**GROWING UP ASIAN IN AUSTRALIA**

**Chapter Summaries**

The Relative Advantages of Learning my Language p.7

**Author:** Amy Choi

**Storyline:**

* Main character Amy young Chinese girl, twelve years old, lives in Australia.
* Doesn’t want to spend time with her grandfather even when he wanted her to read his poems.
* She didn’t see the point of speaking Chinese.
* Watched her grandfather age as he ventured out to the City every day from Monday to Friday.
* He hit his head one day and Amy had to go with him.
* He was diagnosed with a brain tumour and three years later he died.
* Amy later in life felt regret that she was never able to give her grandfather the commonest kindness.
* She starts to begin learning Chinese again so that the next time an elderly relative wants her to listen she will be able to listen to them.

**Characters:**

*Amy* – young teenage girl who later regrets not listening to her grandfather while he was alive.

*Grandfather* – elderly Chinese man who wants his granddaughter to listen to his poems. She doesn’t and later on he starts to ignore her. Passes away.

**Themes:**

*Family and relationships* – Relationship between Amy and her Grandfather and how it changed over time. Also how she changed as he passed away.

*Regret* – Realising that she hadn’t given her grandfather the kindness that he deserved when he was alive.

**Language and Style:** Personal reflection – author talking about her own personal experience. Reflecting on her relationship with her Grandfather.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

Identity: Her identity changes as her grandfather passes away. She starts to want to learn Chinese and before her grandfather passed away she was happy just speaking English. This shows how her identity as a young Chinese girl growing up in Australia changed. It changed from wanting to only know English to relearning Chinese so that if she ever had another opportunity with another elderly relative she would give them her time.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Creative:* Narrative about the relationship between a father and a son and how it changes over time.

*Expository*: Personal reflective. Talking about my current relationships with my family and how they have changed over time.

*Persuasive*: A piece trying to persuade people to take the opportunities that they can while they can as they will not be there forever.

Jordan Negrin

Chinese Lessons p.16

**Author:** Ivy Tseng is Chinese with a Taiwanese father. Ivy’s father is an Asian migrant who didn’t speak English very well, who didn’t have shoes until halfway through primary school, who didn’t have electricity until high school, and who had to help his parents every day. Ivy was a bratty kid who wanted to muck around on weekends instead of doing Chinese lessons. She wished she had normal parents who could speak perfect English. Adored her older sisters.

**Storyline:** Ivy absolutely despises Chinese lessons on a Saturday morning. She can’t understand why her father wants her to learn the language when every other kid can speak English. At one point, her father stops trying and Ivy makes the excuse of having a lot of homework. Later on, she realises that it’s important to learn one’s heritage and culture, to have a kind of authenticity that is her own. She wishes she can belong, eat at a Chinese restaurant and eavesdrop on mandarin conversations. She feels conflicted because she wants to speak English but there is also a part of her that wants to learn why her father was so persistent in teaching her the language. Now she is learning mandarin because she wants to understand her father.

**Characters:** Ivy, Jona, Lin, Ivy’s mother and father.

**Themes:** Belonging and authenticity. Pressured by parents to learn mandarin.

**Language and style:** It is a first person, personal recount with a reflective attribute. Ivy talks about hating mandarin lessons but gradually comes to accept the fact that she is different from people who speak “perfect English”. She comes to realise that she is mandarin and nothing will change that.

**Issues of identity and belonging:**

*Identity*: the experiences that affect Ivy are her father’s Chinese lessons. At one point she looks into a mirror and saw a Chinese girl who is tanned by the Australian sun yet has the blood of Taiwan and china.

*Belonging*: Ivy wishes she could feel more authentic. She wishes she could relate to her culture and background in some way. Before this, she wished she could’ve had normal parents who could speak perfect English. She wished she didn’t have to take mandarin lessons. But there will always be a part her that will question her why. Why do you not accept your heritage? Why do you not want to be different?

Johnny Trippett

Ken Chau’s Poetry: The Early Settlers p.25, The Terrorists p.26, The Family Tree p.153, The First Born p.154

**Author:** Ken Chau, decedent of a corn tobacco farmer migrant.

**Storyline: The Early Settlers**

Ken Chau’s great grandfather arrived in Australia during the time of the white Australia policy in 1897. He was a corn tobacco farmer in Wahgunyah. He realised he did not belong. Chau describes how his great grandfather would fear the ‘foreign devil’ and use derogatory language.

**Characters:** Ken Chau’s grandfather

**Themes:** Prerogative discrimination-blames the early settlers for the way his great grandfather was treated.

**Language and Style:** Poetic form, brief, expressive and can be considered out of context

**Issues of identity and Belonging**: Because of Ken Chau’s great-grandfathers identity he was discriminated against and therefore did not belong as he calls the early settler’s very derogatory terms.

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**Storyline: The Terrorists**

Ken Chau describes to us his hatred of ‘the terrorists’ (early settler’s) how their alleged attacks cause Chau to want to die and want to kill them.

**Characters:** Ken Chau, The terrorists

**Themes:** Racism-Chau hates the early settlers or in his terms terrorists.

**Language and style:** Expressive, opinionative, very upfront and emotional

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**Storyline: The Family Tree**

Ken Chau describes how his great grandfather unfurled the family tree. Only the males were on the family tree as they bare the family name. The women are not listed like they were never even born.

**Characters:** Ken Chau, His great grand father

**Themes:** Family and sexist

**Language:** Appeals to sympathy with a short sharp refection.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:** Ken Chau believes that the women in his family tree never belonged.

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**Storyline: The Firstborn**

Chau describes his family’s movements and how his son is the firstborn is the firstborn on Australian soil. He is enlightened how his son does not have to travel and experience the hardships that he and his ancestors had to endure.

**Characters:** Chau’s son,

**Themes:** Migration, Hardships

**Language:** Repetitive and complex, Very short and brief

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:** Ken Chau feels as though someone in his family finally belongs in Australia and all they had to do was be born here.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Creative*-Migrating to Australia during “white Australia” short story

*Expository-* Essay on the white Australia concept and how it developed our history.

*Persuasive*- Letter to Ken Chau saying how Chinese are racially discriminated against.

Matthew Mahoney

The Water Buffalo p.32

**Author:** Thao Nguyen. Writes on Vietnamese-Australian experiences.

**Storyline:** A king lived abounded in his herd, he was no different, lived to share and stand noble to others. Darkness came upon the air and a thunderous roar of immense screams, echoed and carved themselves onto the field.The king arrived in the south with a feeling of abundance.He did not know what these people were speaking and had to learn around him.Strong and willing to protect his family, he wanted success from all of them and worked his heart out every day to feed and house his family.He painted canvas through his thoughts and dreams of his imagination.Timed passed and his daughter came to see his dreams and reality of the world she now existed, a place of truth.

**Characters:**

*Thao Nguyen:* A father’s daughter who loved and cared about her father, she thought of him as a loving and noble man who did anything for his family.

*Father/water buffalo:* A noble and caring father, who loved and fought for his family to give them better lives in the south.

**Themes:**

Family- Thao’s father cared for his family, lost most in his country and moved south to start a new one.

Noble-The water buffalo was abounded, felt and looked no different than the others who stood noble in his herd.

**Language and Style:**

Personal event- Thao experienced the event of her father through his painting and his stories of his home and her description of the water buffalo. Strong metaphor of water buffalo used to suggest transition as well as the personal qualities and struggles of her father. Written in a way to suggest father morphed from the buffalo into a human inspired by his final painting of himself.

