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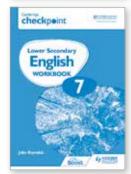
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John Reynolds



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Glossary

All around the world

Reading

- and novels from the USA, Africa and Thailand
- ★ Poems from Jamaica and Japan

Speaking and listening

- ★ Discuss cultural context in
- ★ Talk about your own traditions and culture

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Writing

★ A friendly letter

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A haiku

Key skills

- ★ Word attack skills

- ★ Standard and non-standard

LET'S TALK

Culture is all around us – it's in the language we speak, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the music and songs we listen to, the games we play, and the movies we watch.

- way we use language?
- Why do we read literature from different parts of the world?
- How does our culture influence the What texts or stories have your read that are from another culture?
 - How do authors use cultural context to better tell their stories?



▲ Amy Tan

Reading

Extract 1: A short story set in the USA

Read the following story told by Meimei, a girl who was born in America. Her parents, however, emigrated to the United States from China.

Author: Amy Tan

Amy Tan was born in America but her parents were Chinese immigrants. She has written many novels including *The Joy Luck Club*.

WORD ATTACK SKILLS

Use your word attack skills to work out the meaning of the highlighted words by using the surrounding words:

- ✓ benevolently
- ✓ diminishing
- ✓ well-tended

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Find out more about the history and rules of the game of chess. Explain the rules of the game to a classmate who does not know how to play it.

Rules of the Game

On a cold spring afternoon, while walking home from school, I detoured through the playground at the end of our alley. I saw a group of old men, two seated across a folding table playing a game of chess, others smoking pipes, eating peanuts and watching. I ran home and grabbed Vincent's chess set, which was bound in a cardboard box with rubber bands. I also carefully selected two prized rolls of sweets called Life Savers. I came back to the park and approached a man who was observing the game.

'Want to play?' I asked him. His face widened with surprise and he grinned as he looked at the box under my arm.

'Little sister, been a long time since I play with dolls,' he said, smiling **benevolently**. I quickly put the box down next to him on the bench and displayed my retort.

Lau Po, as he allowed me to call him, turned out to be a much better player than my brothers. I lost many games and many Life Savers. But over the weeks, with each **diminishing** roll of candies, I added new secrets. Lau Po gave me the names. The Double Attack from the East and West Shores. Throwing Stones on the Drowning Man. The Sudden Meeting of the Clan. The Surprise from the Sleeping Guard. The Humble Servant Who Kills the

King. Sand in the Eyes of Advancing Forces. A Double Killing Without Blood.

There were also the fine points of chess etiquette.

Keep captured men in neat rows, as **well-tended** prisoners. Never announce 'Check' with vanity, lest someone with an unseen sword slit your throat. Never hurl pieces into the sandbox after you have lost a game, because then you must find them again, by yourself, after apologising to all around you. By the end of summer, Lau Po had taught me all he knew, and I had become a better chess player.



Spotlight on: cultural context

Texts have cultural context. Culture refers to a particular way of life, including the customs and traditions, beliefs, knowledge and behaviours of a particular group of people at a particular time.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Find out more about Chinese good luck objects and symbols. Prepare a short speech to present to your class.

Spelling

- 1 Which letters are silent in these highlighted words?
 - unwrapped
 - wrinkling
 - knight
 - knock
 - eight
- 2 What is the spelling rule for these highlighted words?
 - society
 - piece

A small weekend crowd of Chinese people and tourists would gather as I played and defeated my opponents one by one. My mother would join the crowds during these outdoor exhibition games. She sat proudly on the bench, telling my admirers with proper Chinese humility, 'Is luck.'

A man who watched me play in the park suggested that my mother allow me to play in local chess tournaments. My mother smiled graciously, an answer that meant nothing. I desperately wanted to go, but bit back my tongue. I knew she would not let me play among strangers. So as we walked home I said in a small voice that I didn't want to play in the local tournament. They would have American rules. If I lost, I would bring shame on my family.

'Is shame you fall down nobody push you,' said my mother. During my first tournament, my mother sat with me in the front row as I waited for my turn. I frequently bounced my legs to unstick them from the cold metal seat of the folding chair. When my name was called, I leapt up. My mother **unwrapped** something in her lap. It was her *chang*, a small tablet of red jade which held the sun's fire.

