Unit 3, Part 1

The All-American Slurp

Click the mouse button or press the space bar to continue
Part 1
Family and Friends

The All-American Slurp
Lensey Namioka
(pages 315–330)

Before You Read
Reading the Selection
After You Read
For pages 315–330

In studying this text, you will focus on the following objectives:

**Literary Study:** Analyzing description.

**Reading:** Analyzing cultural context.
Meet Lensey Namioka

Click the picture to learn about the author.

For more about Lensey Namioka, go to glencoe.com and enter QuickPass code GL19756u3.
Think about a time when you felt awkward in a social setting because you didn’t know what to do.

Quickwrite  Freewrite for a few minutes about the situation and how you felt. Did you get any clues about how to act by observing others?
Many thousands of people immigrate to the United States every year. During one year in the 1990s, about 54,000 people moved from China to the United States. More than 111,400 people came from Mexico; 14,700 from Cuba; and 41,300 from Vietnam.
lavishly  *adv.* in a way that provides much more than is needed (p. 319). *The bed was lavishly covered with pillows.*

acquainted  *adj.* knowing someone, or each other, but not closely (p. 320). *I became acquainted with other athletes when I joined the soccer team.*
blouse  *n.* a woman’s or girl’s shirt (p. 321). Angela wore a matching blue blouse and skirt.

boost  *n.* something that aids or advances a person or thing (p. 322). *Earning a good score on the exam was a boost to Jorge’s spirits.*

coping  *v.* successfully dealing with something difficult (p. 328). *Since Marla’s accident, she’s been coping with a broken leg.*
Set Purposes for Reading

**BIG Question**

As you read, ask yourself, how important is it to be just like everyone else?
Set Purposes for Reading

**Literary Element** Description

Description is a detailed explanation of a person, a place, a thing, or an event. Good descriptive writing brings experiences and events to life. It helps readers see, hear, smell, taste, and feel the story’s details.
Set Purposes for Reading

**Literary Element** Description

Descriptions help you gain a clearer picture of events in the story and may indirectly illustrate themes. For example, when the author says that her family packed themselves into a sofa, you can imagine four people jammed together on a sofa that barely holds them.
Set Purposes for Reading

**Literary Element** Description

As you read “The All-American Slurp,” ask yourself, how do the descriptions add to the humorous tone of the story?
Set Purposes for Reading

**Literary Element** Description

Click the image to view the animation.
Before You Read

Set Purposes for Reading

Reading Skill Analyze Cultural Context

Analyzing, or looking at separate parts of a piece of writing to understand the whole piece, is a way to think critically about a story. Cultural context is the shared qualities and beliefs of people living in a particular place and time.
Set Purposes for Reading

Reading Skill Analyze Cultural Context

When you analyze cultural context, you think about the time and place of a work, as well as the values of the people in that time and place. In this story, you will analyze both Chinese culture and American culture.
Set Purposes for Reading

**Reading Skill** Analyze Cultural Context

Sometimes people of cultures different from your own may speak or act in ways that seem strange to you. Analyzing cultural context will help you better understand the characters.
Before You Read

To analyze cultural context, pay attention to:

- the time and place of the story
- the values of the characters, as shown through details and dialogue
- the characters’ customs, especially those related to eating and drinking

Set Purposes for Reading

**Reading Skill** Analyze Cultural Context

To analyze cultural context, pay attention to:

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- the values of the characters, as shown through details and dialogue
- the characters’ customs, especially those related to eating and drinking
Set Purposes for Reading

Reading Skill: Analyze Cultural Context

As you read, you may find it helpful to use a graphic organizer like the one below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>What It Reveals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The family pulls strings out of the celery.</td>
<td>They aren’t used to eating raw celery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyze Cultural Context

You notice two boys whose culture is different from yours playing a game you don’t recognize. It looks like fun. How can you find out more about the game?
Click the mouse button to return to the Selection Menu
Description  Read the excerpt highlighted in purple on page 318. What does this description reveal about how the narrator and her family are feeling?

Answer: Their uncomfortable movements and nervous glances show that they are uncertain about how to behave.
Reading Skill

Analyze Cultural Context  Read the excerpt highlighted in blue on page 318. What does this tell you about the narrator’s family?

