

## **Guided Imagery for Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club***

**Purpose:** This strategy will help students to place themselves within the story and to imagine and predict what is going on in the characters' minds, and what the outcomes of their experiences will be. This strategy will help the students to connect with an experience that might at first seem foreign, but hopefully will seem more personal and realistic after visualization.

**Rationale:** This strategy will be used toward the end of the novel, before students begin reading the chapter "Double Face" that begins on page 288. In this chapter, one of the mothers is about to come to America for the first time. She has packed her finest belongings in one suitcase and comes to a foreign land, where she knows nothing and no one, has high expectations, but no practical way of realizing them. This activity should vividly help students to understand the perspective and the experiences of the foreign mothers that are central to the novel.

**Directions:** Before reading the prompt, the teacher will prepare students for the guided imagery by dimming the lights slightly, and instructing the students to get comfortable. The teacher will put on a selection of classical music—perhaps the first movement in Vivaldi's "Largo and Allegro from The Winter from *The Four Seasons*"—something slow and searching. This music will set the tone of discovering and searching, and is slow and tentative, much like the uncertainty that the character faces upon first arriving in America. After reading the guided prompts, the teacher gives the students five to ten minutes to write down their reactions and their predictions about what they would do next.

**Steps:**

- 1) Teacher instructs student to relax and listen to the music and the prompts, and to try to visualize the scene and the emotions that will be read to them.
- 2) Play music for half a minute.
- 3) Read prompts, pausing for 20 seconds in between each one.
- 4) Teacher instructs students to jot down their thoughts—whatever comes to mind regarding the images they've experienced. They have 10 minutes to do this.
- 5) Students share for about 5 minutes in groups of 4 what they've experienced.
- 6) Teacher introduces the final section of the novel.
- 7) Students read the chapter.

## Imagery Prompts

Close your eyes and relax.

Imagine that you have just stepped off an airplane in a foreign country.

There are people shouting all around you, yet you can't understand a word that they say.

You wander over to the nearest desk at the airport, and a man begins speaking loudly and rapidly. You don't understand a word.

You hand the man at the desk a passport, and ask him where to go next. He rudely stamps the passport and says a few more words in a language that you don't understand.

You walk outside the airport, and there are thousands of cabs, cars and buses rushing down the street. Horns blare loudly from all directions.

The sidewalks are littered with dirt and magazines that have foreign words. You can't even figure out what the letters are.

