

Essentials in Literature

Level 12

Select sample pages from the
Unit Introductions in the
Student Book

Fiction Unit

The Literature You'll Read:

Edith Hamilton	Perseus
	Cupid and Psyche
ZZ Packer	Brownies
Nathaniel Hawthorne	Rappaccini's Daughter
Ken Liu	The Paper Menagerie
Edmund Spencer	<i>The Faerie Queene</i> Book I (Canto I, st. I-XXVIII)
*Liliana Heker	*The Stolen Party

*Summative Assessment

The Concepts You'll Study:

Analyzing Literature

Hero's Journey
Character Archetypes
Theme
Character Traits and Motivations
Dynamic vs Static Characters
Conflict
Physical and Temporal Setting
Point of View
Symbolism
Allegory

Vocabulary

Allusions
Archaic Language
Context Clues

Reading Focus

Compare and Contrast
Making Connections
Monitor
Making Inferences
Summarizing

Writing Connection

Narrative Poem
Fictional Journal Entry
Alternate Ending
Fictional Letter
Allegorical Short Story

Nonfiction Connection

Biography
Scientific Research
History and Culture
Art History
Encyclopedia Entry

Fiction

The more you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you'll go.
- **Theodor Geisel (otherwise known as Dr. Seuss)**

Some people enjoy reading as a hobby in the same way that others enjoy video games, hiking, knitting, sports, painting, or going to the movies. They are entertained by the experience. However, not everyone enjoys reading in this way. Some people downright dislike it. Luckily, reading is not merely a means of entertainment. Just like how not everyone enjoys physical exercise but will benefit from doing it, anyone can develop the discipline of reading and reap its rewards.

WHY READ?

To discover the *WORLD* around you

other people, points of view, information, experiences, cultures, religions, time periods, geographies, and worldviews

To discover *YOURSELF*

what your opinions and values are, how you would react to a new situation or piece of information, and why you think the way you do

These benefits of reading can stem from both nonfiction and fiction. Nonfiction is prose writing about actual events, individuals, or ideas. Reading nonfiction is necessary because the way it conveys aspects of reality can teach you important information, allow you to practice critical thinking, and encourage you through your own experiences. Reading fiction is also essential, although some people may wonder why. Because fiction is about imagined situations and people—and sometimes even imagined worlds—how could it possibly be important to real life? Fiction is valuable, not because it recounts reality, but because it reflects reality. The details are not true, but the meaning beneath the details is. Fictional stories reflect life and allow the reader the opportunity to step deeply into real concepts—concepts like longing, fear, morality, and connection.

As you step into the stories of the coming unit and discover monsters in caves, letters from loved ones, and unexpected friends and enemies, consider how these fictional tales reflect real life and what you can do with these new perspectives.

Symbolism and Allegory

Symbolism is the use of something in a narrative (a person, place, object, or action) to express deeper or multiple layers of meaning. In literature, **symbols** have literal significance in how they affect the immediate plot, conflict, or other story elements. They also have symbolic significance and contribute to ideas, themes, and concepts beyond the immediate narrative.

In Charles Dickens' historical novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, set partially in France in the late 1700s, chapter five contains the following scene:

“A large cask of wine had been dropped and broken, in the street. [...] All the people within reach had suspended their business, or their idleness, to run to the spot and drink the wine. [...] Some men kneeled down, made scoops of their two hands joined, and sipped, or tried to help women, who bent over their shoulders, to sip, before the wine had all run out between their fingers. [...] The wine was red wine, and had stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. It had stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet, and many wooden shoes. [...] Those who had been greedy with the staves of the cask, had aquired a tigerish smear about the mouth; and one tall joker [...] scrawled upon a wall with his finger dipped in the muddy wine-lees--BLOOD. The time was to come, when that wine too would be spilled on the street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there.”

In this passage, the wine is a foreshadowing symbol of the blood that would be spilt in the upcoming Reign of Terror in Paris, and the red stains about people's hands and mouths represent how they would soon be stained with the guilt of shedding blood.

Allegory is similar to extended use of symbolism. An allegory is a fictional narrative in which every story element, such as conflicts and characters, represents a deeper meaning. For stories that are meant to be allegorical, the allegorical meaning is more important than the literal meaning of the narrative.

