

FINAL PROJECT

**Application of Translanguaging Pedagogy
in Chinese 8th Grade English Class**

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1. Introduction

1.1. Who should read this manual

This manual is primarily designed for English teachers in Chinese middle school, especially for teachers of 8th grade students, to extend the use of research-based pedagogy in their teaching activities. Most English teachers in Chinese middle schools are English language learners, who usually use their native language in their classrooms. But tranlanguaging is still a strange academic term for them even though they might have tried some instructional practice related to this theory. By reading this manual, these English teachers will have a clear overview of tranlanguaging theory. Hopefully, they can also make use this theory to create new strategies of teaching or modify traditional teaching methods.

Also, this manual analyzes how instructional practices in 8th grade English class reflect different educational psychology principles in order to give teachers and parents a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of different instructions.

One thing need to notice is that this manual focuses on teaching second language literacy, which means teachers who teach reading and writing classes will gain more information and inspirations from this manual.

1.2. How to use this manual

First, this manual will provide readers with a brief introduction of tranlanguaging theory and transpanguaging pedagogy by synthesizing previous research, which includes definitions, key components of tranlanguaging pedagogy, and major objectives of implementation. Readers will acquire some background knowledge of translanguaging theory in this introducing part. Then, two typical lesson plan samples are offered in this manual, one of which is for reading class and the other is for writing class. Each lesson plan will elaborately display all in-class instructions among which some are commonly

used and some are quite innovative. Next part will demonstrate how these instructions make use of translanguaging theory and reflect various principles and definitions in educational psychology by analyzing two lesson plans offered. Additionally, expansion of correlational educational psychology concepts in teaching practice will also be referred to in this part. For the sake of clearness and conciseness, all psychology concepts referred to or related to in this manual will be numbered and displayed in Appendix 1, and each specific teaching process in the lesson plans will be superscripted with these numbers to indicate corresponding educational psychology concepts embodied. On the one hand, audience of the manual will have more profound understandings of educational psychology. On the other hand, connections between instructional practices in genuine classroom setting and psychology are perspicuously presented.

Two presented lesson plans should be considered as a beginning of thinking of how to involve translanguaging theory into real practice to support English language learners. Teachers are expected to assimilate analysis in this manual from their own perspectives and attempt to utilize related educational psychology concepts to modify and refine their instructions in the years ahead.

2. Translanguaging Theory and Pedagogy

The first research focusing on translanguaging was done by Cen Williams (1994), who conducted an investigation in which students were deliberately required to read and hear in one language and to write and speak in another. However, Williams did not make any explicit interpretations of translanguaging in the investigation. So many other researchers later extended this theory, and their interpretations could be divided into two primary perspectives. From a linguistic perspective, translanguaging is “the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages” (Otheguy, García, Reid, 2015,

p281). From a pedagogical perspective, translanguaging is “an approach to bilingualism that is centered not on languages as has been often the case, but on the practices of bilinguals that are readily observable” (García, 2009, p45)

The importance of translanguaging theory has been revealed in previous research from different aspects (eg: linguistic, educational, socio-political, etc), and I will mainly display three primary aspects, which could best reflect the significance of this theory. First of all, translanguaging is an approach to make use of languages of bi/multilinguals by considering they possess one linguistic repertoire instead of several different autonomous language systems (Kasula,2016; García, 2009). Second, translanguaging also provides multilingual speakers with support in affirming language identities by “creating a social space bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance” (Wei, 2010, p1223). Next, translanguaging theory has deep social justice implications for the education of bilingual students (García, 2017), especially for the US education system in which bilingual or multilingual speakers used to be considered as disadvantaged learners. But in translanguaging classrooms, they will have more space to enjoy social justice.

In García’s book *The Translanguaging Classroom*, translanguaging pedagogy consists of three main strands including stance, design and shifts (García, 2017). To be more specific, a translanguaging stance means teachers will utilize students’ different language resources rather than consider their native language as an obstacle to learning English. The strand of design contains two aspects, one of which is design of translanguaging instruction, and the other is design translanguaging assessment. The former one aims to develop students’ strategic learning abilities by leveraging their different language resources, and the latter one emphasizes to determine students’ performance by evaluating their general linguistic performance instead of only assessing

their use of English. The last strand of shift means teachers should create a space to allow students to work by themselves and to express their own opinions, and teachers will make some flexible shifts to respond to those unplanned contents. In addition, García has summarized major objectives of using this pedagogy as follow:

- 1) To support students as they engage with and comprehend complex content and texts.
- 2) To provide opportunities for students to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts.
- 3) To make space for students' bilingualism and ways of knowing.
- 4) To support students' socioemotional development and bilingual identities.

