

MODULE ONE

SHORT STORY OPTIONS

READ: You will choose **ONE** short story from below to read and work with for lessons/quizzes **1.01 through 1.05**. Each of the short stories is a narrative that tells the story of an individual's journey to identity—a journey marked by challenges, triumphs, joys, and sorrows. Take some time now to preview the stories and decide whose journey you would like to follow. [1.01 NEARPOD VIDEO FOR SHORT STORY OPTIONS](#)

"Condensed Milk" by Varlam Shalamov

[TEXT- CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY](#)

[AUDIO -CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY READ ALOUD](#)

Story Description:

If you were starving, what would you do for food? "Condensed Milk" tells the story of a political prisoner in a Russian gulag (a forced-labor camp) who is faced with a choice: stay in the gulag—working and starving—or escape from the prison and risk dying. What choice would you make?

Historical Context:

From 1929 to 1953, Joseph Stalin was the dictator of the Soviet Union. His goal was to transform the Soviet Union from a poor society into a world superpower. He used terror and violence to rule, and under his reign, millions of his own people died in work camps, from starvation due to famine, or by execution.

[Video on Gulags](#)

"Rules of the Game" by Amy Tan

[TEXT - CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY](#)

[AUDIO - CLICK HERE FOR STORY READ ALOUD](#)

Story Description:

"Rules of the Game" tells the story of a girl who lives in San Francisco's Chinatown. She learns the strategies of chess but struggles to see eye-to-eye with her mother—possibly her wisest opponent and best teacher. In chess and in life, there are rules and choices. What's your next move?

Historical Context:

As a result of wars, famine, and political oppression, Chinese immigration to the United States dates back to the mid-1800s. Chinese immigrants came to the United States looking for better economic opportunities so they could provide for their families and send money to their relatives back home. San Francisco became a hub of Chinese culture; however, immigrants still faced many challenges like reduced wages, long work hours, and discrimination.

Check out the following scene from the movie, "The Joy Luck Club." This portion of the movie reflects Waverly's conflict in "Rules of the Game." [Video Clip](#)

"Hamadi" by Naomi Shihab Nye

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL TEXT](#)

[AUDIO FOR READ ALOUD](#)

Story Description:

Who are the prophets in your life—you know, the people who make you think about the truly important things? Susan, the narrator in "Hamadi", finds her own prophet of sorts, a family friend from her homeland in the Middle East, whose outlook on life and sage advice are gifts he bestows on everyone he meets.

Historical Context:

The Middle East is a term used to describe the region where three continents meet—Africa, Asia, and Europe. This region includes the nations of Israel, Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine, which border the Mediterranean Sea. Historically, the Middle East has been involved in many complex

conflicts rooted in issues of land, religion, and politics. In fact, deadly conflicts are ongoing now. *The Prophet* was published in 1928 by Lebanese author Kahlil Gibran. The book contains spiritual and philosophical essays on subjects dealing with love, sorrow, pain, freedom, marriage, death, friendship—the things of life no matter where you live.