

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Joy Luck Club, Day 1



Key Passage, pg. 19

“The elements were from my mother’s own version of organic chemistry. Each person is made of five elements, she told me.

Too much fire and you had a bad temper. ...

Too little wood and you bent too quickly to listen to other people’s ideas, unable to stand on your own. ...

Too much water and you flowed in too many directions...” (19)

Writing Prompt

Jing-Mei’s mother told her that people were made up of five elements. These elements define and shape a person’s personality. If a person had too much of one element and not enough of another, they were out of balance and would not perform to their fullest potential. Re-read the key passage on page 19. The five elements are: wood, fire, earth, water, and metal. Brief descriptions of the elements are listed below:

Wood: Unpredictable, generous, passionate, and impatient, selfish and quick-tempered.

Fire: Cheerful, wise, creative, open-minded, and also rude, arrogant and indecisive.

Earth: Responsible, reliable, focused, and controlling, over-bearing and harsh.

Water: Sociable, peace-loving, patient and naïve, over-reliant, and self-indulgent.

Metal: Honest, intelligent, organized and lazy, cold and judgmental.

In today’s journal, respond to the key paragraph by formulating a two paragraph narrative essay. Your writing will include responses to the following questions:
Such as, what ideas is the author trying to convey by comparing the elements to people?

How does this comparison help you to understand the main character? What do you think is Jing-Mei’s element and why? What issues do you think she will have to tackle?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Joy Luck Club, Day 2



Key Passage, pg. 26

“Auntie An-mei and Uncle George were shaken down, not just for two-thousand dollars’ worth of TVs and refrigerators but also for a night’s lodging for twenty-six people in the Overlooking the Lake Hotel, for three banquet tables at a restaurant that catered to foreigners, for three special gifts for each relative, and finally, for a loan of five thousand Yuan in foreign exchange to a cousin’s so-called uncle who wanted to buy a motorcycle but who later disappeared for good along with the money. When the train pulled out of Huangzhou the next day the Hsu’s found themselves depleted of some nine thousand dollars worth of goodwill.” (26)

Writing Prompt

Today’s writing prompt will be in the form of a Dear Abby advice letter. You will frame your response as if you were Jing-Mei writing a letter to Dear Abby and you are asking for advice about what she should do when she travels to China. Do you think she should even go? Do you believe it is Jing-Mei’s responsibility to tell her two siblings about their mother? Furthermore, and as you know from today’s reading, when Auntie An-mei and Uncle George visited family in China, their greedy relatives took advantage of their generosity and “used” all of their money. Jing-Mei wants to make sure that does not happen to her.

Your response should be clear and concise as to give the best advice possible to Jing-Mei. You will respond as if you are Dear Abby and give Jing-Mei advice about what you think she should do to avoid the same outcome. Your response should be one full page in length. Include facts, opinions, quotations, and reasoning to help you convey your point.

Dear Abby,

My name is Jing-Mei Woo. My American name is June. I have just returned from playing/taking my dead mother’s place at the Mah Jong table. It was my father’s wish that I take my dead mother’s place at the East corner of the table. I did it—knowing it is my responsibility to see that this tradition did not end.

We played late into the night. As I was about to leave, one of my Aunties told me that I had another responsibility. My father was not my mother’s first husband, and she had babies before me that were lost in China when the Japanese invaded Kweilin. Through serious searching, my long lost siblings have been found. Since my mother has passed, my Aunties have informed me that it is my responsibility to go to them and explain what happened to my mother, how they became separated and to tell them all about our family and my mother. My mother’s friends have offered to pay for my trip.

I am scared to go to Communist China. Both the Jong's and the Hsu's returned broke, having been taken for everything they owned by greedy "relatives" along the way.

Do you think I should go? Is my responsibility worth the risk? If I do go, how do I make sure that what happened to the Jong's and the Hsu's does not happen to me? Please be specific and provide examples.

Sincerely,

Jing-Mei

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 3



Key Passage, pg. 41

“Even though I was young, I could see the pain of the flesh and the worth of the pain.”

