

Multicultural Curriculum - Ninth Grade Language Arts Lesson Plan
Chinese Proverbs

Content/Theme: Chinese Proverbs

Grade Level: Ninth Grade

Textbook Connection: *Literature, Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes, Prentice Hall, Gold Level*, “Rules of the Game” by Amy Tan, pg. 262

Primary Benchmark:

- SS.912.H.2.1: Identify specific characteristics of works within various art forms (architecture, dance, film, literature, music, theatre, and visual arts).

Secondary Benchmark:

- LA.910.2.1.7: Students will analyze, interpret, and evaluate an author’s use of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, pun, alliteration, onomatopoeia, allusion), figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), common idioms, and mythological and literary allusions, and explain how they impact meaning in a variety of texts

Time: 1 Class Period

Objectives:

- Students will identify proverbs as a cultural aspect of Chinese literature.
- Students will keep a log of the proverbs and their use in the story, “The Rules of the Game” by Amy Tan.
- Students will apply specific proverbs to their own life.

Teacher Preparation/materials:

- Multicultural Information
- Student Handout

Activities:

1. Introduce the story, “Rules of the Game,” by using the pre-reading activities in the Prentice Hall Gold Reading Series. In addition, tell students that this story was written by Amy Tan, a Chinese American author. Read the biography of Amy Tan on pg. 272. Explain to students that this story is a part of a very famous novel, *The Joy Luck Club*. Read about the making of the movie, *The Joy Luck Club* on page 276.
2. Explain to students that before they read this story, they are going to learn a little about Chinese proverbs as a part of Chinese culture and literature. Ask students to think of any proverbs that they already know. Offer them some proverbs from across the cultures for discussion:
 - When the cat’s away, the mice will play. (United States)
 - Get to know new Friends, but don’t give up the old ones. (Bulgaria)
 - Haste makes waste. (Great Britain)
 - The person, who asks for little, deserves nothing. (Mexico)
 - The one being carried does not realize how far away the town is. (Niger)

3. Show students the transparency on Chinese proverbs. Discuss the transparency. Ask students to match up the proverbs with the meaning on the transparency and ask them if they relate to any of them (or use this as a handout). Ask students if there was a lesson that they learned in their life that could relate to any of these proverbs.
4. Have students keep a log book of all of the proverbs, or words of Chinese philosophy or advice, they find throughout the story, “Rules of the Game.” Each entry should show the specific proverbs, and the affect or reaction the proverb has on the main character, Meimei. Model an example of how the log book should look on the board:

Proverb:	Reaction:
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5. Have students read the story in small groups, taking turns to read and pausing to both write proverbs in their log and respond to the “Reading Check” questions located at the bottom of each page of the story.
6. Discuss the story by following the after-reading activities in the Prentice Hall Series.
7. Have students choose a proverb from the story or from the included transparency that relates to their life in some way. Have them copy the proverb and explain its meaning as respective to their own life on a large piece of construction paper; decorate and display around the room when completed. Example:

Haste Makes Waste:

Once, when I cleaned my room, I did it too fast and it was still a mess. I had to go back and clean it again. That wasted time.

ESOL Strategies: Modeling, Read Aloud, Cooperative Learning

Assessment: Student Participation, Proverb Activity

Resources:

<http://www.adl.org/tools%5Fteachers/lesson%5Fproverbs.html>

<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/China/proverb.html#b>

Multicultural Content Information:

All cultures have proverbs or adages that make common observations about life and teach a lesson. In the story “Rules of the Game” the author uses Chinese proverbs as a way that the character is guided and learns. In the United States we use proverbs to express common beliefs and values. For example when we want to remind someone that you can’t be sure of the future we say, “Don’t count your eggs before they hatch.” There are many proverbs that are used every day in every country around the world. Chinese literature is overflowing with proverbs and phrases taken from writers and stories that have been passed down over the ages. Some of the American sayings and proverbs you hear today have been passed down from the Chinese culture.



CHINESE PROVERBS

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Consider this:

百闻不如一见

“Bai wen bu ru yi jian”

or

“Hearing a hundred times is not as good as seeing once”

This aged Chinese proverb comes from the story of a general by the name of Zhou Chongguo, who, when asked by his Emperor the number of troops he needed to invade the barbarians from the North, he replied: “Hearing a hundred times is not as good as seeing once. Warfare is not a matter of guesswork. I'll have to go to the front to see for myself how the land lies before I can formulate my strategy.”

Throughout the years, this Chinese quotation has flowed its way down the rivers of western culture. Its “English” form is very recognizable:

“A picture is worth more than a thousand words.”





**MATCH THE FOLLOWING CHINESE PROVERBS WITH
THEIR MEANING:**

(And think of any western proverbs that may have
derived from them)

A single tree does not make a forest.	If a small problem is overlooked, it could develop into a big disaster.
An ant may well destroy a whole dam.	People learn from their mistakes
A book holds a house of gold.	A crane is too obvious when it stands among a flock of chickens and looks very awkward.
A fall into a ditch makes you wiser.	sometimes rumors may have some grounds.
No wind, no waves.	Risky as it is, if you are afraid of taking chances, there is no way you can succeed.
A crane standing amidst a flock of chickens.	Emphasizes the importance of teamwork.
You can't catch a cub without going into the tiger's den.	It is a metaphor for "Bad people are bad no matter where you find them because human nature never changes."
Crows everywhere are equally black.	An encouragement for youngsters to study: If you study hard, you'll have a good job and a chance to make good money.