Answer: Her parents do not necessarily expect to enjoy new experiences, but when the experiences are pleasantly surprising, they appreciate them.
Cultural History

Lactose Intolerance Dairy products do not play a significant role in the diets of many Asian cultures because a large percentage of people in Asia are lactose intolerant. They do not have an enzyme allowing them to digest milk easily after childhood. Some scientists speculate that most Europeans are lactose tolerant because their ancestors lived in close contact with dairy herds.
Analyze Cultural Context

Why is everyone staring at the Lins?

Answer: The other guests are unused to seeing people pull the strings out of their celery.
Literary Element

Description  Read the excerpt highlighted in purple on page 319. What does this description suggest about how the Lins feel at this moment?

Answer: They move fast because they are embarrassed.
Analyze Cultural Context

Read the excerpt highlighted in blue on page 320. How might this cultural difference affect a Chinese person’s ability to learn English?

Answer: English has many changes in verb tenses that do not occur in Chinese, so this makes the English language difficult to learn.
Reading Skill

Analyze Cultural Context  Read the excerpt highlighted in blue on page 321. Why do you think Mrs. Lin insists that girls wear skirts?

Answer: She thinks that it is inappropriate for girls to wear pants. In her culture, girls may have been required to wear skirts to school.
BQ BIG Question

Read the excerpt highlighted in tan on page 321. Why does the narrator want to pass for an American?

Answer: She wants to fit in and doesn’t want to be noticed for being different.
Look at the image on page 322. The headwaiter is wearing a formal suit with a jacket that has long panels in the back. This kind of jacket is called tails, which is a nickname for “tailcoat.”
Analyze Cultural Context

Read the excerpt highlighted in blue on page 322. What is the narrator’s picture of a normal American family? Why is it important to her that her family become one?

Answer: The narrator thinks that wearing jeans, driving cars, playing baseball, and shopping at rummage sales is what American families do. She wants her family to fit in and be accepted by Americans.
Description  Read the excerpt highlighted in purple on page 322. What details help readers picture the restaurant?

Answer:  The headwaiter dressed in tails, the darkness lit by candles, and the tinkling melodies of the harp help the reader imagine the setting.
Look at the painting on page 323. As you visualized the Lakeview restaurant, did it look like this painting? Explain.

**Answer:** You may say that the restaurant in the painting looks similar to how they visualized the restaurant in the story because it looks fancy with linen tablecloths and wine glasses on the table, or you may say it does not look similar because no one is wearing tails, and there are no candles or harpist.
Look at the painting on page 323. Would you like to eat in a restaurant like the one in the painting?

**Answer:** Answers will vary.
**Literary Element**

**Description**  Read the excerpt highlighted in purple on page 323. How does this description capture what the narrator and her family are feeling?

**Answer:** The word stumbling makes it seem that the family is unsure of their footing and sense of belonging. The murkiness makes the restaurant feel unwelcoming.
Look at the painting on page 324. The style of this painting and the painting on the previous page are very realistic. Look at both pictures and compare them with the picture on the title page. **Why do you think the painter of each picture chose a realistic or non-realistic style?**
The realistic painters wanted to show details as they appear in real life and the nonrealistic painter is more concerned with the mood or feeling of the picture.
Which style do you prefer? Why?

**Answer:** Answers will vary.
Description  Read the excerpt highlighted in purple on page 324. How does the description reveal what the narrator is feeling?

Answer: The narrator uses exaggeration to show that she feels uncomfortable and embarrassed by her parents.
Read the excerpt highlighted in blue on page 325. Why might Americans fail to understand why the Chinese slurp their soup?

**Answer:** Many Americans are taught that slurping food is rude, so they might not understand that this is a respectable way to eat soup in the Chinese culture.
Literary Element

Description Read the excerpt highlighted in purple on page 325. Why does the narrator use the image of a rocky beach to describe eating soup?

Answer: She is comparing the sound of her family eating soup to the loud and constant noise made by water draining from little pools on a rocky beach.
Comic Effect Incongruity, or putting together actions or events that do not quite fit, can often create a comic effect. Lensey Namioka uses incongruity in several ways in the scene at the Lakeview. For instance, both her father’s earnest attempts to form a translation that makes no sense in English and the *shlooping* sound that clashes with the formal setting are examples of incongruity.
Reading Skill

Analyze Cultural Context  Read the excerpt highlighted in blue on page 326. How are the Lins becoming more Americanized?

Answer: The parents go to PTA meetings and dress like American parents.
BQ  BIG Question

Read the excerpt highlighted in tan on page 326. How is the narrator affected by her parents’ opinion of her?

