

Ninth Grade
Summer 2026 Book Report 1

Sr Aisha – English

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Essay Assignment: The Joy Luck Club

Topic: The Language of the Heart vs. The Language of the World

The Prompt

In *The Joy Luck Club*, Lena St. Clair says of her mother: *"We are lost, she and I, unseen and unheard, together and apart."*

Write a 5-paragraph analytical essay that examines how miscommunication serves as the primary conflict between the mothers and daughters. How do their different cultural backgrounds (pre-revolutionary China vs. modern America) create a "language barrier" that is deeper than just spoken words, and what eventually allows them to find common ground?

Requirements

- Introduction: Hook the reader, provide a brief summary of the book's structure, and end with a clear thesis statement.
- Body Paragraph 1: The Mothers' Past. Discuss how the trauma the mothers faced in China (e.g., Suyuan's lost babies or Lindo's forced marriage) shapes their high expectations for their daughters.
- Body Paragraph 2: The Daughters' Present. Explain how the American-born daughters view these expectations as "Chinese superstitions" or burdens rather than acts of love.
- Body Paragraph 3: The Turning Point. Choose one specific pair (e.g., Jing-mei and Suyuan) and describe the moment or object (like the jade pendant or the piano) that finally bridges their misunderstanding.
- Conclusion: Summarize your main points and reflect on the book's message about whether it is ever truly possible to fully "know" our parents.

Grading Rubric: The Joy Luck Club Essay

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (90–100%)	Meets Expectations (75–89%)	Needs Improvement (<75%)
Thesis & Argument	Clear, complex thesis that addresses both culture and miscommunication.	Identifiable thesis that stays on topic throughout the essay.	Thesis is missing, unclear, or merely summarizes the plot.
Evidence & Quotes	Includes 3+ perfectly integrated quotes that directly support the analysis.	Includes 2-3 quotes, though some may feel "dropped in" without context.	Few or no quotes; relies heavily on general plot summary.
Critical Analysis	Deeply explores <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> mothers and daughters clash; avoids "retelling."	Explains the meaning of events but occasionally slips into summary.	Primarily summarizes what happened in the book without analysis.
Organization	Logic flows perfectly from introduction to conclusion with strong transitions.	Follows the 5-paragraph structure; ideas are generally organized.	Ideas are scattered; paragraphs lack focus or logical order.
Grammar & Style	Polished writing with no errors; uses academic voice and varied sentence structure.	Mostly clear writing; minor errors that do not distract the reader.	Frequent errors in spelling or grammar that make it hard to read.