**Issue of Identity and Belonging:**

Identity- Her identity has been affected by the world she lived in which she could neither explore nor explain, she was caught in a dimension of a reality and a dream world. But her father’s experience and his paintings of his dreams and reality. She now found the reason why she existed in the world and the true place she lives in.

**Ideas for Writing Pieces:**

*Creative:*A story on an immigrant who travelled to live in another country and trying to fit into a totally different culture and language to this new country.

*Expository:* A personal reflection on an event of the Afghanistan immigrants who travel to Australia leaving their home and trying to fit into another.

*Persuasive:* An argument of an Afghanistan refugees who migrate to Australia and are forced to learn the language and the culture of the country they’ve moved in.

Nathan Cecchin

Spiderbait p.57

**Author:** Annette Shun Wah, born in Cairns Queensland on the 26th of March, 1958.

**Storyline:** Annette takes us back to when she was eight years of age, when her dad had just bought a seven-acre land with high hopes of making a poultry farm. The land at time was bare but the road, which was built by the Americans during the Second World War, was very impressive. Her dad admired the Americans, mainly because they had given him a job as a translator in China and because they had defended the Chinese from the Japanese invaders.

Annette’s fathers motives for making the poultry farm was simple, he had had enough of slaughtering birds and now wanted to care for them. He built the whole barn and farm himself, asking the point of “paying good money for something you can handle yourself”.

They were all very proud when they received their first one-day old chicken offspring.

Every once in a while she was asked by her mother for spider duty, which was simply killing all the spiders in the farm yard and clean up the cobwebs. (You wouldn’t expect a 8 year old girl stepping on spider’s without any fear what so ever).

They celebrated Christmas instead of New Year because her parents could afford to give money away. Even the few cents counted to them.

Every once in a while something that threatened the lives of the chickens would come along and it was Annette’s job to keep them safe. She talks about how there was a heat-wave that killed a lot of chickens. Some died of the heat and some were put down by Annette herself. (Another thing you wouldn’t expect it an eight year old girl to wring the neck of a chicken, even if it was to put it out of its misery). They had lost 10 percent of their stock in the end, which was pretty bad. But nobody was blamed because it was Christmas.

**Characters:**

* Annette Shun Wah
* Mr Shun Wah
* Mrs Shun Wah
* Tom(Father’s brother)
* Doug(Father’s Brother)

**Themes:**

* Responsibility, parental influence on identity, childhood is overrated, age does not define job.

**Language and Style:** The story was written as a recap of her childhood. The use of colloquial language and stereotypical Aussie phrases made the whole narrative seem as somewhat casual and to the point without going into too much detail.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

Annette didn’t have much of a childhood; while all the other girls played with their Barbie dolls and plated their hair Annette took care of chickens and killed spiders. It could be argued that her Identity was negatively affected but her experiences would have given her a sense of responsibility.

Thilina Hettiarachchige

Take Me Away, Please p.64

**Author:** Lily Chan. Nationality- Chinese. Born- Australia, Queensland

**Storyline:** Lily Chan is of Chinese decent and runs a local family orientated Chinese take-away restaurant with her parents and sister which they also live in. Lily dreads when the clock turns 4.00pm because that is when she starts work. Lily’s job as assigned by her parents is behind the counter controlling the cash register. Peter Chan’s Chinese take away restaurant is opened for 6 days a week, lily, while juggling home studies and the demands of her parents proves to be a tricky and time consuming task that she does not enjoy. All in all she thinks she is unlucky.  
  
**Characters:**

*Lily Chan*- The main character of this short story wants to do well on her parent’s behalf but feels as though she has a thick leash on her ankle, holding her back.

*Mum*- Is a traditional Chinese mother who expects hard work of her daughter. She is busy trying to run a family business and make ends meet.

*Dad*- Similar to the mother is a pushy Father who expects the family to coordinate and work well together to achieve the goals and objectives set by the family. Also a busy man does not have too much time for his daughter which is evident.  
 *Sister*- Only small, works at the restaurant doing minor jobs such as changing the ‘’open’’ and ‘’closed’’ sign and greeting customers. She and Lily Chan get along and talk when they get the chance.

**Themes:**

‘’Battler’’ juggling school and the pressure of the family restaurant highlights the sheer tough work that is present in her life. The pure and utter challenge of working 6 days while being a kid is pretty rough on a teenager trying to find her own way in life.

‘’Family and Belonging’’ in Lily’s eyes she has a distant relationship with her parents due to the ridiculous hours that need to be met in order for the business to be successful. She feels as though it’s all about work, where there is no time for relationships to be established. This is a huge factor due to the development of Lily into an adult and not establishing a solid relationship with her parents in order to create values and morals drummed in by her parents.

**Language and style:** The language and style that are spoken on Lily’s behalf is depressing to an extent because of how she explain her lifestyle.   
**Issues of Identity and belonging:** There are issues of identity and belonging because she feels as though she cannot discover who she really is because of her parents holding her down and not letting her create her own path.

**Ideas for Writing Pieces:**

*Creative***-** A story that can be created could be my family migrating from Italy to Australia.

*Expository-*Describing how hard it is to come to a completely new country and make a living to make ends meet.

*Persuasive*- Italians are racially discriminated against in Australia, persuade the audience to believe how hard done by Italians are.

Adrian Cataldo

Hot and Spicy p.81

**Author:** Oliver Phommavanah

**Storyline:** Albert Yip is a grade six student who loves food. Unfortunately the food he likes is the food from the county he lives in, not the food from his parent’s nation, Thailand. Albert’s parents own a Thai Restaurant and his family live in the back section of the store. Albert despises the food that his parents cook. He much prefers the food that his school canteen sells. Albert loves meat pies, sausage rolls and chicken burgers. During a day at school Albert discovers that his school is having a “feast day” and that each student is required to bring a dish relating to their background as a way of celebrating the cultural diversity of the school. As Albert’s parents run their own Thai Restaurant, Albert’s teacher Mr Winfree asks him to question his parents if they could bring in a variety of dishes that that their restaurant sells. Overjoyed, Alberts parents agree to make up a range of dishes for the schools unique day. Fearing the worst Albert sabotages his parents’ dishes by adding extra spices to all the dishes, resulting in the teachers and students of the school becoming completely overwhelmed by the spicy nature of the dishes. 

**Characters:**

*Albert Yip* – A grade six student who loves Australian food and despises the food that his parents make for him

*Rajiv* – An Indian boy who also has a large interest in food. Could be thought to be overweight as he is constantly eating unhealthy food.

*Kitachi* – Albert’s brother who unlike him enjoys spicy foods and all the food the Thai food that his parents make for him.

*Mum and Dad* – Albert’s parents who run and operate the Thai restaurant on their own. They live at the back of the restaurant. Albert’s Dad is said to have a ‘tongue of steel’ as he can eat the very spiciest of food.

*Mr Winfree* – Albert’s teacher who has a vested interest in Thai food

*Mr Murphy* – Albert’s principal who also like Mr Winfree loves Thai food.

**Themes: “**The rebellious nature of children” The book explores this theme through the use of Albert. He is portrayed throughout the story as mischievous child who has strong feelings towards Australian cuisine.

**Identity and Belonging:** This theme is explored throughout the text through the use of the main character Albert. Although Albert knows he belongs to the Thai heritage in which his family is from he also feels as if he belongs with everyone else that isn’t of Thai ancestry. This can be seen, as Albert loves food that is often classified as Australian such as meat pies and sausage rolls. Furthermore, Albert continues to explore his true identity by debating with himself which foods he likes most and which foods do not quite satisfy his cravings.

