

Sarah Harrison

School address:

University School of Nashville
2000 Edgehill Avenue
Nashville, TN 37212

Shifting Viewpoints in Woman Warrior
Asian Lesson Plan #2

Lesson Plan: After carefully reading “White Tigers” in The Woman Warrior, by Maxine Hong Kingston, students will compare the attitudes towards women in the first part of the Mulan legend with the aphorisms Kingston repeats throughout the American part of her story. They will then write papers correlating the quotation with an event in the Mulan legend, commenting on the contrasts.

Level/Class: Ninth grade students of above-average ability who take a year-long Ninth Grade English class.

Time: This lesson should take three 70-minute periods—one to discuss “White Tigers” and review the Mulan legend, one to choose quotations and plan papers, and one to go to the computer lab to write essays.

Objectives: Kingston’s writing is contradictory, and “White Tigers” takes a sharp turn when she begins describing her American experience. Through careful analysis of the quotations and the events in the Mulan legend, students will examine the duality of her experience, inferring Kingston’s complicated attitudes.

Materials Needed: “White Tigers” by Maxine Hong Kingston, journals, paper for outlines, pens, computer lab for writing day

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on the completeness of their papers, as well as their grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and how well they support their ideas

Procedure:

- A. Assign students to read “White Tigers,” urging them to pay careful attention to the attitude towards women, also, drawing attention to the shift where the American narrative begins. They should mark down examples which catch their attention.
- B. Discuss the quotations below as a class, and have students react to them in their journals (a wide range of reactions will be encouraged)
- C. Explain the writing assignment to the students. Be sure to point out that the more contrasting their examples are, the more interesting their papers will be.
- D. Give students time to make outlines and plan their papers.
- E. Take students to the computer lab to type their papers.

References:

Kingston, Maxine Hong. "White Tigers." The Woman Warrior. New York: Random House Incorporated, 1976.

Comparing the Mulan Legend with Maxine's Experience

Throughout The Woman Warrior, Maxine Hong Kingston's attitude towards her heritage shifts. She is by turns proud, angry, humbled, disgusted, resentful, or haughty. Below you will find several quotations having to do with the status of women in her society. These come largely from the American portion of her narrative. For the quotation that you choose, find an episode from the Mulan legend which disproves the sentiment expressed in the quotation. For your paper, which should be two pages, double-spaced, typed, you should comment on how the quotation and the episode you chose oppose each other—this will be your first few paragraphs. You should then devote the bulk of your paper to identifying what you think Kingston actually believes-- not what the legends believe, not what her parents believe-- but what *she* believes. Be sure to back up your thesis by citing what helped you ascertain Kingston's beliefs. Cite page numbers.

* If you would like to write about a quotation not included on the assignment sheet, see the instructor for permission.

1. Feeding girls is feeding cowbirds. (46)
2. There's no profit in raising girls. Better to raise geese than girls. (46)
3. It was said, 'There is an outward tendency in females,' which meant that I was getting straight A's for the good of my future husband's family, not my own. (47)
4. Do the women's work; then do more work, which will become ours too. (48)
5. There is a Chinese word for the female *I*—which is "slave." Break the women with their own tongues! (47)
6. But I am useless, one more girl who couldn't be sold. (52)
7. When fishing for treasures in the flood, be careful not to pull in girls. (52)