



**A teacher's guide**  
**created by Marcie Colleen**  
**based upon the picture book**  
**written by Margaret Chiu Greanias and**  
**illustrated by Tracy Subisak**

This classroom guide is designed for students in first through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *Amah Faraway* into the curricula.

All activities were created in conjunction with the Common Core and other relevant content standards.

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To learn more about Margaret Chiu Greanias, visit her at <https://margaretgrianias.com>. To learn more about Tracy Subisak visit her at <http://tracysubisak.com>.

## Before You Read...

Before reading *Amah Faraway*...

Look closely at the Front Cover ~

- Read the title aloud.
- Describe what you see.
- Who do you think the people are? What are they doing?
- Imagine you are the child in the illustration. How does this pose make you feel?
- When do you think this story takes place? Today or a long time ago? What clues on the cover tell you this?
- Can you guess what the story might be about?

The Back Cover~

- Describe what you see.
- Read the text on the back cover.
- Does this text give you further information about what the story is about? How so?



# English Language Arts

## Reading Comprehension

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book is about.

- Who is Kylie going to go visit?
- Why do you think Kylie has butterflies in her stomach?
- Describe some of the ways Kylie and Amah connect during their Saturday video chats.
- "Video chats weren't the same as real life." Explain why in your own words.
- Amah lives in Taipei, and Kylie lives in San Francisco. Look at a globe or a map. How far away are they from each other? Can you figure out how long the plane ride would be?
- Why do you think Kylie holds tight to Mama when they arrive in Taipei?
- What are some of the things that feel strange or different to Kylie in Taipei?
- What are some of the things that feel familiar to Kylie in Taipei?
- Look closely at the banquet the family has for Mama and Kylie. List THREE words to describe the scene.
- Why do you think Kylie only ate rice at the banquet?
- Amah takes Kylie and Mama around Taipei. How does Kylie react to:
  - The donuts?
  - The park?
  - The night market?
- What changes on the day they go to the hot springs?
- How does Kylie's reaction to the following change after the hot springs:
  - The donuts?
  - The park?
  - The night market?
- How is the banquet at the end of their trip different from the banquet when they arrived?
- How does the trip to Taipei change the way Amah and Kylie connect on Saturday video chats?



Let's talk about the people who made *Amah Faraway*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?

Now, let's look closely at the illustrations.

- Do an image search on the Internet of Taipei. What elements of Taipei do you see in Tracy Subisak's illustrations? You can use the doodles on the end papers to help you.
- Use the Internet to search for something in Taipei that Tracy Subisak did not include in her illustrations, and create your own drawing.
- Display the finished drawings in the classroom.

### Critical Thinking

In fiction stories, a character usually changes in some way. Do you think Kylie changed in the story? How? (*Analyzing, inferring, giving support to an idea*)

How would the story be different if Kylie had not tried new things in Taipei? (*predicting, cause and effect*)

What do you think is the theme of this story? (*family, cultural differences, new experiences, connecting with loved ones*)

### Wish You Were Here ~ Postcards from Taipei

Kylie's amah lives in Taipei.

If you were to travel to Taipei:

- How would you get there?
- What would you see?
- What would you hear?
- What would you do?
- What would the weather be like?



Create a large postcard of your trip to Taipei. Be sure to illustrate one side and include a note to a best friend or family member on the other side. Be sure to be descriptive, so that the person who gets the postcard can best imagine your trip.

Display the postcards on a bulletin board, along with a map indicating where Taipei is located.

- Where are some of the major spots to visit in Taipei? Use the list in the back of the book to start.
- Where would you want to visit? Why?

### The Mandarin Language

*Amah Faraway* introduces words from the Mandarin language which may be new for students. See the front endpapers for a list of items with their English words and then their Mandarin words on the back endpapers.

Create flashcards of Mandarin and English words. Then create a matching game like Memory in which kids match the Mandarin word to the English translation.

### Additional Exploration:

- Come up with a way to remember what the word means. Using Total Physical Response and a partner, students can create an action that symbolizes the word and helps them remember it.
- Research and learn other common words and phrases in Mandarin. How would you say the following?

- Good morning.
- Excuse me.
- Please.
- I'm sorry.
- Nice to meet you.
- Thank you.



### Feelings and Color

As a class, discuss the feelings and emotions Kylie goes through in *Amah Faraway*.

Make feeling charts.

- List feelings from *Amah Faraway* in the Feelings column (nervous, curious, shy, hungry, happy).
- Have children choose a color for each feeling and explain why they are choosing each color for each feeling.
- Then, in the "When I Felt That Way" column, students should write about a time they felt that feeling.

| FEELING | COLOR | WHEN I FELT THAT WAY |
|---------|-------|----------------------|
|         |       |                      |
|         |       |                      |
|         |       |                      |
|         |       |                      |

- Look closely at *Amah Faraway* and create a colorful piece of art that depicts Kylie's emotional journey to Taipei and back.
- Choose one of the situations in the "When I Felt That Way" column and illustrate it using the color included on the chart. Students can create their own piece of art to represent the emotion.