In order to analyze symbolism and allegory in literature, become comfortable doing outside research about common symbolic interpretations in order to aid your own reasoning.

The Crucible (1953), a stage play by American playwright Arthur Miller, is a fictionalized recounting of the historical Salem witch trials. These witch trials were an example of mass hysteria in which over two hundred people in colonial Massachusetts were accused of practicing witchcraft, nineteen of whom were executed. In Miller's reimagining of the trials, some accusations were clearly fraudulent, intending to ruin an individual for personal reasons that had nothing to do with the practice of witchcraft. Miller intended *The Crucible* to be an allegory for the prominent McCarthyism--or targeted political and social persecution of anyone accused of communist/socialist leanings--of his own time.

Drama Unit

The Literature You'll Read:

William Shakespeare

Macbeth

The Concepts You'll Study:

Analyzing Literature

Foil Character
Irony
Motif
Atmosphere
Conflict
Symbol
Meter
Allusion
Character Archetypes
Theme

Playing with Language

Paradox
Metaphor
Alliteration
Equivocation

Theatrical Connection

Casting and Costuming
Set Design
Staging
Dramatic Reading
Advertisement



Drama

Drama has been around for centuries; this genre of literature is unique in the type of experience it provides in contrast to short stories and novels.

First, drama provides a tangible experience by being performed live in a theater. A reader usually experiences novels and short stories individually and must use their imagination to make the words on a page come alive. Theater, however, immerses people into the world of the story through the physical aspects of the play, such as the lighting, sound, costumes, and the backdrop. These elements bring the language of the play to real life.



Furthermore, drama is a community experience in both creation and performance. Bringing a drama to fruition requires the cooperation of many. The playwright first creates the story and formats it into a script. The play is then analyzed and executed by the director, actors, and designers who work together to bring the story to life. Backdrops are created, costumes are sewn, lines are rehearsed, and music is chosen. The stage crew practices operating the lights, cueing the special effects, and moving the set, doing each task with perfect timing to create a mesmerizing show.

When the play is performed, the live audience participates in this communal experience. As the viewers watch the conflict develop and get to know the characters, they become emotionally invested in the story and respond with real-time reactions. Laughter erupts at the comedic episodes, gasps of shock and awe fill the room as the story rises to its tense climax, and everyone smiles or tears up when the story comes to its happy or tragic close. As the actors take their final bow and the audience applauds, everyone shares a moment of appreciation for the art of drama.

While drama contains many of the same elements in novels and short stories, it also contains its own elements that differentiate it from other types of fiction.



Elements of Drama

Language

The **language** of a play refers to not only the words the characters speak, but also the way words are pronounced, combined, and understood. The playwright intentionally chooses words to emphasize a certain mood, and the actors' tone and line delivery also influences the overall feeling of a scene. For example, a comedy may feature puns to give a lighthearted mood while a tragedy may include sorrowful monologues to emphasize a painful mood.

The language can also emphasize the setting and distinguish the characters. For example, some characters may speak in a particular accent to communicate the play's temporal or physical setting. The way a character speaks may also be used to convey the character's status in society or unique personality.

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde (1895) is a comedy of manners. The language plays a vital role in communicating an amusing, nonsensical mood. Throughout the drama, the characters' speech is unrealistic and loaded with irony, treating crucial matters with triviality and unimportant affairs with seriousness. For example, the play opens with a conversation between the characters Algernon and Lane, a servant. Algernon comments that Lane recorded eight champagne bottles were consumed the night before, and Lane confesses that in reality, eight bottles and a pint were consumed. When Algernon asks why servants inevitably drink the champagne, Lane responds that it is because of the champagne's fine quality. The irony is that Algernon makes a big deal out of the inaccurate record keeping, yet he is not bothered by the servants' stealing champagne. The irony and illogical conversation poke fun at the conventions of Victorian life.