**Ideas for Writing Pieces:**

*Imaginative:*Imaginative piece surrounding issues such as the pressures of being a part of a family business, and also being forced into enjoying specific things.

*Expository:*An informative piece regarding the upbringing and struggles that a child from an Asian background may face growing up in Australia.

*Persuasive:*A letter to the editor regarding the growing issue that many Asian children are being pushed and pressured by their parents to follow a specific path in life.

Damon Marcon

Lessons from my School Years p.89

**Author/authors context**: This story is written by Ray Wing-Lun, a second generation Chinese man who was born in Australia.

**Storyline:** Ray Wing-Lun is a Chinese man who was born in Australia. He grew up helping around his family’s fruit shop with his dad. He had a difficult time adjusting to the different customs and behaviours of his family and peers. Even at his social; prime he still didn’t feel like he was one of the pieces of that puzzle. In the end he finds that he just needed to feel like he was needed to achieve his greatness.

**Characters:**  
Ray Wing-Lun  
Ray’s father  
Ray’s mother  
Ray’s nine siblings  
Ray’s many aunties and uncles

**Themes:**   
Conflict  
Belonging  
Self motivation

**Language styles:** Formal language

**Issues of identity and belonging:**  
Ray didn’t feel like he belonged in his family because he never was as good as his siblings  
Ray didn’t feel like he belonged at school cause he was not a Gwuelo.  
  
**Ideas for Writing Piece:**  
*Creative:*  Exploring how an individual’s experience sculpts their future more than teachings **OR** how self-belief is the building blocks to success

*Persuasive*: “I couldn’t do what a good Chinese boy should do” Racial stereotypes are important when an individual is attempting to shape their future?

Tafadzwa Gwitima

Crackers p.122

**Storyline**: Rudi Soman tells a story of when he was a boy living with his parents. He explains that in their house, there is a mouse that Rudi’s father Acha is trying to catch. Every night Acha puts a mouse trap in the pantry with the bait being Coon Cheese. Acha is confident he will catch the mouse, but what he doesn’t know is that his wife and Rudi’s mother, Amma, each night puts some Crackers in a pan in the pantry which the mouse eats instead of the Coon Cheese on the mouse trap. The mouse reminds Rudi of a tortoise he found when he first moved into his house. He called the Tortoise Bronchi and developed a connection with him. Rudi’s mother Amma started to feed the Tortoise leftovers from what they ate the night before. She would feed Bronchi the food out of an icecream container, Rudi didn’t think that Bronci would be able to eat the food out of the container seeing as he would not be able to get in it. Amma just told Rudi that when Bronchi’s hungry he will eat it. One day Amma showed Rudi that Bronchi had eaten some of the food, Rudi found a chicken bone though and saw savage bite marks on it and presumed that is was a dog, cat or a possum. After a week of not seeing Bronchi, Rudi decided to look for him and found a small hole under the fence and had to face the fact that Bronchi had moved on. Rudi finds it funny in light to the way Amma feed Bronchi a year ago, that she actually put research into the food that she feeds this mouse. Eventually Rudi and his dad catch the mouse and free it through the hole under the fence.

**Characters:**

*Rudi Soman-* Rudi in this story is a young Boy who gets caught up between his dad trying to catch a mouse and his mum trying to save it.

*Acha Soman-* Acha is a very religious man, who desperately wants to catch a mouse running around in his house.

*Amma Soman-* Amma is Rudi’s mother who tries her best to save the mouse that her husband is trying to catch.

**Themes:**

**‘**Family Relationships’- Both the parents have different ideas on what to do with the mouse . Dad wants to kill it and mum wants to save it. The son gets caught up in the middle and ends up solving the problem by getting rid of the mouse but not killing it, making both parents happy.

**Language and style:** The language is very descriptive in explaining what was going on in this story. It doesn’t really explain how anyone was feeling, just what they were thinking.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:** The story told is a typically Australian, although, the people in it are from another culture. The things that separate this from an Australian explaining this story are the little cultural things that are different to people from different backgrounds.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

|  |  |  |
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| Creative | Expository | Persuasive |
| A story you can relate to or is similar to this one. | You can explain that a lot of families have different points of views on different topic, some of which might be more serious than this one and some might not be. | You can write a piece saying that the father was entitled to kill the mouse or that he wasn’t. |

Thomas Hughes

Are you Different? p.140

**Author/Author’s context:** Mia Francis is a 2nd Generation Australian mother.

**Storyline:** During this story Mia Francis highlights her journey of mothering a Filipino child in Australia. It begins in the Philippines where Mia and her husband adopt a 3 year Filipino boy named Ricky from an orphanage and bring him home to Adelaide. The couple raise Ricky in an Australian culture but try to keep him involved in Filipino ways and traditions but the older he gets the less he seems to care about it. The family move to regional Victoria which is predominantly mono-cultural as Ricky enters his teenage years where he begins high school. He is the subject of much racism and prejudice considering the students are all Anglo-Australian but he never lashed out. Francis describes the day where Ricky had had enough and punched another student and threw him in a bin. Since that event, Ricky has gained much more respect from his fellow students and makes many friends. At the age of 18 Ricky returns to the Philippines with Mia and her husband to understand where he really is from.

**Characters:**

*Mia Francis***-** Married, adopts Ricky and raises him in Australia with her husband, very caring

*Ricky***-** A Filipino boy adopted from an orphanage is the subject to much prejudice and racism during his school years, doesn’t take much interest of his Filipino culture/heritage as he is raised in Australia.

**Themes:**

*Family-*Ricky is left in a Filipino orphanage by his family who could not afford to raise him. He is adopted by an Australian couple who make the ultimate decision to raise him in Australia. Mia and her partner care for him and raise him in the best way they can.

*Prejudice and Racism-* During his school years in a predominantly anglo-australian country town, Ricky is the subject of much prejudice and racism regarding his Filipino background. Typically he lets it all go by him but one day one student went too far and he retaliated and punched the kid and threw him in a rubbish bin.

**Language and Style:** The style of language that is used in this descriptive piece is formal language where Mia Francis recounts the events of her adopting Ricky.

**Issues of identity and belonging:**

Ricky is born in the Philippines but is raised in Australia by his adoptive family where he often forgets who he really is. He gradually loses interest in the background and culture that he is really from. Fitting in in a country town and school is a major challenge for Ricky as it is predominantly Anglo-Australian.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Creative:* Personal Reflective Piece or Narrative- Ricky and his struggles through racism at school, how he didn’t fit in or from a perspective of one of Ricky’s classmates who feels bad for the way he has been treated **OR** an interview with Ricky discussing the challenges of growing up with Australian parents and how prejudice and racism affected him during his teenage years.

*Expository:*Newspaper Article- Prejudice against Asian Australians in regional Australia **OR** a research piece exploring the effects of prejudice against Asian Australians.

*Persuasive:*Interview- An interview with Ricky **OR** an opinion piece about Asian prejudice in regional areas of Australia.

Nicholas Ireland

Tourism p.147

**Author/author’s context:** Benjamin Law is a first generation of Chinese descent, born and raised in Australia.

**Storyline:** Benjamin Law recounts his experiences of “family tradition” of going to theme parks in Australia, as his family dislikes the Australian way of the outdoors, especially camping. He describes how they would often travel to theme parks in his grandmother’s Honda and upon arrival would do his best to “distinguish [himself] from the actual Asian tourists” He was only twelve years old when his parents separated and describes his father’s failed attempts of keeping the tradition going as they only spent four days a month together. He wants to fit in with the Australian crowds and wonders what others think of his family and at the end of the story states that “someone has suggested [they] go camping”.