# Math

## How Many People at the Banquet?



For this activity students will need to draw the above math equation on a piece of paper.

Each square will represent a banquet table. Have students pair up. Give each pair of students several “people”. These can be buttons or pennies or even jellybeans.

One partner closes their eyes, the other partner places some “people” in each of the first two squares. Each box can only hold up to 12 people, like the banquet tables in *Amah Faraway*.

They write the total in the square at the end and then cover up one of the squares with a paper cup or piece of paper.

The other partner guesses how many people are at the banquet.

Use the pennies or buttons to figure out the following:

- If there are 2 tables at the banquet and 12 people at each, how many people are at the banquet?
- What about 4 tables with 10 people each?
- Or 5 tables with 4 people each?

## Let’s Go on a Globe Trip!

This activity provides a hands-on view of the planet for kids and explores distances between countries, cities, and towns around the world.

In addition to a globe, you will need:

- Modeling clay
- Card stock
- Dot stickers
- Ruler
- Something to write with

Place a dot sticker on San Francisco where Kylie lives. Place another dot on Taipei where Kylie’s amah lives.

Find your own city on the globe. This will be your starting point or "home." Place a dot sticker there. Place more dots on various locations around the globe. The places chosen may be the result of ongoing discussions or learning opportunities, such as a location someone might have visited recently, or where polar bears live.

Make several strips with modelling clay by rubbing the clay between your palms or rolling the clay on a table with a palm.

Place each clay strip on the globe to link the starting point with one other dot. Link all the dots to the "home" dot with clay strips. This will take some trial and error rolling the clay to get the lengths just right!

Observe the design of the modelling clay on the globe. The result will be hub-like with the various spokes.

Looking closely at the design, predict which country/state/city is farthest away from "home."

Carefully transfer the strips of modelling clay to a simple graph drawn on card stock. Be sure to label each one.

Once the clay is placed on the graph, compare each strip. Determine the shortest and longest distances.

Talk about how you might travel from one place to another (plane, train, etc.)

## Social Studies

### Destination: Taipei

As a class, locate Taipei on a map and or/globe. Then, conduct research of Taipei and the Taiwanese people on the Internet.

Information of interest can include:

- History
- Culture
- Music and dance
- Diet
- Shelter
- Climate
- Geography
- Economy

Gather photographs of Taipei.





Then, plan a week-long fictitious trip to Taipei. Be sure to plan transportation to and within Taipei (maybe on the MRT), food, what to pack, what to do and see. Detail your trip in a daily itinerary.

Include a budget, considering local economy and the US dollar.

### **All About Me; All About My Family**

This project allows students the opportunity to get to know one another and serves as an introduction to family.

Students will make books that contain pages with answered questions and pictures about themselves and other loved ones in their lives.

Yarn is used to bind the pages together.

Each student should have a special day that he reads his book to the class.

- Pages in each book include:

A portrait  
I am called \_\_\_\_  
My first and last name is \_\_\_\_  
My address is \_\_\_\_  
I live in \_\_\_\_ (the country, a city, etc.)  
I live with \_\_\_\_  
I am good at \_\_\_\_  
My favorite snack is \_\_\_\_

- In addition to the page about themselves, additional pages should be created about family and other loved ones in the student's life.

### **My Ancestor Collage**

Ancestors are people who we are related to that may have lived a very long time ago and we have never met. Learning about our ancestors can teach us about our heritage or where we come from.

Choose one ancestor to study.

- What country did your ancestor come from?
- Print out a map of your ancestor's country.
- Draw a flag of the country.
- How would your ancestor have said "hello"?
- Draw a picture representing your ancestor's job or occupation.
- If you have one, print out a picture of your ancestor. If you don't have a photograph, then draw a picture.

Using the above, put together an ancestor collage, introducing your ancestor to your fellow classmates.

## Finding Commonalities/Uniqueness

Kylie and Amah are different because they live in different cultures or countries. But they also have lots of things in common.

Finding what you have in common with other people is a good way to start a meaningful relationship.

Here is a way to learn what you have in common with your classmates, while also celebrating what makes each of you unique.

Materials: A pen and two pieces of paper.

- This activity can be done as a whole class or in pairs.
- On one sheet of paper, you will have twenty minutes to come up with a list of things in common. Completely obvious answers such as “we both have hair” or “we are both in \_\_\_\_\_ class” are not allowed!
- After twenty minutes, switch to the other paper. You now have twenty minutes to come up with a list of things that are unique to only one person.
- Share both lists with the class when finished.