Writing Prompt

An-mei begins to understand pain and how it can be beneficial. Most of the time when we think about the impact of pain we only see it from a negative perspective. However, in this situation An-mei sees that pain cannot only be worthwhile, but it can be courageous and honorable.

Think of the above quote and respond to it. What do you think An-mei meant when she could see the worth of the pain. Based on what you read today what was her mother trying to prove? Do you think that some types of pain can be worthwhile? In other words, can there be a painful event or experience from which you can learn and grow? Explain in a 2-paragraph narrative essay.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 4



Key Passage, pg. 47

“You couldn’t go to an insurance company back then and say, Somebody did this damage, pay me a million dollars. In those days, you were unlucky if you had exhausted your own possibilities. My father said we had no choice but to move them family to Wushi, to the south near Shanghai, where my mother’s brother owned a small flourmill. My father explained that the whole family, except for me, would leave immediately. I was twelve years old, old enough to separate from my family and live with the Huangs.”
 Dear Abby,

Writing Prompt

My name is Lindo Jong. I am twelve years old and am writing you from China. I have been sent to live with the family of my future husband. This is an arranged marriage in which I have no say. It was arranged by my parents when I was two years old. I have heard of other young people in the cities refusing arranged marriages and marrying instead someone they are in love with.

Do you believe in arranged or marriages based on love, shared values, mutual interests and reciprocal respect and support? Do you think I am too young to get married? At what age do you think marriage is appropriate? How long should I get to know and date someone before I decide to get married? Do you think pre-marital counseling is a good idea? What advice can you give someone in my shoes?

Sincerely,

Too young Lindo

Pretend you are Abby. Respond to Lindo and give her advice about her situation. Think about her options and culture. What can she do to help her situation? Give her clear details and multiple suggestions in your writing. Your response should be between one half and a full page.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 5



Key Passage, pg. 53

I wiped my eyes and looked in the mirror. I was surprised at what I saw. I had on a beautiful red dress, but what I saw was even more valuable. I was strong. I was pure. I had genuine thoughts inside me that no one else could see, that no one could ever take away from me. I was like the wind. (53)

When Lindo was two she was given to another to be married. She was sent away at 12 and married at 14. For the first time Lindo saw herself and she realized her value and that she had power.

Writing Prompt

Re-read the Key Passage on page 53.

Write a three-paragraph narrative essay related to the key passage that includes the following:

What ideas and values is the author trying to convey about Lindo, strength, and arranged marriages? What kind of power does she possess? Is it an inner strength? Does Lindo use this power to convince her parents that she does not want to be part of an arranged marriage, or does she use it in a different way? Use examples from today's reading to support your ideas and viewpoints.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 6



Key Passage, pg. 68

“What is a secret wish?”

“It is what you want but cannot ask,” said Amah.

“Why can’t I ask?”

“This is because... because if you ask it... it is no longer a wish but a selfish desire, said Amah. “Haven’t I taught you—that it is wrong to think of your own needs? A girl can never ask, only listen.”

Writing Prompt

Amah describes the role of the Moon Lady for women in China. It is a woman’s place to listen to others and to think of others before themselves. However, it is important to have wishes. Consider this... what do you want for yourself? Can you name it? If you tell others do you risk failure and being laughed at?

Place yourself in China during the Moon Festival. Yes, that’s right...you are half-way around the world in the world’s most populous country. You have an opportunity to celebrate with the locals and make your wish known to the Moon Lady. What do you want? Write two paragraphs describing what you really want from life, school, and your family. Include one wish for yourself. Also include your thoughts/opinions from Amah’s perspective. Do you agree or disagree with her belief that it is wrong to think of your own needs? Clearly state your pro or con position.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 7



Key Passage, pg. 82

“At the end of her singing tale, I was crying, shaking with despair. Even though I did not understand her entire story, I understood her grief. In one small moment, we had both lost the world, and there was no way to get it back.”

Writing Prompt

Ying Ying is moved by the Moon Lady. She feels she knows what it is like to lose her world.

Write a 6-8 sentence narrative paragraph. Based on today’s reading what world do you feel that Ying Ying is referring to? Support your position with examples from the novel. Do you think that Ying Ying will find her world again? What else did she lose when she got lost? Did she eventually find it?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Joy Luck Club, Day 8



Key Passage, pg. 95

“This American Rules,” she concluded at last. “Every time people come from foreign country, must know rules. You not know, judge say, Too bad, go back. They not telling you why so you can use their way go forward. They say, don’t know why, you find out yourself...” (95)

Writing Prompt

Lindo was comparing chess rules to rules in general. She thinks that you should be told the rules, and then be told why things are that way. She thinks there would be more understanding if someone tells you *why*. Waverly, however, learned the rules and why she was learning figured out the *why*. Because she figured out the *why* herself she knew the rules of chess backward and forward. Think about this comparison.

Based on today’s reading and your own knowledge, who do you think is right in this situation? Do you agree with Lindo or Waverly? Should people be told the rules and why they’re important or do you think they should be told the rules and find out on their own that they are important? How do you learn better—by being told or by learning and exploring? Which is better? In your opinion, is what you choose always the best option, or does it matter on the circumstances?

Write a two-paragraph narrative that explains your views. Use information from today’s reading to support your reasons.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 9



Key Passage, pg. 103

“Her black men advanced across the plane, slowly marching to each successive level as a single unit. My white pieces screamed as the scurried and fell off the board one by one. As her men drew closer to my edge, I felt myself growing light. I rose up into the air and flew out the window. Higher and higher, above the alley, over the tops of the tiled roofs, where I was gathered up by the wind and pushed up toward the night sky until everything below me disappeared, and I was alone. I closed my eyes and pondered my next move.”

Writing Prompt

Waverly had a fight with her mother about how her mother seems to hover over her when she is practicing her chess moves and how she introduces her to others they come upon when shopping on Saturday in the market. Now doesn't know what to do. Do you think that Waverly was right to be embarrassed by her mother? Much of their argument was based on a misunderstanding.

Based on their argument on page 100-103, who do you think is right? Write a 6-8 sentence narrative paragraph that explains who you think is right, defend your reasons with information from today's reading, your past experiences, facts, and quotes. Tell what you think the other person should do to correct this situation.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 10



Key Passage, pg. 112

“She whispered something in Chinese about things “not being balanced,” and I thought she meant about how things looked, not how things felt. And then she started to move the larger pieces: the sofa, chairs, end tables, a Chinese scroll of goldfish.”

Writing Prompt

Ying Ying feels their house on the hill is out of balance. She refers to many principles of feng shui. She is not only referring to the house but is referring to their life when she makes this statement.

Balanced living is achieved when you can offset negative events in your life with positive experiences. It also occurs when you can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Below are five suggestions to help you develop a balanced life.

1. Awareness-Appreciate who you are right now and find you in your life. Be mindful of what you have.
2. Body maintenance-Take care of it. Make healthy choices. Eat a balanced diet, stay active, rest when your body needs it and pamper it once in a while.
3. Be creative-This doesn't mean you need to be an artist. Approach your challenges with a creative mind. In other words, think of positive ways to solve the issues at hand.
4. Patience-Breathe deeply, think about the situation, give others the same courtesy. Realize that some things will be not fixed over night.
5. Simplicity-Keep things simple. Organize your priorities. Do what you can. Don't overbook or overwhelm yourself. Remember you are human.

Write a 6-8 sentence narrative paragraph about balance. What do you think it means to live a balanced life? How important is balance for you? What affects does living a life out of balance have on you? Do you think you can achieve full success if you don't have balance? Write today's paragraph based on your prior experiences. You can use basic principles of feng shui that you learned about today to help defend your opinion.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 11



Key Passage, pg. 121

“The mother nodded: “Now I have perfect understanding. I have already experienced the worst. After this, there is no worst possible thing.”

