



Taking a Bite!

Exploring Cultural Identity Through Food



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Published by *K20 Center*

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Grade Level	9th – 11th Grade	Time Frame	60-90 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	2 periods
Course	American Literature, World Literature		

Essential Question

What role does food play in your culture? How does food shape your cultural identity?

Summary

In this lesson, students will explore the way in which culture is connected to the foods people eat. Students will examine how their own favorite foods are connected to their cultural identities and read Amy Tan's short story "Fish Cheeks."

Snapshot

Engage

Students respond to a Bell Ringer question about their favorite home-cooked meal or childhood snack.

Explore

Students view a video clip about food and culture; then, in groups, they jigsaw an article about food.

Explain

Students read a short story by Amy Tan, "Fish Cheeks," and complete a Stop and Jot throughout.

Extend

Students write a Claim, Evidence, Reasoning response about the theme of the story and watch an interview with a first-generation Asian American chef and restaurateur.

Evaluate

Students use the 3-2-1 strategy to reflect on their learning.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.2.R.1: Summarize the main ideas and paraphrase significant parts of increasingly complex texts.

9.3.R.3: Evaluate how literary elements impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:

- setting
- plot structure (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, *in media res*)
- conflict (i.e., internal, external)
- characters (e.g., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization (i.e., direct, indirect)
- point of view (e.g., narrator reliability)
- archetypes

9.3.W.2: Compose informative essays, reports, or technical writing that:

- objectively introduce and develop topics
- include a defensible thesis
- incorporate evidence (e.g., specific facts, details, charts and graphs, data)
- maintain an organized structure
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision
- establish and maintain a formal style
- emulate literary devices from mentor texts

Attachments

- [Fish Cheeks Short Story–Taking a Bite.docx](#)
- [Fish Cheeks Short Story–Taking a Bite.pdf](#)
- [Fish Cheeks Short Story—Taking a Bite - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Fish Cheeks Short Story—Taking a Bite - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Taking a Bite.pptx](#)
- [What Americans can learn from other food cultures —Taking a Bite.docx](#)
- [What Americans can learn from other food cultures —Taking a Bite.pdf](#)
- [What Americans can learn from other food cultures—Taking a Bite - Spanish.docx](#)
- [What Americans can learn from other food cultures—Taking a Bite - Spanish.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- What Americans Can Learn From Other Food Cultures handout (attached, one per student)
- "Fish Cheeks" Short Story handout (attached, one per student)
- Internet access
- Printer access
- SMART board/projector access
- Copy paper
- Notebook paper
- Pens/pencils
- Highlighters

10 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Ask students to have a piece of notebook paper and a pen or pencil out. Show **slide 3** and review the [Bell Ringer](#) questions. Provide five minutes for students to answer the following prompt:

Describe your favorite home-cooked meal or one of your favorite childhood snacks/meals. What made it special to you?

After students have finished their written responses, ask several students to share their thoughts. Facilitate a class discussion using some of the major ideas that will be covered in the lesson. Some guiding questions to ask include the following:

- What role does food play in your culture?
- Have you ever been or felt judged because of the food you eat?
- Have you ever judged someone else because of the food they eat?

Review the essential questions and lesson objectives on **slides 4 and 5**.

20 minutes

Explore

Move to **slide 6** and show students the "[Our Global Kitchen - Food, Nature, Culture](#)" video. Remind students to think about the role that food plays in their life as they watch the video.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=bPlmnEJ9CHc>

After watching the video, pass out the attached **What Americans Can Learn From Other Food Cultures** handout and provide each student with a highlighter. Transition to **slide 7** and introduce students to the [Why-Lighting](#) strategy. Explain that Why-Lighting is used while reading a text to highlight passages that seem important. Notes are added in the margins that explain why the passage is important.

Model the strategy by reading the first section of the article aloud. Ask students to highlight portions of the text they think are important as they listen to the first section. After reading, ask for a few volunteers to share what they highlighted and why they highlighted the passage. Instruct students to add a note in the margin explaining why they thought the passage was important.

Teacher Note: Jigsaw Sections

The article has been sectioned off with horizontal lines to make each section equitable in length. Modify the sections of the article to fit classroom needs, if necessary.

Place students into groups of five and introduce the [jigsaw](#) strategy. Have students split up the article so that each student in the group reads one section. Remind students to highlight what they think is important or what sticks out while reading as well as the main idea of their section. In addition to highlighting, ask them to write brief explanations in the margins about why they highlighted the passages. Allow at least ten minutes for students to read and highlight their sections.

After students finish reading, ask them to discuss each section as a group and answer the following:

- What was the section about?
- What were the big ideas in your section?
- What stood out to you?
- Do you agree or disagree with what your section was saying?
- Do you have an experience that you can relate to your section?

While students discuss, encourage them to make notes on each section in the margin of the handout. Allow at least fifteen minutes for student discussion of the handout.

Teacher Note: Completion Time

Adjust time limits if needed to best suit students' needs.

After the groups have had time to discuss the handout and take notes, ask for volunteers to summarize each section of the article and have a class discussion about the many ways food is viewed around the world.

15 minutes

Explain

Pass out the attached "**Fish Cheeks**" **Short Story** handout and move to **slide 8**. Introduce students to the [Stop and Jot](#) strategy. Ask students to stop reading after each pair of paragraphs and summarize what happens in the story. The notes do not have to be complete sentences, just brief statements to ensure students are actively following the story. The story can be read individually, in pairs, or as a class and should take no more than fifteen minutes.

30 minutes

Extend

After students have finished reading, ask them to consider what potential themes emerged from the story. As students share, write their ideas on the board.

Possible Student Responses

Some ideas for the theme of the story may revolve around topics like family, cultural identity, food, and coming-of-age.

After students create a list of topics, model how to write theme statements. Using student ideas, create some sample theme statements as a class.

Move to **slide 9** and explain the [Claim, Evidence, Reasoning](#) (CER) strategy to students. Have students use the notebook paper from the Bell Ringer activity to answer the following question: What is the theme of Amy Tan's "Fish Cheeks"?

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=JGOxVlgmGWE>

8 minutes

Evaluate

After students finish watching the interview, transition to **slide 11**. Using the [3-2-1](#) strategy and on the same sheet of notebook paper used for the Bell Ringer and CER, ask students to complete the following:

- 3: List three takeaways from the story and/or interview.
- 2: List two meals that represent your culture or you as a person.
- 1: What role does food play in your culture?

Collect responses to check for understanding and determine further instruction.

Resources

- American Museum of Natural History. (2012, November 9). *Our GlobalKitchen - Food, Nature, Culture* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPlmnEJ9CHc&t=3s>
- K20 Center. (2022, August 8). *K20 ICAP - taking a bite* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbG9rv6xtZc>
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125>
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Claim, evidence, reasoning. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/156>
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Jigsaw. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/179>
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Why-lighting. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128>
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Stop and jot. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/168>
- K20 Center. (n.d.) 3-2-1. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/117>