

Pachinko Lesson Plan

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Rationale:

As an AP Literature teacher, I've observed a growing emphasis on modern texts by living writers, especially those by BIPOC authors. While works of literary merit by BIPOC authors are not new, the recent focus on inclusivity has made it more common to see these authors represented in the AP exam—whether in poetry for FRQ 1, as excerpted texts for FRQ 2, or as recommended long-form works for FRQ 3. In this context, I highly recommend *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee as a valuable text for study. Its intricate narrative, cultural richness, and exploration of complex themes make it an excellent choice for students preparing for the exam.

I also selected *Pachinko* in alignment with New Jersey legislation S4021/A6100, signed into law by Governor Murphy in 2022. This bill mandates the inclusion of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) contributions, history, and heritage in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies from kindergarten through Grade 12. Practically, this means AAPI stories must be integrated throughout the curriculum, not just in specialized AAPI or history courses but also in subjects like English Language Arts (ELA). Given the novel's literary depth, I believe *Pachinko* provides a rigorous and authentic way to include AAPI voices in the curriculum.

This novel can be studied in full or, as I outline below, used for focused exercises such as those for FRQ 2, which involves a close reading of a passage. In this practice, students analyze a selected passage and write a literary analysis essay in 40 minutes.

The following lesson was designed for my 12th-grade AP Literature class early in the year. At this stage, many students are still developing the skills and stamina to write a full timed essay. To help them build these skills, I gave students a passage from *Pachinko* as a blind reading, mimicking what they will encounter on the FRQ 2 in May. They spent 15 minutes independently analyzing the passage and 10 minutes crafting a complex thesis statement. To guide this process, I introduced the “TAG-SAT” acronym, which helps scaffold thesis writing.

I selected this particular passage because it highlights the collective, communal nature of Korean society, a central theme in the novel. Additionally, it focuses on Sunja's struggle for self-actualization within a patriarchal system, a theme that resonates with other works we will explore in later units. For example, we will examine “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin, both of which are widely read in AP Literature classrooms across the country. These texts also center on women's challenges in seeking autonomy and identity under patriarchal constraints, setting the stage for rich, cross-cultural discussions about feminism and gender roles.

Lastly, I chose this passage for its thematic complexity, a hallmark of texts featured on the AP exam. Sunja's internal conflict—her personal betrayal by Hansu versus the communal shame her actions bring upon her—creates layers of meaning that students must navigate. This depth in character and theme will help students practice the analytical skills they need to succeed in the exam, as well as foster a nuanced understanding of moral and social dilemmas across different cultural contexts.

New Jersey Standards (NJSLs 2023 ELA Standards):

- RL.CR.11–12.1. Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to strongly support a comprehensive analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as interpretations of the text; this may include determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

- RL.CI.11–12.2. Determine two or more themes of a literary text and analyze how they are developed and refined over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account or analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- W.AW.11–12.1.A Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

AP Literature Focus Standards:

- 7B: Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.

Grade / Level:

- AP Literature students, 11th or 12th grades

Lesson Objective(s):

1. Students will independently analyze a passage from *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee, focusing on literary elements such as character, theme, and symbolism.
2. Students will develop a complex thesis statement that reflects their understanding of the passage and its connection to broader themes in the novel.
3. Students will identify and evaluate the communal values in Korean society as depicted in *Pachinko*, and discuss how these cultural contexts shape the characters' actions and conflicts.

Assessments:

- Formative assessments:
 - Class discussion
 - Thesis statement

Materials:

- Laptop/Computer
- Access to digital worksheet
- OR: Printed worksheet with highlighters

Recommended resources for background research:

- History On Maps. (2022, July 21). Full History of Korea in 5 Minutes. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lIQB4p9NT4&t=227s>
- Role of shame in Korean Families: Yang, S., & Rosenblatt, P. C. (2001). Shame in Korean families. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 32(3), 361–375. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41603758>
- Supplemental lessons: The Korea Society. (n.d.). *The Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1945)*. https://www.koreasociety.org/images/pdf/KoreanStudies/Monographs_LessonPlans/High_School/5%20The%20Japanese%20Occupation%20of%20Korea%201910-1945.pdf

Students prior knowledge needed:

- Basic literary analysis skills

Time	Lesson Sequence
10 minutes	<p>Engage (Warm Up/ Do Now):</p> <p>Teacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write or project on the board the DO NOW question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you know about Korean history? <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take out Do Now trackers and respond to the question - Write down preliminary thoughts - Turn and talk with peers <p>Teacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call on 3-4 students to share their thoughts, writing collective ideas on the board - Play this short clip for students about Japanese colonization of Korea: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6llQB4p9NT4&t=227s (3:47-4:28) - Teacher will the introduce the book <i>Pachinko</i> with a general synopsis of the text and time period
5 minutes	<p>Analyze the prompt</p> <p>Teacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preview instructions for the assignment with the class - Call on student to read the prompt - Call on students to reword the prompt <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take out FRQ2 worksheet (digital or physical) - Follow along with teacher to preview the assignment and prompt - Reword the prompt - Share reworded prompt aloud
10 minutes	<p>Read and Analyze the text</p> <p>Teacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put on a 10 minute timer for students to independently read and analyze the text for the “Big 5 elements” of AP Literature (character, setting, narration, figurative language, structure) <p>Students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage in analysis an annotate the text using the color code provided
15 minutes	<p>Share aloud and discuss</p> <p>Teacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask students to share what elements they found - Annotate the text on the board as students share their ideas <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in discussion - Add annotations to their individual notes <p>Teacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guide the discussion to discuss the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-Worth: How does Sunja’s reaction to Hansu’s revelation about his wife and family reflect her values and beliefs about love, honor, and her own self-worth? - Shame: How does shame impact Sunja’s decisions, and what does it reveal about the importance of family reputation and societal expectations in the novel? - Gender: How does this passage highlight the power imbalance between men and women in the novel? How does Sunja’s declaration that she will never see Hansu again reflect her attempt to reclaim agency over her life, and what are the risks and consequences of this decision in her cultural setting? - Help students generate a list of topics that are present in the text so that students can develop them for their own theme statements in their thesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examples include: community, shame, regret, responsibility, reclamation
10 minutes	<p>Write Thesis</p> <p>Teacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put on a timer on the board for 10 minutes, explaining to students that they will write a thesis using the scaffolded elements provided <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write a TAG-SAT thesis statement
(If time)	<p>Peer Edit</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swap thesis statements with a fellow student and grade their work using the rubric provided - Student will provide a rationale for their grade using the comment feature on Google Classroom for feedback - Student may revise their thesis if desired
5 Minutes	<p>Wrap Up:</p> <p>Teacher will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect worksheets to check for understanding
<i>Total Time: 55 minutes*</i>	

*Optional: if desired, the teacher can make this a multiple-day assignment by having students generate full essay responses to this prompt. Students may do this independently, or in small groups writing one paragraph at a time, depending on the skill that the teacher is building presently in the unit.

Name:

Date:

Period:

**AP Literature and Composition
FRQ 2 Practice**

*SWABAT: Write a complex thesis statement
AP Lit. Standard: 7B*

Directions: Read the prompt and passage below, using the annotation guide to support your reading of the “big 5” along the way. Then set up your “TAGSAT” response to create a thesis statement for a potential FRQ 2 style essay.

Prompt: Using **yellow**, highlight the subject of the prompt. Then reword the prompt into a question form below:

The following excerpt is from Lee Min Jin’s novel *Pachinko*, published in 2017. In this passage, the protagonist, Sunja, faces a pivotal moment of personal reckoning after realizing that Hansu, the man with whom she had a love affair, was married. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the author employs literary elements and techniques to depict Sunja’s complex reaction to the revelation.

Reworded prompt: What is _____?

Annotation guide:

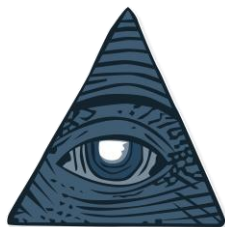
Step 1: Color code for Big 5 (the “what”)

Pink	Character
Orange	Setting
Green	Narration
Blue	Structure
Purple	Figurative Language

Step 2: Annotate with comments along the way, asking yourself the “how”? How does this help you to understand your question from the prompt?