And the daughter said, “Now you must come back, to the other side. Then you can see why you were wrong.”

And the girl grabbed the mothers hand and pulled her through the wall.

Writing Prompt

Lena’s mother has been lost. For years her soul has been washing away. She is a living shell present in her life but not experiencing it. Lena feels she has experienced the worst. Lena’s mother and Lena believe that there is nothing more worse than what she has experienced.

What do you think Lena is trying to convey to her mother? How does she know that she has experienced the worst? Is it perception?

Write a 6-8 sentence narrative paragraph explaining the quote above. Support your explanation with details from the text. Do you think Lena is right: If you have experienced the worst there is nothing more devastating beyond that? Why?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 12



Key Passage, pg. 128

“...and although my father was not a fisherman but a pharmacist’s assistant who had once been a doctor in China, he believed in his *nengkan*, his ability to do anything he put his mind to.”

Writing Prompt

Rose’s father has *nengkan*, which means he believed in himself and that he could do anything that he put his mind to. Many people have abilities, but if we do not believe we are good enough or can use them or try to use them, they will go to waste. Think of a time you really wanted something and believed you could do it.

Write a 6-8 sentence narrative essay describing your situation. Think about the following questions as you write: What did you want? How did believing in your abilities help you achieve your goal? Why is it important to believe in yourself?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 13



Key Passage, pg. 139-140

"I know now that I never expected to find Bing, just as I know now that I will never find a way to save my marriage. My mother tells me, though, I should still try.

"What's the point?" I say. "There's no hope. There's no reason to keep trying."

"Because you must, she says. "This is not hope. Not reason. This is your fate. This is your life, what you must do."?

"So what can I do?"

And my mother says, "You must think for yourself, what you must do. If someone tells you, then you not trying."

Writing Prompt

Rose's mother wants her to fight for her marriage. She wants her to think for herself, to stand up for herself, and to fight for herself. She wants her daughter to be strong. Why do you think it is important to be able to think for yourself and to have inner strength?

Write about a time that you were in a situation that you had to stand up for yourself, fight for yourself, and to have inner strength. What happened? In two narrative paragraphs describe your situation. Besides yourself, who else was involved? What did you have to do? What was the result? Be as descriptive (provide as many details as possible).

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 14



Key Passage, pg. 153

“You want me to be someone I’m not!” I sobbed. “I’ll never be the kind of daughter you want me to be!”

“Only two kinds of daughters,” she shouted in Chinese. “Those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind! Only one kind of daughter can live in this house. Obedient daughter!”

Writing Prompt

Jing-mei’s mother says there are only two types of daughters.... “those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind.” Think about and brainstorm the good and bad qualities of each.

Obedience means you are compliant and reverent; willing to obey your parents or other authority figures.

Jing-mei’s mother wants an obedient daughter. Based on your brainstorming, which kind of daughter do you think is better? What types of qualities would that daughter have and why do you think they would be important? Do you think you can have an obedient daughter who follows her own mind?

As you write your two-paragraph narrative response include support for your ideas from your experiences and use facts from today’s reading.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 15



Key Passage, pg. 164

“...My mother knows, underneath all the fancy details that cost so much, this house is still a barn.

She can see all this. And it annoys me that all she sees are the bad parts. But then I look around and everything she said is true. And this convinces me that she can see what else is going on, between Harold and me. She knows what’s going to happen to us...”

Writing Prompt

Lena is trying her best to hide the details of her life from her mother. But she feels that her mother can see through her and knows what is wrong with her and her marriage. Think of a time that someone you know—friend, parent, teacher, coach, mentor could see through you and they knew what you were hiding something.

Write a two-paragraph narrative about this person and about the situation. Give details explaining who was involved and what they did to see through you. What were you trying to hide? How did it make you feel that this person was here for you regardless of the situation? Why do you think we stand by people when they let us down? Is this person still an important person to you?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 16



Key Passage, pg. 180-181

“And then I see my mother sitting by an open window, her dark silhouette against the night sky. She turns around in her chair, but I can’t see her face.

