolf had managed to adopt at least one good school friend. On the way home from school one day, he asked his new pal if he wanted to come home to play with him until supper. That was OK with Wind-Wolf’s mother, who was walking with them. When they all got to the little friend’s house, the two boys ran inside to ask permission while Wind-Wolf’s mother waited. But the other boy’s mother lashed out: “It is OK if you have to play with him at school, but we don’t allow those kind of people in our house!” When my wife asked why not, the other boy’s mother answered, “Because you are Indians and we are white, and I don’t want my kids growing up with your kind of people.”

So now my young Indian child does not want to go to school anymore (even though we cut his hair). He feels that he does not belong. He is the only Indian child in your class, and he is well-aware of this fact. Instead of being proud of his race, heritage, and culture, he feels ashamed. When he watches television, he asks why the white people hate us so much and always kill our people in the movies and why they take everything away from us. He asks why the other kids in school are not taught about the power, beauty, and essence of nature or provided with an opportunity to experience the world around them firsthand. He says he hates living in the city and that he misses his Indian cousins and friends. He asks why one young white girl at school who is his friend always tells him, “I like you, Wind-Wolf, because you are a good Indian.”

Now he refuses to sing his native songs, play with his Indian artifacts, learn his language, or participate in his sacred ceremonies. When I ask him to go to an urban powwow or help me with a sacred sweat-lodge ritual, he says no because “that’s weird” and he doesn’t want his friends at school to think he doesn’t believe in God.

The direct address of a an absent or imagined person (“dear teacher”) is called an *apostrophe*. What is its effect in the speaker’s argument? Why does he choose to place it here?

“But” is a signal of a shift. What kind of shift does the sentence “But I need your help” signal?

Underline the speaker's call to action in these closing remarks.

My Notes



Argumentation in “An Indian Father’s Plea”

My Notes

After Reading

3. In the graphic organizer below, identify examples of the five elements of argument that appear in “An Indian Father’s Plea.”

Element of Argument	Example from the Text
Hook	
Claim	
Support	
Concessions/ Refutations	
Call to Action	

4. Discuss the effectiveness of the writer’s organization of ideas with your group members. How does the organization help or hinder the argument?

Check Your Understanding

Argumentative Writing Prompt: How effective is the speaker’s argument? Taking on the perspective of the unnamed teacher, respond to the speaker’s appeal in a letter. Be sure to incorporate the following elements in your letter:

- Use the structure of an argument that you saw modeled in “An Indian Father’s Plea.”
- Specifically address his appeal by quoting his words and phrases within your letter.
- Incorporate varied syntax structures in your writing.

Synthesis: Drafting Your Position

ACTIVITY
1.15

Learning Targets

- Collaborate with group members to reach a consensus in response to a synthesis prompt.
- Synthesize various sources to formulate a position and state it in a thesis statement.

Choosing a Position

Throughout the last few activities you have focused on individuals' attitudes and perspectives about cultures that have affected or influenced their own. You have analyzed perspectives through a close look at rhetorical devices and elements of argument.

In order to write a proficient synthesis essay, you need to (1) present a clear position on an issue and (2) synthesize perspectives from multiple sources, including your own experiences, in support of that position.

1. For this activity, you will work in a group to create a group synthesis essay. What are the benefits and barriers to writing a group synthesis essay? Pass a single pen and paper from person to person to write your thoughts.
2. Look at your group list. What do you need to do to be successful in this assessment? How will you turn your negatives into positives? Conduct a small group discussion by hearing from each member.
3. Read the prompt below. Consider your personal point of view based on experience and on texts you have read in response to the prompt. Write your response below the prompt.

Writing Prompt: To what extent does a person's culture inform the way he or she views others and the world?

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Quickwrite, Brainstorming,
Group Discussion

My Notes

Synthesis: Drafting Your Position

pick up the

My Notes

4. Working with your group, brainstorm three different ways one could respond to this type of prompt—by defending, challenging, or qualifying it.

Response #1 (Defend):

Response #2 (Challenge):

Response #3 (Qualify):

5. Share your personal responses to the prompt so everyone has a chance to hear perspectives that he or she may not have considered. Reach a consensus by asking each team member to vote for his or her position. Give 3 points to the first choice, 2 to the second, and 1 to the third. Total the points of the group to determine the most popular position.

