

# Family

By Emily Davis

## Rationale

What is the purpose of teaching a unit on family? Why is a unit on family worthy of class time and student effort? What can students learn from a unit on family?

Whether positive or negative, one of the major influences on adolescents is their families. A unit working with families will provide students with the opportunity to navigate their own families and understand their position within their family, gain cultural awareness through reading families from different cultures, and gain civic awareness through reading about different types of families. The Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary defines 'family' as: "a group consisting of parents and their children" (Cayne, p. 340). Although this definition may be apt for some families, it is not inclusive. This unit on family will help students deconstruct this definition using assigned readings of varying genres. The students will then apply the new definition to cultural and civic issues raised in the readings.

There are three main areas that justify teaching a unit on family. The first area that justifies teaching a unit on family is the area of psychology/ human development. According to Jerry Trusty at Texas A&M University, "Researchers and educators generally agree that parents are an efficacious force in students' development. Parents logically have the advantage—over peers, educators, counselors, and other professionals—of serving as a continual, and perhaps more stable, resource for their children over the life span" (Trusty, p.260). Although this statement only applies to parents in particular, it is arguable that family in general has the most influence over a

child throughout his or her life span. Students need this influence and support of their families during their adolescent years.

Teaching a unit on family can help students examine their own families in two different ways. Initially, reading about fictitious family situations can provide students with a model for real life situations. After reading a selection, students can examine how a particular situation was handled and decide whether the handling of the situation was appropriate for them and their family. For example, in Billy Collins' poem, "Where I Live" the students can question why the main point of the poem (the death of the narrator's father) is written about at the end of the poem in a nonchalant manner. The students can discuss the possible relationship between the narrator and the father. Were they close? Were they estranged? What are possible intentions of the author? A discussion could ensue about whether or not this relates to the students families.

Secondly, teaching a unit on family can help students navigate their own families. Students can use assigned readings to examine the relationships among their own family members and the student's position in the family. In other words, the students can use the unit on family to figure out who they are and discover the beliefs of their family. For example, after reading Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club, students can pull from the experiences of the characters to help define themselves. Students can also examine the relationships in the novel and decide whether the relationships in their own families are similar or different. Regardless of whether the students align themselves with characters in the novel, the text can provide a starting place for examining family relationships and defining 'family.'

The second area that justifies teaching a unit on family is the area of cultural awareness. Today's schools are growing more and more diverse, and teachers need to face this issue. By reading works that depict different cultures, students can gain access to information about the similarities and differences in the way families interact across other cultures. For example, by reading *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan, the students can gain an understanding for the way people interact in an Asian family . These interactions may or may not be similar to the ways in which the students' own families interact. This increased awareness will foster understanding about cultures different from the students' own cultures. The unit will be taught in a manner that promotes tolerance and acceptance of other cultures. Both differences and similarities will be viewed as positive aspects of different cultures.

In addition, by reading works that depict different cultures, students can gain a sense of pride about their own culture. James Banks suggests that there are five dimensions to educating students about different cultures. This unit on family will include content integration, where examples from a variety of cultures are used in order to illustrate the key concept of family. The unit will also include focus on prejudice reduction, shifting the focus of cultural differences from negative racial attitudes to pride in cultural differences within the classroom (Woolfolk, p. 158). For example, students will write in a dialogue journal during the unit on family. The students will be assigned a variety of selections to read outside class. The students will then form pairs and write back and forth to each other in a dialogue journal, reflecting on the day's assignment and reacting to the reflection written by the partner the night before. The students will be instructed to comment on the selection read for homework and also include anecdotes

and traditions that the selection caused them to remember. The assignment will be explained so that the students understand that not only are they learning about other cultures, but they are also identifying with a culture and taking pride in that culture. Through the assigned readings and written activities, students will gain an increased cultural awareness.

The third area that justifies teaching a unit on family is the area of civic awareness. By reading and interacting with works that deal with different types of families, students will gain an increased civic awareness. To begin, the class will deconstruct the definition of 'family' and create a new, working definition. In order to create this definition, students will be exposed to literature about many different types of families- single-parent families, extended families, blended families, and homosexual families. This information will help students understand the changing demographics of families. In their article entitled, "The Changing Demography of America's Families," Jay Teachman, Lucky Tedrow, and Kyle Crowder discuss many aspects of change affecting families. Although divorce rates skyrocketed in the late 1940s, overall rates of divorce remain around 20 divorces per 1,000 married women over the age of 15, with a gradually increasing trend. Approximately 2/3 of divorced women remarry by the age of 45. Depending on race, anywhere from 25% to 70% of births occur outside of marriage. Taking these statistics into account, almost 50% of White children and 66% of African-American children will live part of their life in a single-parent family (p. 453- 460). With these statistics in mind, students will examine different types of family units. For example, students will read Maxine Kumin's poem entitled, "Divorce" and discuss the ramifications for the narrator's family. This discussion will provide students an

opportunity to express their opinions on divorced and single parent families in a controlled, teacher-led discussion. Students need to understand that not all families are exactly like their family. Every family is different, and yet many families are similar. Through examining the transient definition of family, students will become aware of the different types of family units.

In addition, a unit on family will foster understanding and tolerance of other types of families. Students need to learn to accept other types of people and families in a comfortable learning environment. For example, students will write a text about a time in their lives when their definition of family was “troubled.” Students will be asked to recall a specific event that changed their outlook on families. They will then explain how the event changed their outlook and why it changed their outlook. A teacher-led discussion will spring from this assignment. Civically aware students will become better citizens. The purpose of public school is to create good citizens, and what better way to do so than education about tolerance.

