




Lesson Guidance 2	
Grade	11
Unit	4
Selected Text(s)	<i>Buddha in the Attic</i> Chapter 1 pages 3-11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We Real Cool by Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Magazine • Not silent - Isthmus Madison, Wisconsin •  Chinese Silence #62 • Julie Otsuka on Writing Memory Loss and the Power of the First-Person Plural Literary Hub •  Buddha in the Attic Chapter Notes •  Buddha Lit Analysis Bookmark.pdf
Duration	Approx 1-2 days

Plan with guidance from the [ELA Instructional Expectations Guide](#)

Learning Goal(s)

What should students understand about today's selected text?

Students will understand how Julie Otsuka uses the first person plural narrative in *Buddha in the Attic*. Students will analyze the impact of the author's choices and discuss the benefits and limitations of her approach.

CCSS Alignment

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story. (eg. where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.



	<p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1</u> Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p>
<p>End of lesson task <i>Formative assessment</i></p>	<p>Ask students to read the statement and rephrase what Otsuka is saying in their own words. Using textual evidence from pages 3-11 of Chapter One of <i>Buddha in the Attic</i>, ask students to write a paragraph explaining to what degree they agree with the statement. Could it be argued that there are limits to how well a story can be told or a character's point of view can be described using a first person plural perspective?</p>
<p>Knowledge Check <i>What do students need to know in order to access the text?</i></p>	<p>Background knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of assimilation• Understanding of white supremacy and its effects <p>Key terms: (domain specific terms to analyze the text)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• first person plural point of view: narrators tell the story using "we"; no individual speaker is identified; the narrator is a member of a group that acts as a unit• secondary characters: a character who plays a significant role in the story, but the plot doesn't revolve around them <p>Vocabulary Words (words found in the text)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• yellow peril: a racial color-metaphor that depicts the peoples of East and Southeast Asia as an existential danger to the Western world.• barrack: provide (soldiers) with accommodations in a building or set of buildings• technocrat: a person with a lot of scientific or technical knowledge who has an important position in a government or in an industry• kimono: a traditional Japanese garment and the national dress of Japan• Geisha: a Japanese female performance artist, traditionally hired to entertain guests at teahouses and social events• stupor: a state of near-unconsciousness or insensibility• Haiku: a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables• unfathomable: incapable of being fully explored or understood• invalid: a person made weak or disabled by illness or injury• latrine: a toilet or outhouse, especially a communal one in a camp or barracks

Core Instruction

Text-centered questions and ways students will engage with the text

Day 1:
Opening Activity:



Have students read the poem [We Real Cool by Gwendolyn Brooks | Poetry Magazine](#) . Explain to students that the poem was written in 1960 and is meant to describe a group of teenagers who are hanging out in a pool hall.

1. What are the traits of the teenagers that Brooks describes? Have students circle lines in the poem that describe how the teenagers behave and their motivations for behaving that way. Have students circle lines that describe the personality of the teenagers.
2. What overall message is Brooks trying to give the reader about the teenagers?

Preparing the Learner: Tasks and Scaffolds

Content Knowledge:

Explain to students that Brooks is using a technique called **first person plural point of view**, where the narrator uses the pronoun “we” to describe multiple characters as a singular unit. Julie Otsuka uses the first person plural point of view to drive her narrative in *Buddha in the Attic*.

Shared Reading:

The first person plural narrative can be an effective way of conveying the diversity of a group of people with one common identity. For example, the poet Timothy Yu uses first person plural in his poem Chinese Silence #62 to describe the collective experiences of Chinese American men in American history:

Have students read the poem “Chinese Silence #62” by Timothy Yu ( Chinese Silence #62) in order to answer the following questions:



- What are the traits of the Chinese men Yu describes? To answer this, have them circle lines in the poem that describes the behaviors and motivations and personalities of the men.
- Note that Yu begins his poem with a quote from Charlie Webster, chairman of the Maine Republican Party. Ask students: What overall message is Yu trying to give the reader about the men?
- Yu’s poem is meant to be a response to this quote. With this in mind, what overall message is Yu trying to give to Webster about Chinese American men.
 - **Note to instructor:** Teachers can find more information on Timothy Yu at: [Not silent - Isthmus | Madison, Wisconsin](#). The middle of the page shows a picture of Timothy Yu at age 8 meeting Gwendolyn Brooks. Beneath that is a copy of the poem “Chinese Silence #62”.