**Characters:**

*Protagonist, Benjamin Law* – Chinese child who wants to fit in. He speaks collectively of his family stating, “When my parents split up, I was twelve years old and had just finished primary school. Trips to theme parks became less frequent.” “We saw dad less and less”. The family identity seems to change from an anti-camping and outdoors family once the divorce of his parents occurs and disastrous weekends to theme parks to a more open family by the end even suggesting to go camping.

*Mum* – “detested the beach”. “Mum was a tiny woman.”

*Dad* – “disapproved of wearing thongs”

**Themes:**

Idea of change of perspective and values. At the beginning of the story the protagonist explains how his family “were never camping people”. “All those things involved in camping – pitching a tent; cooking on open fires; the insects; shitting in the woods; sleeping on rocks; getting raped and murdered in the middle of nowhere – they never appealed to us.” His mother “detested the beach” and his father “actively disapproved of wearing thongs”. His mother explains, “See Asians – we’re scared of dying. White people they like to ‘live life to the full’ and ‘die happy’… Asians we’re the opposite.”. The divorce of Benjamin’s parents was seemingly looked down upon by all Asian relatives and they saw their father “less and less”. They seemingly only go to theme parks and when the enjoyment of theme parks seems exhausted after many disastrous weekends with their divorced father, “someone has suggested [they] go camping”. This shows a change in perspective and values because they were extremely anti-camping and only considered themselves as Asians, not Australians and here they seem to be fitting into the Australian culture of camping and the outdoors.

**Language and style:** This short story is written as a personal recount and often speaks of his family as collective whole. The language is quite informal about how Asians buy many things at theme parks. Asians “naturally excel [at] buying shit” and “Oh my God the fridge magnets.” His description of why they dislike camping is quite informal and straight forward as well stating that they disliked “shitting in the woods” and “getting murdered and raped in the middle of nowhere”. Stating that they drove for a “good three hours” shows a slight Australian slang to the writing style.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

“White people, they like to ‘live life to the full’ and ‘die happy’…Asians, we’re the opposite.” This remark instantly identifies the family as being in no way Australian and only Chinese. They in no way see themselves as being Australian and do not want to be identified as Australians. Although the children often found it difficult to fit in and belong, with the protagonist exclaiming, “we kids would do our best to distinguish ourselves from the actual Asian tourists. We’d make our Australian accents more pronounced.” The children disliked belonging to the stereotype of Asian tourists being everywhere so they tried to change their accents to fit in more with the Australian accent.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Creative* – Could write an imaginative first person short story describing how Australian children see/depict/stereotype Asian children at theme parks.

*Expository* – Could write a personal recount about your own experiences at a theme park **OR** could write a personal recount about a time when you struggled to fit in and tried to change something about you to fit in.

*Persuasive* – Could write an essay to argue about when people are put into different environments they will always change.

Paul Fedrizzi

Family Life p.155

**Author:** Diem Vo (Vietnamese)

**Storyline:** This is a personal story about what happens around Diem Vo’s life and how things changed throughout time. One of her various stories involves her Father’s video store. The video in present time is failing due to piracy. She talks about its location design, the customs, a popular film called “King of Gamblers” and how she used change from the profits to buy ham-burgers and cappuccino.

Another story was about her home in St Albans. She centres this on her father’s siblings, parents and their own families. She talks about would happen in family gatherings such as huge dinners and gossip.

Also due to strict discipline it leads to rebellious nature of some cousins. Diem then brings up the difficult of various languages and the problem that brings such as her cousins using the difficulty of language to their advantage which leads them to become ‘Masters of forgery and rebellion. They did this by translating parent-teacher interviews, explaining the bill, forging their parent’s signatures and writing their own sick-leave. It also leads Diem to speak in different tones of ‘Hello’ to avoid confusion between a Vietnamese family and friend or a non-Vietnamese friend from school.

Despite her frustrations did eventually learn about their parents’ struggles. Her parents struggle from employment, money issues and isolation from different cultures because of language difficulties. She concluded that it is not a bad home as she compares herself another friend and that is just the nature of her family and should be that way.

**Characters:** Diem Vo, her parents, cousins, sister and various aunties and uncles.

**Themes:** Identity, Belonging, Struggle, Isolation, Conflict.

**Language and Style:** Vietnamese, informal

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

* Diem having to talk in different tones on the phone to avoid confusion between Non-Vietnamese and Vietnamese people.
* How she is forced to work instead of having a life as she describes.
* Discipline and rebellion.
* Parents being with other people with other Vietnamese instead of learning English leading them to be alienated by the Non-Vietnamese world.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Creative:* Reflection **OR**Alternate times

*Expository:* How discipline affects children **OR** Difficulties of different languages for a child

*Persuasive:* Parents should adapt to the country

Johnny Xu

Ginseng Tea and a Pair of Thongs p.167

**Author/Author’s Context** *(nationality, where born/ 1st gen/ 2nd gen)***?:** ‘Ginseng Tea and a Pair of thongs’ was written Australian Actor Haiha Le, The main protagonist is possible born in Australia but is not confirmed. The short story gives us a glimpse of Haiha Le as a young teenage girl, living with her parents and 2 siblings. Her Parents were both born in Vietnam.

**Storyline:** The Story is narrated from a third person perspective, and begins by talking about Haiha Le’s parent’s and the troubles they have overcome since immigrating to Australia. Her father is still upset about losing his chicken farm in Vietnam 13yrs ago, whilst her mother suffers from severe hay-fever. The family have had to move around a lot since coming to Australia. We are informed that the third and youngest child, was an accident that none of the family care for, the author refers to him as a cancer that eats out their core. She has to sleep in the same bed as her younger sex obsessed brother, who often attempts to grope her. The family has adopted the Jehovah’s religion. She wants to become an actor, parents disagree. Parents see her as a long term investment and so allow her.

**Characters:**

*Anh:* - Is the father of the family, laments about loss of Chicken farm in Vietnam. He considers his family and wife as his property. Vietnamese

*Em*: - Is the mother of the Family, Suffers from bad hay-fever, loves western hospitals. Vietnamese

*Oldest Con*: - Is the oldest child, this is probably Haiha Le. She is groped repeatedly by her youngest Brother. Wants to become an Actor, has no friends. She serves in the Theocratic Ministry, spreading the word of Jehovah. Vietnamese

*Middle Con*: - Is Conceived at 7 Athol Road, Vietnamese

*Youngest Con*: - Dirty, Sex driven, Unwanted Accident, Gropes Sister, Gropes Himself, Vietnamese

**Themes:**

* Religion
* Sexuality
* Ownership
* Poverty
* Youth
* Foreign

**Language and Style:** 3rd Person Narration, Haiha Le is the Narrator and it is a story from her youth.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

The oldest Con is restricted by her parents’ ethnic background, her family’s poverty and her religion. As a young girl she suffers her brother’s sexual advances. Because of this she struggles to understand her own identity.

**Ideas for Writing Piece**:

*Creative:* A short story telling the life of a young teenager from Mongolia, living in Government high-rise housing in Brunswick, who due his Jewish faith and lacking language skills falls victim to the predation and molestation by his uncle/Rabbi.

*Persuasive:* It is unfair to Restrict her to a life in the Jehovahs Church

*Expository:* Some people need help to get to their dreams.