Some parents, educators, and administrators may question the importance of teaching a unit on family. These individuals may not understand how a unit on family can foster understanding and tolerance, develop individual thinking skills, help students define who they are as a person, and create an environment where opinions are expressed and reacted to in a mature, inoffensive way. These individuals may think that a unit discussing family will educate students in a romanticized “Ozzie and Harriet” depiction of families. Such is not the case. This unit will teach students meaningful life skills through a topic that is both highly relevant to the students’ lives and cosmopolitan in its definition. Our students do not live in an “Ozzie and Harriet” world. They live in a

“Simpsons” and “Roseanne” world. This unit will give them the skills these students need to navigate through this world and emerge better citizens.

### Bibliography

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# Family

## Goals and Rubrics

Goal 1- Students will participate in a dialogue journal, which will meet the following criteria:

1. Each student will be responsible for one entry per week.
2. Each student will have a partner.
3. Partner 1 will turn in one entry every Tuesday and Partner 2 will turn in one entry every Friday.
4. Each entry will be roughly two pages in length.
5. Each entry will contain the following topics: a comment on the weekly readings or activities, a reaction to the partner's entry, and a personal connection to the student's life.
6. Although the students will be required to write about specific topics, the dialogue journal will proceed as if in an informal pen pal situation.
7. Journals will be checked weekly for completeness.

## Rubric

A "check plus" journal will meet the following standards:

- Roughly two pages in length
- Contain all three writing topics

A "check" journal will meet the following standards:

- Roughly two pages in length
- Contain two of the three writing topics

A "check minus" journal will meet the following standards:

- Roughly two pages in length
- Contain one of the three writing topics

A “minus” journal will meet the following standards:

- Fail to contain any topics
- Fail to complete the assignment

Journals will not be taken up during week one.

A “check plus” will be worth 20 points

A “check” will be worth 17 points

A “check minus” will be worth 15 points

A “minus” will not be worth any points

At the end of the unit, 92-100 points is an A, 83-91 points is a B, 74-82 points is a C, and anything below 74 points will receive an F.



Goal 2- Students will participate in Book Circles while reading the novel. Participation in the Book Circles will include:

1. Student-generated open-ended questions, which will be created as a homework assignment.
2. Participation in Circle discussions
3. Adherence to behavior guidelines to be discussed in class

Each Circle will contain four students. The format will be similar to the Literature Circles described in Harvey Daniel's book, *Literature Circles*, except that each Circle will discuss the same book instead of choosing different books.

Rubric- Peers, using the following chart, will evaluate students:

Name	Prepared?	Participated?	Thinking Skills	Social Skills
Member 1				
Member 2				
Member 3				
Member 4				

The columns are to be checked only if the behavior is exhibited. Each Circle member will fill out a chart every day the Circles meet. The teacher will evaluate each student's daily performance by "averaging" the peer evaluations for each day. In addition, the teacher will observe each Circle and evaluate using the same evaluation sheet.

An "A" discussion grade would consist of the following:

- Participation during every Book Circle meeting
- Preparation for every Book Circle meeting
- Thinking and positive social skills exhibited during every meeting except two

A “B” discussion grade would consist of the following:

- Participation during all but two meetings
- Preparation for every meeting
- Thinking and positive social skills exhibited during at least five meetings

A “C” discussion grade would consist of the following:

- Participation during at least five meetings
- Preparation for at least five meetings
- Thinking and positive social skills exhibited during at least four meetings

A “D” discussion grade would consist of the following:

- Participation during three meetings
- Preparations for at least three meetings
- Thinking and positive social skills exhibited during at least two meetings

An “F” discussion grade would consist of the following:

- Participation during less than three meetings
- Preparations for less than three meetings

No thinking or positive social skills exhibited during any of the meetings

Goal 3- Students will read assignments and complete quizzes

1. Quizzes will consist of one open-ended question that will ask the students' opinions of the required text.
2. Students should include enough information in their response to prove they read the required text.

Rubric-

An "A" quiz will prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the material was thoroughly read by using names, places, key events, or motifs to structure the arguments and support the student's opinion

A "B" quiz will provide sufficient evidence to prove that the reading was done, although some evidence may be sketchy, incorrect, or lacking.

A "C" quiz will indicate the possibility that the text was read by skimming or not read in its entirety. Although some facts about the book are used, not enough evidence is presented to prove that the book was read in its entirety.

A "D" quiz will indicate that the student attempted to acquire information from an outside source such as the Internet, a friend, or a movie. However, evidence is lacking to the point where it is obvious the book was not read.

An "F" quiz will indicate that no attempt was made to read the assignment.

Goal 4- Students will complete in-class writing assignments and activities. In-class assignments will be checked for completeness and participation. Specific in-class assignments and writing activities will be described in the lesson plans.

**Rubric-**

Complete assignments will be marked with a check.

Incomplete assignments will be marked with a minus sign.

The teacher will add up the number of completed assignments and divide this number by the total number of assignments. This number, when multiplied by 100, will be the student's percent of participation and in-class assignment completion.

92%-100% will be considered an "A"

83%- 91% will be considered a "B"

74%-82% will be considered a "C"

70%-73% will be considered a "D"

Below 70% will be considered an "F"

Goal 5- Students will complete a multigenre research paper about their families. The paper will be bound as a book for the students to keep. The book will include the following:

1. Students will research one aspect of their family history on the Internet and in the library and summarize their findings in a non-essay format.
2. Students will interview one family member about the topic of their choice. The students will then transcribe the interview.
3. Students will write their autobiography.
4. Students will draw pictures to illustrate their books.
5. Students will include creative writing assignments in their books
6. Students will include quick writes in their books
7. Students will write a poem for their books
8. Students will find song lyrics for their books
9. Students will expand upon one quick write, creating a summative text for their books

Items 1, 2, 3, and 6 will be completed throughout the unit. Items 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 will be completed at the end of the unit. The students will bind their book and decorate the outside and inside as they see fit.

