

Red Scarf Girl by Ji-Li Jiang (Published by Harper Collins)

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 7

Summary

Ji Li Jiang recounts personal events that took place during the cultural revolution in 1960s China. Her family experiences first-hand the persecution of the Red Guard and influences of Chairman Mao's strive for a socialist country through a fall in social status due to past political choices.

Connection to the Curriculum

The backdrop of the cultural revolution provides an ideal setting for analyzing the concepts and themes of culture, change, and diversity. Jiang reveals the complexities of a politically explosive 1960s China in terms middle school age children can understand, adding to their knowledge of world events. It allows opportunities to compare and contrast these same themes through other cultural events in history. In addition, students can examine the topics of literary structure, sentence fluency, and characteristics of narrative text.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.2.2- The student reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech.

1.4.10- The student identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.14- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

1.4.15- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.18- The student explains cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.19- The student uses paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (e.g., stated and main ideas, main events, important details) from appropriate-level narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical texts in logical order.

1.4.21- The student explains the relationship between elements of an author's style in a text (e.g., word choice, sentence structure) and his or her purpose for writing the text.

1.4.24- The student uses evidence from text to support conclusions drawn from grade level reading.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of major and minor characters (e.g., their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and explains how those aspects influence characters' interactions with other characters and elements of the plot, including resolution of the major conflict.

2.1.2- The student identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and analyzes connections between the setting and other story elements (e.g., character, plot).

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor elements of the plot (e.g., conflict, crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution, rising action, falling action, subplots, parallel episodes) and explains how these elements relate to another.

2.1.4- The student understands aspects of theme (e.g. moral, lesson, meaning, message, author's ideas about the subject) and supports with implicit/explicit information from the text.

2.1.5- The student identifies the use of literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, figurative language, irony, metaphor, tone/mood, symbolism).

2.2.9- The student recognizes connections between cultures and experiences through a variety of texts.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

This text contains some racial slurs and other language associated with direct recollections of events and conversations. In this story about the Chinese Revolution and the Red Guard, students will read about the political unrest and mob mentalities; some limited violence is associated with these topics.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities