

American Born Chinese: First Edition

Venn Diagram



Purpose:

The purpose of creating this Venn Diagram is to discover similarities and connections between the three stories told in American Born Chinese. The students will explore the structure of the graphic novel, understanding how the individual stories are related before the author reveals the big connection at the end. There are many great thematic connections throughout the book that can be discovered with the help of this writing strategy. This activity will help the students learn to read more closely, looking for patterns and themes. They will learn to make connections.

Context:

This strategy will be most useful if it is introduced early on in the reading, and revisited throughout the entire book. A good time to re-examine this activity is at the end of each chapter.

Directions:

This graphic organizer is designed to help the students find text-to-text connections. In preparation for this activity, the students should understand that they will be comparing the three different stories in American Born Chinese, searching for connections between the plights of each character.

It will also be important that the students know how to use a Venn Diagram. First you could model this activity by having the students complete a simple Venn diagram comparing themselves to another classmate (Briefly explain this or explain how to model the first comparison if you want them to begin on the actual worksheet). The instructions for this one are as follows:

- Pass out copies of the handout attached to this document.
- Explain that each circle represents one of the characters in the story: The Monkey King, Jin, and Chin-kee (or Danny). Have them write those names in each circle.
- The middle section, where all three circles meet, is where the students will record the similarities between each character and their current plights.
- The sections where two circles overlap is where they can write/record any similarities that they discover between the two corresponding characters.

- The sections where the circles do not overlap is where they can record information individual to each character.

To help the students begin to think about this concept of similarities, you might prompt them with some ideas, such as: attitudes, appearance, ethnicity, problems the characters face, others' attitudes toward the main characters, etc.

These handouts should be passed out near the beginning of the unit, allowing the students to record as they read the book. Ask them to record their ideas at the end of each chapter, but more frequently, if they wish. You will want to allow them 15-20 minutes to work on it initially, as well as 5 minutes several times throughout the novel to allow them to develop and add to those ideas. Close to the end of the novel, you will want to conclude with a discussion of what the students have discovered. You need to make sure you do this BEFORE they finish the novel, or the book will tell them the concrete connection. Have them make predictions. Some prompts to inspire this discussion could be:

- What are the similarities between these characters?
- Why would the author make those connections?
- Do any of the stories or themes repeat?
- What does repetition imply? (importance and emphasis)
- Make a prediction of how you think these characters might be connected.

Assessment:

As an immediate assessment, the teacher will move throughout the classroom, looking at a few of the answers each student has recorded. The teacher will guide any student who doesn't seem to understand the assignment.

The teacher could also walk around to each of the students and stamp the back of their assignment to count for participation points. If you do this each time, it will be easy to keep track of the daily participation.