#### Rubric-

An “A” book will make use of each genre in a creative, scholarly manner. The quality of writing within each piece will be considered exceptional, with research supported by fact

and creative assignments full of sophisticated writing tools. The book will be completed in an organized, “professional” manner. Special touches will be added throughout each item to make the book exceptional. The students will exhibit evidence of having learned something about himself/herself and maturity through the course of the unit.

A “B” book will make use of each genre in such a manner that is slightly less creative and scholarly than an “A” book. The quality of the writing within each assignments will be good, although slightly less than the “A” quality writing. The book will be completed in an organized, professional manner. Some special touches will make the book unique and the student will show evidence of having matured throughout the unit.

A “C” book will make use of each genre, although some writings may seem redundant or formulaic. The quality of writing will be acceptable, although editing errors may impede the understanding of the text. The book will be completed and bound, although not necessarily well organized or professional looking. The book will contain little special touches and will contain only the bare minimum. The student will exhibit minimal evidence of having grown or matured throughout the course of the unit.

A “D” book will make use of the genres, although under duress. The quality of writing within each item will be considered poor and unreadable. The book may or may not be bound and may not be organized. No special touches are found in the book. The student exhibits no evidence of having grown or matured throughout the course of the unit.

An “F” book may not have all items completed. The quality of writings is unintelligible and is not organized at all. The items may not be bound in a book. The student may not complete enough of the assignment to add special touches. The student may not complete enough of the assignment to show growth or maturity.

# Family

## Materials

Poems:

“Where I Live” by Billy Collins

“My Father’s Neckties” by Maxine Kumin

“Mama and Daughter” by Langston Hughes

“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes

*The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan

Comic strips

Artwork

Television shows

Songs

*Family Prayers* (rated PG)



# Family

## Lesson Plans

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Day 1		
7 minutes	Introduction	<p>The teacher will introduce the concept of the dialogue journal. The teacher will explain his/her expectations and the format of the journal. The purpose of the journal is to connect personally with the readings and to communicate with peers. Partner 1 will turn in a journal every Tuesday and Partner 2 will turn in a journal every Friday. The students will follow the format described in the rubric, which the teacher will hand out to each student.</p> <p>The teacher will pair the students. If this is the first unit of the year, the teacher may use a survey to match student personalities.</p>
5 minutes	Quick Write	<p>Topic: What is a family? Students will jot down their personal definition of 'family.'</p> <p>The students will keep this writing activity for the multigenre research paper.</p>
10 minutes	Class Discussion	<p>The students will discuss the differences among their personal definitions. The students will come to a consensus on a class definition of 'family.'</p>
26 minutes	Family Collage	<p>On butcher paper, the students will paste magazine clippings that depict the class definition of 'family.'</p>
2 minutes	Wrap-up	<p>The students will clean up the classroom and hang the collage on the wall.</p>
	Homework	<p>If applicable, the students will fill out the survey.</p>

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Day 2		
2 minutes	Warm-up	Students will pick up copies of Billy Collins' poem, "Where I Live" when they walk in the door. If applicable, the students will turn in the surveys.
8 minutes	Quick Write	Topic: How did participating in the collage expand your personal definition of 'family'? The students will keep this writing activity for the multigenre research paper.
10 minutes	Lesson	The teacher will explain behavior in small groups. The teacher will address issues like respect, equal talking time, active participation, listening, and use of roll sheets.
5 minutes	Silent Reading	The students will read the poem silently and jot down their initial thoughts about the poem.
15 minutes	Group Discussion	The students will break into groups of four students and discuss the following prompt: Why did the author wait until near the end of the poem to reveal the death of the narrator's father? The students will utilize the group roles (student handout included).
8 minutes	Class Discussion	The students will briefly discuss the main points from each group discussion.
2 minutes	Wrap- up	The students will clean up the classroom and turn in a written copy of the main points from each group.
	Homework	None

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Day 3		
2 minutes	Warm-up	The teacher will pass out a handout that summarizes the main points from the small group discussions yesterday. This handout will serve as a resource for the students for the following quick write.
7 minutes	Quick Write	Topic: Choose 1 point from the handout and apply it to your life by telling a story. The students will keep this activity for the multigenre research paper.
2 minutes	Class Activity	The teacher will choose one student to read aloud “My Father’s Neckties” by Maxine Kumin.
16 minutes	Class Discussion	The students will discuss their individual reactions to the poem, the possible intentions of the author, why this poem is included in a unit about family, and the message the author is trying to convey to the reader.
20 minutes	Pair Activity	In pairs, the students will write a poem about an encounter with a dead family member using Maxine Kumin’s poem as an example. The students will not finish the poem- they will leave off the last stanza. The teacher will remind the students that, although they may write about a real family member, it is also acceptable to write about a fictitious family member. The students will make two copies of the poem—one for each student.
	Homework	The students will write their personal ending to the poems. The students will then type the poems and decorate using graphics or borders as if the poems were published in their literature book.

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Day 4		
5 minutes	Warm-up	The students will turn in the poems that they completed for homework. The teacher will pass out a list of dialogue partners. The teacher will also pass out two poems and divide the class into two groups.
15 minutes	Group Activity	The students in Group 1 will read and discuss “Mama and Daughter” by Langston Hughes. The students in Group 2 will read and discuss “Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes. Each group will come up with a few main points to “teach” to the other group.
10 minutes	Group Activity	Group 1 will teach “Mama and Daughter” to Group 2.
10 minutes	Group Activity	Group 2 will teach “Mother to Son” to Group 1.
5 minutes	Class Evaluation	The class will orally evaluate the teaching experience with the teacher.
5 minutes	Preview	The teacher will preview <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> by Amy Tan by explaining the format of class (Book Circles) and the expected reading load for the next two weeks (about 35 pages per night).
	Homework	None