'Is luck,' she whispered and tucked it into my dress pocket. I turned to my opponent, a fifteen-year-old boy from Oakland. He looked at me, **wrinkling** his nose.

As I began to play, the boy disappeared, the colour ran out of the room and I saw only my white pieces and his black ones waiting on the other side. A light wind began blowing past my ears. It whispered secrets only I could hear.

'Blow from the South,' it murmured. 'The wind leaves no trail.' I saw a clear path, the traps to avoid. The crowd rustled. 'Shhh! Shhh!' said the corners of the room. The wind blew stronger. 'Throw sand from the East to distract him distract him.' The **knight** came forward ready for the sacrifice. The wind hissed, louder and louder. 'Blow, blow, blow. He cannot see. He is blind now. Make him lean away from the wind so he is easier to **knock** down.'

'Check,' I said, as the wind roared with laughter. The wind died down to little puffs, my own breath.

My mother placed my first trophy next to a new plastic chess set that the neighbourhood Tao **society** had given to me. As she wiped each **piece** with a soft cloth, she said, 'Next time win more, lose less.'

'Ma, it's not how many pieces you lose,' I said. 'Sometimes you need to lose pieces to get ahead.'

'Better to lose less, see if you really need.'

At the next tournament, I won again, but it was my mother who wore the triumphant grin.

'Lost **eight** piece this time. Last time was eleven. What I tell you? Better off lose less!' I was annoyed, but I couldn't say anything.



Answer these questions about Extract 1.

LET'S TALK

Much of the interest in the full story lies in the contrast between the attitudes of the people of her parents' generation – which were shaped by the Chinese culture in which they lived before emigrating to the United States – and those of Meimei.

How does the author show the tensions and differences between these cultures? Give examples to support your statements.

Activity

- 1 What do you think the old man (Lau Po) means when he says, 'Little sister, been a long time since I play with dolls'?
- 2 Explain in your own words the meaning of 'benevolently'.
- 3 What do you think Meimei's reason was for taking the Life Savers with her and why do you think that she lost so many of them?
- 4 Explain, using your own words, the meaning of 'the fine points of chess etiquette'.
- 5 Why does Meimei think her mother will not allow her to play in the chess tournament?
- 6 Explain as fully as you can how Meimei managed to get her mother to approve of her playing in local chess tournaments.
- 7 What does the paragraph beginning, 'As I began to play, the boy disappeared ...' tell you about Meimei's state of mind when she is playing chess?
- 8 How does Meimei's account of the game show that she had learnt from Lau Po's teaching?
- Explain carefully how what her mother says after Meimei had won the game shows that her mother does not fully understand how the game is played.
- 10 Looking at the passage as a whole, explain as fully as you can the mother's attitude towards her daughter's interest in playing chess.

Key skills: Punctuation – direct speech

Direct speech is a quotation of the actual words that someone speaks. Follow the guidelines to use direct speech:

- Place the actual spoken words within inverted commas "" (known as quotation or speech marks).
- Observe other punctuation rules such as starting a new line for each change of speaker.
- Use commas, full stops, question marks or exclamation marks within the inverted commas (according to the meaning of the words).
- Use a comma before the inverted comma to introduce the words that are quoted.

EXERCISE

- 1 Rewrite these sentences, adding the correct direct speech marks.
 - a Want to play? I asked him.
 - **b** Blow from the South it murmured. The wind leaves no trail.
 - c Check I said, as the wind roared with laughter.
 - d Better to lose less, see if you really need. Ma, it's not how many pieces you lose I said. Sometimes you need to lose pieces to get ahead.





Extract 4: A poem set in the Caribbean

Read this poem about an unexpected present.

Poet: Kamau Brathwaite

Although the Honourable Edward Kamau Braithwaite was from Barbados, he lived in other many countries around the world. He was a poet and academic, studying and writing about the cultural life of people of African descent in Africa and in the Americas.

The Pawpaw

Four little boys, tattered, Fingers and faces splattered With mud, had climbed In the rain and caught A pawpaw which they brought, Like a bomb, to my house. I saw Them coming: a serious, mumbling, Tumbling bunch who stopped At the steps in a hunch. Releasing the fruit from the leaf It was wrapped in, I watched them Carefully wash the pawpaw Like a nugget of gold. This done, With rainwater, till it shone, They climbed into the house To present the present to me. A mocking sign of the doom of all flesh Or the purest gold in the kingdom?

