



**Michigan State University  
Fulbright-Hays Group Study Abroad 2009:  
Nepal in the Contemporary World**



Lesson Plan  
from

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**Title: Taking Stances – Marriage Practices in Nepali Literature**

**Subject Areas: English – World Literature**

**Grade Levels: 11-12**

**Length of Lesson: Two 55 minute periods plus homework**

**Summary/Overview:**

Manjushree Thapa's short story, "Love Marriage," depicts a young Nepali man who falls in love with a woman of the wrong caste. Throughout the story, the man addresses many of the women that his parents presented to him in attempt to arrange a marriage for him. He is adamantly against arranged marriages, until he watches his love marriage dissolve. In the end, he questions his decision and wonders if he should have just allowed his parents to arrange a marriage for him. Students will read the story and use parts of it in persuasive responses about the dichotomy between arranged marriage and love marriage.

**Primary Objectives:**

1. Students will study and analyze a piece of Nepali literature.
2. Students will consider the pros and cons of arranged marriages and love marriages.
3. Students will write persuasive responses to the ideas presented in the story.

**Required Resources/Materials:**

- Copies of the story "Love Marriage," by Manjushree Thapa
- Paper and writing utensil

**Procedure:**

1. Write the following journal question on the board, "Do you believe that you will get married because of your love for another person, or do you think you will get married

because your parents/guardians have chosen a life partner for you? Explain.” Allow students 5-7 minutes to respond to the question. Engage students in a discussion about their responses.

2. Explain that in many places around the world arranged marriages still exist. Marriage is not seen as a response to love, but almost as a contract between two people to live their lives in partnership, to procreate, and to raise good citizens together. Arranged marriages are usually based on similar positions in the society, which will allow their children to continue to live in that same position. Young people in these countries generally do not fight against arranged marriage because it is simply accepted as part of the culture.

3. Students will be reading a short story from a Nepali author that displays a young man who has fallen in love with a girl from a lower caste. He describes the process his parents go through in order to arrange a marriage for him, all the while he is in love with a girl already. Students will read the story (as a class is preferable in order to discuss sections) and will answer the questions that correspond to it.

4. Once the students have read the story and answered the questions, have students create two t-charts in their journals or on the same paper as the questions. In the first t-chart, students should list the pros and cons of arranged marriage. In the second t-chart, students should list the pros and cons of love marriage. Students should think about the story they just read, but they should also think about their own perspectives on the ideas. Give students a few minutes to think on their own. Then, ask for volunteers to share their ideas and re-create the t-charts on the board. Discuss the ideas as they come up.

5. Once the discussion has come to an end, give students the writing assignment handout to begin. Students will have to write two persuasive paragraphs, one will defend arranged marriage and one will defend love marriage. Students will have to write from both perspectives, even if they do not necessarily agree with their arguments. These writing assignments should be given as homework.

6. As an extension to this lesson, another story, “Marriage is a Private Affair,” by Chinua Achebe (Nigeria) is also about the struggle between arranged marriages and love marriages. This would allow students to see that this struggle is not just in Nepal, but also other places around the world. This would also lead into a nice assignment comparing and contrasting the two stories, or even comparing and contrasting the marriage practices in the two countries via a research project.

### **Assessments:**

1. Journal entry
2. Discussion
3. Reading questions
4. Persuasive writing assignment

### **Michigan Content Expectations Met:**

- CE 1.3.4 Develop and extend a thesis, argument, or exploration of a topic by analyzing differing perspectives and employing a structure that effectively conveys the ideas in writing (e.g. resolve inconsistencies in logic; use a range of strategies to persuade, clarify, and defend a position with precise and relevant evidence; anticipate and address concerns and counterclaims; provide a clear and effective conclusion).
- CE 1.4.3 Develop and refine a position, claim, thesis, or hypothesis that will be explored and supported by analyzing different perspectives, resolving inconsistencies, and writing

about those differences in a structure appropriate for the audience (e.g., argumentative essay that avoids inconsistencies in logic and develops a single thesis; exploratory essay that explains differences and similarities and raises additional questions).

- **CE 2.3.1** Read, listen to, and view diverse texts for multiple purposes such as learning complex procedures, making work-place decisions, or pursuing in-depth studies.
- **CE 3.1.7** Analyze and evaluate the portrayal of various groups, societies, and cultures in literature and other texts.
- **CE 3.3.5** Demonstrate familiarity with world literature, including authors beyond American and British literary traditions.

**Bibliography Unique to this lesson:**

Thapa, Manjushree. (2007). Tilled Earth: Stories. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

“Love Marriage,” by Manjushree Thapa  
Guiding Questions

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability while reading the story.

1. In the first paragraph, what image does the speaker use to describe looking for a wife? Explain what this might illustrate about the Nepali marriage structure.
2. Describe the speaker’s reaction to at least two of the girls he meets as potential wives. What does this show us about how the process of arranging a marriage works in Nepal?
3. How does the speaker react to his best friend, Nimral, mentioning that Lalita is not of a high caste? What does this show us about the speaker?
4. The speaker marries the woman he loves. Within the last few paragraphs of the story, what is revealed about the speaker’s feelings about love marriage and arranged marriage? Give quotes to support your answer.

Persuasive Writing

Name \_\_\_\_\_

After reading “Love Marriage” you should have many thoughts and questions in mind. People around the world would not arrange marriages if there weren’t some positive aspects to it. It is your job to look at both sides of the argument. You will write two persuasive paragraphs, one in defense of arranged marriage and one in defense of love marriage. Even if you do not agree with one of the options, you must consider both perspectives. You must have a strong thesis to begin each paragraph. Each response will only be a paragraph long, but it must include a point for the opposition and it must include two points in support of your thesis. Use quotes from the short story to prove your points. Please type your responses and turn them in on \_\_\_\_\_.