

## Story Map for *The Joy Luck Club*, by Amy Tan

### Example for Jing-mei Woo

**Setting/main characters:** America, present day. Jing-mei Woo, her father, Suyuan Woo (Jing-mei's recently deceased mother), An-Mei Hsu, Lindo Jong, Ying-ying St. Clair, Jing-mei's twin sisters in China.

**Statement of the problem:** Jing-mei must learn of her mother's personal and cultural background so that she can tell about her mother to her newfound Chinese twin sisters.

**Event 1:** Jing-mei goes to a Joy Luck Club meeting and learns of the discovery of her two sisters.

**Event 2:** Jing-mei begins to remember the story of her mother and the two daughters, who her mother carried across the war-torn lands of China, and was forced to abandon. Jing-mei learns that her mother spent much of her life searching for them.

**Event 3:** As Jing-mei learns the stories of her mother's Joy Luck Club friends and their daughters, she weaves in her own stories. She includes stories of how the daughters became separated or disconnected from their mothers. Jing-mei felt a personal struggle with her mother when she failed to become the child prodigy that her mother so desired.

**Event 4:** While Jing-mei is coming to a greater reconciliation and understanding with her relationship with her mother, she remembers ways that she and her mother were the same. At a crab dinner, she and her mother are the only ones who choose the lesser quality crabs. Suyuan gives Jing-mei a jade pendant to symbolize their "life's importance".

**Event 5:** Jing-mei travels with her father back to China to meet her two sisters. When they meet, Jing-mei realizes that her mother's wishes are now complete.

**Statement of the solution:** Jing-mei realizes her own cultural and family identity as she learns the stories of her family and her mother's friends' families.

**Story theme** (What is the story really about?): Even though communication and connection may seem impossible because of separation by culture and generational differences, a greater understanding of one's heritage will lead to unification and understanding.

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Setting/main characters:

Statement of the problem:

Event 1:

Event 2:

Event 3:

Event 4:

Event 5:

Statement of the solution:

Story theme (What is the story really about?):

## Story Map for Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*

**Purpose:** To provide a guide for students to help them to understand the very basic structure of the story. In *The Joy Luck Club*, characters and story lines can get very confusing due to the interwoven, pieced ordering of the stories, so a guide to events and characters, with a clear concept of main themes, is helpful to maintain the focus of the story.

**Rationale:** The story map can be completed either throughout the story, as each character is developed, or upon completion of the novel. Completing the story map throughout the story will help students to chart the progress and connection of each character. Completing the story map at the end of reading will serve as a good review guide and study sheet for the basics of the novel.

**Directions:** Students will be a worksheet to help them chart the progress of a character. The characters will be assigned beforehand so that the eight main characters are distributed throughout the class. After each vignette, the student should pull out the story map for that particular character, and jot down the significant events and setting for that character's story. A couple minutes will be given in class at the end of each of the four main segments of the novel for students to complete the events segments of the story map. At the end of the novel, students should create the theme and solution for the story map they have created. This will help them to understand the meaning behind each of Tan's stories. The 3 or 4 students who have the same character will group together one day, compare information that each person has gathered from the book, and compile the shared themes/events into one. They will then write the information on an overhead and present their findings (with special emphasis on theme) to the class. Group presentations should last no longer than 3 minutes.