Spectacle

Spectacle refers to all the visual features of a play, such as the lighting, scenery, costumes, and special effects. Depending on the play, the spectacle may be ancient or modern; minimalist or lavish; and strange or mundane. The spectacle of a play can be used to emphasize the setting. For example, a history play may feature costumes and backdrops from a specific time period. Another play may include modern wear and a current setting to remind the audience of present life. Additionally, spectacle can generate atmosphere. For instance, a tragedy may use a cold lighting and minimal setting with dark colors to create a serious atmosphere while a comedy may feature warm lights and brilliant colors to create a pleasant atmosphere.

With music composed by Stephen Schwartz and story written by Winnie Holzman, *Wicked* (2003) recounts the rise and fall of an unlikely friendship between two Elphaba and Galinda in the Land of Oz. The musical embraces an extravagant spectacle. Colorful lights and detailed backdrops are used throughout the show to bring the audience into the fantastical setting. While the show contains emotionally tense moments, it also features fun dance numbers with characters dressed in brilliantly colored clothing. The most iconic and tone-setting element of this musical's spectacle, however, is how the main actress performs her role bearing bright green skin.

How to Read Shakespeare

In the unit, you will read one of Shakespeare's plays. Because Shakespeare's work was written during the late 1500's and early 1600's, his writing can be intimidating and may be difficult for modern readers to understand. To best understand Shakespeare, give yourself plenty of time and be patient. As you read, use the following strategies:

● PREVIEW



Before reading each act, preview it by watching a filmed version of the play, which can be found online or at your local library. Previewing helps you understand what happens and enables you to interpret Shakespeare's outdated writing more easily. Be sure to choose a video of a stage production of the play, not a movie adaptation; a stage production will portray the play more accurately and allow you to follow along with the text more easily.*

● READ SLOWLY & REREAD



To help you process the play, read slowly and look up the definition of words you do not understand as needed. Additionally, go back and reread the text if you do not comprehend what you are reading at first.

● LISTEN



While reading, listen to the play as well. Listening allows you to hear how the poetry is meant to be spoken. Hearing the tone in the actors' voices can also help you to infer the characters' emotions. Oftentimes, knowing the feelings being conveyed helps make the basic meaning of what the characters are saying clearer, even if you do not completely understand their dialogue. Free, read-aloud versions of Shakespeare's plays can be found online.* Alternatively, you can read aloud to yourself.

● TAKE NOTES



Take notes as you read to help keep yourself engaged and monitor what is happening in the story. Also, take notes to decipher the outdated vocabulary and syntax as well as summarize general ideas, action, events, and characters' emotions. Also, underline lines of dialogue that stand out to you or record your own reactions.

● PARAPHRASE



At the end of each scene, paraphrase what happened in your own words to reinforce your understanding.

**Keep in mind that recordings/audio versions may not include all the lines or scenes. Follow along with the text the best you can.*

Novel Unit

The Literature You'll Read:

William Golding

Lord of the Flies

The Concepts You'll Study:

Analyzing Literature

Characterization
Conflict
Theme
Symbol
Allegory
Irony

Reading Focus

Monitor
Making Connections
Compare and Contrast
Visualization
Author's Purpose
Making Predictions

Vocabulary

1950s Vernacular
Synonyms
Discerning Meaning Through Context
Connotative Meaning
Antonyms
Visualizing Meaning

N

Lord of the Flies



Day 1

WHAT TO LEARN?

- Meet the Author
- Access the Backdrop

Mankind's Essential Illness

Why are humans moral beings? Are we born innately good, or do we only behave morally because of societal structures, such as rules and punishments, that condition us to do so? William Golding explores these complicated questions in his novel, *Lord of the Flies*.

British Literature



When an airplane, full of evacuated British school boys, crash lands on an uninhabited island during a war, the boys must survive without the guidance of adults. While this adventure story alone is entertaining, Golding's narrative also presents an allegory in which the characters and objects symbolize larger ideas. This allegory prompts the reader to question the roots of human behavior, both during Golding's time and in our world today.

Keep an Eye Out



Which characters and objects may represent larger ideas? Try to identify important characters and objects on the island, and think about what ideas they may stand for beyond the surface.

