



GRANDMOTHER
FROM
THE EAST
+
GRANDMOTHER
FROM
THE WEST

Jacinta Liu & Freda Chiu

TEACHERS RESOURCES

GRANDMOTHER FROM THE EAST GRANDMOTHER FROM THE WEST

Jacinta Liu & Freda Chiu

Teachers Resources by Bec Kavanagh

About the Book	3
Before Reading	3
Comprehension Questions	3
Creative Activities	3
About the Author	4
A Note from the Author	4
About the Illustrator	4
A Note from the Illustrator	5
Related Reading	5

Recommended ages: Ages 4+, notes recommended for grades 2–3

Themes: love, multicultural identity, difference, connection, family

Curriculum connections: AC9E2LA08, AC9E2LA09, AC9E2LE03, AC9E3LA09, AC9E3LE02

ABOUT THE BOOK

Who is in your family? In *Grandmother from the East, Grandmother from the West*, the narrator tells the story of her two grandmothers, two women who live in very different parts of the world and who have led very different lives. One grandmother comes from the East, where she was blessed under the protection of the Chinese dragon. She is strong and brave. The other grandmother comes from the West, where she heals those around her. Both grandmothers are loving and caring. Both have the brightest smiles and the biggest hearts. The narrator sees all the things she loves about her grandmothers come together in herself: the way they love, protect and give to everyone in their community.

Grandmother from the East, Grandmother from the West is a gentle book filled with love for family and the people whose differences make us who we are. It celebrates care, community and finding joy in your identity.

BEFORE READING

- Look at a map of the world and discuss which countries are generally considered to be a part of the East and which are considered part of the West. Which part of the world is Australia in?
- Explore the front cover of the book. What do you notice about the two grandmothers? What are some of the differences you can observe? Which grandmother do you think is from the East and which is from the West? What makes you think this?
- Read the note from the author (below) aloud. What does she say the book is about? Why are stories like this important to share?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Both grandmothers cook – what do they make?
- What was the grandmother from the East blessed under? What two qualities define her?
- What animal is the grandmother from the West pictured with? What qualities does this grandmother share with this animal?
- What did the grandmother from the East fight against? Look at the image and describe who she fought to protect.
- How does the grandmother from the West care for those around her?
- Look at the narrator's expression when she says, 'They are my grandmothers. One protects from the East, and one protects from the West.' How do you think she feels about them?
- What does the narrator learn from each of her grandmothers?
- Make a list of all the things the two grandmothers have in common.
- How does the illustrator use colour to show the differences between the grandmothers? Explore the illustrations closely – which details connect them?
- How does the narrator describe herself?
- How does the illustrator show unity at the end of the book?
- Which different parts of your family can you see in yourself?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Write a letter to a grandparent or a person who has taught you something important about yourself, as the narrator's two grandmothers have taught her. In your letter, share your gratitude with them and describe what they've shown you.
- In the book, each grandmother is represented by an animal, and the author uses two words to describe qualities that make them special. Which animal would you be represented by and why? Draw a picture of the animal and write two words that describe qualities about yourself that you're proud of.
- Create a poster that represents your family – it might be a family tree, a map or even the steps of a special recipe. Try to use it as a base for telling your own story. Include the details that make

- your family unique. Be creative!
- Thinking about where we're from can be great inspiration for a story. Fill in the brackets below with your own responses to write a poem that tells the story of who you are. This activity is inspired by the poetry of George Ella Lyon, whose work you can find here: <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html>

I am from (a place name)
From (a person) and (another person)
I am from (your favourite food) and (the smell of another food)
I am from (something one of your parents/carers always says to you)
I am from (a memory that includes one colour)
I am (a favourite object), (a favourite place) and (two words that describe you)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacinta Liu is a children's book author and oracle cards creator, with a love for astrology and a wanderlust that explores the realms of body, mind and soul. Her debut picture book, *Grandmother from the East, Grandmother from the West*, was born out of her own personal upbringing, the struggle to define her identity and, most importantly, her deep gratitude and love for the strong women who helped to shape who she is today.