“Fallen down,” she says simply. She doesn’t apologize.

“It doesn’t matter,” I say, and I start to pick up the broken glass shards. “I knew it would happen.”

“Then why didn’t you stop it?” asks my mother.

And it’s such a simple question.

Writing Prompt

Based on today’s quote and the reading think of the conversation between Lena and her mother over the broken vase.

Write a one-paragraph essay that describes the situation. What are Lena and her mother really talking about? What does each of the objects represent? What does Lena’s mother want her to do? Use examples from today’s reading to support your ideas.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 17



Key Passage, pg. 186

“This is not so good,” she said at last. “It is just leftover strips. And the fur is too short, no long hairs.”

“How can you criticize a gift!” I protested. I was deeply wounded. “He gave me this from his heart.”

“That is why I worry,” She said.

Writing Prompt

Waverly is excited that Rich has given her a Mink. When her mother sees it she is critical and fears that his gift reflects his heart. Waverly went from being happy and confident to scared and unsure of herself.

Write a narrative paragraph that describes the scene on page 186.

Waverly’s mother believes that the mink is not in a condition that is acceptable. Do you think the condition of the mink represented something deeper that Waverly was unable to see? What did her mother say to make Waverly feel so badly? How did Waverly set the scene? (Reread page 185 to help you establish the tone). How did you feel after you read the conversation between Lindo and Waverly? Use the material on pages 185-186 to defend your position.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 18



Key Passage, pg. 203-204

"I saw what I had been fighting for: It was for me, a scared child, who had run away a long time ago to what I had imagined was a safer place. And hiding in this place, behind my invisible barriers, I knew what lay on the other side: Her side attacks. Her secret weapons. Her uncanny ability to find my weakest spots. But in the brief instant that I had peered over the barriers I could finally see what was really there: an old woman, a wok for her armor, a knitting needle for her sword, getting a little crabby as she waited patiently for her daughter to invite her in." (203-204)

Writing Prompt

Waverly finally understands what her mother has been waiting for—her daughter to allow her in.

What does it mean to "let, or allow, your parents in?" Why do you think parents want their children to "let them in"? What do you think they are waiting for and have to offer?

Using what you read today and drawing from your previous experiences, write a two-paragraph narrative essay that explains the importance of "home", your parents, and feeling connected and being accepted. If you and your parents have a mutual understanding in the acceptance of differences and diversity, how can that help you?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 19



Key Passage, pg. 210

“I had been talking too many people, my friends, everyone it seems, except Ted. To each person I told a different story. Yet, each version was true, I was certain of it, at least at the moment I told it.”

Writing Prompt

Rose says she talked to everyone but Ted. She told the truth or different versions of the truth about her relationship. Why do you think she told different people different stories?

Pretend that Rose came to you asking for advice. Write her a letter giving her advice on her relationship with Ted. Explain to her what you think she should do to try and save her marriage. To support your position, you should give examples from your own life of things you have done to heal hurt or broken relationships. In addition, you could also reflect upon similar situations you have observed of people trying to heal and save a relationship.

The length of your narrative letter to Rose should be one complete page.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 20



Key Passage, pg. 213

“A girl is like a young tree,” she said. “You must stand tall and listen to your mother standing next to you. That is the only way to grow strong and straight. But if you bend to listen to other people, you will grow crooked and weak. You will fall to the ground with the first strong wind. And then you will grow like a weed, growing wild in any direction, running along the ground until someone pulls you out and throws you away.”

Writing Prompt

Rose’s mother is trying to get her to learn to have an opinion and to know what she wants. She is trying to get her to stand up for herself. She acknowledges that in order to grow strong and tall that she needs the help of others who are concerned with her well-being.

Based on what you have read, respond to the passage with 2-3 narrative paragraphs. Do you agree with Rose’s mother? Or, do you think that Rose can achieve independence and a strong character on her own and without the help of those close to her. What styles does Rose’s mother use to try and prove her point? In your opinion, what will it take for you to stand strong and tall, as in confident and self-assured?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 21



Key Passage, pg. 234

. . . "Only you pick that crab. No one else take it. I already know this. Everyone else want best quality. You think different."