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Day 5		
5 minutes	Quick Write	Topic: Write about the first thing that comes to your mind about your family. Pretend you are having a conversation in your mind and write in dialogue form. The students will keep this activity for the multigenre research project.
20 minutes	Lesson	The teacher will explain to the class the criteria for asking “good” questions. The class will construct a few good questions aloud. (Student handout on constructing good questions included.)
8 minutes	Independent Activity	The students will construct five good questions independently. The students will turn in their good questions when they are finished.
2 minutes	Class Evaluation	The teacher will ask the students how they feel about their ability to construct good questions and the difficulty level of the assignment.
13 minutes	Introduction	The teacher will introduce Amy Tan and <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> . The teacher will explain the author’s background, the background of the novel, and the different points of view in which the novel is written. The teacher will also pass out the books. (The teacher is responsible for researching this information. A good place to start is the University of Michigan’s website entitled “Voices from the Gaps” at url: <a href="http://voices.cla.umn.edu/authors/AmyTan.html">http://voices.cla.umn.edu/authors/AmyTan.html</a> )
2 minutes	Wrap-up	The students will turn in their four quick write activities from this week.
	Homework	The students will read the first two chapters of the book entitled “Jing-Mei Woo: The Joy Luck Club” and “An-Mei Hsu: Scar.” The students will mark good passages, make note of any questions they have about the text, and construct two good questions to discuss during tomorrow’s Book Circle meeting.

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Day 6		
5 minutes	Warm-up	The teacher will post the list of names in each Book Circle on the chalkboard. The students will check the board when they enter the room and form their Book Circle groups. The students will pick up a Group Discussion Roles Sheet and a Book Circle Evaluation Sheet and fill in the names of each group member where appropriate.
5 minutes	Introduction	The teacher will explain that the students should use the skills explained in the lesson on small group behavior. The teacher will also pass out the rubric and explain how the students will receive grades for the Book Circles. The teacher will stress that, in order to receive credit for participation, the students need to be prepared, participate, and show signs of thinking and social skills.
5 minutes	Quiz	Assignment: Compare one aspect of two poems that we read in class last week. Write enough to prove that you have a good understanding of the poems.
30 minutes	Book Circles	The Circles will discuss the first section of <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> using the questions that they constructed for homework and examples from the text. The students will utilize the group discussion roles. The teacher will circle the room, sitting in on each group for a few minutes.
5 minutes	Class Evaluation	The students will discuss the format of the Book Circles. The teacher will ask the students if they liked having the freedom to discuss any relevant topic they desired or if they would like a prompt for the next Book Circle meeting. The students will turn in their evaluation sheets.
	Homework	The students will read the next two chapters of the book entitled "Lindo Jong: The Red Candle" and "Ying-Ying St. Clair: The Moon Lady." The students will mark good passages, make note of any questions they have about the text, and construct two good questions to discuss in tomorrow's Book Circle meeting.

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Day 7		
3 minutes	Warm-up	As students walk in the door they will pick up a Book Circle Evaluation Sheet and fill in the names of each group member where appropriate. Dialogue Journal Partner 1 will turn in his/her journal.
5 minutes	Quick Write	Topic: Write about one time that you were expected to replace a family member in a social or family situation. How did you feel? Do you empathize with Jing-Mei? The students will keep this activity for the multigenre research project.
40 minutes	Book Circles	The Circles will discuss the second section of the book using the questions that they constructed for homework and examples from the text. The students will utilize the group discussion roles. The Circles will use a prompt if the class voted to use discussion prompts. Prompt: How would you react to being betrothed as a young child? What does Lindo Jong's situation tell you about her culture? How do you feel about the way Lindo Jong handled her situation? The teacher will observe Book Circle Group 1 using the evaluation sheet.
2 minutes	Wrap-up	The students will turn in their evaluation sheets.
	Homework	The students will read the next two chapters of the book entitled "Waverly Jong: Rules of the Game" and "Lena St. Clair: The Voice from the Wall." The students will mark good passages, make note of any questions they have about the text, and construct two good questions to discuss in tomorrow's Book Circle meeting.

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Day 8		
2 minutes	Warm-up	As students walk in the door they will pick up a Book Circle Evaluation Sheet and fill in the names of each group member where appropriate.
46 minutes	Book Circles	The Circles will discuss the third section of the book using the questions that they constructed for homework and examples from the text. The students will utilize the group discussion roles. The Circles will not use a prompt today. The teacher will observe Book Circle Group 2 using the evaluation sheet.
2 minutes	Wrap-up	The students will turn in their evaluation sheets.
	Homework	The students will read the next two chapters of the book entitled “Rose Hsu Jordan: Half and Half” and “Jing-Mei Woo: Two Kinds.” The students will mark good passages, make note of any questions they have about the text, and construct two good questions to discuss in tomorrow’s Book Circle meeting.

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Day 9		
2 minutes	Warm-up	As students walk in the door they will pick up a Book Circle Evaluation Sheet and fill in the names of each group member where appropriate.
5 minutes	Quick Write	Topic: What would you do if you were forced to play the piano as Jing-Mei was? Pretend you are Jing-Mei and write a letter to Suyuan Woo (her mother). The students will keep this activity for the multigenre research project.
40 minutes	Book Circles	<p>The Circles will discuss the fourth section of the book using the questions that they constructed for homework and examples from the text. The students will utilize the group discussion roles. The Circles will use a prompt if the class voted to use discussion prompts.</p> <p>Prompt: Discuss Rose Hsu Jordan's relationship with her husband and with her mother. How do these two relationships differ? How are they similar?</p> <p>The teacher will observe Book Circle Group 3 using the evaluation sheet.</p>
3 minutes	Wrap-up	The students will turn in their evaluation sheets.
	Homework	The students will read the next two chapters of the book entitled "Lena St. Clair: Rice Husband" and "Waverly Jong: Four Directions." The students will mark good passages, make note of any questions they have about the text, and construct two good questions to discuss in tomorrow's Book Circle meeting.