Meet the Author

William Golding

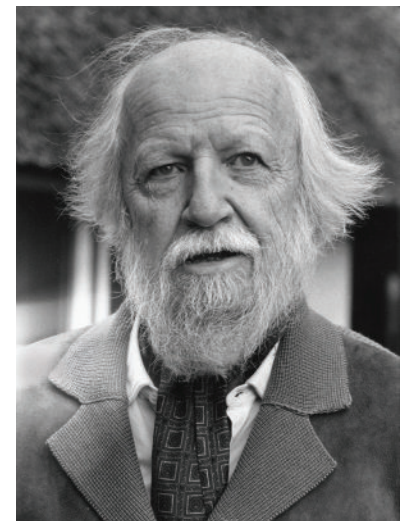
Life Experiences

William Golding, born in Cornwall, England, earned a Nobel Prize in Literature in 1983. Prior to his accomplishments as a writer, Golding spent time as a teacher and joined the Navy in World War II. His observations of children's behavior in the classroom, and of soldiers at war, likely contributed to his writing of *Lord of the Flies*. Golding once said he wrote the book "to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature."

What Would Really Happen?

Golding was additionally inspired by a children's adventure story, R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1857), in which a group of boys are shipwrecked on an island and behave in a civilized manner, just as they would back in England. Golding borrows much from this classic story, such as the island setting and some character names, but he recreates the narrative to demonstrate how British schoolboys might actually behave in such a terrifying situation. Would they continue to follow the rules from home, or would their old way of life disintegrate when there is no system present to enforce it?

Sep 19, 1911—Jun 19, 1993



NOVEL

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Reading Through a Lens

Literature can be interpreted through various lenses that affect how the reader views the characters and events of the text. While every reader will approach a story through a personal and unique point of



view, choosing to analyze a work of literature through a specific lens will influence how a piece of writing is understood. *Lord of the Flies* can be analyzed through multiple lenses, including religious, political, and psychological.

Religious Lens

A character may represent a savior, or Christ-figure; and actions, settings, or events may mirror biblical stories or themes. For example, an idyllic setting may represent the Garden of Eden, or a false idol may represent Satan.

Political Lens

Story elements may signify different types of government, such as a democracy or a dictatorship. Instances in the text involving voting and fairness, or conquest and repression, may mirror various governing systems. Sometimes, characters may also mimic historical or current political leaders in their behavior or descriptions.

Psychological Lens

Characters may represent parts of the psyche as described by Neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). He proposed that each person's mind is made up of the id, ego, and superego. The id is someone's most basic, primitive desires and instincts; the superego is someone's morality or conscience; and the ego balances the needs of these two and is the rational part of someone's mind.

Keep an Eye Out



Think about the lenses through which *Lord of the Flies* can be interpreted. Consider how the characters and events appear differently through a political, religious, psychological, or other type of lens.

Poetry Unit

The Literature You'll Read:

Jessie Pope	Who's for the Game?
Wilfred Owen	Dulce et Decorum Est
Mary Darby Robinson	Ode to the Moon
Pablo Neruda	Ode to a Large Tuna in the Market
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	Paul Revere's Ride
Lin-Manuel Miranda	Alexander Hamilton
Anne Sexton	The Starry Night
Liu Xia	Empty Chairs
Jalal Al-Din Rumi	Where did the handsome beloved go?
Alicia Ostriker	Ghazal: America the Beautiful
*Emma Lazarus	*The New Colossus
*Seamus Heaney	*Digging
*Li-Young Lee	*From Blossoms

**Summative Assessment*

The Concepts You'll Study:

Analyzing Figurative Language

Simile
Metaphor
Synecdoche
Metonymy
Personification
Hyperbole
Symbolism
Allusion
Imagery

Elements of Poetry

Voice
Rhythm
Mood
Tone
Sound Devices
Diction
Ekphrasis
Ghazal

Writing Connection

Voice
An ode
A commemorative poem
An ekphrastic poem
A ghazal

Poetry

"I wander'd off by myself, / In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time, / Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars." ~ from **"When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer"** by Walt Whitman

Compare a high-definition photograph of a star-studded night sky with the colorful oil painting *The Starry Night* by Vincent van Gogh (1889). The first can be described as scientifically accurate and a clear portrayal of physical reality, while the other can be described as more mystical and abounding in feeling. Both, it must be said, are beautiful. While the photograph conveys what the night sky *is*, van Gogh's painting conveys how the night sky *feels* when a person stands beneath it.

