**World Literature: Asia**

**In this twelve-week unit, students read and discuss ancient and modern Asian literature, especially from China, India, and Japan.**

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**Overview**

* + Through reading the diverse selections in this unit, students consider the role of ancient philosophies, universal themes, Western influence, and historical change in these works. In addition, students listen to recordings of some of the poems in the original language, so that they may appreciate their sounds, structures, and rhythms.

*Note: the tenth-grade World Literature course consists of three twelve-week units. Four units have been provided (Russia; Africa and the Middle East; Asia; and Latin America); schools may select three out of the four. The middle unit will likely cross from one semester into another; teachers should divide it accordingly.*

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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
		- **RL.9-10.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a textand analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
		- **RL.9-10.5:** Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
		- **RI.9-10.1:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
		- **RI.9-10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
		- **W.9-10.7:** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
		- **W.9-10.10:** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
		- **SL.9-10.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues,* building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
		- **L.9-10.2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Explore ancient and modern works of literature from Asian countries, particularly China, India, and Japan.
		- Consider how Asian literature both draws on and questions cultural traditions.
		- Consider how certain Asian authors integrate Western literary influences into their cultural contexts.
		- Compare two or more translations of a single poem.
		- Write a close literary analysis of a work of poetry, fiction, or drama, considering language use and literary elements.
		- Offer insightful inferences regarding the themes of the text.
		- Create a clear, original, specific thesis statement.
		- Organize concrete evidence and supporting textual details to support a thesis statement.
		- Use precise language, avoiding casual language and clichés.
		- Write appropriate transitions to organize paragraphs.
		- Analyze how philosophy influences literature.
		- Understand how literary devices convey theme.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Note:  This unit should include excerpts from an ancient work; one novel; one play; several short stories; and a long poem or selection of poems. The teacher may choose two novels or two plays instead of one novel and one play. In addition, students should consult informational texts and secondary sources, online and in the library, for their essays.**

**Novels**

*China*

* + - *Dream of the Red Chamber* (Cao Xueqin) (selections)
		- *Family* (Pa Jin)

*India*

* + - *Midnight’s Children* (Salman Rushdie)
		- *In Custody* (Anita Desai)
		- *Nectar in a Sieve* (Kamala Markandaya)
		- *The God of Small Things* (Arundhati Roy)

*Japan*

* + - *The Sound of Waves* (Yukio Mishima)
		- *After Dark* (Haruki Murakami)
		- *Norwegian Wood* (Haruki Murakami)

**Short Stories**

*China*

* + - *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* (Pu Songling, ed.)
		- *Under The Red Flag* (Ha Jin) (selections)

*Japan*

* + - *Rashomon and Other Stories* (Ryunosuke Akutagawa)

*Vietnam*

* + - *The General Retires and Other Stories* (Nguyen Huy Thiep)

**Plays**

*China*

* + - *Thunderstorm* (Cao Yu)

*India*

* + - *The Post Office* (Rabindranath Tagore) (EA)

**Poems**

*Sanskrit*

* + - Excerpts from the *Ramayana* (attributed to the Hindu sage Valmiki)

*China*

* + - *The Jade Mountain: A Chinese Anthology, Being Three Hundred Poems of the T’ang Dynasty 618-906* (Kiang Hang-Hu and Witter Bynner, trans.) (selections)
		- “A Song of Ch'ang-kan” (Li Po) (E)
		- “Substance, Shadow, and Spirit” (T’ao Ch’ien)
		- “On a Gate-tower at Yuzhou” (Chen Zi’ang)

*India*

* + - “Song VII” (Rabindranath Tagore) (E)
		- *The Golden Craft* (Rabindranath Tagore) (EA)

**Informational Texts**

**Informational Text**

* + - *The Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature* (Joshua Mostow, ed.)
		- *Historical Dictionary of Modern Japanese Literature and Theater* (J. Scott Miller)
		- *Trading Places: The East India Company and Asia, 1600-1834* (Anthony Farrington)
		- *The Scandal of Empire: India and the creation of Imperial Britain* (Nicholas B. Dirks)