(García, 2017, p29)

3. Two Samples of Lesson Plans

In this section, two lesson plans designed for 8th grade English class are presented below. One is for reading class and the other is for writing class. Specific procedures and instructions, which involve the application of translanguaging pedagogy, are illustrated in each lesson plan. Each superscripted number stands for a certain concept in educational psychology, which can be found in Appendix 1. Also, teaching materials used in each lesson plan are clearly consigned in Appendix 2. Abbreviation used in two lesson plans to avoid repetition includes SWBAT, which means 'Students Will Be Able To'. Below is two sample lesson plans:

Sample 1

<p><u>Topic:</u> How do you celebrate new year?</p>	<p><u>Class:</u> Reading class for 8th grade students</p>	<p><u>Total time:</u></p>
<p><u>Content Objectives:</u> --SWBAT have an overview of main festivals in American and China. --SWBAT summarize differences and similarities between Christmas and Chinese Spring Festival. --SWBAT understand the underlying cultural backgrounds behind Christmas and Spring Festival.</p>	<p><u>Language Objectives:</u> -- SWBAT acquire new vocabularies including names of different festivals and corresponding customs. -- SWBAT extract information from article and relate it to self-experience -- SWBAT utilize contrastive connectives to do comparison</p>	
<p><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> Festivals; Customs; Differences; Culture.</p>	<p><u>Materials (including supplementary and adapted):</u> -Article: <i>The Comparison Between Chinese and American Festivals</i> ^{[17], [11], [12]} -Form: Christmas VS. Chinese New Year ^{[17], [30], [11]}</p>	
<p><u>Introductory Activity:</u> Ask students what do they know about ways or festivals to celebrate new year's coming in different places around the world, and ask them to exchange their knowledge and experience in groups (3-4 people in each group). Then students share their opinions with the whole class. ^{[8], [9], [26], [29], [30]}</p>		
<p><u>Time:</u> 3min</p>	<p><u>Teaching procedures:</u> 1. Ask students to list names and dates of main festivals in China and America (based on the assigned article), and help students figure out English names of specific festivals. ^{[5], [9], [28]}</p>	

4min for discussion; 3min for sharing	2. In small groups of 3 or four, ask students to list 3 most important key words/phrases regarding Chinese Spring Festival and Christmas respectively, then sharing reasons with the whole class. ^{[25], [26], [7]}
7min	3. List differences and similarities between Spring festivals and Christmas mentioned in the assigned article on the white board including their origins, customs, and foods. Encourage students to use their own words instead of using sentences in the article. I will help them when they encounter strange words in expressions. ^{[24], [5], [3], [18]}
4min	4. Connecting with students' self-experience, how much of their experience are the same as what the article said, and on what aspects their experience are different from content regarding Spring festival in the reading. ^{[1], [2], [3], [8], [9], [14]}
3min	5. Summarizing key vocabulary of expressing customs of different festivals. ^{[24], [25]}
5min	6. Ask students discuss in group what kind of cultural factors behind these differences and similarities, they can utilize information from the article, but new ideas based on self-experience are encouraged. ^{[28], [3], [7], [20], [21]}
4min	7. Teach students frequently used contrastive connectives with example sentences. ^[16]
6min	8. Based on information in the form and summarized above, ask student use contrastive connectives to write sentences of comparing differences between Christmas and Spring Festival, then ask students share their sentences, require them to compare from different perspectives. ^{[3], [10], [12], [13], [20]}
4min	9. Review vocabulary and new expressions they have learned in class about different festivals, especially the translation of proper nouns. ^{[10], [2], [1]}
2min	10. Give each student a blank card, ask them to write down what new ideas they have learned regarding our own festivals and western festivals like Christmas, and what questions they still have. ^{[14], [4]}

(Note: SWBAT is the abbreviation of 'Student Will Be Able To...')

Sample 2

<p><u>Topic:</u> Can I have a pet? (Introduction of argumentative writing)</p>	<p><u>Class:</u> Writing class for 8th grade students</p>	<p><u>Time:</u></p>
<p><u>Content Objectives:</u> --SWBAT express their own opinions from different perspectives --SWBAT understand what is argumentative writing --SWBAT identify thesis statement, evidence and process of warranting</p>	<p><u>Language Objectives:</u> -- SWBAT acquire new terms and vocabularies -- SWBAT make their own complete arguments and defend their own opinions with evidence or examples. -- SWBAT make refutation with evidence and examples</p>	
<p><u>Key Vocabulary:</u> Argument, persuade, thesis statement, warrant, refute</p>	<p><u>Materials (including supplementary and adapted):</u> - White board and markers in different color - Introduction Video (Argumentative writing: Definition, Format & Examples) ^{[29], [30]} - PowerPoint - Handout</p>	
<p><u>Introductory Activity :</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students do they like pets? Do they have pets at home? ^{[9], [17], [29]} 2. Set up a situation (with pictures presented on the PowerPoint): Amanda likes dogs very much and she really wants to keep a puppy dog at home, but her little brother Sam doesn't want to keep a pet at home. If you were Amanda (or Sam), what would you say to persuade your parents why it is good to (or not to) keep a pet dog at home? (Separate students to two big groups. All girls will represent Amanda, and all boys will represent Sam.) ^{[5], [9], [28], [30]} 		
<p><u>Time:</u></p>	<p><u>Teaching procedures:</u></p>	