This difference captures, in part, what literature in the form of **poetry** is all about.

Like van Gogh's painting when compared to a photograph, poetry focuses more on the essence, emotion, and experience of a matter than **prose** works. Fiction and nonfiction can certainly evoke emotion, capture a reader's heart and mind, and convey a wonderful experience--claims that also apply to poetry. The key difference is the manner in which these ends are accomplished. Van Gogh's color choices, brush strokes, shapes, and level of detail in his painting are not realistic or straightforward, but the resulting work of art reveals something that no photograph could ever achieve. In the same way, poetry--with its typography, sound devices, rhythm, figurative language, and other core elements--creates literature that is worth experiencing and studying in order to appreciate a new way to view life.

On the following pages, we will introduce elements of poetry that we will explore more deeply in the coming unit.



POETIC FORMS

Form in poetry refers to line or stanza length, typographical arrangement of words on a page, and even central subject matter. There are many different types of poetic forms.

Free Verse

In free verse poetry, there are no rules or standards regarding line length, sound devices, subject matter, and arrangement of words on a page. This mode of poetry is very popular in modern times.

Ode

An ode is a semi-formal poem that focuses on a specific person, place, thing, or idea, often in a way meant to honor the subject matter. Odes have been around for millennia, and over time different forms of odes have been developed and popularized, which influenced things like rhyme scheme, line length, and topical focus.

Ekphrastic Poetry

This form of poetry is not concerned with structure so much as it is concerned with subject matter. Ekphrasis is a literary device in which some form of visual art is described in detail; therefore, ekphrastic poetry describes and responds to visual artworks like paintings or sculptures. These poems can be written in any form of the author's choice.

Other Forms:

Elegy – a lament in honor of someone who has died

Ballad – a narrative poem that can often be accompanied by music



**“The Paper Menagerie”
section from the Fiction Unit**

**with accompanying activity
sheets from the Resource Book
and the Independent Practice**



WHAT TO LEARN?

- Point of View
- Making Inferences
- Art History
- Independent Practice

Changing Relationships

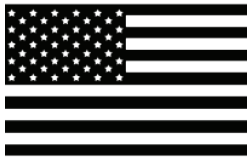
A young child often sees their parent as their hero who can magically fix all their child-sized problems. The parent plays fun games, gives hugs, and wipes away tears.

Once the child becomes a teenager, their parent may become more of an embarrassment, or someone to avoid. The parent does not dress right or listen to the right music, and they certainly cannot magically fix teenage-sized problems.

Yet, as the teenager becomes a grown adult, they may reconsider their earlier thinking. They might realize that the parent they first idolized, then shunned, is actually just a human with both positive and negative traits, as well as a whole life story beyond their role as a parent.

In "The Paper Menagerie," the narrator, Jack, struggles through his evolving relationship with his Chinese mother as he tries to fit into his American community. As you read the story, think about whether you can relate to his struggle with a parent as you grow and change yourself.

American Literature



Meet the Author

Ken Liu

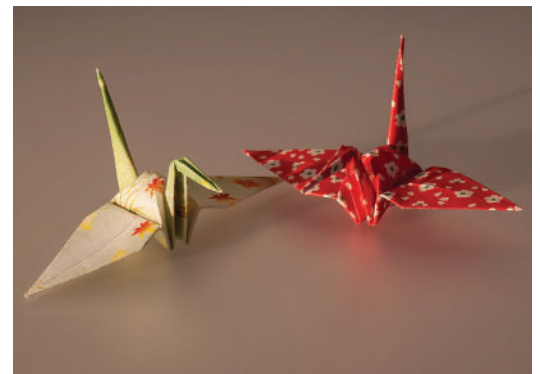
b. 1976

Speculative Fiction

Ken Liu writes speculative fiction, which is fiction that has elements that do not exist in the real world. Some genres included under the umbrella of speculative fiction are science fiction and fantasy. A lot of the interaction between characters in "The Paper Menagerie" seems realistic, but there are elements in the story that go beyond the real world, too.