Writing Prompt

Jing-Mei's mother is trying to teach her daughter her worth and value as a person. She wants her to know what she ranks as "best quality."

Write a descriptive narrative paragraph about a time that you felt you received the best quality. This could be in the form of a service, in other words, how you were treated; an item you purchased that exceeded your expectations, or idea that you found to be absolutely brilliant. Did you feel you received what you deserved, or did the experience affect you in such a positive way, it left you humbled and utterly grateful? Did you tell others you about it? Did you get everything you wanted? Did you feel truly worthy of receiving the best quality?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 22



Key Passage, pg. 244

“Now you see,” said the turtle, drifting back into the pond, ‘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.’”

Writing Prompt

The turtle is trying to teach An-Mei inner strength. Do you think the turtle was telling her to never cry? What did he mean when he told her that her tears would feed someone else’s joy? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Write a narrative paragraph that describes the story as told by the turtle. Explain what he meant for An-Mei to do that was based on her circumstances. Use specific details from the text and experiences from your own life to defend your reasoning.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 23



Key Passage, pg. 256

“My mother was not jealous of this young girl who would now be called Fifth Wife. Why should she be? My mother did not love Wu Tsing. A girl in China did not marry for love. She married for position, and my mother’s position, I later learned was the worst.

Writing Prompt

Amy Tan spends a lot of time describing the wives and the house in which An-Mei has moved. An-Mei’s mother has the worst position in the house for a number of reasons.

From today’s reading, list the number of wives Wu Tsing had, and state the reasons that their positions are better than the position of An-Mei’s mother. Give examples from the text and use your prior knowledge of Chinese marriages, arranged marriages, and birth order to assist you in writing a 1-2 paragraph narrative essay.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 24



Key Passage, pg. 271

“When the poison broke into her body, she whispered to me that she would rather kill her own weak spirit so she could give me a stronger one.”

Writing Prompt

An-Mei knew she was trapped in her situation. Since Second Wife controlled Wu Tsing she knew she could never escape her situation. She wanted more for her daughter than she had had for herself. She realized in order for An-Mei to succeed she would have to give her words of empowerment, strength and support. She had to do everything she could do to lift her spirit. She sacrificed all she could to give her daughter more.

Think of a time you sacrificed for others.

Write about your sacrifice. As you write think of the following questions. What was your situation? What, or for whom did you sacrifice? How did it make you feel? Would you do it again? Give specific and thorough descriptions and your perspective based on your situation. Your response will be in the form of a two paragraph narrative essay.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 25



Key Passage, pg. 275

“All around this house I see signs. My daughter looks but does not see.
This is a house that will break into pieces. How do I know? I have always known
a thing before it happens.”

Writing Prompt

Amy Tan describes the signs that Ying Ying sees in the house. She describes a house that will break into pieces.

Write a narrative paragraph that describes the house and the reasons it will fall. What kind of effect do you think the Amy Tan was trying to convey? Do you agree with her and why or why not? Use examples from today's reading to support your answer.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 26



Key Passage, pg. 286

“...I will use this sharp pain to penetrate my daughter’s tough skin and cut her tiger spirit loose. She will fight me, because this is the nature of two tigers. But I will win and give her my spirit, because this is the way a mother loves her daughter.”

Writing Prompt

Ying Ying knows that her daughter will fight her. Think about the people you have around you that love you and support you. They ultimately have your best interest in mind. Why do we fight the people who are trying to help us the most?

Write about a person that is close to you. Describe this person in detail. How does this person try to help you the most? Have you tried to resist or fight with them for helping you? What were you trying to prove? Ultimately, describe what the person did that helped you the most. Your response should be no less than two narrative paragraphs.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 27



Key Passage, pg. 289

“...You don’t have to sit like Buddha under a tree letting pigeons drop their dirty business on your head. You can buy an umbrella. Or go inside a Catholic church. In America, nobody says you have to keep the circumstances somebody else gives you.”