10min	1. Ask two groups of students to share their opinions by turn and write them separately on the white board. List all reasons they came up with in the discussion. (5min) Then ask each group to discuss again and pick up three strongest reasons to persuade Amanda's/Sam's parents. (5min) ^{[7],[15], [21]}
4min	2. Divide students into 6 groups: each group will be assigned to defend one of the six reasons listed on the white board with more details (evidence) and specific examples. Then ask each group to write them on the white board below the reason that they support. ^{[5], [23]}
10min	3. Discuss with the whole class to figure out whether the evidence and examples provided are appropriate and effective enough to persuade others. ^{[14], [15], [20]}
10min	4. Then introduce argumentative writing: Instead of saying, people also write articles to persuade audience, and to write a good argumentative essay you have to know the format of it. Watch the video with students (6min). Then ask students the definition and format of argumentative writing according to the video (based on the video content but use their own words, praise and encourage students when they accurately catch some important key words).
6min	5. Remind students their knowledge of argumentative writing in Chinese. Ask them what are the three components of argumentative writing in Chinese, then give them corresponding translation in English. e.g.: 论点---- Thesis statement 论据---- Evidence 论证---- Warrant Ask students try to explain each component in English, make modifications if necessary. ^{[3], [13], [16], [24]}
20min	6. Read the article on the handout and brainstorm the thesis statement, evidence and warrant in this passage. Discuss in two-three people and write them down. Then ask students to share their results. ^{[11], [12], [10], [27]}
6min	7. Ask students to make refutation to this article and make their own argument. Just let them list their thesis statements (at least three sentences), and share with other group members. ^{[23], [27]}
15min	8. Summary: review all definitions and terms learned in this class (prompt questions). Make a competition. ^{[24], [25]}

6min	9. Finally, ask what do they feel difficult/easy about argumentative writing. Leave Homework: Complete their refutation to the electric car article to a persuasive argumentative essay.
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(Note: SWBAT is the abbreviation of ‘Student Will Be Able To...’)

4. Reflections on Educational Psychology

Since these are too many concepts in educational psychology, this manual will analyze how these two sample lesson plans using translanguaging pedagogy relate to educational psychology from several main perspectives as follow:

4.1. Transfer

Transferring is a really important process in translanguaging theory in that students’ knowledge in first language could be transferred to learn the second language. This knowledge will not only include linguistic knowledge, but also mention to cultural knowledge as well. For example, in the Sample 2, students’ knowledge in Chinese argumentative writings can be used to make an analogy to argumentative writing in English. Since translanguaging theory has recognized students’ language resources, transferring could be extensively used in English classes to leverage various language resources derived from students. Students’ prior knowledge plays a significant role in transferring without which transferring will hardly proceed.

4.2. Constructivism

Constructivists will facilitate students’ learning rather than dictate them to follow their instructions. Most of the time, students will use hints and clues given by teachers to work out problems by themselves. Constructivism has been adopted in both sample lesson plans. Many class activities are designed to offer students opportunities to accomplish independent or cooperative tasks. Also, group discussions are supportive and indispensable, which could be found in a lot of teaching procedures in each lesson plan.

4.3. Conceptual changes

Formal knowledge gained at school could help students to change their prior knowledge or informal knowledge acquired out of school. In the first sample lesson plan, the reading material could help students know more about how foreigners celebrate their new year. Comparisons can also modify their previous understandings of different festivals. Apart from activities mentioned in these two lesson plans, teachers can also make conceptual change by introducing alternative theories and leading students to think more deeply.

4.4. Strategic learning

Teachers can develop students' strategic learning skills by adopting strategic teaching. Teaching students various learning strategies is the biggest part of strategic teaching. Strategies involve general strategies and domain-specific strategies. In this manual, some general strategies have been presented in two lesson plans. But these strategies are far from sufficient for students to achieve academic success. Hence, teachers are supposed to do more research on strategic teaching and learning to figure out more effective strategies which could assist students' learning.

4.5. Motivation

One thing noted is that, technology is an effective tool to keep students motivated. In the Sample 2, video and PowerPoint are used to give students more visual support to ensure more motivation. Motivation has a lot to do with students' individual interests and situational interests. Students will be definitely more motivated if teaching contents are of their interests, but sometimes it is hard to satisfy all students' interests. So situational interest is an aspect that needs to be paid more attention to ensure enough motivation of students.

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Appendix 1. Definitions in Educational Psychology

Note: All concepts given in this part are based on definitions in *Psychology in Learning and Instruction* written by Patricia A. Alexander

[1] **Equilibration:** The means by which individuals incorporate new or disparate knowledge and experiences into their existing knowledge structures.

[2] **Assimilation:** The process of new information or experiences absorbed by existing knowledge structures.

[3] **Accommodation:** The process of modifying existing schemes if the new and conflicting information is to become part of one's internal mental world.

[4] **Cognitive constructivism:** A theory portrays knowledge as being individually formed and represents knowledge as an individual possession.

[5] **Constructivism:** Give more power to individuals or groups in the formulation of knowledge and to treat knowledge as more variable and far less certain.

[6] **Social constructivism:** Thinking and learning are dependent on social interactions and reflective of cultural values.

[7] **Zone of proximal development:** The gap between what any person can accomplish mentally when working alone and what can be accomplished with the support or guidance of a more knowledgeable or capable other.

[8] **Prior knowledge:** All that a person knows or believes, whether positive or negative, accurate or inaccurate, real or imagined, verifiable or nonverifiable.

[9] **Unschooling/ informal knowledge:** Understandings acquired as a result of out-of-school experiences.

[10] **Schooled/ formal knowledge:** Scientific concepts or ideas that are abstracted or generalized from routine human interactions

[11] **Decoding:** Breaking the linguistic code.

[12] Encoding: Achieving fluency or automaticity in converting encryptions into meaning

[13] Transfer: The use of knowledge and skills acquired in one situation in a novel situation.

[14] Productive thinking: Construct new interpretations or devise new insights from available information.

[15] Reproductive thinking: Echo or mimick thoughts or procedures presented by others.

[16] Bridging: Set the stage later transfer

[17] Prompting: The reminders offered by teachers to encourage students to reach back into prior content.