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Day 10		
3 minutes	Warm-up	As students walk in the door they will pick up a Book Circle Evaluation Sheet and fill in the names of each group member where appropriate. Dialogue Journal Partner 2 will turn in his/her journal.
7 minutes	Quiz	Assignment: Lena St. Clair's mother has a saying, "Chunwang chihan" which means "one thing is always the result of another". How does this apply to Lena's marriage? What does Lena's mother observe when she visits Lena and Harold's home?
22 minutes	Book Circles	The Circles will discuss the fifth section of the book using the questions that they constructed for homework and examples from the text. The students will utilize the group discussion roles. The Circles will not use a prompt today. The teacher will observe Book Circle Group 4 using the evaluation sheet. The students will turn in their Evaluation Sheets.
17 minutes	Independent Writing Activity	The teacher will explain Student Biographies and pass out a handout (included). The students will begin writing their biographies. (This assignment is item #3 on the list of items for the multigenre research paper.)
1 minute	Wrap-up	The students will turn in their 2 quick write assignments from this week.
	Homework	The students will read the next two chapters of the book entitled "Rose Hsu Jordan: Without Wood" and "Jing-Mei Woo: Best Quality." The students will mark good passages, make note of any questions they have about the text, and construct two good questions to discuss in tomorrow's Book Circle meeting.

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Day 11		
2 minutes	Warm-up	As students walk in the door they will pick up a Book Circle Evaluation Sheet and fill in the names of each group member where appropriate.
33 minutes	Book Circles	The Circles will discuss the sixth section of the book using the questions that they constructed for homework and examples from the text. The students will not utilize the group discussion roles. The Circles will not use a prompt today. The teacher will observe Book Circle Group 5 using the evaluation sheet. The students will turn in their Evaluation Sheets.
15 minutes	Independent Writing Activity	The students will work on their biographies until the end of the period. The teacher will serve as a resource for any questions the students may have.
	Homework	The students will read the next two chapters of the book entitled “An-Mei Hsu: Magpies” and “Ying-Ying St. Clair: Waiting Between the Trees.” The students will mark good passages, make note of any questions they have about the text, and construct two good questions to discuss in tomorrow’s Book Circle meeting.

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Day 12		
3 minutes	Warm-up	As students walk in the door they will pick up a Book Circle Evaluation Sheet and fill in the names of each group member where appropriate. Dialogue Journal Partner 1 will turn in his/her journal.
5 minutes	Quick Write	Topic: Respond to the quote, “Now you see...why it is useless to cry. Your tears do not wash away your sorrows. They feed someone else’s joy. And that is why you must learn to swallow your own tears” (from An-Mei Hsu: Magpies). How does this quote make you feel? Is this good advice for you? The students will keep this activity for the multigenre research project.
40 minutes	Book Circles	The Circles will discuss the seventh section of the book using the questions that they constructed for homework and examples from the text. The students will not utilize the group discussion roles. The Circles will not use a prompt today. The teacher will observe Book Circle Group 6 using the evaluation sheet.
2 minutes	Wrap-up	The students will turn in their evaluation sheets.
	Homework	The students will read the last two chapters of the book entitled “Lindo Jong: Double Face” and “Jing-Mei Woo: A Pair of Tickets.” The students will mark good passages, make note of any questions they have about the text, and construct two good questions to discuss in tomorrow’s Book Circle meeting.

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Day 13		
2 minutes	Warm-up	As students walk in the door they will pick up a Book Circle Evaluation Sheet and fill in the names of each group member where appropriate.
46 minutes	Book Circles	The Circles will discuss the eighth section of the book using the questions that they constructed for homework and examples from the text. The students will not utilize the group discussion roles. The Circles will not use a prompt today. The teacher will observe Book Circle Group 7 using the evaluation sheet..
2 minutes	Wrap-up	The students will turn in their evaluation sheets.
	Homework	None

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Day 14		
5 minutes	Warm-up	The students will evaluate their Book Circles experience by filling out a questionnaire (Questionnaire not included. The teacher should construct a questionnaire based on his or her observations and the dynamics of the class).
5 minutes	Introduction	The teacher will introduce the concept of a body biography and pass out a handout (included).
35 minutes	Body Biographies	The students will choose a character from <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> and create a body biography.
5 minutes	Wrap-up	The students will clean up the room and put away all art supplies.
	Homework	None

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Day 15		
5 minutes	Quiz	Assignment: State your favorite scene in <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> , briefly explain what happens in the scene, and explain why this is your favorite scene. Give enough details to prove you read the book. Dialogue Journal Partner 2 will turn in his/her journal.
40 minutes	Body Biographies	The students will continue working on their body biographies. All body biographies must be completed by the end of the period.
5 minutes	Wrap-up	The students will clean up the room and put away all art supplies. The students will hang their body biographies on the wall for display. The students will turn in their quick write assignment from this week.
	Homework	The students will search on the internet, look in comic books, or look in the Sunday paper for a comic dealing with family. The students will bring the comic strip to class for Day 16.

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Day 16		
3 minutes	Warm-up	As students walk in the door, they will scotch tape their comics around the walls of the room. The students will be careful not to disturb the body biographies.
35 minutes	Comic Gallery	The students will walk around the room as if they are in an art museum. Each student will take notes on one comic he/she likes and one comic he/she dislikes.
12 minutes	Independent Writing Activity	The students will write about the comics that they took notes on as if they were a newspaper reporter (handout included).
	Homework	The students will finish their newspaper articles.