Hamilton Murdoch

Destiny p.176

**Author/Author’s Context (nationality, where born/1st gen/2nd gen etc.):**

* Shalini Akhil
* Nationality: Indo-Fijian
* Born: In Fiji in 1973

**Storyline:** As a young girl Shalini Akhil had a dream of aspersions of becoming wonder women after watching cartoons of ‘Wonder Women’. Once her grandma came over she watched the cartoon with her and told her she wanted to be ‘Wonder Women’ when she grew up. Her grandma explains to her that she is Indian and that she can’t be like ‘Wonder Women’. She starts to understand what her grandma tells her and then thinks of being an ‘Indian Wonder Women’ but her grandmother doesn’t like the costume. So they end up discussing what an Indian wonder Women would wear and they come to the conclusion that she would wear a lungi. Her grandma decides that she would help her make the costume, get accessories and tells Shalini that the lungi it a good weapon for many reasons. After their discussion they begin a making and rolling roti together. With the influence of her grandma she changes her view and wants to become an ‘Indian Wonder Women’.

**Characters:**

*Shalini*- Protagonist, wants to become wonder women, loves her grandma and her advice

*Grandma*- helps Shalini understand and change her idea about becoming wonder women,

**Themes:**

“Understanding Indian culture” Shalini’s grandma attempts to persuade shalini that she can’t become Wonder Women because she is Indian. Wearing the lungi brings culture into shalini’s life as she begins to understand that she is different to other people because of her skin colour.

**Language and style:** This story is a recount of the way she grew up as a young girl. The language in the piece is informal about her discussion with her grandma about her future goal in life.

**Issues of identity and Belonging:**

“As we discussed my plan, my grandmother reminded me that I was Indian. It was then I began to realise I could never grow up to be exactly like Wonder Women.” The quote from the book shows that her grandma wants to show her that she is different to other people by her skin colour in a nice way. She accepts the fact that Shalini can be whoever she wants to be without restrictions as usual grandparents would have them.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Creative*- Write a story about my older sister’s dream of becoming a singer at the age of 9-11 years in which she loved the barbie girl song by Aqua and sang it 24/7. The piece can be written in a third person perspective. Main idea can be the Sri Lankan community not accepting the fact that she is singing an English song instead of a Sinhalese song.

*Persuasive*- write an opinion piece about young minds being affected by racism and their effects in the future.

*Expository*- Could write a personal reflective about wanting to become a particular idol that I had when I was young most likely a cricketer of the Sri Lankan cricket team.

Diluka Dewage Don

Papa Bear p.183

**Author/Author’s Context (nationally, where born/1st gen/2nd gen etc.):**

The author of *Papa Bear* is Chin Shen. He is a first generation Australian-Chinese. Her parents grew up in Shanghai, China.

**Storyline:** Chin Shen talks about his parents’ lives in Shanghai. He retells the story of how his father and mother migrate to Australia. He writes about his father trying to a new identity in Australia in the form of a new non-Asian name. Chin states that his father was a very interesting figure in his life and that he wants to grow up just like him.

**Characters:**

*Chin Shen* is the narrator of the story. His story and personality is not revealed in the story.

*Chin Shen’s father*, or *Tandy*, is the protagonist of the story. When he was young he was involved on gangs in Shanghai He is eager to fit in with the Australian culture. E.g. He strives to find himself an Australian name. He is a caring person yet he eccentric. E.g. “This is the same man who used to mix a little whiskey with my milk to pacify me.

*Chin Shen’s mother* was described as a “genius and borderline Martian”. She is also described as a “crafty college slut” who was keen on Chin’s Dad.

**Themes:**

* Identity and Belonging: Tandy was looking for an Australian name to fit into mainstream society.
* Family

**Language and Style:** This story is written in the style of first person. Chin is the narrator of the story.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

Tandy tries to artificially build a new identity which includes finding him a new name. He believes that this new title will assist him in fitting in with other “average white Australian male”.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Persuasive:* Adopting a new name automatically makes you accepted into society. (Speech)

*Creative:* A young man trying to find a new life in Australia after leaving China fearing the gangs from his province

*Expository:* Some are held back by others in society. The need and want to reveal your culture. (Essay)

Christopher Peiris

The Embarrassments of the Gods p.208

**Author/Author’s Context:**The author of this story is Xerxes Matza. This story is highlighting a half-Spanish, half-Pilipino family. Xerxes’ mother is from Manila and his father from Spain. Matza had come from Manila at age 9 and is second generation Spanish/Pilipino.

**Storyline:**The plot of this story is focused around the annual family Christmas party and how the big family all come together and the rituals they engage with every year. Xerxes is familiar by now with the male members in his family and their obsession with sex and their penises as each uncle and his own father Enrique have named their genitals. The majority of the story involves the “Gonzalez men” regaling their relatives with crude comments, innuendo and personal sexual facts between them and their partner. Xerxes by now is used to this focus and theme at these events, as it appears the women in the family are as well due to their apparent indifference to the conversations.

**Characters:**

*Xerxes Matza*: the main character and narrator who is ostracised from the men in the family due to his lack of sexual prowess or dollar value.

*Enrico Gonzalez:* The father in the story. A boisterous, loud character that places value on sex and money.

*Miguelito Gonzalez:* Half-brother who is pride and joy of Enrico due to his sexual dalliances, financial success and “following in his footsteps”.

*Uncle Christopher:* Proudly Australian since immigrating and insists on becoming part of the culture. Calls his penis “pipo”.

*Benedict:* Seventeen- year old father who has now been include in the group because of his impregnation of his girlfriend. Uncle Terrence’s only son.

**Themes:**

*Sex*- The overwhelming theme in this story is sex, sexual relations, sexual innuendo and anything regarding sex. The majority of the story has some reference to sex, genitals and so on. It is clear that the Gonzalez family, in particular the men have an unhealthy obsession and place an unhealthy reliance on sex and view it as an achievement.

*Family Values*- The Gonzalez men only allow family members (men) into their “dick club” if they have proven themselves sexually active. This and the focus on money suggest this families core values are really superficial and questionable. What is considered important causes emotionally insensitive and unaware people it appears in this story.

*Fitting in a Group-* The novel’s narrator, Xerxes, tells the story of his family from an outsiders perspective. He is not really apart of the male group in this family because he is yet to prove himself in the bedroom or financially. As a result he feels excluded and unloved calling himself the “bastard son”. This fits in with identity and belonging because he has the wrong identity and personality to fit in and hence feels as if he doesn’t belong in his own family.

**Language and Style***:* It is written in a very informal manner as to fit in with the manner in which the Gonzalez family communicate with one another, especially considering the constant sexual references. It is written in a conversational style, h is not reflecting on the past, mores providing a description of the event (family Christmas) and serves the purpose to merely inform the reader of the nature of his family gatherings.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging***:*

*Sex and its connection with our values*. In this story the identity of the Gonzalez men revolves around their sexual affairs, relationships etc. They place their self-worth and sense of self around this fairly superficial topic and this coupled with their finances defines who they are. This is unhealthy and Xerxes inability to fit in, in either characteristic has him questioning his self-worth, identity and even his manhood.

*Fitting in with your family*. The family in this story is very group based with the men and woman gathering separately to talk and Xerxes differences with his male relatives results in him feeling as if he does not belong in his own family. He appears to feel left out and lost due to his lack of a safe haven in his family. This is deeply troubling as family should be the one place and group where you feel at ease and as if you belong.