Writing Prompt

In some ways Lindo is sad she was not able to balance Waverly out more. However, she talks about the things she was able to give her in terms of circumstances. Look at the quote above. What do you think Lindo was talking about when she says you don’t have to keep the circumstances someone else gives you?

Write a narrative paragraph that describes the quote above. What is the author trying to convey through Lindo? What ideas and ideals is she describing?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Joy Luck Club, Day 28



Key Passage, pg. 303

“ . . . I wanted everything for you to be better. I wanted you to have the best circumstances, the best character. I didn’t want you to regret anything. And that’s why I named you Waverly. It was the name of the street we lived on. And I wanted you to think this is where I belong. But I also knew if I named you after this street, soon you would grow up, leave this place, and take a piece of me with you.”

Writing Prompt

Lindo, much like all parents wants the best for their children. Lindo has good intentions. Think about what she wants for Waverly, what she tried to give her, and why she tries to give her the best. Do you think Waverly values what her mother has done? Parents can only do so much and then it is up to the child to go forward.

What do you want for yourself, short-term and long-term goals? What do your value about yourself and about life? Will your wants and your values be able to co-exist in a way that is positive, prosperous, and of value to society?

Write a 6-8 sentence narrative paragraph that describes you at your best. what you can do to have the best for yourself. What will you need to help you achieve a life for which you and those close to you can be proud?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 29



Key Passage, pg. 307

“Today I realize I’ve never really known what it means to be Chinese. I am thirty-six years old. My mother is dead and I am on a train, carrying with me her dreams of coming home. I am going to China.” (307)

Writing Prompt

Jing Mei is going to fulfill her mother’s dream and will get to meet her half-sisters for the first time. She realizes she doesn’t know what it means to be Chinese but she is Chinese.

Write a one paragraph narrative responding to the above prompt. What do you think it means to be Chinese? How can the daughter of two Chinese parents not know what it means to be Chinese? Use information from today’s reading and from experiences regarding your own race/ethnicity to respond to today’s prompt.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 30



Key Passage, pg. 319

“So it is decided. We are going to dine tonight in our rooms, with our family, sharing hamburgers, French fries, and apple pie a la mode.” (319)

Writing Prompt

When Jing Mei arrived at the hotel she was excited to meet her family and also have an authentic Chinese meal. As they drove through the city she discovered that China is much like the United States. Big cities have traffic, big buildings, large hotels, and plenty of retail stores. The relatives decide they want to stay in for dinner in order to spend more time with Jing Mei and her father. They want a typical American dinner. This is clearly not what Jing Mei was expecting.

Place yourself in Jing Mei’s place. Write a one paragraph narrative describing what your expectations would be if you were to visit China. In addition, describe how things probably are in reality. Use information you have learned from your reading so far to help you with your response.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
The Joy Luck Club, Day 30



Key Passage, pg. 330

“And now at the airport, after shaking hands with everybody, waving good-bye, I think about all of the different ways we leave people in this world. Cheerily waving good-bye to some at airports, knowing we’ll never see each other again. Leaving others on the side of the road, hoping we will. Finding my mother in my father’s story and saying good-bye before I have a chance to know her better.” (330)

Writing Prompt

Today, my mother’s greatest wish came true. She got to see her children together. And for the first time since infancy, her twins got to see her. They got to say goodbye. I realized, while looking at the Polaroid of the three of us, that my mother, my culture and my family were a part of me. This is the home in my heart. They are a part that I do not want to lose touch with again.

What do you think Jing Mei can do to maintain the home in her heart where her mother and her sisters and my Chinese culture live? How can she show respect for each as she continues to live her life in America? As you write think of ways you can respect your past and culture but live a full life in a new culture without being disrespectful. Keep in mind that it is acceptable for you to not fully embrace and happily accept all aspects of this new culture, but focus on how you can make the best of the situation and to always place respect at the forefront. We live in this world together. Do your part to keep it peaceful and harmonious.