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Day 17		
2 minutes	Warm-up	The students will turn in their newspaper articles. Dialogue Journal Partner 1 will turn in his/her journal.
32 minutes	Slide Projection Show	The teacher will show slides of 8 pieces of artwork. The teacher should let the students view each slide for about four minutes. The students will take notes on the appearance of each piece of artwork. The students need to write down enough details to recall the appearance of the piece of artwork for the next activity.
10 minutes	Independent Writing Activity	The students will write a poem about a family using the appearance of one piece of artwork. The students will attempt to recreate the scene portrayed in the artwork and convey the tone of the artwork in the poem. The poem must be at least four stanzas long.
	Homework	The students will finish their poem. The students will type or neatly print their poems.

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Day 18

		The students will turn in their poems as they walk in the door.
5 minutes	Quick Write	Topic: My idea of a perfect family would resemble... The students will fill in the blank with a television sitcom and explain this decision. The students will keep this activity for the multigenre research project.
43 minutes	Television Shows	The teacher will show pre-recorded three- minute segments of 5 or 6 different television sitcoms that deal with families. Although no specific examples are included with this unit, some suggestions include <i>Seventh Heaven</i> , <i>Gilmore Girls</i> , <i>The Cosby Show</i> , <i>My Two Dads</i> , <i>Father Knows Best</i> , <i>The Patty Duke Show</i> , <i>Eight Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter</i> , <i>Everwood</i> , <i>Roseanne</i> , <i>Diff'rent Strokes</i> , <i>The Simpsons</i> , etc. The students will watch the segment and then discuss the similarities and differences between each clip. The students will look for reoccurring issues, how the families deal with those issues, family member make-up, etc.
2 minutes	Wrap-up	The students will reorganize the room if any furniture was moved around and prepare for the bell.
	Homework	The students will bring in pillows, blankets, or other comfortable accessories for the mock coffee shop concert tomorrow. The students may also bring in drinks or food to add to the atmosphere. A sign- up list needs to be created if students opt to bring in food and drinks.

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Day 19	Quick Write	<p>Topic: Write two stanzas of lyrics about a sibling, cousin, pet, or friend. Describe your relationship in the lyrics.</p> <p>Students will keep this activity for the multigenre research paper.</p>
5 minutes		
40 minutes	Coffee shop	<p>The students will push all the desks to the perimeter of the room and set up comfortable pallets on the floor. The students will sit on the floor and spread out the food and drinks on the “coffee shop table” which the teacher will set up ahead of time. The students will lounge on the floor, sip their drinks, and listen to songs.</p> <p>The teacher will compile a set of tapes or CDs that contain songs about families. Some examples include John Lennon’s “Beautiful Boy,” Suzanne Vega’s “Luka,” Harry Chapin’s “Cat’s in the Cradle,” Bette Midler’s “Baby Mine,” U2’s “Mothers of the Disappeared,” Reba McIntire’s “The Greatest Man I Never Knew,” and Alanis Morissette’s “Perfect.”</p> <p>The students will be encouraged to discuss the songs as they relate to family. However, no official discussion will take place. The focus of this day should be listening to the songs.</p>
5 minutes	Wrap-up	<p>The teacher will explain to the students that they will be going to the library tomorrow. Students need to think about what they want to research as they will only have two days in the library and will not have time to decide tomorrow.</p>
	Homework	<p>The students will decide what aspect of their family’s history they will research. Students who are adopted or who do not know where their ancestors are from will have the option to choose a country that they feel best represents their heritage. The students will write their topic down and they need to be prepared to show the teacher the topic tomorrow.</p>

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DAY 20	Warm-up	<p>The teacher will take attendance by having students show their research topic when their name is called. Students who do not have a topic must provide an explanation in order to be counted in attendance. Dialogue Journal Partner 2 will turn in his/her journal.</p> <p>The students will turn in their 2 quick write assignments from this week.</p>
45 minutes	Library	<p>The students will research their topics in the library until the bell rings.</p> <p>Possible topics include: the traditional food from a country, the cultural traditions of a country, the religion of a country, the history of a country, the traditional dress of a country, important monuments in a country, a specific city in a country, etc.</p> <p>The students must provide a rationale for their topic. For example, a student whose family is Italian may research Italian food if their family feels Italian food is something that is important to or defines their family. If the student's family traditionally visits Rome every year for their family vacation, that student may research Rome. (Student research guide included.)</p> <p>The students may leave directly from the library when the bell rings.</p>
	Homework	<p>The students will work on their final projects.</p>

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<b>DAY 21</b>		
2 minutes	Warm-up	The teacher will take attendance.
48 minutes	Library	<p>The students will finish their research in the library. By the end of the period, the students should have enough information to write about their topic. The students will turn in their research guides at the end of the period.</p> <p>The teacher will explain that the research piece should be written in a non-essay format. Students may write a poem, a story, an advertisement, travel brochure, or any other relevant genre.</p> <p>The students may leave directly from the library when the bell rings.</p>
	Homework	The students will work on their final projects.

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Day 22		
3 minutes	Introduction	The teacher will introduce the movie, <i>Family Prayers</i> (rated PG) with actors Joe Mantegna and Anne Archer. The movie is about a 13 year-old boy's coming of age in a dysfunctional Jewish household. Dialogue Journal Partner 1 will turn in his/her journal.
47 minutes	Movie	The students will watch the movie.
	Homework	The students will work on their final projects.

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Day 23		
7 minutes	Quick Write	Topic: How has this unit altered your definition of the word “family”? The students will keep this activity for the multigenre research project.
43 minutes	Movie	The students will watch the movie.
	Homework	The students need to bring their research to class tomorrow.

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Day 24		
29 minutes	Movie	The students will watch the end of the movie.
21 minutes	Independent Writing Activity	The students may work on their research piece until the bell rings. (Handout incl.)
	Homework	The students will work on their final projects.