[18] Misconceptions: Erroneous ideas, which known as naïve theories or naïve conceptions, which constitute serious obstacles to understanding

[19] Conceptual change: In the broadest sense, the term conceptual change pertains to all modifications of conceptual knowledge structures, whether that change happens easily or with great difficulty. D.E. Rumelhart (1980), identified three mechanisms of conceptual change including accretion, tuning, and restructuring.

[20] Accretion: The simplest and subtlest form of conceptual change. It involves an elaboration or enrichment of existing knowledge structures through experience or the acquisition of relevant information. P124

[21] Tuning: Nonradical adjustments or tweakings of knowledge structures

[22] Restructuring: Conceptual changes that reflect an alternation in fundamental world views and are accompanied by theory or belief change that impacts all the components of a concept.

[23] Two-sided refutation: One form of refutational text that is crafted to present both sides of an issue, but also to dismantle arguments on one side.

[24] Strategic teaching: Enhance the strategic thinking that occurs in the learning

environment.

[25] General strategies: Strategies have broad applicability across various domains and tasks

[26] Peer interactions: Social interactions between students and peers, which will have direct and vicarious influences on students' strategic thinking.

[27] Independent problems: Problems that are addressed without the express input or assistance of another person.

[28] Collaborative problem solving: Students undertake tasks that warrant the input or assistance of others and work as a member of a team.

[29] Individual interest: Refers to an enduring disposition to engage with particular content or activities whenever opportunities arise.

[30] Situational interest: Interests emerge in response to something in the situation that catches our attention and motivate us to focus on it and explore it further.

Appendix 2. Teaching Materials

Teaching Materials for Sample 1:

1) Reading Material:



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The Comparison Between Chinese and American Festivals

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Abstract

Every country has its own traditional festivals, celebrated by all kinds of activities. In China, the most important festival is the Spring Festival, while in America, the most important festival is Christmas. Festival differences exist between China and America. With time elapsing, festival culture changes gradually and some new cultural phenomenon occurs.

Key words: Festival; Custom; Difference; Culture

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INTRODUCTION

Festival—an occasion when people come together to enjoy themselves, especially to mark a special religious event—is a happy time for all of the people. It was not only the window to show social life of every nation, every country, but also the conclusion and extension of politics, economy, culture and religion of every nation, every country. In festivals, people can have a good rest to relax themselves from the tired working days, no work, no study; taste delicious food; take part in different activities; make a short journey; visit relatives and friends; go shopping; enjoy themselves, enjoy life, and do whatever they want to do. Festival, indeed, is a charming and exciting time.

1. MAIN FESTIVALS IN CHINA AND AMERICA

There are so many various festivals celebrated in every minority ethnic group in every country, also lots of festivals celebrated by the whole world together, like New Year's Day, International Labor Day.

In China, the main festivals are as follows. The most important festival is Spring Festival, the Chinese New Year in the lunar calendar on January 1st. Besides, some traditional festivals are still attached great importance to nowadays. For example, Tomb-sweeping Day, offering sacrifices to ancestors and sweeping the grave, around April 5th; Dragon Boat Festival, May 5th in lunar calendar, commemorating the famous patriotic poet Qu Yuan in ancient times of China; Chinese Valentine's Day, July 7th in lunar calendar, coming from the old legend of the cowboy and the weaving girl; Mid-autumn Day, a festival for reunion on August 15th in lunar calendar; Double Nine festival, celebrating by the senior citizens on September 9th in lunar calendar.

In America, there are also a lot of festivals. Saint Valentine's Day, a festival especially for lovers on February 14th; Good Friday, the day before Easter that Jesus was in distress; Easter, March 12th, commemorating Christ's death and his return to life by Christians; April 1st, All Fool's Day, cracking a joke with each other; Mother's Day, the second Sunday on May and Father's Day, the third Sunday on June, expressing the respect to parents; Halloween, October 31st, the eve of All Saints' Day; Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday on November, a holiday to pray and to thank the god; Christmas Day, the most important festival in America, celebrating the birth of Christ on December 25th.

2. THE MAIN FESTIVAL IN CHINA AND AMERICA

There are so many differences between Chinese and American festivals, from the origins, ways of celebration, customs to food. Here will cite the example of the most important festival in both China and America.

2.1 Spring Festival

2.1.1 The Origin of Spring Festival

Far and away, the most important traditional holiday in China is Spring Festival, also known as the Chinese New Year, starts at the beginning of spring. It occurs somewhere between January 30 and February 20. Each Chinese year is represented by a repeated cycle of 12 animals, the rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, ram, monkey, rooster, dog and pig.

The origin of Chinese New Year is too old to be traced. It is said that a monster beast named Nian, ferocious and terrible, swallowed up people and animals on the New Year's Eve, people all scared of him and run away to the remote mountains to avoid him.

One year, when people in peach blossom village were busy in escaping, an old man came to beg. No one had the mood to care for the elder, only an old woman gave him some food. The old man said to her: "If you let me stay at your home, I can drive the monster Nian out." The old woman stared at the old man carefully, who had white hair and ruddy complexion, hale and hearty, not like a common man, but she still persuaded him to leave. The old man remained unmoved. Finally, the old woman escaped alone.

In the midnight, Nian burst into the peach blossom village, he found the atmosphere seemed different from the other years. On the east of the village, red paper put on the gate of the old woman's house, candles lighted the whole house bright. Nian shouted and threw himself on this house, but the crackling from the house made him a shudder and stop him going ahead. At this time, the old man with red clothes opened the door, laughed heartily. Nian was frightened and fled in panic. Originally, Nian was most afraid of the color red, the fire and the sound of crackling.

