

**Integrated Teaching Activities for**  
***No Pigs Brain Soup, Please***  
**By Gail Greenberg**

The following classroom activities are designed to be used in conjunction with the story so that teachers in grades pre-k through second may use them for a classroom unit on different cultural traditions. Those who have younger children will focus on oral discussion and group writing with the teacher as a scribe. Children in first or second grade may be able to write more on their own. Teachers may pick and choose activities as time, student interest, and individual needs permit.

The activities incorporate the following objectives and learning concepts from the mandated curriculums of most states. Objective numbers have been left out so that teachers may insert numbers as indicated by their states or districts when listing them on lesson plans.

**Language Arts:**

Listen attentively; respond to stories read aloud; listen to gain knowledge of his/her culture and the culture of others. Communicate clearly by putting thoughts/feelings into words. Develop vocabulary; discuss the meaning of words. Use a variety of strategies to comprehend texts. Retell/act out order of important events in stories. Make/explain inferences, make predictions and draw conclusions. Distinguish between forms and texts: lists, signs, fiction, non-fiction, side bars, etc. Distinguish between the role of author and illustrator. Understand simple story structure. Generate questions and conduct research; draw conclusions from information gathered. Connect his/her life experiences to those of others and across cultures. Write for a specific purpose/audience. Write/dictate to record ideas and refine ideas. Compose original text using the writing process as developmentally appropriate. Use available technology.

**Math:**

Compare/order whole numbers. Estimate and measure length using non-standard units. Compare and order according to length from least to greatest. Collect and sort data and organize into a graph. Draw conclusions from a graph.

**Social Studies:**

Locate places using the four cardinal directions. Understand the purpose of maps and globes. Locate places of significance on maps and globes. Understand the importance of family beliefs, customs, language and traditions.

**Art:**

Express ideas through original art works.

**Before Reading:**

Ask the children if they have ever been offered a new food at a party or as a guest at a friend's house that they didn't like, or that for some reason they were not supposed to eat. What did they do in that situation and how did they work it out? Discuss polite ways to say, "No, thank you."

**During reading:**

Stop at various places to ask questions such as: What do you think will happen next? What else might Tali and Liang have done? What would you do? What is Tali's problem? How do you think she will solve this problem? Why does Tali hide her doll in the restroom? Why was she angry with her friend? And other appropriate questions a teacher may think of during reading.

**After reading:**

- Make a story map showing the elements of fiction: characters, setting, plot/problem, events and resolution. On chart paper, or on the board, make a large smiley face and list the characters inside it. (Every story has characters, the animals or people in the story.) Draw a simple outline of a house and write the setting inside it. (Every story has a setting, a place where it "lives" or happens.) Use a rain cloud for the problem and big rain drops falling from the cloud for the events in the story (In every story, the main character has some problem or difficulty to overcome and because of this, things called events happen.) and use a sun or rainbow for the resolution (Not all stories have happy endings, but they at least end hopefully.). This simple graphic helps children understand the basic elements of all fiction.
- Point out the side bars on some of the pages of the book and explain that a side bar is a tool an author uses to include important information that is not directly part of the story.
- Ask the children what their favorite part of the story was and why.
- Return to pages 6 and 7 of the book and ask the children if they know what famous structure in China is pictured there. If they do not know, take the time to explain a little about The Great Wall of China.
- Return to pages 18 and 19 and identify some of the flags in the children's parade. Look up the ones they do not know.
- Have two or more students act out the scene on pages 4-9, or the scene on pages 10-14. Think of other ways the two characters might have reacted and act those out, too.
- Make lists on two charts or two lists on the board. Ask the children to tell one food they like very much and one they do not like at all. Notice if some foods are on both lists. What can they conclude from this? Is this like the part in the story where Ms. Chang says she doesn't like pig's brain soup either?
- Make a class cook book. (This project may take more than one day.) Ask the children if there are some special foods that their families make at certain times of the year or for special occasions. (If any of these special foods originated in another country, make a note of that for later.) Tell them to think about how their parents prepare that food. Explain that when someone tells how to prepare food, that is called a recipe. What must they do first, next, or last? Pass out drawing paper, crayons, markers, etc. and ask the students to draw a picture of their family and that special food. As the children draw, the teacher can circulate and take dictation from the children as they tell how this special food is made. Older children may be able to write their own. Young children generally do not think much about "rewriting" but the teacher may suggest some editorial changes while taking dictation, or some quick corrections to an older child's work. (Young children may have "recipes" that are quite humorous to teachers and other adults who read the class cook book, which is part of the charm of this project.) Older children should recopy their work, or, if capable, type into a computer and print out their recipes.

In the case of younger children, the teacher will be the one to type and print out recipes. Read all the recipes to the class. Ask the children how their cook book should be organized. What similar foods should be placed together? Guide the discussion into typical cook book format: appetizers, main dishes, desserts, etc. Or show them a cook book and ask if they should organize theirs in a similar way. Choose a title for the book. Once the pages are grouped (with each child's drawing next to their recipe) use a three-hole punch and "publish" the book in a folder with brads or, if the school has some type of binding machine, use that. Place the book in the classroom library, or in the house-keeping center.

- Using a globe or world map, find China, Israel, and the United States. Find where the children live within their state. Point out north, south, east, and west within the classroom. Point to the direction an airplane would have to fly to get from their classroom to China or Israel. Which one looks farther away? Use a string to measure the distance and compare to see if they were correct in their guess. If any of the recipes in the children's cook book originated in other countries, these can be pointed out as well.
- Send a letter home asking parents to let their children know from which countries around the world their ancestors came. (sample letter at the end of this unit) Some children may have several countries listed. When the letters are returned, put colored dots on the map or globe (or stick pins) for those of each child. Count how many countries there are and how many dots or stick pins have been placed in each country. Then make a graph showing the countries are represented and how many children have ancestors from the same country. Point out what direction from the classroom an airplane would have to fly to get to each country listed. Which country has the most? Least, etc.? Arrange the numbers in order from least to most. Explain that The United States has sometimes been called a "melting pot" because people from so many countries and cultures have made their homes here. How much of a melting pot is your class?
- Use several strings to measure the distance from where the school is to each country. Which is the farthest away? Which is the closest? Arrange the strings, with country names, from least to greatest.
- Have your own International Night, as a class or as a school, like the one in the story. Use the library to find books about the countries represented by your class and learn about their flags, customs, traditional foods and clothing.

The letter on the following page may be reproduced for classroom use.

Dear Parents,

Our class would like to explore the various countries and cultures represented in our children. Please list what country, or countries, are represented in your family. If you can, tell your child whether it was a parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, etc., who came from those countries. List these people and the countries below. Please return this letter to class by Friday. Thank you for your support in this learning experience.

Sincerely,

[Your child's teacher]

**Child's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Person</b> | <b>Relationship (parent, grandparent, etc.)</b> | <b>Country</b> |
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