Kamau Brathwaite

Activity

EXERCISE

- In your own words, explain what you think the poem 'The Pawpaw' is about.
- 2 How would you describe the four little boys in 'The Pawpaw' to a friend?
- 3 Why do they wash the pawpaw like a nugget of gold?
- 4 Explain the two meanings of the word 'present' in 'The Pawpaw'.
- 5 What do you think the poet means in the last two lines of 'The Pawpaw'?
- 6 What does the 'The Pawpaw' show you about the cultural context of the 'me' and the four little boys in the poem?

- 1 Copy and underline the prepositions in the following sentences. Which words do they link?
 - a They climbed into the house.
 - **b** Releasing the fruit from the leaf.
 - c With mud, had climbed In the rain and caught...
- Why do you think the poet has used prepositions in this way?

HINT

Remember that cultural context in a text includes the ideas, knowledge, customs, lifestyle, traditions and behaviours of a particular people. It also includes language, religion, food, music and the arts.

Extract 5: A poem set in Japan

Hanami is the tradition of flower gazing. The Japanese cherry blossoms (*sakura*) and this tradition have inspired poets for centuries.

HAIKU

cherry blossoms scatter– snap! the buck's antlers come off

without regret they fall and scatter... cherry blossoms

cherry blossoms fall! fall! enough to fill my belly

cherry trees in bloom warmed by a brazier blossom-gazing



<u>Poet: Kobayashi</u> <u>Issa</u>

Kobayashi Issa, or just Issa as he is commonly known,

lived from 1763 to 1828 in the Shinano Province of Japan.

He is known as one of four greatest haiku poets.

Translation by David Gerard Lanoue

WORD ATTACK SKILLS

Can you work out the meaning of the word 'brazier'?

DID YOU KNOW?

Haiku is a traditional form of poetry that has three lines. There are five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line and five syllables in the third line.

Activity

- What does 'the buck's antlers' refer to in line 1? What figure of speech is this? Is it effective why?
- 2 How has the poet used punctuation to add to the effects in the poem.
- 3 What does the poem tell you about the cultural context of Japan?
- 4 What words are repeated? Why do you think they are repeated?
- 5 Why does the speaker say 'enough to fill my belly'. What do you think the speaker is doing at the time?
- 6 Why do you think the author has used only lowercase letters in this
- 7 Does this poem follow the pattern of a traditional haiku?
- 8 Explain how the choice of form adds to the theme and cultural context of this poem.

Speaking and listening



Our culture influences how we behave in the world – what we think is acceptable or unacceptable, polite or impolite. It affects our values and attitudes, how we see ourselves and how we see, treat and relate to others. When we read about other cultures, we deepen our understanding of others.

So far, you have read stories and poems from other cultures around the world. You will now have an opportunity to deepen your understanding of your own culture.

HINT

Don't forget to plan, draft and revise before you present your talk. Consider using cultural objects to add interest to your talk, such as photographs, clothes, foods, music, dance or poems.

Activity

Imagine that you have to choose three aspects of your culture to present to your future grandchildren, when they reach the age you are now. Which three things would you choose? Here are some examples, but do not be limited to these: typical customs and traditions of your culture; food and festivals, the clothes you wear, songs, music, literature, dance or artworks from your culture; beliefs and superstitions; typical behaviours and values. Prepare a talk on the three aspects you choose to present to your class or group.

Key skills: Standard and non-standard English

Just as different cultures have different beliefs and rituals, they may also speak differently – even if they are speaking English! They might pronounce words differently (accent) – or even use completely different words.

EXERCISE 1

- 1 Look at the examples below. Say these examples aloud as you think they could be said in the context of the story. Then put the words or phrases in standard English.
 - a 'Is luck,' she whispered and tucked it into my dress pocket.
 - b 'Better to lose less, see if you really need.'
 - c 'Lost eight piece this time. Last time was eleven. What I tell you? Better off lose less!'
- Why do you think the author chose to use non-standard English? How does it add to the effect of the writing?