On the New Year's Day, villagers came back, they were very surprised that everywhere was so clam. The old woman realized what had happened suddenly and told them. People crowded into the woman's house, found the things that the old man used to subdue Nian and knew the way to drive out Nian. The custom of putting on Red Spring Festival couplets and burning fireworks to scare away Nian continues today and the term "guonian", which may mean "survive the Nian" becomes "celebrate the year" today.

2.1.2 The Simple Introduction of Spring Festival

To the ordinary people, the Spring Festival actually begins on the eve of the lunar New Year's Day and ends on the

fifteenth day of the first month of the lunar calendar, celebrated nationwide. The 15th of the first month, which is normally called the Lantern Festival, means the official end of the Spring Festival, celebrated at night with lantern displays and children carrying lanterns in a parade.

In the morning of the New Year's Day, the younger generations pay New Year calls to their senior generation, and get lucky red envelopes with money inside from the elders. The rest of the first day is spent visiting relatives, friends and neighbors.

The second day of the New Year is the day to pray to the God and the ancestors, and people are extra kind to dogs on this day. So it is also believed that the second day is the birthday for all dogs.

The third and fourth days are for the sons-in-law to pay respect to their parents-in-law.

The fifth day is called Po Woo. It is a day to honor the God of Wealth. People believed that under the protection of this God, they can have a well-fed life. On this day, Chinese families are all staying at home. It is said that bad luck will follow people when they go out.

Now that welcomes the God of Wealth on the fifth day, the sixth day is the day to kick the poor devil out.

The seventh day is a time for farmers to show off their produce. These farmers make a drink from seven types of vegetables to celebrate this occasion. This day is also considered the birthday of all human beings.

2.1.3 The Customs of Spring Festival

Around the Spring Festival, many customs are formed during the past thousand of years. For the development of society and the improvement of science and technology, some customs with superstition have weakened, but some are still followed from generation to generation.

The custom of sweeping the dust means the thorough cleaning at the end of one year, starts on the 23rd day of the 12th lunar month and ends on the eve of the Chinese New Year. When Spring Festival is coming, the Chinese people completely clean the indoors and outdoors of their homes as well as their clothes, bedclothes and all their utensils. In Yao and Shun period of ancient China, this custom has already existed. It is believed that the cleaning sweeps away bad luck and makes the house ready for good luck to enter.

Another custom is to put up the Spring Festival couplets on both sides of the front gates. It also called for the antithetical couplets, coming from the peach wood charms. The peach wood decorated people's gates first was carved deity figures against evils and ghosts. Because of complicated and troublesome, later on, people began to write some auspicious words or drew charms on two pieces of paper and put them on their gates instead of it. During the Five Dynasties, people have already started to write antithetical couplets as their peach wood charms. This custom was popular in Ming Dynasty. Not only the city but also the countryside, every Chinese family

carefully chooses the Red Spring Festival couplets putting on their gates in Chinese New Year. At the same time, some families put the Chinese character “fu” on the gates or walls. “Fu” means happiness and good fortune, expresses looking forward to a happy life. A lot of people put the character “fu” upside down, for in Chinese the “reversed fu” is homophonic with “fu comes”, both being pronounced as “fudaole”.

In addition, one of the most important customs in Spring Festival is all night on New Year’s Eve, which called “shousui”. In ancient times, after eating the family reunion dinner, the whole family was sitting together, lighting the candles or oil lamps, chatting around the stove, waiting for the moment to bid farewell to the outgoing year and staying up all night. It symbolizes to expel all the illness and pestilence and expects the good fortune in the new year. Nowadays, people are still accustomed to stay up late to welcome the New Year.

2.1.4 Food in Spring Festival

There are a lot of special foods people eat during Spring Festival.

Niangao, a sticky sweet glutinous rice pudding, eat in Spring Festival, because as a homophone, niangao means “higher and higher, one year after another.”

Jiaozi, which are dumplings boiled in water. On the eve of Chinese New Year, the whole family is sitting around the table, making dumplings. People think “jiaozi” symbolizes family reunion, besides, the shape of the dumpling is like gold ingot from ancient China, so people eat them and wish for money and treasure.

Tangyuan, stuffed dumplings made of glutinous rice flour served in soup. People eat it in the Lantern Festival, because it means reunion and happiness of the whole family and all the luck.

Besides, in Spring Festival, dishes such as chicken, fish and bean curd cannot be excluded, for in Chinese, their pronunciations, respectively “ji”, “yu” and “doufu”, mean auspiciousness, abundance and richness.

2.1.5 Superstition in Spring Festival

There are many ancient superstitions during the Spring Festival, some are still practiced today. For example, People can not use knife and scissor in the Chinese New Year, otherwise, they will break off the road for gaining money, even die without sons. Next, people are banned to sweep the floor and pour water, which will sweep their fortune away. Besides, breaking the cups and bowls is also a taboo during the New Year, it is believed that this will make people bankrupt. If people do this careless, they should say “peace all year round” to change the portentous into the propitious. Also some believe it is bad luck to wash hair on this day, for people would wash away the good luck in the New Year. In addition, it is believed that if people cry on this day, they will cry all through the year, therefore, children are indulged by their parents on New Year’s Day.

Most of these taboos lift a ban on the fifth day of the New Year. After that day, people can use knife and scissor, tip rubbish and so on.