*Immigration*. Xerxes uncle says “they are Aussies now”. This mentality shows that the family are trying to assimilate into their new culture and that they must change to fit into their new society. This is key as changing certain cultural mannerisms is significant in shaping your sense of identity and defining who you are and where you come from. The attempt to fit in shows the innate human desire to be apart of something larger and too not stand out for being different, odd or strange.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Creative** | **Expository** | **Persuasive** |
| A character vignette describing a nameless teen desperately trying to find out whom he is and fit into a confusing world in which he appears to have nothing in common with. | An argumentative essay describing Latino culture and in particular males: their cultural mannerisms and focusing on the importance of sex. | A passionate speech imploring unity and compassion and emphasizing the importance of acceptance and tolerance not only in our families but globally. |
| A journal describing the emotional turmoil of a young woman who cannot find anywhere to feel as if she is welcomed and belongs. Sad and depressing to drive home message. | A speech informing people of the damage caused by segregation and exclusion including real examples such as white Australia, Nazi Germany etc. | A letter to the editor addressing the lack of human kindness and unity in our world and begging for a return to common values that are still critical but now ignored. |
| A story of a sexually wild and active young man in Madrid and the pain his actions cause himself and others and the emptiness he is left with due to this narrow minded outlook on relationships. | A reflection of the pain experienced by a young man who is unloved by his father due to their individual differences and this coupled with the pride placed upon his brother by the dad and its damaging results. | A newspaper article presenting the point of view that our attitudes toward critical life areas (money, sex, love) are formed by our family members and the critical role, role models play in our future attitudes and ambitions. |

Michael Cole

My First Kiss p.216

**Author :** Lian Low, Malaysian

**Storyline :** Lian starts by explaining how growing up in Malaysia, she was never exposed to mouth-to-mouth kisses, going on to explain Malaysia’s strict censorship laws. She touches on how during her childhood she was a tomboy and how she detested growing up and becoming womanly. Hating the changes, she retreated into the library and delved into her nerdy self. While others spoke about the hottest boy, she dreamt about the popular girl she had a crush on.

Lian moved to Australia when she was fourteen and was placed in the ESL class just because she had just arrived in Melbourne, despite her good English skills. She goes on to describe how despite her good English, her accent would always betray her and make others think she was a foreigner, despite how much she tried to hide it. She was like most other teenage girls, with long hair, pimples and too many crushes. But unlike others, she had crushes on female stars. Since she couldn’t share such thoughts with her friends, she wrote them in her journal.

She was introduced to her brother’s friend Ken, a nerd, but she figured him to be a boring type and ditched him not long after their first date. Four years later at university, she orchestrated her first play, which involved a kiss, but not knowing how to kiss, the star of the play showed her how and they kissed several times.

Thanks to her writing and performing, she was able to use them as outlets, letting herself express and explore her multiple identities: Asian, woman, queer, migrant, Chinese-Malaysian-Australian.

**Characters:**

* Lian Low
* Ken
* Her Family

**Themes:**

* Identity,
* Love,
* Growing Up,
* Finding Acceptance,
* Fantasy.

**Language and Style:**

* First Person reflective piece.
* Casual, easy to read language.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:** Lian was a lesbian, something frowned upon by most of society, so she would have felt out of place with her friend’s typical views of gender and sexuality. She was unable to express her feelings to her friends simply because her sexuality was abnormal, freakish, at the time. However once she started her plays and writing, she found her views were accepted by people, most importantly her family and friends.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Creative | Expository | Persuasive |
| Similar to what Lian Low does for her job, an imaginary play could be written that explores concepts and express parts of yourself that you wouldn’t normally express directly to others. | An opinion piece on topics such as homosexuality and discrimination could be written | Create a speech which points out the unfairness inherent in discriminating gays and gives reasons for why gays should be accepted as a normal part of society. |

William Tran

A Big Life p.220

**Author/Author’s Context (nationality, where born/1st gen/2nd gen):**

The author of A Big Life is Jenny Kee. She was born in Bondi, Australia to a Cantonese father and a mother of partially Italian descent.

**Storyline:**

Jenny Kee talks about moving from primary school to high school and how her attitude changed, thinking that school was only a place to meet her friends. She explains that her strengths are art, jazz ballet and athletics. Her mother wanted her to do maths instead and after art was closed to her she rebelled. She discovered that boys liked her and she moulded hoer self-image around that, she started going to parties and becoming exotic. She was determined to study dress design at East Sydney Technical College, when her mother said no she deliberately failed her fourth-year exams, scoring 11 out of 100 in biology.

**Characters:**

*Jenny Kee* is the narrator of the story. She is athletic and she also likes art and jazz. She also rebelled when told to do maths by her mother. She is concerned about popularity.

*Jenny’s mother* wants her to do something else instead of art. Won’t let here drop out of school.

**Themes:**

Popularity: when she starts rebelling she is concerned with her popularity.

Oppression/freedom: she wants to do art but her mother wants her to maths

**Language and Style:**

The story is written in the style of 1st person perspective. Jenny also is the narrator of the story and retells this part of her life.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

When Jenny’s mother tells her that she can’t do art anymore, she starts to rebel because it is the end for educationally. After Jenny’s starts rebelling, her self-image changes, she starts to become popular.

Her identity is that she loves art and her mother tries to change her.

**Ideas for Writing Pieces:**

*Persuasive:* Should parents try to control what their child learns at school? (Essay)

*Expository:* A reflective piece on a child wanting to do VCAL but instead their parents wants him to do VCE.

*Creative:* The journey of going through VCE then dropping out.

Thomas Brusamarello

Silence p.234

**Author/Authors Context**: Tony Ayres was born 16 July 1961 is a Chinese-born Australian screenwriter and director. He is most notable for his award-winning films *Walking on Water* and *The Home Song Stories*.

**Storyline:** Robert and Tony are walking to a cinema to watch a movie and decide to eat beforehand and to decide to walk down Russell St. They stop at a Chinese café and order roast duck and roast pork whilst describing the people they see. Two “skinheads” call Tony a poofter as he sits in the restaurant as he blows him a kiss which ignites the man to storm into the restaurant with the intention to hit Tony when the waitress steps in and orders the man to leave. After they leave Robert asks what had happened in which Tony accuses him of moralizing him. As they leave Tony tips the waitress $10.

**Characters:**

Tony Ayres, Robert, Chinese men, Handsome Skinhead boys, Waitress

**Themes:**

*Racism* - In this short story there are glimpses of racism when one of the boys confronts Tony in the café and calls him a slope which is a denigrating word that is used towards Asian people.

*Friendship -* Between Robert and Tony we see the ups and down of friendship in which a disagreement occurs after the altercation with the boys outside the Café. Tony accuses Robert of moralizing about the incident and snaps at him and then latter apologizes and makes up.

**Language and Style:** The language style of this short story is semi-formal. Tony retells the incident and gives a pretty detailed recount of what happens however there are time in which he is colloquial for example when he describes one of the men as a skinhead which is a colloquial term for a man that is bald.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

At the start of the story Tony describes how he feels embarrassed about not knowing how to speak Cantonese and especially in a Chinese restaurant. He snaps at his mate Robert when he tries to moralize about the situation that they find themselves in which shows that he feels embarrassed about what had happened and shy’s away from feeling proud about himself.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Creative*- In a creative piece you could write a short story from Robert point of view discussing how he feels about Tony and the situation that he finds himself in. Write his reflection on the story.

*Expository*- You could write about the living conditions of newly formed migrants into the city of Melbourne.

*Persuasive*- You could write a letter to the editor or an opinion piece about how people still shy away from racism and how we are still living in denial.

Patrick Smith

Chinese Dancing, Bendigo Style p.246

**Author/author’s context:** Jo-Inn Chew, is a Chinese/ Australian woman that has a Australian mother and a Chinese father. She had a hard time growing up trying to figure out who she was and where she belonged.

