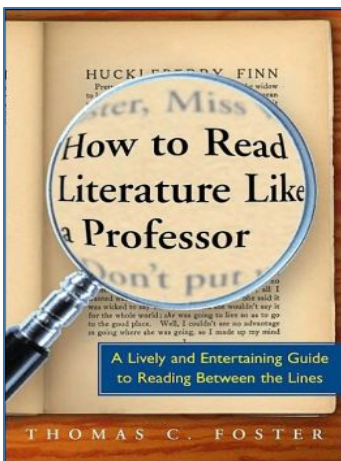


Farragut High School

English 9 Honors Summer/Outside Reading 2016-2017

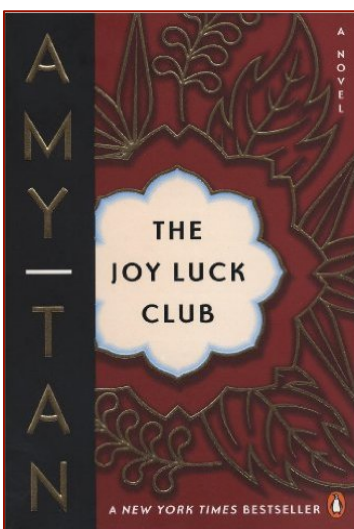
As an English 9 Honors student, you are required to read two books (nonfiction and fiction) independently to prepare for the course. The nonfiction selection, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster, serves as a resource for studying literature not only in ninth grade but also throughout high school. In fact, Foster's book will be helpful as you read the second required book, the modern novel *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan. Please read closely, and be prepared for assessments (including possible class discussions, objective exams, and writing prompts) on both books in the first weeks of the semester. If you are taking English 9 Honors in the second semester, remember that you must read and/or review the titles prior to your semester. Contact valarie.cagle@knoxschools.org if you have questions.

Nonfiction Selection: *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster (Ch.16-17 are not required reading at the 9th grade level)



“Most professional students of literature learn to take in the foreground details while seeing what the detail reveals. Experience has proved to them that life and books fall into similar patterns. Nor is this skill exclusive to English professors.”
--Foster

Fiction Selection: *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan*



“Over the years, she told me the same story, except for the ending, which grew darker, casting long shadows into her life, and eventually into mine.”
--Amy Tan

Partly inspired by Amy Tan's own relationship with her mother, *The Joy Luck Club*, Tan's debut novel (1989), tells stories of four immigrant women from China – their hopes, fears, and tragic pasts – as well as stories of their four American-born daughters. This mother-daughter story encompasses numerous universal themes, such as family, hope, love, sacrifice, strength, and wishes for a better life.

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***The Joy Luck Club* READING ASSIGNMENT:** Complete **at least SIX** of following discussion questions after reading the novel *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan. Each response should reflect that you as the reader have gained a basic understanding of the literature and are able to accurately respond through writing. Responses may be neatly written in blue or black ink or typed in Times New Roman or Ariel 12 point font. Be prepared to discuss the novel during the first days of class.

1. Which story is your favorite and why? Do you prefer the stories set in China or California?
2. How are the notions of balance (yin and yang) and energy flow (feng shui) an important theme in the novel? Does the Chinese notion of balance and flow translate to the characters' lives in America?
3. *The Joy Luck Club* was written as a collection of short stories. Is the order important? Could this have been told as a single story? What would that change?
4. In your experience, does the book reinforce or shatter stereotypes of Chinese culture? Use specific examples from the text.
5. By telling a story from the perspective of Chinese immigrants and first-generation Americans, what does the book reveal about American culture? What does it reinforce or negate about the American Dream?
6. Tan has said that she wishes to break from "the ghetto of ethnic literature." Does *The Joy Luck Club* cross from the ethnic to the universal? Explain.
7. Although June is not sure why her mother gives her the jade necklace, she assumes it's because of her humiliation by Waverly. Is she right?
8. How do the struggles of the daughters mirror the tragedies of their mothers? What does this suggest about the relationships between parents and children?
9. Ying-ying sees herself as both a tiger and a ghost. Why does she use these symbols as characterizations? How would Lena be characterized? How would they be different?
10. The "broken English" of the mothers is often more colorful than the "perfect English" of their daughters. How does the way the mothers choose to express themselves reflect their identities? What gets lost in translation?
11. How do the mothers decide to use their mah jong winnings? Does this show assimilation? Why, or why not?
12. The ritual of mah jong is central to the story. What rituals do American women perform that reflect culture and identity?
13. Select a chapter from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* that seems best supported by *The Joy Luck Club*. Explain how the Foster chapter fits a story or passage from Tan's novel.