Consider that Yu is using the first person plural perspective to challenge perceptions of Chinese American men by exploring the diversity of experiences Chinese American men have had in history. In doing so, the instructor may wish to go over Chimamanda Adichie’s argument regarding [The Danger of a Single Story](#). (**remind students of [Lesson 26 of The Namesake](#)**). For Asian Americans, a group historically underrepresented in American literature, this perspective can be an effective way of challenging negative stereotypes.

Day 2:

Independent Reading and Analysis:

Ask students to read pages 3-11 of Chapter One: *Come Japanese*. Explain that in the first chapter Otsuka uses the perspective of the first person plural to establish her protagonists (*Japanese picture brides*). As students read *Buddha in the Attic*, encourage them to take notes on either the

 Buddha in the Attic Chapter Notes document or the  Buddha Lit Analysis Bookmark.pdf . Students can answer any or all of the following questions:

1. What sorts of traits do the women have? Ask students to provide textual support in the chapter that gives insight into the behaviors, personalities and motivations of the women.
2. To what extent are the behaviors, personalities and motivations of the women shaped by their experiences in Japan? Shaped by their perceptions of life in America? Shaped by patriarchy?
3. To what extent are their behaviors, personalities and motivations shaped by their experiences on the boat?
4. Consider how in his poem “Chinese Silence #62”, Yu uses the first person plural perspective to challenge stereotypes of Chinese American men. Otsuka employs the same perspective in *Buddha in the Attic*. In using this perspective, what message is Otsuka trying to give the reader about her protagonists? To what extent is Otsuka also trying to challenge stereotypes of Japanese American women or the lack of representation of Asian American women in literature? To what extent does Otsuka’s use of the first person plural perspective an effective technique in challenging stereotypes or achieving whatever messages Otsuka is conveying?
5. By using the first person plural perspective, Otsuka also creates secondary characters such as the mothers and husbands. What message is she trying to say about them?
6. Notice that every now and then Otsuka uses italics. Why does she do this?

Interacting with the Text: ELD Tasks + Scaffolds

Formative Assessment:

Julie Otsuka justifies her use of first person plural in this interview: “Julie Otsuka on Writing Memory Loss and the Power of the First-Person Plural”: [Julie Otsuka on Writing Memory Loss and the Power of the First-Person Plural < Literary Hub](#)

In the interview, she says:

“The first-person plural is, for me, the ideal voice to use when describing a community from within... It allows you to paint a bigger picture than you would otherwise if you were telling the story from a single character’s point of view.”

Ask students to read the statement and rephrase what Otsuka is saying in their own words. Using textual evidence from pages 3-11 of Chapter One of *Buddha in the Attic*, ask students to write a paragraph explaining to what degree they agree with the statement. Could it be argued that there are limits to how well a story can be told or a character’s point of view can be described using a first person plural perspective?

Extending Understanding: ELD Tasks and Scaffolds

Optional Extension Activity:

Have students look for other examples of first person plural narratives in poetry or literature and evaluate the author’s use of the technique. For example, the technique can be found in memoirs such as *Speak*, *Okinawa* by Elizabeth Miki Brina, or *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue.

Fluency, Comprehension and Writing Supports

Fluency

[Fluency Protocols](#)

Sentence Comprehension

[Juicy Sentence](#) protocol with sample sentence



Writing	Pattan Writing Scope and Sequence Quality of Writing: II: Content

Additional Supports	
ELD Practices ELD ELA Tasks an...	ELD Practices for Preparing the Learning, Interacting with Text and Extending Understanding
SpEd Practice	Practices to promote Tier 1 access
MTSS Practices	Practices to promote Tier 1 access
Enrichment Practices	Practices to promote Tier 1 access