Writing

Friendly letters

Letter-writing is an important skill to learn and develop. You already learnt about writing business letters in Chapter 4. Now we focus on friendly or informal letters.

Activity

Look at the letter that Meimei has written to her cousin. How well do you think she has included all the features of a friendly letter?

In a friendly letter, it's unlikely that you will use a person's title (Mr, Mrs, etc.) unless you are writing to someone who is in a position of authority. However, it is polite when writing to an older relative to begin with 'Dear Aunt or Uncle', for example. The opening of a letter is called the salutation.

Organise your thoughts into paragraphs. Have a new paragraph for each new thought.

13 Garden Place Put your address at Begin the letter with the top right corner Fifth Street 'Dear' followed by the first name of the New York, USA person to whom you Add the date when → 19 July 2021 you are writing.

Dear Meiling,

are writing.

Sorry not to have written for such a long time but you'll never believe what's happened to me!

This summer, I started playing chess with the old men in the park. I used Vincent's old chess set. One man, Lau Po, took me under his wing and taught me all he knew.

By the end of the summer, I took part in my first chess tournament - and I won! No-one was more surprised than me. I really didn't think that mother was going to let me play, but she even came to the tournament! Now I've won three trophies!

I really love chess. I will teach you when you come to visit in the fall, OK?

Your favourite cousin,

Meimei

LET'S TALK

Do you think people still write letters to each other - or is all letter-writing now done on email?

At the end of the letter, on a new line, end with the valediction followed by your signed name. The standard valediction for a friendly letter is 'Yours sincerely'. However, this ending may be too formal for a letter written to a close friend or relative. You could end with a word or phrase that indicates your closeness to the person to whom you are writing such as 'With love' or 'Yours affectionately'.

Writing a friendly letter

Activity

Write a letter to a friend who lives in a different country, describing and explaining some of the traditions and customs of the country in which you live.

- Check that you have included all of the features of a friendly letter.
- Remember that you should use language precisely to make the meaning of your letter clear. Think about the words you use to extend your intended meaning. See if you can find better or more descriptive alternatives in a thesaurus.
- Follow the steps for planning, drafting, proofreading and finalising your letter.

Writing a haiku

HINT

A haiku does not have many words – so make every word count!

Activity

Choose an object from those below, or a cultural object of your family or community. Write a haiku to describe what it looks like or what it does.

- Check to see that you have the correct number of syllables per line:
 - five syllables in the first line
 - seven syllables in the second line
 - five syllables in the third line.
- Remember that you should use language precisely to express what you want to say. Think of the imagery you want the reader to see and feel so use literary and poetic devices to paint with words.
- Follow the steps for planning, drafting, proofreading and finalising your haiku.



Reviewing

Reflect on the texts you've read

Talk about the texts you engaged with in this chapter.

- Which did you like?
- Which didn't you like?
- Which do you think were well-written? Why?
- What techniques did the authors or poets use to create effects in their writing?
- What stories, novels or poems have you read that are similar to these?

Ideas for further reading

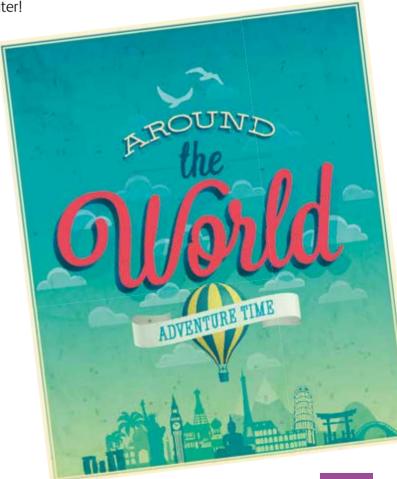
If you want to read similar stories, here are some suggestions:

- Some Places More Than Others by Renée Watson
- *The Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynne Reid Banks
- The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf
- No Ballet Shoes in Syria by Catherine Bruton

Reflect on your learning in this chapter

Just as Meimei learnt many different strategies to win at the game of chess, think of the strategies you have learnt in this chapter to be a better reader – and a better writer!

- Make a list of things that you still need to master – or concepts with which you need more practice.
- Compile a plan for tackling these.
- Discuss your lists and ideas with your classmates and your teacher.



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