**Literary Nonfiction**

*China*

* + - *The Analects* (Confucius) (selections)
		- *The I Ching* (transmitted by Fei Zhi)
		- *The Tao Te Ching* (Lao Tzu) (selections)
		- The Tao of Pooh and the Te of Piglet (Benjamin Hoff) (selections)

**Autobiography**

* + - *Six Records of a Floating Life* (Shen Fu) (China)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Prompt: How does the study of select Asian objects give us a greater understanding of the depth and diversity of Asian literary forms and genres?**

*Art*

Japan

* + - Ando Hiroshige, [*One Hundred Views of Edo*](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/online/edo/) (1856)
		- Arita, [Porcelain plate with design of dragon](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_image.aspx?image=ps339597.jpg&retpage=16828) (1690s-1730s)
		- [Kimono with carp, water lilies, and morning glories](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/2006.73.2) (1876)

China

* + - Ma Lin, [wall scroll](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File%3AMa_Lin_001.jpg) (1246)
		- [Moon-shaped flask with birds](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/galleries/asia/room_95_chinese_ceramics.aspx) (1723-1725)
		- [Han Clothing](http://www.cultural-china.com/chinaWH/images/exbig_images/b26cda66c221adfd80f37804dd82997e.jpg), pre-17th century

India

* + - [*Radha at night*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File%3AIndischer_Maler_um_1650_%28I%29_001.jpg), Mughal painting (1650)
		- [Box with lid](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1996.3ab), late 16th century
		- [*Princess Damayanthi talking with Royal Swan about Nalan Hindu*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File%3ARavi_Varma-Princess_Damayanthi_talking_with_Royal_Swan_about_Nalan.jpg) (no date)

*Media*

* + - *Chinese Poems of the Tang and Sung Dynasties: Read by Lo Kung-Yuan in Northern Chinese, Peking Dialect* (Folkways Records, 1963)

*Film*

* + - *Rashomon* (1950) (Akira Kurosawa, dir.)
		- *Curse of the Golden Flower* (2006) (Zhang Yimou, dir.)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + ***Teachers Note:*** *After reading and discussing a work or pairing of works as a class, students prepare for seminars and essays by reflecting individually, in pairs, and/or in small groups on a given seminar/essay question. Ideas are student generated in this way. (Seminar/Essay assignments include more than one question. Teachers may choose one or all the questions to explore in the course of the seminar; students should choose one question for the essay.) Seminars should be held before students write essays so that they may explore their ideas thoroughly and refine their thinking before writing. (Click here* *to see a sample seminar scoring rubric.) Page and word counts for essays are not provided, but teachers should consider the suggestions regarding the use of evidence, for example, to determine the likely length of good essays. In future iterations of these maps, links to samples of student work will be provided.*

**Collaborate**

Reflect on seminar questions, take notes on your responses, and note the page numbers of the textual evidence you will refer to in your seminar and/or essay answers. Share your notes with a partner for feedback and guidance. Have you interpreted the text correctly? Is your evidence convincing? (RL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.1)

**Seminar and Essay**

Analyze Akutagawa’s story “In a Bamboo Grove” and Kurosawa’s film *Rashomon*. How do the story and the film portray the characters’ psychological states? (Note: Kurosawa’s *Rashomon* is based on Akutagawa’s “In a Bamboo Grove,” not on his “Rashomon,” though a few details from the latter story appear in the film.) Write an essay using at least three pieces of textual evidence to support an original thesis statement. (RL.9-10.7, SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2)

**Seminar and Essay**

How does fiction writer Ryunosuke Akutagawa or playwright Tsao Yu integrate Western literary influences into his work? Use textual evidence from the literary and informational texts to support an original thesis. Write an essay using at least three pieces of textual evidence to support your thesis statement. (RL.9-10.6, RL.9-10.9, SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9)

