**Body Biography Instructions**

**Assignment Overview**

This week you will create a body biography—a visual and written analysis of your character. You will present your analysis to the class. Your body biography should be creative, thorough, analytical, and accurate, and it should promote discussion of your character.

Because Tan develops her characters in a fragmented, non-linear sequence, it is *especially* important that you work together to convey the *full* essence of mother or daughter, as understood by looking at *all four parts* of her story.

The choices you make as you devise your body bio should be based on the text. Be sure to meet all requirements (below), but feel free to add your own flair to your analysis.

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| **Requirements** | **Notes / Ideas** |
| **1** | **Symbolic colors, objects, and actions*** Tan associates specific colors, objects, and actions with each character in her novel
* Incorporate these symbols in your analysis (remember to consider chapter titles)
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| **2** | **Body outline*** Consider the character’s posture and the positioning of his or her arms and legs
* How would he/she be standing? Will he/she be holding something?
* Use the character’s outline to convey the individual’s personality and conflict(s)
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| **3** | **Heart*** Where should it be placed to best represent what this character loves most?
* What should it look like? (consider shape and color here)
* What object**s** or idea**s** should be placed in or near the character’s heart?
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| **4** | **Spine or backbone*** Actors often discuss a character's "spine." This is or her objective in the work.
* What is the most important goal for your character?
* What drives his/her thought and actions?
* The answers to these questions are his/her "spine." How can you illustrate it?
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| **5** | **Hands*** What does the character hold in his or her hands?
* Item**s** associated with the character—literally or figuratively—should be included
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| **6** | **Foundation*** On what is the character standing? What ideals provide the character’s “foundation”?
* The foundation should represent the character's most fundamental beliefs about life.
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| **7** | **Background*** The area surrounding the body outline represents the character’s past.
* What important information do we learn about the character’s history in the book?
* Include important aspect**s** of the character’s individual history in the background.
* Remember to include all of the events that shape the character’s worldview, personality, or self-identity.
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| **8** | **Quotations*** Near the character’s head, place two direct quotations from the novel that directly convey the thematic message you think this character conveys in Tan’s novel.
* These quotes must come from separate chapters—one from each story that the character tells (for Suyuan, pull from the first and last chapter dedicated to providing her history, as told by Jing-Mei)
* Beneath the quotes, state the theme in 1 sentence (*keep the theme statement concise: 15 words or less*)
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**Other Items for Consideration**

**Placement**

Carefully choose the placement of your text and artwork. For example, the hands might refer to accomplishments of the character; the legs might refer to character actions.

**Virtues & vices**

What are your character's most admirable qualities? His/her worst?

How can you make us visualize them?

**Mirror, mirror**

Consider how your character appears to others and what you know about the character's inner self. Do these images clash or correspond? How can you illustrate this “mirror” image?

**More Notes & Ideas**