Step 3: Thinking towards the thematic connection, or the “why” – what abstract ideas are being presented in the text as you read? List in the box below as you read – come back to evolve one of them into a full theme statement at the end:

Always consider the **What – How – Why**



1 "What are you doing?" He raised his voice a little.
Sunja looked away from him. He was saying
something, but she couldn't hear what it was if her
5 mind would no longer interpret his words with
meaning. His talk was just sounds, beats of noise. 40
Nothing made sense. He had a wife and three
daughters in Japan? Since she had met him, he
10 had been straightforward, she supposed. Every
promise he'd ever made had been kept. He said
there would be a surprise, and he had brought a 45
watch for her, but the surprise she had for him, she
15 no longer wanted him to know. Nothing about him
had ever made her suspect that he was a *jebi*— a
kind of man who could flit from one woman to
another. Did he make love to his wife, too? What 50
did she know about men, anyway?
What was the wife like? Sunja wanted to know.
Was she beautiful? Was she kind? Sunja could not
25 look at his face anymore. She glanced at her white
muslin skirt, its tattered hem remaining gray no
matter how much she tried to clean it. 55
"Sunja, when can I go to speak to your mother?
Should we go speak to her now? Does she know
30 about the baby?"
It felt like a slap when he mentioned her mother. 60
"My mother?"
35 "Yes, have you told her?"
"No. No, I have not told her." Sunja tried not to
think of her mother.
"I will buy that boardinghouse for you, and your 65
mother and you won't have to keep lodgers
anymore. You could just take care of the child. We
could have more children. You could get a bigger
house if you like."

The bundle of laundry by her foot seemed to glow
in the sun. There was work to do for the day. She
was a foolish peasant girl who'd let a man take her
on the grounds of a forest. When he had wanted
her in the open air of the beach, she had let him
have her body as much as he liked. But she had
believed that he loved her as she loved him. If he
did not marry her, she was a common slut who
would be disgraced forever. The child would be
another no-name bastard. Her mother's
boardinghouse would be contaminated by her
shame. There was a baby inside her belly, and this
child would have had a real father like the one
she'd had.

"I will never see you again," she said.

"What?" Hansu smiled in disbelief. He put his
arms on her shoulders, and she shrugged him off.

"If you ever come near me again, I will kill
myself. I may have behaved like a whore—" Sunja
couldn't speak anymore. She could see her father
so clearly: his beautiful eyes, broken lip, his
hunched and delayed gait. When he finished his
long day's work, he would carve her dolls out of
dried corn cobs and branches. If there was a brass
coin left in his pocket, he'd buy her a piece of taffy.
It was better that he was dead so he couldn't see
what a filthy creature she had become. He had
taught her to respect herself, and she had not. She
had betrayed her mother and father, who had
done nothing but work hard and take care of her
like a jewel.

Step 4: After reading, discuss your findings from reading and annotations with your table group. Add to your annotations if you hear anything you didn't find before.

Step 5: Writing the thesis in chunks – TAGSAT

Title	Author	Genre

Subject	Assertion	Theme
<p>(WHAT is the prompt asking you to answer)</p> <p><i>Example from "The Paper Menagerie":</i> The complex relationship between Jack and his mother</p>	<p>(HOW does the story excerpt answer the question? Stay in the level of the story– you may use character names and plot details up to this point. You also may establish a line of reasoning here if you wish.)</p> <p><i>Example from "The Paper Menagerie":</i> The complex relationship between Jack and his mother underscores the internal conflict the biracial protagonist endures as he grapples with the clash between his Chinese heritage and American upbringing, attempting to balance life between two cultures.</p>	<p>(WHY does this matter? What is the theme or life principle that the excerpt is demonstrating? DO NOT use character specific names, pronouns, or plot details for this part)</p> <p><i>Example from "The Paper Menagerie":</i> Ultimately, the story illustrates the painful yet fulfilling journey of embracing the cultural richness of one's heritage in a society that demands assimilation.</p>

Step 6: FINALLY — Put all the building blocks together for the entire thesis!

Example from "The Paper Menagerie":

In Ken Liu's short story "The Paper Menagerie," the complex relationship between Jack and his mother underscores the internal conflict the biracial protagonist endures as he grapples with the clash between his Chinese heritage and American upbringing, attempting to balance life between two cultures. Ultimately, the story illustrates the painful yet fulfilling journey of embracing the cultural richness of one's heritage in a society that demands assimilation.

4 - Exceeding	3 - Meeting	2 - Approaching	1 - below
Thesis statement that clearly answers the question from the text and adds a complex thematic significance.	Thesis statement that clearly answers the question from the text, but includes a thematic significance that is surface level.	Thesis statement that clearly answers the question from the text.	Thesis statement is missing the assertion and theme, and/or doesn't answer the prompt.