**Storyline:** Throughout this story by Jo-Inn Chew, we discover the hardship of young Chinese girl which is trying to fit in. She feels like she doesn’t belong anywhere, she feels Chinese at school with the Aussies and she feels Aussie when she is with her Chinese family. Having a Chinese father and a Australian mother we learn that her siblings and herself struggle to find who they really are, she comes to the conclusion that she is half-halfs, part Chinese but mostly Australian, same but different, and just a little bit unique.

**Characters:**

*Jo-Inn*: teenage girl trying to fit in with the world, which doesn’t think much of herself.

*Mother*: an Australian born female that had 3 children all with Chinese names which she can’t pronounce, sacrificing things for her family.

*Father*: a Chinese male, married an Australian girl and bore 3 children. His family doesn’t like that he married an Australian woman.

**Themes:**

*Belonging -* Jo-Inn growing up never felt like she fit in because of her heritage, she was stuck between the two nationalities being Australian and Chinese, having a mother that can pronounce her name and her not understanding when her family talks she doesn’t know why she is completely different from everyone.

*Identity* - Jo-Inn doesn’t really know who she is until the end of the story she has been wondering who she was for years, being unhappy with herself and the way she looked so different from everyone else. She develops a sense of pride and acknowledges that she is perfect and unique, being Chinese and Australian.

**Language and Style:** The writing of work is a descriptive piece, the author has many thoughts on what she thought she was like when she was young and how much she didn’t fit in, she attacked herself quite abit, stating that she has ‘poo-brown eyes and a flat yellow nose’ she continues to say that she would never be as good at thinks as the ‘pure’ Chinese.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Creative*: Narrative - A story about how you didn’t fit in at times, eg. First day of school, starting a new club, entering an unknown place and not knowing.

*Expository:* Personal Stories***OR*** Profiles about the community and there influence***OR***Research piece on the history and development of a culture.

Dion Tigani

Hoa Pham p.261

**Author:** Hoa Pham is a psychologist, mentor and award winning author. Her children’s books include *49 Ghosts* and *No One Like Me*, and her novels include *Vixen* and *Quicksilver*. In 2001, she won the Sydney Morning Herald’s Young Writer of the Year Award. She also writes for theatre and film, and is the founding editor of Peril, on online journal focusing specifically on Asian-Australian issues. Hoa is an Australian of Vietnamese decent.

**Storyline:** The interview of Hoa Pham is about her life as a young child and how she has grown into the person she has become today and how she has become an writer. As a young girl Hoa wanted to become a writer but her parents forbade her from writing creatively, so she wrote creatively in secret. As a child Hoa was not happy with how she looked and wanted to be blonde and have blue eyes, and did not like her Vietnameses. She was also subjected to bullying at school and was raped by her uncle at the age of ten. As Hoa grew up she finally became content with her appearance and background. She also talks about her partner who has changed her life and supports all her endeavours. Hoa aslo says that her family is now very proud of what she does even though they wouldn’t allow her to write creatively when she was young.

**Characters:**

Hoa Pham, parents, and Alister Air (partner).

**Themes:**

Family – as a child Hoa went through some very difficult times as a result of her family. Her parents disallowed her from doing what she loved, which was creative writing, and she was also raped at just the age of ten. After becoming an author her family her parents come to accept her love of writing and are proud of her.

The Influence of the Media – the mass media has a huge effect on society today and we see this through Hoa’s story. Hoa feels like she is not beautiful because of the stereotype that the media has created; you need to have blonde hair and blue eyes to be beautiful.

**Language and Style:** It is a formal interview.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging**

As a child Hoa was unable to express her true identity because her parents forbade her from writing creatively. Hoa also felt like she didn’t belong in Australia because of bullying at her school and the Australian mass media which made her feel like she was ugly. As a child she wished that she had blonde hair and blue eyes because this is the stereotype of what beauty is. The bullying and stereotypes also made her almost dislike her Vietnamese background. Hoa has now grown up and is very much proud of her background and her own beauty. Her family is now proud of her writing since she became an author and this makes her feel like she belongs in her family.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

*Creative* - you could write a narrative about your own experiences of belonging at school

*Expository* - you could write a newspaper article informing readers about the effects of really tough parenting on children

*Persuasive* - you could write an essay that persuades people that the Australian mass media has a negative impact on migrants

Sean Money

John So p.272

**Interviewee context:** John So came to Australia from China, as a teenager and completed high school at University High School, then finished a Bachelor of Science and a Diploma of Education at The University Of Melbourne. After serving 10 years as a councillor, John So was the first lord mayor of Melbourne to be voted into power by the people; the lord mayor was voted in by councillors before John So. He was elected as lord mayor in 2001 for a term of 4 years, and was re-elected to be lord mayor for another 4 years. John So's popularity in office caused him to be named World Mayor for 2006.

**Storyline:** This piece is an interview of the first lord mayor of Melbourne, John So. It covers what he wanted to be when he was growing up, what brought him to his career path, how he became the lord mayor, who his inspiration is and an important lesson he has learnt that changed his life.

**Characters:** John So

**Themes:**

* Belonging
* Identity
* History
* Reflection
* Aspirations

**Language and Style:** This interview is of an anecdotal nature and the language is sharp, reflective, deeply moving, heart-wrenching, hilarious, joyful, warm and poignant.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:** The White Australia Policy, the Immigration Restriction Act.

**Ideas for Writing Piece:**

Creative Persuasive Expository

* Narrative - Scripted debate - Biography
* Diary Entries - Speech - Reflection

Sharbel Salman

Five Ways to Disappoint your Vietnamese Mother p.287

**Author/Author’s Context: (nationality, where born/1st gen/2nd gen etc.):**  The author is Diana Nguyen who is a second generation Australian-Vietnamese. Her parents were migrants from Vietnam.

**Storyline:** Diana Nguyen retells her childhood story and describes what is like for her to grow up with a ‘typical’ Vietnamese mother. Her experience with her mother changes from her young age until when she becomes 18. Her memories of her childhood composes a ‘guide’ of 5 things she did that disappointed her mother the most and she informs the reader not to follow the same steps if they are in a similar position.

**Characters:**

*Diana Nguyen-* Diana is the main character and the narrator of the story, she is a young girl born in Australia with Vietnamese parents and she describes the difficulties she encountered growing up through her teenage years. Her mother is her main issue as she always is disappointed by Diana’s actions and paths in education she is taking because they do not fit with her vision for Diana.

*Diana’s Mother-* Her name is not given in the story. From Dianna’s description she is a ‘typical’ Vietnamese mother who has high aspirations and expectations for her daughter. She wants the best from her daughter and expects her to listen and follow the plans she has set out for Diana. She is very old fashioned and enforces the traditional Vietnamese rules most Vietnamese parents set. Although Diana’s mother does not agree with the path she has taken and resents her daughter.

**Themes:**

*Growing up-* The story gives the reader an insight on what it is like to grow up as Vietnamese child with parents who follow traditional values.

**Language and Style:** The story is written as a recount from the author’s perspective (narrator). It is told in first person and is set out like a guide with instructions of ‘how to’ do something. In this case how to disappoint your Vietnamese mother.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:** Diana has expressed how it is hard for a Vietnamese girl to grow up with traditional Vietnamese parents. The reader gets the idea that growing up with traditional Vietnamese parents can be frustrating because they have such high expectations of their children, they want them to be good at everything and achieve something great. This pressure put on Diana in the story has led her to turn away from her mother because her mother does not agree with the things she is doing such as drama in school, having a boyfriend and working 4 jobs. This has caused her mother to resent her daughter and has forced Diana to move out of the house.