**Seminar and Essay**

How are the novels from India *Midnight’s Children* and *Nectar in a Sieve* allegorical texts? What does the allegory reveal about the author’s point of view? Use evidence from reference texts *Trading Places: The East India Company and Asia, 1600–1834* and *The Scandal of Empire: India and the creation of Imperial Britain.* Write an essay using at least three pieces of evidence from the novels and the reference texts to support an original thesis statement. (SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9)

**Seminar and Essay**

Compare and contrast *Midnight’s Children* and *Nectar in a Sieve*. How do they differ in meaning? How are they similar in meaning? Write an essay using at least two pieces of textual evidence from each text to support an original thesis statement. (RL.9-10.6, RL.9-10.9, SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9)

**Seminar and Essay**

What does Amal teach the other characters in Rabindranath Tagore’s *The Post Office*? Do these teachings reflect the values of Confucianism or Taoism? Write an essay using at least three pieces of textual evidence to support an original thesis. (RL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2,W.9-10.9)

**Seminar and Essay**

Does the poem “Spirit, Substance, Shadow” connect to the teachings of Lao Tzu or Confucius? What does the poem reveal about these two philosophies? Write an essay using at least three pieces of textual evidence from multiple sources to support an original thesis statement. (SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9)

**Seminar and Essay**

How do the works you have read so far in this unit honor or rebel against cultural tradition? Write an essay that supports an original thesis statement, using at least three pieces of textual evidence to describe the cultural traditions. (The teacher may choose to focus on one or two texts.) (RL.9-10.6, SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9)

**Seminar and Essay**

How do Benjamin Hoff’s allegories reveal Asian teachings? Do the allegories accurately illustrate these teachings? Write an essay that uses textual evidence to support an original thesis statement. Use evidence from more than one text. (RL.9-10.6, SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9)

**Seminar and Essay**

(*This assignment is especially appropriate for bi-lingual students who understand both languages presented in the texts.)* Read James Merrill’s poem “Lost in Translation” and discuss it in the context of the works of Asian literature that you have read in this unit. What skills does a good translator need? In translation, is meaning lost irrevocably to the reader? Write an essay that uses at least three pieces of textual evidence to support an original thesis. (RL.9-10.6, SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9)

**Essay**

Write a close literary analysis of one of the poems in the unit, with attention to its form, figurative language, symbolism, and meaning. Be sure to include any historical context necessary. Use at least three pieces of textual evidence to support your analysis in an essay. (SL.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9)

**Oral Presentation**

(*This assignment is especially appropriate for bi-lingual students who understand both languages presented in the texts.)* Choose a recording of a poem from *Chinese Poems of the Tang and Sung Dynasties,* or find a different recording. Play the recording and explain the literary structure of the poem. Present two translations of the poem and compare the choices the translators have made. (RL.9-10.5)

[Scoring Rubric](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/Socratic_Seminar_Rubric_SP.doc)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [Lessons of the Indian Epics: The Ramayana](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=600) (National Endowment for the Humanities) (RL.9-10.3)

This series of lessons examines the *Ramayana* as an epic poem that offers moral lessons through the examples of its characters.

[Being in the *Noh*: An Introduction to Two Japanese *Noh* Plays](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=628) (National Endowment for the Humanities) (RL.9-10.6)

This lesson provides an introduction to the elements of *Noh* plays. Using the text of two plays, it allows students to compare the conventions of the *Noh* play with other dramatic forms with which they may already be familiar, such as the Ancient Greek dramas of Sophocles. By reading classic examples of *Noh* plays, such as *Atsumori*, students will learn to identify the structure, characters, style, and stories typical to this form of drama. Students will expand their grasp of these conventions by using them to write the introduction to a *Noh* play of their own.

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**Terminology**

* + - absurd
		- allegory
		- Confucianism
		- figurative language
		- filial piety
		- first person perspective
		- foreshadowing
		- internal monologue
		- irony
		- metaphor
		- morality
		- paradox
		- perfect rhyme
		- perspective
		- poetic translation
		- simile
		- stream of consciousness
		- symbol
		- Taoism
		- theme
		- third person omniscience
		- tone (Chinese)
		- vice
		- virtue

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