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Day 25		
20 minutes	Introduction	<p>Dialogue Journal Partner 2 will turn in his/her journal.</p> <p>The teacher will explain the interview portion of the final project. The teacher will discuss constructing interview questions by building on the “constructing good questions” lesson. The teacher will explain that the students should interview a family member (or very close friend if the student doesn’t have family). The interviews should be tape recorded (if possible) and then transcribed. The teacher will explain the elements of a transcription and how to transcribe.</p>
29 minutes	Independent Writing Activity	The students will spend the remainder of the period constructing their interview questions.
1 minute	Wrap-up	The students will turn in their quick write assignment from this week.
	Homework	The students will interview the family member before day 28. The students will bring all materials needed to work on their final project in class tomorrow.

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Day 26		
10 minutes	Class Discussion	The teacher will facilitate a question and answer session where students may ask questions about the final project. The teacher will return all quick writes to the students so that they may choose which quick writes they would like to incorporate into their multigenre research project.
40 minutes	Independent Activity	The students will work on project items 4,5,7,8, and 9. The students will also finish any other item that needs completing.
	Homework	The students will work on their final projects. The students will bring their projects to class tomorrow to work on them.

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Day 27

50 minutes

Independent  
Activity

Dialogue Journal Partner 1 will turn in his/her journal.

The students will complete their projects today and begin binding them into books. The teacher will be available to answer questions.

Homework

The students will complete their projects. The students will turn in their projects tomorrow.

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Day 28		
5 minutes	Warm-up	The students will turn in their projects.
45 minutes	Presentations	Ten students will present their projects to the class. The students may talk about any aspect of the projects that they wish. The students will not be graded on these presentations.
	Homework	None

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Day 29  
50 minutes      Presentations      The next ten students will present their projects to the class.

Homework      None

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Day 30		
50 minutes	Presentations	Dialogue Journal Partner 1 will turn in his/her journal. The final ten students will present their projects to the class.
	Homework	None

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## Group Discussion Roles

**Questioner-** The questioner is responsible for writing down any questions the group discusses about the literature. The questioner should also ask the group if they had questions while they were initially reading the literature. The questioner should also write down any conclusions the group comes to regarding those questions.

**Passage Finder-** The passage finder is responsible for finding a few special sections or quotations for the group to discuss. The sections or quotes should be especially interesting or thought provoking and should prompt insightful discussion. The passage finder will write down the main points of the discussion surrounding those quotes or sections of text.

**Connector-** The connector is responsible for making connections between the literature and the world. The connector can relate the literature to personal experiences, current events, or other writings on the same topic. The connector will write down all connections on a sheet of paper.

**Leader-** The leader is responsible for keeping the group on topic. When the discussion veers off topic, it is the leader's responsibility to get the group back on track. In addition, the leader will summarize the main points of the discussion and report back to the class during the class discussion.

Remember that when the class uses evaluation sheets, you are responsible for the requirements listed on the evaluation sheet in addition to the role responsibilities.

## Constructing Good Questions

### **Generic (Bad) Questions:**

- Have “yes” or “no” answers (ex. Did you like the book?)
- Can be answered by recalling information directly from the text (ex. Who married Romeo and Juliet in his secret chamber?)
- Can be answered without reading the text (ex. Who is the main character in the book?)
- Are worded in a manner that makes the questioner’s opinion known (ex. Shouldn’t Atticus have been more attentive to his children?)

### **Good Questions:**

- Are focused (deal with a very specific incident, idea, character, or plot element)
- Are open-ended (can have a variety of correct answers, not “yes” or “no”)
- Are meaningful (make the reader think, not recall, enhance the reader’s understanding of the text)
- Are clearly worded (reduce the chance that the question could be misunderstood, help the reader understand the logistics of what is expected )



## Book Circles Evaluation Sheet

Group Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Prepared?	Participated?	Thinking Skills	Social Skills

**Instructions:**

“Prepared” column to be checked off only if group member has done the reading and has two good questions to discuss.

“Participated” column to be checked off only if group member participates the entire period.

“Thinking skills” column to be checked off only if the group member makes statements that show s/he is thinking about the text. Examples include making connections, judgments, or inferences about the text.

“Social skills” column to be checked off only if the group member exhibits the behaviors discussed during the lesson on group discussion behavior.

Fill out each column for every group member, including yourself. Fill out an evaluation sheet every time your Book Circle group meets in class.

# Autobiographies

One piece in your multigenre research project is your autobiography. A biography is a history of a person's life, usually written. An autobiography is a history of a person's life written by that person.

You are responsible for writing your autobiography. Your autobiography should include the following:

- Your birthday, birthplace, and parents' names (if known)
- Your full name, the name you go by (if different),
- Any nicknames you might have and why you have those nicknames
- A brief description of where you live now and the places you have lived in the past
- A brief description of the people with whom you live, including pets
- A description of some of your "favorites"
- A description of some of your hobbies
- Any major milestones in your life
- Your plans for your life after high school
- What you want to be when you "grow up"
- Anything else that is interesting or different about you

Your autobiography should be approximately 3-4 typed pages in length.

You will have class time to work on this assignment.

This assignment is due as part of your multigenre portfolio, although you may submit drafts for the teacher to review.

# Body Biographies

A body biography is a visual and written portrait illustrating several aspects of a character's life.

Each group will be given a large sheet of paper. One student will lay down on the piece of paper and another student will outline the student's body.

Within and around the outline of the body, each group will write or draw relevant information about the character.

The information included on the body biography should reflect information that is relevant to the events, choices, and changes that affect the character.

The placement of the information on or around the body outline should reflect the implications of the information.

Some suggestions include:

- Placement- Carefully choose the placement of the artwork or information. For example, if the character cannot see that she is being taken advantage of, make the character blind- the character is blind to the situation.
- Spine- Write the character's goal or objective within the work down the spine or find a way to depict the character's spine creatively.
- Virtues/Vices- Find a way to artistically represent the character's virtues and vices.
- Color- Use color symbolically. If the character kills his enemy, red could symbolize the blood of his enemies on his hands.
- Symbols- What objects would you associate with your character? How can you incorporate those objects into your body biography?
- Written text- If appropriate, use a poem or other written genre to reveal aspects of the character's personality. Find a creative way to incorporate this text into your body biography.
- Changes- How can you show change within your character?
- Culture- How can you depict elements of your character's culture on the body biography?