Jacinta is committed to growing as a writer, and as a person. She also authors, illustrates and self-publishes her own sets of oracle cards. Jacinta's oracle cards offer the invitation for children and adults alike to discover more about themselves – who they are, and why they are here.

If you feel something in your heart and want to learn more, you can find her at www.jacintaliu.com or on Instagram @jacintaliu.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Grandmother from the East, Grandmother from the West is an #OwnVoices story inspired by my personal upbringing, as well as my past struggle to define my own identity.

I was born and lived in Beijing, China until the age of fourteen, before migrating with my mum to live in Australia. Growing up with mixed cultures, I've struggled to define and reconcile who I am. But as I get older and have now created a multicultural family of my own, I begin to appreciate the complexities and the beauty of my own life experiences. I realise that my identity has been founded on strong values that were born out of strong family ties, blood-related or not.

This book, *Grandmother from the East, Grandmother from the West*, is a tribute that honours my heritage, as well as the strong women that have helped shape who I am. It also serves as a reminder for me, and for others with similar background, that we don't need to choose to be either or, but really are the best of two worlds. By owning our unique heritage, we help unify separation, as our diversity enriches the world. On a broader spectrum, this book celebrates love. It shows that while love may be expressed and shared in different ways, ultimately, love is love, no matter where it comes from.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Freda Chiu is an Australian author, illustrator and educator, and a shortlistee for the 2022 CBCA Award for New Illustrator and IBBY Australia Ena Noël Award. As well as illustrating children's books, Freda's work spans comics, editorial illustration, public art and retail graphics. To find out more about her work, visit fredachiu.com or her Instagram handle @_fredachiu_.

A NOTE FROM THE ILLUSTRATOR

The illustrations from *Grandmother from the East*, *Grandmother from the West* were born from my studio during some messy and experimental painting sessions. Every picture book is unique and requires an individual analysis about what materials, colours, lines and shapes would best communicate the tone and message of the story. Before I illustrate a book, I read the story many times until I connect with it on a personal level. Sometimes I know how I want to illustrate it right away; other times, it takes a little while before I get there.

For *Grandmother from the East*, *Grandmother from the West*, it wasn't long before I arrived at the textured, painterly style. I was captivated by the gentle and sentimental nature of the author's story and wanted to show the boundless love between the two grandmothers and the little girl protagonist. Reading Jacinta's story also brought warm memories of my own late Por Por ('Grandmother' in Cantonese) in Hong Kong, which influenced the tone of my artwork. I thought a textured, hand-painted look would communicate the raw love and warmth of the story. It's also a subtle nod to the author's and my own Chinese background, with the gestural brushwork influenced by traditional Chinese ink paintings.

I enjoyed using a combination of traditional media techniques combined with digital techniques to create my art. This method gives me a lot of flexibility – I can retain the hand-painted quality that I love but can also digitally edit the colours and make changes. Firstly, I used black acrylic paint and a dry brush technique to make pages of loose textures and painted elements, following my sketches as a guide. In total, I had 32 thick stacks!

Once I made the hand-painted elements, I scanned them and worked on Photoshop to clean up and colour my images. This part of the process is the most fun to me, but also the most time-consuming. I also have to stay very organised to make sure I don't forget which textures were made for which page! After the composite elements were scanned, I collaged them together to make a complete image based on my sketches and coloured everything digitally. Once I completed the 32 pages of art, I sent them to my editor for review, and we had multiple back-and-forths of revisions before the book was sent to print. Making picture books is a huge team effort, and lots of love and thought is poured into them to ensure we get things right.

RELATED READING

Words That Taste Like Home by Sandhya Parappukkaran and Michelle Pereira
How We Share Cake by Kim Hyo-eun and Deborah Smith (trans.)
Mia's World by Amelia Donnelly and Jennifer Bouron
My Strange Shrinking Parents by Zeno Swords
Tatya's Secret Ingredient by Amal Abu-Eid and Cara King
What Do You Call Your Grandma? by Ashleigh Barton and Martina Heiduczek