2.2 Christmas

2.2.1 The Origin of Christmas

Christmas Day, on December 25th, is the most important holiday in America, as well as the Spring Festival in China. It is the day to celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus by Christians.

According to the Bible, God decided to allow his only son, Jesus Christ, to be born to a human mother and live on earth so that people could understand God better and learn to love God and each other more. “Christmas”, meaning “celebration of Christ”, honors the time when Jesus was born to a young Jewish woman in Mary.

Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph, a carpenter, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child. Joseph was an honest man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, so he had in mind to divorce her in secret. However, when he was considering this thing, an angel of lord appeared in his dream and said:

Don’t hesitate, take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

The exact date of the birth of Jesus is not clearly, but finally, in the year 354 A.D., church leaders chose December 25th as his birthday.

2.2.2 The Customs of Christmas

From December 24th to January 6th in the next year is Christmas. During Christmas holiday, Christians celebrate it grandly. It originally is the holiday only for Christians, but because people attach unusual importance to it, later on, it becomes the holiday for all the common people. There are many customs in Christmas.

First, Christmas tree is the necessity of Christmas, made of pine tree, decorated by all kinds of toys, presents, multicolored balls, gorgeous bulbs, and at the top of the Christmas tree, there is a bright star. This custom maybe originate from Germany in 16th century. The German thought taking the branch of pine tree to their home can protect them from the hurt of Azrael, the god of death. In the 19th century, it spreads over the whole Europe and America. Now nearly two thirds of the American families will decorate Christmas tree during Christmas.

Another important element in Christmas is Santa Claus. In the 4th century, in the area of Asia Minor, the Bishop Nichola was kind, generous, and famous for sending gifts to the poor in the evening. The east addressed him St. Nichola respectfully in the 6th century. Because the legend about St. Nichola from the folk always connected with children and presents, from now on, the image of Santa Claus became the kind old man who sent presents to children especially in Christmas Day.

The Comparison Between Chinese and American Festivals

In the 18th century, through the literature and painting, an old man with red clothes and red trousers, white eyebrow and white beard, a benignant look and a short and fat figure became the typical image of Santa Claus. People all believed that Santa Claus will come into their house from the chimney, and put the presents into the socks of their children on Christmas Eve.

The Christmas meal is just like the family reunion dinner in Chinese New Year. The main course is poultry, like chicken, beef, duck, and turkey. All kinds of desserts are the most characteristic food of Christmas meal, they are usually fruit biscuits, puddings, pies and ice-cream. Christmas Eve is the night for reunion, people always sit together, taste the delicious food and chat freely.

And everyone will prepare Christmas gifts. The first Christmas gifts were sent to Jesus who was just born by three saints. Nowadays, it is popular to send presents to family members and friends. Every family prepares plenty of gifts before the Christmas. Not only the children, but the adults can receive many Christmas gifts, children always can get more. Friends and colleagues usually send Christmas cards with blessing words to each other.

3. THE COMPARISON BETWEEN CHINESE AND AMERICAN FESTIVALS

3.1 Differences

There are many festival differences between China and America.

First, the typical characteristic of the traditional Chinese festivals is the strong secular nature, namely non-religious. It advocates the harmony and balance between the God and the human beings, focus on humanism. Besides, the traditional Chinese festivals are named according to the climate and other natural phenomena of a season, and each has their own specific custom activities, such as Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival and so on. But in America, most of the festivals, like Christmas, Easter, are strongly linked with the religion. In fact, holiday itself has the meaning "holy day" in English. It is thus clear that the American people have their spiritual sustenance in their belief to the God. Festivals in America are god-oriented in essence.

Next, every festival has some particular celebrations and some taboos. The specific food culture is characteristic of Chinese traditional festivals, like tangyuan in the Lantern Festival, zongzi in Dragon Boat Festival and moon cake in Mid-autumn Day, while in America, presents, greeting cards and entertainments are characteristics of American Festivals. Therefore, the Chinese traditional festivals are most within the limits of family and center on food, just like the Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, which with obvious collective recreation, people are always join the activities with

family members together but not in individual. All this indicates that Chinese take family reunion seriously. But festivals in America are most within the limits of community, and weaken the family colors. For example, the large-scale festival parade, this reveals Americans pay more attention to individual.

Finally, China is a large agricultural country, the traditional festivals reflect the agricultural life style. In production, ancestors conclude many regulars about the season replacement and the weather change, so many Chinese festivals are the record to these regulars, like the Spring Festival, Tomb-sweeping Day. Besides, these festivals embody people's desire to harvest, and these festival customs embody the characteristic of agricultural life. However, in America, festivals have fewer links with agriculture. Because of a country of immigration, festivals in America reflect the peculiarity of immigration like Thanksgiving Day.

3.2 Similarities

Though there are many differences between Chinese and American festivals, similarities also exist.

First, all these festivals appear according to the development of the culture, religion, and society of their own country. China is an agricultural country from the ancient time. People focus on the influence of the climate to the crops. During the farming, they conclude the 24 solar terms, and on this foundation, formed the system of traditional Chinese festival. In America, people lay stress on Christianity, so most of the festivals are related to religion, like Valentine's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving Day and so on. Thus it can be seen, all these festivals strongly connect with their own culture, religion and society.

Second, all these festivals pursue peace and harmony, seek love and embody the humanism. For example, nowadays, Spring Festival and Christmas Day all emphasize on reunion and happiness. In these days, people always would like to visit relatives and friends, enjoy delicious food. Besides, people who are outside are hurriedly to come back to share the beautiful time with their family members. Humanism is strengthened day by day.