Answer: She seems pleased that her parents are proud of her even though they still cling to some of their Chinese ways.
Visual Vocabulary

Look at the image on page 327. **Prawns** are large shrimp.
Does the girl in the picture remind you of the narrator of the story? If so, why?

Answer: She is young and Asian.
If not, describe the way you visualize the narrator.

**Answer:** Include specific details. You can also draw a picture of what you think the entire Lin family looks like.
Cultural History

Chopsticks Chopsticks are used as a primary utensil in much of East Asia. The first chopsticks, made of bamboo or wood, were used in China as early as the 12th century B.C. In China, the substitution of chopsticks for knives while eating symbolized a preference for the lifestyle of the scholar over the lifestyle of the warrior.
Analyze Cultural Context  Read the excerpt highlighted in blue on page 328. Why is the narrator horrified?

**Answer:** The Chinese use rice bowls. They pick up food from the platters on the table and bring it directly to their rice bowls instead of putting their food on individual plates. The Chinese do not mix foods together as Americans do.
The All-American Slurp

Lensey Namioka

**Literary Element**

**Description**  Read the excerpt highlighted in purple on page 325. Why is this description humorous?

**Answer:** The narrator finds it funny that a grown man must struggle to chase his pea around his plate with chopsticks, finally giving up and using his fingers.
Read the excerpt highlighted in tan on page 328. Why is the narrator surprised to hear Meg slurp? What does the narrator discover about herself and Meg?

**Answer:** She was embarrassed by her family’s slurping in the restaurant. She didn’t realize that Americans sometimes slurp, too. She discovers that Americans and Chinese people are not really that different.
Click the mouse button to return to the Selection Menu
1. What “mistakes” does the Lin family make at the Gleasons’ dinner party?

[Recall]

**Answer:** The Lins pull the strings from their celery sticks, carry dining room chairs to a buffet table, and refuse to eat dairy products.
Respond and Think Critically

2. Why is it important to the narrator to get a pair of jeans? [Interpret]

Answer: Everyone at school wears jeans, and she wants to fit in.
3. Why does the narrator run and hide in the elegant restaurant? Give details from the story to support your answer.

[Infer]
Respond and Think Critically

TIP: Inferring

When you infer, you use clues in the story and your own knowledge to figure something out. Here are some tips to help you infer why the narrator runs and hides:
Respond and Think Critically

• Review what happens in the restaurant.

• Think about how the narrator feels and what she does.

• Draw upon your own experiences to imagine how you would feel in that situation.
Answer: She is embarrassed by her family. Her father reads the menu with a mini flashlight. The family slurps their soup while people in the restaurant stop and stare.
Respond and Think Critically

4. By the end of the story, how have the Lins changed? [Compare]

Answer: They dress, eat, and speak in American ways, but still maintain many of their own customs.
5. The narrator constantly tries to fit into American society. Do you think that fitting in is important? Why or why not? [Infer]

Answer: You will likely say that fitting in is important to a certain extent. However, people should also appreciate the ways in which they are different from others.
Respond and Think Critically

6. **BIG Question** After reading “The All-American Slurp,” what are your thoughts about what makes us who we are? How do our family, friends, and culture play a part in shaping who we are? [Conclude]

**Answer:** You will likely say that all of these things play a part in making us who we are and that our differences should be valued.
On a separate sheet of paper, write the vocabulary word that correctly completes each sentence. If none of the words fits the sentence, write \textit{none}. 
1. The diners __lavishly__ praised the wonderful meal.

2. Ryan is __coping__ with a bad headache.

3. When the rain started, we ran __none__ to the shed.
4. Jon became acquainted with his classmates in the new school.

5. I felt a boost to my pride when I received the award.
6. The cat ________ for the water bowl in its new home.

7. Liz bought a ________ to go with her blue skirt.
Lensey Namioka describes her family’s consumption of soup as “unnaturally loud.” In the preceding sentence, consumption is the act of eating. A consumer is someone who eats or drinks. A consumer can also be someone who buys an item or uses a service. In what ways are you a consumer?
Answer: You should give examples of food, drinks, and other items and services you consume.
1. Three different dinners are described in the story. Use the chart to list details that appeal to the five senses from each of the dinners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gleasons’ house</th>
<th>French Restaurant</th>
<th>Lins’ house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After You Read

**Literary Element**  Description

**Answer:** You should use details from your chart to explain your answer.
2. Choose a scene from the story that does not involve food. List the details that help you vividly picture the scene.