Chinese-American Perspective

Ken Liu was born in Lanzhou, China in 1976, and immigrated to the United States when he was 11 years old. His short story, "The Paper Menagerie," has won three major awards: the Hugo, the Nebula, and the World Fantasy Award. In addition to writing short fiction and novels, Liu translates Chinese authors' writing into English.





Analyzing Literature

Point of View

Point of view is the perspective from which a story is told. Most stories are told from either first-person or third-person point of view.

First-Person Point of View

told by a character in the story

Third-Person Point of View

told by a narrator outside the story

When a story is written in **first person**, the reader needs to be aware of that character's biases, motives, and limitations in order to judge whether they are **reliable**. A first-person narrator may be **unreliable** because of limited outlooks or exposures, a lack of information, or personal prejudices. After all, people rarely view situations or relationships with perfect clarity.

For example, in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the first-person narrator, Scout, talks about a man named Boo Radley. Scout's description of Boo is told through her eyes as a child and is limited to the rumors from the neighbors and her youthful imagination, which makes her account unreliable. Once the story ends, the reader realizes there was more to Boo than what young Scout's limited point of view provided. He was not a scary monster that refused to come out of the house, but a misunderstood and caring man who saved the children's lives.

Additionally, an author will sometimes change narrators during a story. Switching points of view can provide additional information to the reader, as well as force the reader to re-evaluate their perceptions of characters and events. Had Boo narrated *To Kill a Mockingbird*, he may have recounted events much differently than Scout, and the ending may not have been nearly as surprising!

Reading Focus: making inferences

When an image appears repeatedly throughout a story, it may represent a larger idea. The image of origami animals that come to life appears repeatedly throughout "The Paper Menagerie." As you read, note when this image comes up and infer what you believe these animals may represent.

Vocabulary

In a story that has words from another language, the author may give you **context clues** that help you to know what the foreign words mean. Keep an eye out for where the listed Chinese words appear in the story. Determine their meanings by using the context clues Liu provides.

Kan
Laohu
Zhezhi
Ai
Haizi

Read "The Paper Menagerie" by Ken Liu



Check Comprehension

1. In one of his earliest memories, **how** does Jack's mother calm him when he is crying?
2. **Which** specific events cause Jack to start insisting that his mother speak English?
3. **Where** does Jack find his deceased mother's letter that explains her past?

Think Critically

When someone immigrates to a new country, they may want to conform to the lifestyle of the people in their new community, or they may try to cling to their old culture. Jack, the son of an immigrant, chooses to distance himself from his mother and his Chinese heritage. He wants to have American toys and food, and he wants his mother to speak English. In contrast, Jack's mother still speaks Chinese, cooks Chinese food, and creates toys for Jack like the ones she had in her childhood.

Why do you believe some people would choose to distance themselves from their heritage and conform to the lifestyle of their new community, while other people may cling to the culture of their home country?

Write an organized paragraph explaining your answer.

After you understand
what happens in a story and
why it happens, ask yourself,
what's the point?

Main Idea

When members of Jack's American community belittle his Chinese heritage, Jack pushes his mother away and insists she speak English. However, after reading his deceased mother's letter and hearing her story for the first time, Jack writes the Chinese word for "love" over and over, and his paper tiger suddenly purrs again.

A

Considering what Jack understands after reading his mother's letter, write one sentence that sums up the main idea of "The Paper Menagerie."

B

Why do you think Liu ends the story with the image of the tiger purring again?

Analyzing Literature

Point of View

In "The Paper Menagerie," Liu uses two narrators. Jack narrates the first part of the story, so the reader's initial perception of the characters and their actions is filtered through his point of view. At the end of the story, Jack's mother writes a letter, adding her point of view to what the reader has already learned through Jack. Such a shift in perspective can give the reader additional information, and cause them to re-evaluate their perception of the characters and their actions.

Jack's Narration	
Details about Mother	Your Perception of Mother
1. Jack's mother created an origami tiger to calm him down when he was crying.	1. Jack's mother cares about him and tries hard to soothe him.

Mother's Narration	
Details about Mother	Your Perception of Mother
1. Jack's mother became an orphan at the age of ten.	1. Jack's mother had a very difficult childhood.

