



7A: *Red Scarf Girl*

Text

Red Scarf Girl by Ji-li Jiang

Introduction to the Text

Jiang Ji-li is an excellent student who lives in Shanghai, China, with her loving family. She has been taught to admire Chairman Mao Ze-dong and respect the Communist Party. A red scarf is the symbol of youthful good citizens.

Ji-li and her family are good citizens. However, in 1966, Mao's Cultural Revolution throws the world of 12-year-old Ji-li into chaos. This political movement ruins her family. Jiang describes her experiences in her memoir, *Red Scarf Girl*.

Background and Context

Communism

Communism's major idea is a classless society, where there is no class of people who are rich and no class of people who are poor. Communists think that wealth should belong to people equally. No single person should be richer than another. Communists dislike capitalism, an economic system of private ownership and profit. The United States is one example of a capitalist nation.

Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution

After his takeover of China in 1949, Chairman Mao took bold steps to reshape the nation. First, he tried to improve the economy of the country so China would not need products from foreign countries. Then, in the spring of 1966, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution. This movement encouraged people, especially young people, to overthrow old habits, ideas, customs, and

cultural traditions. In *Red Scarf Girl*, Jiang refers to these traditions as "Four Olds." During this time, the communist government shut down schools across the country. It also encouraged people to inform the authorities about neighbors, friends, and family members who seemed to be holding on to Western or capitalist ideas, or who disagreed with or resisted the Communist Party.

The Cultural Revolution lasted for more than a decade. It destroyed China's economy and society. The chaos turned people against one another, and it ruined many lives and futures. Children such as Ji-li lost opportunities for education. Intellectuals were attacked, and some were even killed, in the name of getting rid of "old" beliefs. It was not until the late 1970s that Chinese people began to understand that the movement had not only ruined the country, but had also hurt generations of people.

Word Count: 301

Keywords

communism
capitalism

Cultural
Revolution

Chairman Mao
Ze-dong
Four Olds

Sources

- "Cultural Revolution," Encyclopedia Britannica, britannica.com
- "Chinese Communist Party," Encyclopedia Britannica, britannica.com





7C: Brain Science

Texts

Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science by John Fleischman

Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore

The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks

Introduction to the Texts

In *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science*, John Fleischman describes a terrible accident that happened in Vermont in 1848. An explosion caused a long piece of metal to go through the head of a man named Phineas Gage. Amazingly, he survived. Unfortunately, his brain did not work as well as it did before the accident. His behavior changed. Phineas's case changed the way doctors think about the brain.

Many people believe that adolescents are a problem. But in her book *Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain*, Sarah-Jayne Blakemore says we need to reimagine how we think about young people. Blakemore describes the science of the brain, the important stages of development that we all experience, and what makes teenagers so...different.

In the excerpt from *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, Oliver Sacks discusses people alive today who have brain damage similar to Phineas Gage's.

Background and Context

Phineas Gage

Phineas Gage was injured when an explosion caused a metal rod to go through his skull. The rod, called a tamping iron, was made by a blacksmith. A blacksmith is a worker who shapes metal into objects, such as tools.

At the time of Phineas's accident, there were many things that doctors did not know about medicine. They did not know that bacteria causes infections. When doctors did surgery, they did not always clean their hands or tools. Many people died from bacterial

infections because their immune systems were already weak from surgery. Your immune system is what helps your body fight infection, or heal after illness or injury.

At the time of Phineas's accident, doctors were starting to use anesthesia during surgery. Anesthesia is a medicine that puts people to sleep so that they do not feel pain during surgery.



The Adolescent Brain

The brain is made up of billions of cells called neurons. Neurons move impulses from the body to the brain. They are linked by connections called synapses. Changes in synapses during adolescence help the brain with higher-level thinking and impulse control.

Some of the most important changes that happen in the brain during adolescence involve risk-taking and impulse control. Teenagers take more risks than they did when they were younger. They have fewer restrictions than younger children and they feel a need for new experiences. But the parts of the brain that involve planning and self-control are not fully developed yet.

Word Count: 480

Using Technology to Understand the Brain

Today, scientists use technology to see inside the brain. Magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI, uses powerful magnets and radio waves to scan the body. Brain researchers use MRI to examine the structure of the brain. They can compare scans of different brains to understand how the mind and personality develop over time. MRI can also help diagnose and treat many brain injuries.

Keywords

immune system
anesthesia
adolescents

impulse control
neurons

MRI
(magnetic resonance
imaging)

Sources

- "Anesthesia," Encyclopedia Britannica, britannica.com
- "Functional magnetic resonance imaging," Encyclopedia Britannica, britannica.com
- "Neuron," Encyclopedia Britannica, britannica.com





7E: The Frida & Diego Collection

Unit Overview

Mexico's most famous and provocative artists, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, were an extraordinary couple who lived in extraordinary times. They were soul mates and complete opposites. Rivera was a brilliant muralist and painter whose work explores the history and future of humanity. Kahlo was a fearless painter whose small self-portraits depict intense physical and emotional pain through a surrealist lens. Rivera was large, 6 feet tall and 300 pounds, a whirlwind of energy and intelligence. Kahlo was tiny, 5-feet-3-inches tall and less than 100 pounds, often bedbound with pain yet always pushing artistic boundaries. He said, about her, "Her work is acid and tender...hard as steel...and fine as a butterfly's wing." She said, about him, "I had two big accidents in my life, Diego, the trolley and you...You are by far the worse."

The story of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo is complex, intriguing, and more than a little surprising. You'll see...



7F: The Gold Rush Collection

Unit Overview

When Sam Brannan, savvy shopkeeper and the first gold rush millionaire, proclaimed "Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River!" he sparked a migration of some 300,000 people. The promise of instant fortune drew people from all over the world and from all walks of life. San Francisco grew from a tiny community of about 200 in 1846 to a bustling town of nearly 36,000 in 1852. Roads were laid, railroads were built, and the California legislature was formed. The state was thriving, but most of the miners were not. They struggled with harsh living conditions, disease, and crime. Most of the fortune seekers did not strike it rich; instead, they left the gold fields poorer than they had been when they arrived. And for Native Americans the gold rush was a disaster. Their populations dropped from an estimated 150,000 in 1845 to approximately 30,000 in 1870. In this unit, you'll discover the good and bad of the California gold rush. It's the Wild West after all...