

Suggested Answers

Activity 1: Identifying Events

Setting	Event
a. Mr. Li's office	Ah-Ma visited the office to try and see Tanjong Rhu through the binoculars her son had bought for her. She was unable to see the actual place, but she could 'see' it in her mind, something that Mr Li did not understand.
b. The altar room in Mr Li's house	Ying had an argument with her grandmother who refused to let her help at the family altar and questioned her understanding of their family traditions.
c. The hospital	Mr Li scolded Ying whom he thought was treating her grandmother with disrespect. Father and daughter exchanged harsh words due to this misunderstanding.

Activity 2: Information Gap

1. successful/wealthy
2. mother
3. events
4. binoculars
5. Tanjong Rhu
6. stories
7. death/demise
8. family relationships

Activity 3: Describing Characters**1. Mr T. W. Li**

Character trait	Evidence
Loving/Caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buys binoculars for his mother to see better • Makes sure that his mother's burial is done the right way
Filial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decides to take care of the family altar as his mother would want him to
Prefers the simple life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks the rooms in his house are too big and too many • Dislikes his wife's gatherings with her friends where they eat cakes made with expensive fruit

2. Ah-Ma

Character trait	Evidence
Stubborn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuses to go for an eye operation to remove her cataracts • Insists on using real candles for years
Traditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes care of the family altar • Makes sure that the ancestral worship customs are followed properly
Kind/Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands her son who is trying to distance himself from his past

3. Ying

Character trait	Evidence
Disrespectful of customs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not see the importance of following the traditional customs and rituals properly
Loving/Caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes care of her sick grandmother in the hospital

Accept any relevant answers.

Activity 4: Themes

Theme	Evidence
The conflict between traditional and modern values and beliefs.	Ah-Ma is a traditional woman who follows the old Chinese traditional practice of ancestral worship. In contrast, her granddaughter Ying does not believe in doing the ritual properly although she helps Ah-Ma at the altar.
The importance of remembering our roots.	Mr Li avoids talking about his past because he does not want to be reminded of the time when he was poor. He chooses to forget about the happiness of being close to his mother in the old days. This makes him feel guilty and regretful after his mother's death.

Accept any relevant answers.

Activity 5: Lessons Learnt

Lesson Learnt	Evidence
We must learn to appreciate other people while we still can.	Mr Li is aware that his mother cannot see clearly, so he buys her a pair of binoculars to enable her to see the ships and the harbour from his office window.
We must not forget our roots.	Mr Li is ashamed of his poor background. He tries to look like someone who has inherited his wealth. In the end, he is full of regrets because he has chosen to forget his roots.

Accept any relevant answers.

Bibliography

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