Work as a group to decide which elements you will incorporate onto your body biography. Be prepared to defend any written or drawn elements of the body biography. Most important, have fun and gain insight into your character!

# *The New York Times*

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Monday, November 12, 2003

50 Cents

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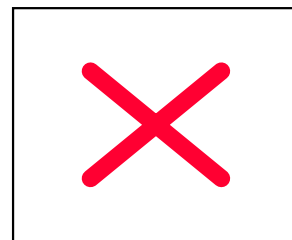
## Directions:

Pretend you are a columnist for the *New York Times*. Your assignment is to write a review about two comics your editor has asked you to review. Your editor wants you to include the following in your review:

- Name of each comic
- Brief synopsis of the plots
- Possible audience
- One aspect of the comic that made you like/dislike the comic.
- Your overall opinion of the comics (1 or 2 sentences)
- An overall grade for each comic

## Reminders:

- The plot synopsis should be brief – no more than a paragraph in length.
- When writing about the possible audience, think about what type of reader would be interested in the comic. Does the comic appeal to males, females, children, teens, adults, people interested in comedies, or people who are interested in the Civil War? Be specific.
- The majority of the column should be devoted to your professional opinion as a *NYT* columnist. Choose one aspect of the comic to discuss at length.
- When giving the comic a grade, use the school's grading system: A, B, C, D, or F. If the comic falls between two grades, add a plus or minus to the grade. Example: B-
- Keep in mind when writing that if you like the comic, the purpose of the column is to persuade readers to read the comic. If you do not like the comic, the purpose of the column is to convince readers that the comic isn't worth reading.



# Research Guide

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My research topic is \_\_\_\_\_

I want to research this topic because \_\_\_\_\_

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Sources:

Two print sources

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Two Internet sources

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Three interesting facts I found:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Research Piece

One piece in your multigenre research project is your research piece. This piece is not to be written up as a traditional essay. Instead, think of a genre that you could use to write the piece that would enhance the meaning of the research. Refer to your list of genres for examples.

1. Choose which genre would best enhance your research.
2. Write an outline or other prewriting device to gather the information you want to use in your research piece.
3. Write your research piece.
4. Reread your piece and revise as necessary.
5. Write your final draft.

Even though your research is not being written in a traditional essay, I still want to see evidence of all steps of the writing process.

Your research piece should be long enough to use information from all four sources and show the reader that you have enough knowledge about the subject to write about it.

The final draft of your research piece is due when you turn in your multigenre research paper, although you may submit drafts for review ahead of time.

# List of Genres

Journal Entries  
Personal Letter, Correspondence, or Greeting Card  
Business Letter  
Persuasive or Advocacy Letter  
Narrative Essay  
Short Scene from a Play with Notes for Stage Directions  
Short Scene from a Movie with Notes for Camera Shots  
Dialogue of a Conversation among Two or More People  
Inner Monologue Representing Internal Conflict  
Short Story  
Adventure Magazine Story  
Ghost Story  
Myth, Tall Tale, or Fairy Tale  
Picture Book  
Biographical Summary  
Newspaper or Magazine Feature Story  
Newspaper or Magazine Human Interest Story  
Home or Hobby Magazine Story  
Future News Story  
Letter to the Editor  
Classified or Personal Advertisement  
Obituary and Eulogy or Tribute  
Critique of a Published Source  
Speech, Diatribe, or Debate  
Personal Essay or Philosophical Questions  
Historical Times Context Essay  
Information Wheel  
Chart or Diagram with Explanation and Analysis  
Time Line, Chain of Events, or Map with Explanation and Analysis  
Top Ten List  
Textbook Article  
News Program Story or Announcement  
Talk Show Interview or Panel  
Magazine or Television Advertisement or Infomercial  
Glossary or Dictionary  
Recipe and Description of Traditional Holiday Events  
Restaurant Description and Menu  
How To or Directions Booklet  
Travel Brochure Description  
Science Article or Report  
Business Article or Technical Report  
Company or Organization Publication  
Receipts, Applications, Deeds, Budgets, or Other Documents  
Wedding or Graduation Invitation  
Local News Report  
Birth Certificate  
Year Book or School Newsletter or Paper  
Classroom Discussion  
Award Nomination  
Contest Entry Application  
Doctor, Teacher, Lawyer, Employer, Police, or Counselor Records and Notes  
Character Analysis or Case Study  
Review and Poster for a Movie, Book, or TV Program  
Board Game or Trivial Pursuit with Answers and Rules  
Comedy Routine or Parody  
Comic Strip or Book  
Tabloid Article  
Puzzle, Witticisms, or Aphorisms  
Poetry  
Favorite Inspirational Quotation with a Journal Entry  
Lyrics for a Song or Ballad Video  
Power Point Presentation  
Web Site  
Advice Columns  
Bedtime Story  
Billboard  
Book Review  
Bumper Sticker  
Collage  
Diary  
Horoscope  
Interview  
Jingle  
Soap Opera  
Spoonerism  
Telegram  
Vignette  
Valentine  
Dedication  
Soliloquy  
Crossword

# Credits

The idea for the Book Circles is based on the second edition of Harvey Daniel's book, *Literature Circles*. Stenhouse Publishers: Portland, Maine

The Book Circles Evaluation Sheet is loosely based on an evaluation sheet in *Literature Circles*, as well.

The "Constructing Good Questions" handout is based on information given by Dr. Mark Faust at the University of Georgia.

The Body Biography idea was taken from Peter Smagorinsky's book, *Teaching English Through Principled Practice*. Merrill Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