4. THE BLEND OF FESTIVAL CULTURE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES

As times going by, festival culture changes gradually. In China, it is with distinctive traditional color, and spreads humanism all over the place, meanwhile, traditional festival mixes with modernization together. In America, the festival culture is the combination between religion and modernization. Besides, the religious color is weakened by degrees and the humanism is strengthened.

Nowadays, both in China and America, the business air of festivals become strongly. In China, three things must

be done better by every family at least before the Spring Festival. First, do Spring Festival shopping, second, brush off dust, third, buy new clothes. For these reasons, many people are hardworking and thrifty in daily time. Catching this psychology of the common people, businessmen all hoped that they can earn lots of money during the festival. So Spring Festival becomes the best sale chance.

Also, in America, business gradually reduces the religious meaning of Christmas. From November, commercial activities have already begun. At the shop gate, staff member dresses up as Santa Claus, waving his hands to people with a big smile. When close to Christmas, all the shops prolong their business hours and all the people are crazy for shopping. Merchants catch this golden opportunity and make their turnover increase doubled and redoubled.

With the policy of reform and opening, China develops quickly. In the 21st century, the national power of China strengthens day by day. In China, most people, especially the young generation, would like to celebrate the western festivals, such as Valentine's Day, Halloween, Christmas Day and so on. Someone even said that, Christmas is so hot in China that maybe one day it can have equal shares with the Spring Festival. This is the result of the interchange and fusing between the Chinese culture and Western culture. People worry about that some Chinese are keen on western festivals that they forget how to celebrate their own traditional festivals. In fact, celebrating western holidays is only for expressing emotion to family members, friends and lovers. All Chinese still remember the origin and customs of their own festivals.

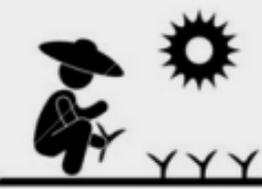
Similarly, the Chinese culture has already spread all over the world. Every year, through the satellites, many foreigners appreciate the Spring Festival Party, and in the USA, during the Chinese New Year, Americans celebrate the Spring Festival with the Chinese together in Chinese city.

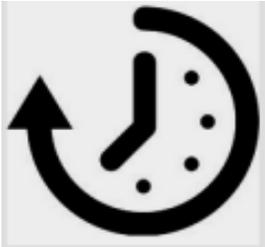
The blend of festival culture makes people know more about the other country, understand each other better and keep the world peace and prosperity.

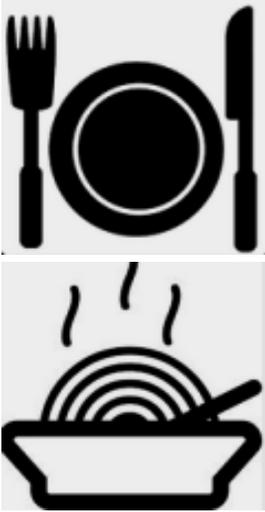
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2) Handout:

DIFFERENCES	CHRISTMAS	CHINESE NEW YEAR
<p>DATES</p> 	<p>Christmas is always on December 25th, the date never changes</p>	<p>Chinese New Year's date changes every year. It is celebrated on the first new moon of the lunar calendar, always between January 21st and February 20th.</p>
<p>ORIGIN</p>  	<p>Christmas is a religious holiday linked to the Catholic religion. Christmas celebrates Jesus Christ's birth.</p>	<p>Chinese New Year has pagan roots; it is linked to the rural life. According to Chinese mythology, the origin of the Spring Festival dates back to an ancient legend that tells of a monster named Nian (年) who once a year used to go to the villages to eat livestock and children. This terrible monster was being banished by using red-color objects and loud noises, which frightened him. For this reason, in China it is usual to greet the arrival of the new year with fireworks and the use of the color red.</p>

DIFFERENCES	CHRISTMAS	CHINESE NEW YEAR
<p>TRADITIONAL RITES</p> 	<p>Christmas is a Catholic holiday, so the typical rite is to attend the Christmas Holy Mass, usually at midnight December 24 or 25 in the morning to celebrate with the community the birth of Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>The Chinese New Year is welcomed with lion and dragon dances, made by martial artists and acrobats, who wear a great costume with the features of lions and dragons and dancing in a parade through the streets of the city, surrounded by the sounds of drums and dishes. Traditionally this dance is used to push away evil spirits and propitiate luck and prosperity for the new year.</p>
<p>HOLIDAY DURATION</p> 	<p>Christmas holiday season usually lasts two weeks, from December 24th until January 6th, the Epiphany. Not every day is a public holiday, except for schools, but it is a time for celebration.</p>	<p>Chinese New Year season also lasts two weeks. The celebration begins on Chinese New Year's eve and it ends 15 days later, with the traditional Lantern Festival (元宵节 yuanxiao jie). For the Lantern festival children hold parades with red lanterns of various shapes to celebrate the arrival of the first full moon and this is the end of the Chinese New Year Season.</p>
<p>FAMILY HOLIDAY</p> 	<p>Christmas is traditionally a family celebration, a time when you meet the extended family, with grandparents, uncles, cousins to celebrate all together.</p>	<p>Chinese New Year is the most important family celebration in China. The days before this festival are frantic, lots of people are traveling, because everyone wants to reach his/her family on time to celebrate together.</p>