**Answer:** You will likely choose a scene that appeals to one of the other four senses.
As you learned on page 103, **dialogue** is conversation between characters in a story. Writers use dialogue to move a story’s plot forward. Dialogue also reveals what the characters think and feel. Dialogue is usually set off with quotation marks and dialogue tags, or markers that tell the reader who said what.
3. Recall the dialogue that occurs between the narrator and her mother about the boy’s bike. What does the dialogue show about the characters’ thoughts and feelings? Use examples to explain your answer.
**Literary Element**  Review: Dialogue

**Answer:** The mother is worried that people might see her daughter’s thighs when she rides the bike. The narrator explains that most girls wear jeans when biking. The dialogue shows that fitting in is important to the narrator and modesty is important to her mother.
Literary Element Review: Dialogue

4. The narrator’s mother and father try to improve their English skills. Give some examples of dialogue that show them trying to learn English.

Answer: The father diagrams verbs and practices with sentences like “I shall have finished my project by Monday.” The mother tries to learn polite phrases, such as “You’re welcome,” even though she often gets them confused.
5. How do the Lin and Gleason families show that they are accepting of other cultures? Give examples to support your answer.

Answer: Mrs. Gleason explains the buffet and doesn’t embarrass the Lins when they bring their chairs to the table. The Lins don’t ridicule the Gleasons for mixing their food on the same plate or for not being able to use chopsticks.
6. What customs, attitudes, and beliefs shape your culture? How is your culture similar to or different from that of the narrator?

Answer: You may name watching fireworks on the Fourth of July or eating turkey at Thanksgiving or give examples from their own cultures that are similar to or different from the narrator’s culture.
Adjectives and Adverbs

Words that describe nouns or pronouns are **adjectives**. For example, the adjectives below are in bold type. The nouns they describe are underlined.

- I could use a **big chocolate** milkshake!
- I squirmed and died at least **fifty** times.
- The **celery** was **delicious**.
Adverbs describe verbs by giving information that answers *how, when, where, or to what extent* questions. They also describe adjectives and other adverbs.
The adverbs below are in bold type. The words they describe are underlined.

- Our family sat **stiffly** in a row.
- I **soon** met other students.
- My two dogs **played** **outdoors**.
- She **slurped** her milkshake **rather** **loudly**.
Practice  Look back at “The All-American Slurp” and find three sentences that contain adjectives, adverbs, or both. Write the sentences on a separate sheet of paper. Underline the adjectives and circle the adverbs.
I eventually got acquainted with a few other kids in school, but Meg was still the only real friend I had.
Literature Groups With a small group, discuss how a person’s outlook can determine whether something is funny or sad. In a chart, list three events from the story in which the narrator uses humor to describe situations that are embarrassing for her and her family. How might each situation have turned out differently?
Next to each event, list other possible outcomes. What helps the narrator and her family overcome these embarrassments?
Name a custom you practice or habit you have that might seem odd to others. Do you recall how it started?

Customs that might seem completely natural in one context may look quite strange to observers in another context.
A Chinese Banquet

But the outstanding feature of a Chinese banquet is the food, which is superb. It usually starts with four to eight cold dishes. I was startled to find rings of canned pineapple and asparagus spears next to cold squab and vinegared jellyfish at some banquets. Canned food is very expensive in China compared to fresh food, and canned corned beef is the height of elegance... A host, or even a guest, often serves the person next to him with food. A banquet table is usually round, and it is so large that not everyone can reach every dish. I've been to banquets where the person next to me kept heaping my plate with crab patties, frog legs, and braised duck, until I had to beg for mercy.... The only thing I could do was to dump some food on his plate when he was busy overwhelming the person on his other side.

—Lensey Namioka

How do Chinese banquets compare and contrast with American banquets? How does Lensey Namioka respond to the Chinese traditions? How would you respond?
Each of the following sentences contains one or more errors. Find the errors and correct the sentences.

1. If you be coming with us, put your coat on.
   
   **If you are coming with us, put your coat on.**

2. I hope you has learned by now that we not going to wait.
   
   **I hope you have learned by now that we are not going to wait.**
Each of the following sentences contains one or more errors. Find the errors and correct the sentences.

1. I am glad that I starting to grow taller.
   
   I am glad that I am starting to grow taller.

2. Until recently I getting worried.
   
   Until recently I was getting worried.

3. All my classmates seemed to been growing, but I wasn’t.
   
   All my classmates seemed to be growing, but I wasn’t.
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