

The Great Wall of Lucy Wu Discussion Guide

 [scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/great-wall-lucy-wu-discussion-guide](https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/great-wall-lucy-wu-discussion-guide)

About the Book

Lucy Wu thinks she is about to have the perfect year. Her annoying big sister is moving out to go to college, and Lucy is about to have her own room for the first time. Plus Lucy is ready to rule the school as a sixth-grader and play basketball with her best friend, Madison. When her parents announce that a long-lost aunt is coming to visit from China and is *staying in Lucy's room*, though, Lucy thinks her year is ruined. But is it? Like the Chinese saying that events that appear to be good or bad luck often turn out to be quite the opposite, Lucy finds that while she may not get the "perfect" year she had planned, she can create something better.

Discussion Questions

1. In the prologue, why does Lucy believe that the Chinese story about the old man and his horse fits her situation? Do you think she is correct? How is this story similar to the saying, "Every cloud has a silver lining"? How is it different?
2. Are there idioms - in English or another language - that describe your life or how you view the world? Try inventing a new idiom that describes one aspect of you and your view of the world.
3. What role does food play in this story? How does the author show Lucy's feelings through food? What role does food play in your life? What dishes does your family have for celebrations? What do you think makes a dish become part of a tradition?
4. Learn how to make a favorite family dish, and share it, including the recipe. How long has this recipe been in the family? Who is most famous for making it? What country is it from?
5. What is the secret that Lucy's grandmother kept from her family? Why did she have this secret? Was her decision to keep a secret harmful or helpful to the rest of the family?
6. What comment by Yi Po does Lucy misinterpret? Do you think she would have made the same mistake if Yi Po had spoken English? What if Lucy had been in a better mood?
7. Find examples in the book of how older people are perceived and treated in Chinese culture. How does this compare with perceptions of older people in the United States? Why do you think older people are treated differently in these two cultures?
8. Look through the advertisements in a magazine. What products are sold with young-looking people, and what products are sold with older-looking people? Based on the ads, do you think it is more desirable to be younger or older?
9. After the student-faculty basketball game has been announced, Sloane tells Lucy she shouldn't try out for captain because "who ever heard of a basketball team lead by a short Chinese girl". What does Sloane hope to gain from saying that? How does her attitude compare to Lucy's dad's belief that Lucy should not focus on basketball because very few Chinese-Americans play professionally?
10. Research pioneers in other sports and professions, such as Jackie Robinson, the first baseball player to integrate professional baseball, and Sandra Day O'Connor, the first female Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. What did they have to overcome to become a "first"?
11. In what ways does Sloane intimidate Lucy? Why doesn't Lucy tell her parents or teachers? Do you think Lucy's reasons are common to kids who are being bullied? What can schools do to help kids

who are being bullied or intimidated?

12. How do Lucy's feelings toward Talent Chang change over time? When do they really become friends? What qualities would Lucy say she admires about Talent?
13. What does Lucy learn about Yi Po from the photograph of Lucy's grandmother? How does the photograph change how Lucy feels about Yi Po and how Lucy herself decides to act?
14. Find an older photograph either in a family album or online and study it. What moment or story do you think the photographer was trying to capture? Look for clues as to how people used to live from their clothing, their belongings and how the photo is taken. What is missing from the photograph that you might see in a similar picture taken today? Try to find out the story behind the picture, or imagine one for yourself. How has digital photography changed the way people feel about photographs?
15. Describe Lucy's friendship with Madison. How does their friendship compare with Gabi and Ariana's friendship with Sloane? What kinds of friends do you prefer? Do you think one kind of friend is better than the other? What qualities do you look for in a best friend?
16. How does Lucy's side of the room reflect her mood? Do you think a person's surroundings is a sign of how they are feeling? Do you think you can change your mood by changing your surroundings?

- Part of Collection:

[Asian Pacific American Heritage Month](#)

- Subjects:

Basketball, Bullying Experiences, Content Area Reading, Literature, Reading Comprehension, Literature Appreciation, Asian and Asian American, Extended Families, Tolerance and Acceptance, Prejudice and Tolerance Experiences, Understanding Self and Others

- Skills:

Reading Comprehension