

7A: Red Scarf Girl & Narrative

During this unit, students read a highly engaging memoir about a young girl growing up in China in 1966 during the Cultural Revolution. Students will learn some of the history and politics of this tumultuous period by focusing on the story of Ji-li Jiang and her family, who live through the upheaval. As students follow Ji-li's journey through a world turned upside down, they will track how her understanding and feelings about what is happening to her society change over time.

Core texts your student will read:

- *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* by Ji-li Jiang

What your students will do/learn:

- Students experiment with some narrative writing techniques, creating focused descriptions by zooming in on a moment and using strong verbs, dialogue, and vivid details to capture the feeling of a moment.
- Students learn key classroom routines, including the sharing routine, during which classmates respond to shared writing by noting one effective way the writer used language or details or evidence.
- Students analyze some of the propaganda images Ji-li Jiang was exposed to and consider how this material influenced the attitudes of young people like Ji-li.
- Students read and discuss Jiang's experiences in China during the Cultural Revolution as they read *Red Scarf Girl*. Using a specially designed app, the Hope-o-Meter, students analyze levels of hopefulness and gain insight into how Ji-li's feelings and motivations change as the Revolution impacts her school, her friendships, and her family.
- Students write consistently throughout the unit, developing their idea or claim about the text and providing textual evidence.
- Students will write an end of unit essay responding to the following prompt: How does Ji-li change over the course of her story?

Here are some conversation starters that you can use during this unit to promote discussion and encourage continued learning with your student.

1. What are two of the moments from your experiences that you wrote about as you learned to focus on one moment? What caught your attention about those moments? What techniques did you use to try to communicate the experiences and feelings of those moments? Which technique made the biggest impact on your writing?
2. What stands out to you about Ji-li's life or about China during the Cultural Revolution? What was it like being a child during this time period?

3. Can you share a piece of writing with me in which you used precise details to show, not tell? (Provide feedback to your student by finding something in their writing that you can respond to as a reader. For example, "In your writing, I noticed your detail about how you were unable to eat 'a bite of dessert.' Including that detail shows me how sad and upset you were.")
4. Can you tell me about a part of *Red Scarf Girl* when Ji-li feels hopeful? When does she feel less hopeful?
5. What other emotions does Ji-li experience in *Red Scarf Girl*? What major events make her feel that way?