DIFFERENCES	CHRISTMAS	CHINESE NEW YEAR
<p>FOOD</p> 	<p>Once the family has gathered, the best way to celebrate Christmas is by eating and drinking together. Each region has its own dishes, but everyone celebrates spending hours around a table, eating the typical dishes of the festivities. Typical Christmas food include turkey, nuts, sweets and cakes. In general all the reunions with friends and family are always related to food and drinks.</p>	<p>Chinese New Year is also celebrated around the table eating together the traditional foods of the feast.</p> <p>Certain foods are typical of Chinese New Year for their symbolic meaning often linked to their name or their appearance. Fish for example is a dish that cannot lack during this celebration. This is because the word fish (鱼 yú) has the same sound of the word abundance (余 yú), so eating fish brings fortune and prosperity to the new year.</p> <p>Another typical dish of this festival is dumplings (饺子; jiaozi) filled with meat and vegetables. Their shape remind people of the ancient Chinese coins and therefore represent wealth and prosperity.</p>
<p>GAMES</p> 	<p>Once done eating the typical way of spending time together during the holidays is playing games as bingo or cards.</p>	<p>People in China are also used to spend time together playing games. One of the typical games is majiang, a Chinese game that could be compared to our chess.</p>
<p>PRESENTS</p> 	<p>Christmas is also the time for gift exchange. Children wait anxious for Santa Claus to bring them presents and adults exchange different kinds of gifts, often food or drink or sometimes even money, especially among close relatives.</p>	<p>Gift exchange is also typical in Chinese New Year. The most popular gift is a red envelope (紅包; Hongbao) with money inside. The red envelope is usually given to children and the elderly. Adults generally exchange gifts as fruit baskets, sweets, alcohol, tea etc.</p>

DIFFERENCES	CHRISTMAS	CHINESE NEW YEAR
<p>DECORATIONS AND COLORS</p>  	<p>Christmas is the season to decorate the streets of the city, the shops and homes with lights and Christmas trees.</p> <p>The typical colors of Christmas are red and gold.</p>	<p>Chinese streets, shops and homes are decorated as well during the Spring Festival. The typical decorations are made out of red paper cut out and nodes with red thread. The typical colors of this festival are red and gold.</p>

Teaching Materials for Sample 2:

- 1) **Video:** <http://study.com/academy/lesson/argumentative-essay-definition-format-examples.html>
- 2) **Handout:**

Why Electric Cars are The Future

The world is changing quickly, and what looked like a science-fiction fantasy is gradually becoming our current reality. It seems that progress spreads to all spheres of humanity's life, but one of the most amazing breakthroughs has been achieved in energy recently. About two decades ago, it appeared there was no effective alternative to the conventional fossil fuels such as gasoline and oil, but it turned out that there is a better, cleaner, and more effective substitute to them: electricity. Although electric engines are not so widespread, more and more people consider changing their gasoline-fueled vehicles to

electric cars. And this choice is more than reasonable.

The maintenance cost of electric cars is lower than the one of those fueled by conventional gasoline. Fuel prices heavily depend on the political and military situation in countries providing oil; even if we do not take it into consideration, one year of driving a gasoline car would cost you about \$2,100 (given that you drive about 15,000 miles per year, spend one gallon of gas for each 25 miles traveled, and buy gasoline at \$3.50 per gallon). At the same time, driving an electric car would cost you only \$475 per year. Along with the fuel costs, conventional cars require regular technical inspections, transmission repairs, and so on (EVgo). By all means, electric cars are a much cheaper alternative for those who want to save money.

Safety is another reason why electric cars are more preferable. There were several incidents when Tesla Model S electric cars flared up. This motivated Tesla Motors to research the situation with car fires in general, and it turned out that there are about 150,000 car fires per year only in the United States. “Since the Model S went into production last year, there have been more than a quarter million gasoline car fires in the United States alone, resulting in over 400 deaths and approximately 1,200 serious injuries,” Tesla Motors management informs. “There are now substantially more than the 19,000 Model S vehicles on the road that were reported in our Q3 shareholder letter for an average of one fire per at least 6,333 cars, compared to the rate for gasoline vehicles of one fire per 1,350 cars” (The Long Tail Pipe). So, according to the statistics, electric cars are safer—at least in terms of flaring up.

Electric cars are also known to be more efficient in terms of converting energy: on average, electric cars use about 60% of power of the electrical energy to make the wheels spin, compared to 17%–21% of energy stored in gasoline converted to power at the wheels. This is important not just in terms of efficiency, but also environmental protection, because the more effective use of energy means less resource taken from the nature; besides, electric cars emit no greenhouse gases. Power plants that produce electricity may pollute the air, but only those working on fossil fuels; nuclear power plants, hydro, solar, and wind power plants produce no pollution at all. So, the more people choose to drive electric cars, the less damage will be dealt to the environment (fueleconomy.gov).

As it can be seen, electric cars are in many ways more preferable than conventional gasoline vehicles. The costs of fueling and maintaining an electric car are much lower compared to those of regular cars; electric cars are safer in terms of being prone to flaring up—according to the statistics, many more car fires occur with gasoline vehicles than

with electric cars. And finally, electric cars are more environmentally friendly, meaning that not only people, but also our whole planet benefits from them. Thus, it is advisable that as many people as possible choose to change their vehicles to electric cars.

Thesis statement	Evidence	Warrant
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. (Add more if necessary)		