**Ideas for Writing Pieces:**

*Creative:* (Recount of events by a Vietnamese mother), you could write a narrative told from the perspective of a Vietnamese mother who has trouble with her daughter while she is growing up. The mother has high hopes for her daughter but her daughter has not followed her mother’s views and has been influenced by outsiders and friends.

*Expository:* (Living conditions in Vietnam), you could write an informative piece about the living conditions in Vietnam and describe them. You could research why so many people from Vietnam came to Australia to live and discuss why most Vietnamese parents highly value the success of their children and what it means to them for their children to be successful.

*Persuasive:* (listening to parents), you could write an essay about the reasons why teenagers should listen to their parents and why they know what is best for them.

Justin Abu Awad

The Courage of Soldiers p.291

**Author:** Pauline Nguyenand her family escaped Vietnam in 1977, they were forced to spend a year in a Thai refugee camp, before settling in Cabramatta in Sydney’s outer west. She refers to herself as ‘1.5 generation’ Australian , “born in Vietnam, made in Australia”. She is a successful restaurant owner, filmmaker and writer, as well as a mother.

**Storyline:** Pauline’s parents were workaholics and had escaped Vietnam to provide a better life for their children. She and her siblings were to be high achievers in their parent’s eyes, and they followed a very strict home life. She worked at the family restaurant 7 days a week, only stopping to complete homework and finish household chores. She also attended maths school, Vietnamese school, cooking school and did debating and martial arts. Amongst all these chores and activities she was expected to achieve top grades. At report time she and her brothers would be caned once for every B grade and twice for every C grade. They lived in fear of their father and one day when Pauline caught the wrong train home and arrived 2 hours late, her father punched her three times and accused her of meeting a secret boyfriend, telling her “you’ll grow up and amount to nothing more than a common whore”. Pauline runs away from home as soon as she is able to and is completely ostracised by her family. Whilst hiding from her father, the family break down and sell the restaurant, she later returns to Sydney to finish her degree and out of habit she still sends her father her results.

**Characters:**

*Pauline* – Details her family life and the physical violence and social humiliation she faced whilst growing up under the strict ruling of her father. She is smart and was in the top three of all her classes in high school. She may not have stood up to her father but she had the courage to leave home and fulfil her dreams and ambitions, not those of her parents. She notes the irony of her family escaping their communist homeland and then years later she having to escape the ruling of her father.

*Pauline’s father* – Is a very hard working man who wants the very best for his children and wishes for only the highest grades from them. It seems that he doesn’t attempt to get to know or understand his children, only worrying about their grades and activities. He is violent and canes his children if their grades are bad, he also punches Pauline without thinking there may have been a reasonable excuse for her lateness.

**Themes:**

*The bonds of family*: The Nguyen family had fled their country and endured a challenging process going through the refugee camp and then the long journey to Australia. This journey shows how the parents wanted the best life for their family. However as the family grew the bonds between them were not strong as the children feared their parents and the punishments they would receive. Pauline says her father never tried to understand or get to know his children and this is evidence of a week family bond. When Pauline leaves home the family breaks down further more with the closure of the restaurant and her mother becomes a vegan.

**Language and Style:** The author is writing this story as a personal account, containing various episodes of her life. She writes in the first-person, in a passive tone and with the use of irony.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:** Pauline's father is very restrictive and controls each and every aspect of his children's lives, preventing them of making their own choices and finding their own identity. They are made to stay home and work and feel they don't belong anywhere. Pauline final rebels against her father's cruelty and strict guidelines by running away from home in search of her identity and a sense of belonging. She hides for many years in fear of her father and his "henchmen" but never really finds a place to belong and eventually ventures back home to Sydney, where she comes to term with herself and her situation.

**Ideas for Writing Pieces:**

*Creative* - Journal pieces of a young girl/boy having difficulty with his/her parents.

*Expository* - Personal story of dealing with strict parents and running away from home.

*Persuasive* - A parent giving a speech about how a strict upbringing is best for children.

Luke Spiteri

The Face in the Mirror p.323

**Author:** Blossom Beeby, born on the 1st of February 1984 in a city called Pusan in South Korea she has white parents she is adopted.

**Storyline:** Blossom Beeby is an Australian girl who was born in Korea and was adopted by white parents. The story is of her wanting to learn about where she came from. She takes Korean classes and gets a scholar ship back to Korea to discover her origins. In Korea she travelled to the adoption agency in search of her real mother. She meets up with her mother and finds out the reason for abandonment. She finds her and identity and realises where she belongs.

**Characters:**

*Blossom Beeby* is the only character in the story. She is the narrator and while she talks about her parents and boyfriend, they are not in the story that much.

**Themes:** The main themes in the story are identity and belonging. She talks about wanting to discover who she is and she wants to find her mother. Her identity is later defined when she meets her mother and learns about her culture.

**Language and style:** The story is written in first person. She narrates the story and tells us recounts of her life.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

Identity- She is trying to figure out her identity so she goes to Korea to find her real mother and she also learns Korean.

Belonging- She belongs to a white family because she was adopted as a baby and is also trying to belong to the Korean community by learning the Korean language and searching for her real mother.

**Ideas for Writing Pieces:**

*Persuasive:* It is wrong for parents to adopt children from different countries because it confuses and puts major stress on the child. It might affect the child fitting in and could cause depression.

*Creative:* A story about a young girl travelling around the world in search of her real parents because she was stolen at birth because of the war in her country.

*Expository:* Informative piece from an expert for example psychologist from what happens to children who have been adopted from a different culture.

Dean Brown

Hanoi and Other Homes p.337

**Author’s Context (nationality, motherland/1st gen/2nd gen etc.):** Sim Shen is Malaysian. He moved to Australia at the age of 13 and lived in Adelaide. He is now married with stepchildren.

**Storyline:** Sim went on an overseas trip to Vietnam where he had the opportunity to relive his childhood in Malaysia. The city, Hanoi, was still lagging behind the modernised western countries with little skimpy shophouses with second-storey windows from which lines of washing were skewed on poles slung out over the street to dry, with overcrowded streets, poor hygiene and lack of manners. Although he could relate to their way of living to his own childhood memories, but he was made to feel like an outsider simply because he couldn’t speak their languages, or knew very little. His wish is to enable his upcoming daughter to inherit the traditions and cultures of Malaysia, England, Australia, Finland and everywhere else her ancestors came from and develop a sense of identity and belonging.

**Characters:**

*Sim Shen* grew up in Malaysia and later on moved to Adelaide, Australia. His overseas trip to Vietnam was a turning point in his life where he realises that was viewed as an Australian and adopted their way of living, language and culture; suppressing the Asian inside him. It was a profound experience which transformed Sim and the way he thinks - even though he could relate the experience to his childhood, he’s still an outsider because his inability to speak Vietnamese.

**Themes:**

*Culture and Value:* Asians takes pride in the cultural values which symbolises their inheritance, traditions, rituals, specials events – representing who they are as a person that is part of that community.

*Ignorance:* Generally speaking, the Asian are extremely protective of their culture and values that leads to having the mentality of thinking that they’re the best race of people.

**Language and style:** The author utilises simplistic language to describe what he sees and how he felt, creating effective imagery that appealed to your sense of curiosity.

**Issues of Identity and Belonging:**

Sim Shen chose to adapt to the western culture – their way of living, language, values and culture. His partner is an English woman (in the Asian culture, this can be viewed as dishonourable and/or disrespectful).

His wish now is to raise his daughter to learn and respect her inheritance, where it may be Malaysian, English, Australian, Finland or whatever it may be.

Anthony Tran