*Activity
in the
Resource
Book,
p. 21*

DIVE DEEPER

- Apply** – *Irony* is when something happens that is opposite of what someone expects. Identify an example of irony in the story and explain what type of irony it is (verbal, situational, or dramatic).
- Analyze** – Reread the scene where Mark brings his Star Wars action figure and Jack shares his paper tiger, Laohu. List the words and phrases Jack uses to describe each of the two toys. Comparing your two lists, infer how these two toys may represent Jack's view of the cultures from which they come.
- Evaluate** – List all the ways Jack's mother tries to appease him when he is trying to fit in. In your opinion, should she have done these things? Justify why or why not.



Analyzing Literature

Symbolism is the use of a person, place, object, or action to express a deeper or double meaning, often describing an idea or concept that has no physical attributes. This literary device creates at least two levels of meaning: the immediate, literal meaning and the deeper, symbolic meaning.

1. What could the origami animals symbolize? How do you know? Use details from the text to support your answer.
2. Look up and record the symbolic meaning of tigers in Chinese culture. With that information in mind, why do you think the author may have chosen the tiger as the first and most beloved animal that Jack's mother creates for him?

Connection Reflection

3. Jack treats his mother poorly despite her best efforts to please him. Have you ever treated a parent or another loved one poorly even though they have done nothing wrong? Why do you think you behaved this way?
4. Not much information is shared about Jack's father. Record what details you can find about him--descriptions, things he says and does, etc. Based on these details you collected, do you think Jack's father is a good father? Why or why not?

Writing Connection

When Jack reads his mother's letter, it is too late for him to respond to her in person as she has died. If he was able to write her a letter back, imagine what he might say. Would he apologize for his behavior? Would he ask her questions about her past?

Consider all you now know about both characters, and write a letter from Jack's perspective back to his mother.



Nonfiction Connection

Art History

In "The Paper Menagerie," Jack and his mother connect through the origami animals that she created for him as a child. Origami is the art form of folding paper. Usually, origami involves no cutting or gluing; the challenge is to create an animal or object out of one single sheet of paper by folding alone.

Look up "**History of origami**" on **Britannica.com**.

As you read the article, look for the following:

- When and where do people speculate origami began?
- Where was paper invented, and why is this important in regard to the origin of origami?

You might also look up pictures of origami examples to get an idea of the many forms it can take.

Taking into account your new knowledge of origami, why may Liu have included origami in particular as a central image in the story? Write an organized paragraph explaining your answer, or discuss your answer with your teacher or fellow students.

Extended Activities

Origami – Search online for a step-by-step tutorial video on how to create origami. Follow along and try to make your own origami. Pause or rewatch the video as needed!

Listen & Reflect – Ask a parent, grandparent, or other adult in your life to tell you a significant story from when they were younger. Reflect on what that story helps you understand about the person who told it.

Read – Graphic novels are written in the style of comic books. *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang is an award-winning graphic novel that tells the story of a child of Chinese immigrants who is struggling to find his identity in America. Read the novel, and compare and contrast the characters and events with those in "The Paper Menagerie."



Complete the Independent Practice on page 23 of the Resource Book.

Analyzing Literature: Point of View

___ / 30 points

Jack narrates most of “The Paper Menagerie,” but toward the end of the story, the narration switches to his mother’s point of view through her letter. This switch in narrators provides the reader with additional information and a new perspective that may sway their perception of the characters and their actions.

From just Jack’s narration, identify details that characterize his mother. Based on these details, record your perception of Jack’s mother and her actions.

Jack’s Narration	
Details about Mother	Your Perception of Mother
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

From Jack’s mother’s letter, identify three additional details that characterize her. Based on these details, record your perception of Jack’s mother and her actions.

Mother’s Narration	
Details about Mother	Your Perception of Mother
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Did your perception of Jack’s mother stay the same or change after reading her letter? Explain your answer.

Independent Practice

“The Paper Menagerie” by Ken Liu

NOTE: Students may reference the literary work.

Multiple Choice _____ / 30 points

Identify the choice that best finishes the statement or answers the question.