Write your group position here:

6. Now that you have a position, brainstorm stories, essays, poems, or real-life incidents that support your position. Make a list of the texts you might use, and then pass a pen and paper around the table while each member writes one supporting idea. Each member needs to add a new piece of evidence or support.

Check Your Understanding

After reaching a consensus and brainstorming support for your position, construct a well-crafted thesis statement that asserts your group's position. Write it below.

Synthesis: Presenting Your Position

ACTIVITY
1.16

Learning Target

- Collaborate to plan a synthesis essay by revising a thesis statement and mapping out an organizational strategy.

Creating an Argument

- Consider the second Essential Question from the beginning of this unit: How can I use literature as the primary source of an argument? Look at the thesis statement you constructed in the previous activity. Which works that you read in this unit will help you support that thesis statement? Quickwrite your answer and reason in My Notes.
- Each member of your group will select one author from the unit who is relevant to the conversation about how culture informs perspective. Your task is to reread the text and fill in the graphic organizer below. When you have finished, be prepared to report your findings to your group.

What is your group's position?	
Which author is relevant to the conversation? Why?	
Would he/she agree, disagree, or qualify your position?	
What specific examples could we use to support/refute our claim? (Include at least three.)	

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, Rereading, graphic organizer, Sharing and Responding, Drafting

My Notes

Synthesis: Presenting Your Position

My Notes

3. Report your findings to your group, and listen as they share their works and ideas. After discussing your answers, write your revised thesis below.

4. Revisit the components of an argumentative essay in Activity 1.14, Argumentation in “An Indian Father’s Plea.” How will your group organize the different elements of an argumentative essay to make the strongest possible case in support of your claim? Work together to create your organizational framework. Consider the following questions as you plan your essay:

- How will we organize our supporting ideas: by idea or by source? Consider how you may offset the challenges of a group essay as you answer this question.
- Will our concessions and refutations be a separate paragraph from the supporting paragraphs? Or will concessions and refutations be incorporated into the paragraphs that offer explicit support for our claim?
- Keep in mind as you make your plan that you will each be writing a separate “chunk” of your argumentative essay. How will you create cohesion between paragraphs?

Check Your Understanding

Write your organizational plan below by creating an outline for a synthesis paper and describing how your group will complete the task.

Writing a Synthesis Paper

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a clearly stated and strongly maintained claim that takes a specific position • develops the argument effectively by integrating relevant evidence from a variety of texts and personal insights. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes an effective claim with a specific position • develops an argument sufficiently by integrating evidence from a variety of texts and personal experiences. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has an unclear or insufficiently maintained claim, lacks focus, or does not take a position • uses vague, irrelevant, or insufficient evidence to develop the argument. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not coherent and does not make a clear claim or state a position • provides little or no evidence to develop an argument.
Structure	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses an effective organization that establishes clear relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence • introduces ideas smoothly, develops claims and counterclaims fairly, and provides a satisfying conclusion • uses appropriate and varied transitions. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses an adequate organization that establishes relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence • introduces ideas, develops claims and counterclaims, and provides a conclusion • uses some varied transitions. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses an inconsistent or confusing organization • does not develop claims and counterclaims and/or conclude ideas • uses weak, repetitive, or insufficient transitions. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a confusing organization and/or does not link ideas • does not develop claims and counterclaims or provide a conclusion • uses weak or no transitions.
Use of Language	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses diction and syntax that convey a formal, authoritative voice • correctly embeds and punctuates parenthetical citations • demonstrates strong command of conventions for grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses diction and syntax that convey a formal voice • uses generally correct parenthetical citations, with appropriate punctuation • demonstrates adequate command of conventions for grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not use appropriate diction or formal voice • omits parenthetical citations • demonstrates partial or insufficient command of conventions; errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling interfere with meaning. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses inappropriate diction and informal voice • omits parenthetical citations • demonstrates little command of conventions; numerous errors in grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling interfere with meaning.