- _____ 1. The origami animals most likely symbolize...
- A. Jack’s relationship with his mother.
 - B. Jack’s feelings about his new home.
 - C. Jack’s relationship with Mark.
 - D. Jack’s desire to make new friends.
- _____ 2. True or False: A first-person narrator is always reliable.
- A. True
 - B. False
- _____ 3. Which of the following makes “The Paper Menagerie” an example of speculative fiction?
- A. The conflict between Jack and his mother
 - B. The paper animals that come to life
 - C. The conflict between Jack and Mark
 - D. The letter Jack’s mom writes
- _____ 4. Which is not a topic in “The Paper Menagerie”?
- A. Immigration
 - B. Discrimination
 - C. Parent/child relationship
 - D. Academic struggle
- _____ 5. A narrator may be unreliable because...
- A. they have limitations.
 - B. they lack information.
 - C. they have a personal prejudice.
 - D. All of the above

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_____ 6. “*When I was ten, we moved to a new house across town. Two of the women neighbors came by to welcome us.*”

What is *ironic* about the neighbors’ welcome?

- A. The neighbors were new to the neighborhood, too.
- B. The neighbors insulted Jack and his mother.
- C. The neighbors brought American food to share.
- D. The neighbors had never had a Chinese neighbor before.

_____ 7. Based on the context clues, what could the Chinese word *Laohu* mean?

- A. Water buffalo
- B. Mother
- C. Son
- D. Tiger

_____ 8. What is the catalyst that causes Jack to insist his mother speaks English?

- A. Mark treats Jack in a racist and insulting manner.
- B. Jack begins to learn English at school.
- C. Jack’s father cannot understand his mother.
- D. Jack’s mother has been unkind to him.

_____ 9. Which of the following is *not* a possible theme demonstrated in the story?

- A. Sharing your story is important so others may empathize with you.
- B. Children should try to understand their parents before judging them.
- C. All people want to be loved and accepted.
- D. It is important to carefully weigh all options before making a decision.

_____ 10. True or False: A symbol has either an immediate meaning or a deeper meaning.

- A. True
- B. False

_____ 11. Which of the following lines best shows the *limitations* that Jack has as a first-person narrator?

- A. “*What kind of woman puts herself into a catalogue so she can be bought?*”
- B. “*She pleated, packed, tucked, rolled, and twisted until the paper disappeared between her cupped hands.*”
- C. “*My fight with Mark didn’t end there.*”
- D. “*I packed the paper menagerie in a large shoebox and put it under the bed.*”

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- _____ 12. At the end of the story, Jack refolds the letter back into Laohu, and the tiger begins to purr on their walk home. This ending could symbolize that Jack feels...
- A. confused about his mother.
 - B. angry at his mother.
 - C. reconnected to his mother.
 - D. indifferent toward his mother.
- _____ 13. Why does Jack decide he wants American toys?
- A. He wants to fit in.
 - B. He thinks they are better made.
 - C. He loves Star Wars.
 - D. He wants to make his father proud.
- _____ 14. Which of the following is not true of first-person narration?
- A. The narrator uses first-person pronouns such as “I” and “we”.
 - B. The narrator reveals their own thoughts and feelings but may not reveal the thoughts and feelings of other characters.
 - C. The narrator may have bias, motives, or limitations that need to be considered.
 - D. The narrator is outside of the story.
- _____ 15. Which best describes Jack’s attitude toward the origami animals?
- A. As a young child he loves the animals, but when Mark ridicules them, he feels ashamed.
 - B. He feels proud of the animals at all times, even after Mark ridicules them.
 - C. He feels ashamed of the animals from the moment his mother creates them.
 - D. He feels indifferent about the animals.

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Constructed Responses _____ / 20 points

1. When Jack is in high school, he thinks about his mother: *“We had nothing in common. She might as well be from the Moon. I would hurry to my room, where I could continue my all-American pursuit of happiness.”* At the end of the story, after he has read his mother’s letter, do you think Jack would still say he and his mother have nothing in common? Why or why not? Use at least two details from the text to support your answer.

2. Wanting to be accepted is a topic explored in “The Paper Menagerie.” Jack wants to be accepted by his American community, and his mother wants to be accepted by her son. Think of a time in your own life when you wanted to be accepted by others. Compare or contrast your experience with either Jack or his mother’s experience in “The Paper Menagerie.” Use details from the story as well as from your own life.