

**“Rules of the Game” by Amy Tan**  
**Suggested Lesson Procedure (~95 Minutes)**

**1. Vocabulary Introduction (~15 minutes)**

Distribute the Vocabulary Chart handout. Use the Powerpoint lesson to teach students the vocabulary words. Have students copy down the definitions in their graphic organizers.

**2. Before Reading Discussion (~10 minutes)**

Have students review the 11 words provided (strength, game, chess, pride, rules, secrets, family, tradition, opponent, victory, strategy). Students choose 10 of the 11 words and pair them into 5 sets that are either similar, opposite, or connected. For each pair, students write 1–2 sentences explaining why they matched them together. This activity builds anticipation and gives students a preview of what the story will be about.

**3. Reading the Text (~20 minutes)**

Read the short story “Rules of the Game” together.

**4. Reading Questions (~35 minutes)**

Distribute the Reading Questions handout. Students can work individually or in pairs on the questions. Review the correct answers as a whole class after ~20 minutes. Ask for volunteers to share responses. Facilitate meaningful conversations while scaffolding literary analysis.

**5. After Reading Activity (~15 minutes)**

Students create their own short handbook with 10 “rules” for navigating family, culture, and growing up. For each rule, they explain its significance in 1–2 sentences.

Name:

Date:

Vocabulary Chart

Vocabulary Word	Part of Speech	Definition	Synonyms
impart	verb	<b>PREVIEW</b>	
obscured	adjective	<b>NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE</b>	
foresight	noun	<b>PREVIEW</b>	
concessions	noun	<b>NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE</b>	
ancestral	adjective	<b>PREVIEW</b>	
benefactor	noun	<b>NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE</b>	
etiquette	noun	<b>PREVIEW</b>	
exhibition	noun	<b>NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE</b>	
humility	noun	<b>PREVIEW</b>	
prodigy	noun	<b>NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE</b>	

Name:

Date:

**Before Reading**

Directions: Look at the words in the box below. Choose 10 of the 11 to make 5 pairs that go together because they are similar, opposite, or connected in some way. One word will be left out. Write 1-2 sentences for each pair explaining why you matched them.

strength	game	chess	pride	rules	secrets
family	tradition	opponent	victory	strategy	

Paired Words

Explanation

1. \_\_\_\_\_

**PREVIEW**

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**PREVIEW**

4. \_\_\_\_\_

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

Name:

Date:

Reading Questions

1. What does Waverly's mother call the "art of invisible strength"?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

2. Where does Waverly's family live?

**PREVIEW**

3. How does Waverly convince her brothers to let her play chess with them?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

4. Who is Lau Po, and how does he help Waverly?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

5. What unspoken rules seem to govern Waverly's relationship with her mother, and how do they shape her choices?

**PREVIEW**

6. How does Waverly's mother embarrass her?

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

7. How does Waverly's character change from the beginning to the end of the story?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

8. What qualities make Waverly a strong chess player?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

9. How is chess used as a symbol for power and control?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

10. What role does the wind imagery play throughout the story?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

11. How does Amy Tan's use of first-person narration affect the reader's understanding of Waverly's struggle?

**PREVIEW**

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

12. How do the “rules” of chess mirror the “rules” Waverly’s mother tries to teach her about life and survival?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

13. Why do you think Waverly views her mother as both her greatest support and her greatest opponent?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

14. Are Waverly’s victories the result of her own skill and control, or is it “luck” as her mother suggests?

PREVIEW

15. How does Waverly’s struggle compare to challenges young people face today in balancing personal freedom with family expectations?

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

16. Chess teaches Waverly strategy and patience. What activity, sport, or hobby in your life has taught you important lessons that apply outside of the activity itself?

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

Name:

Date:

**After Reading  
“Rules of Life” Handbook**

Write a short handbook with 10 “rules” for navigating family, culture, and growing up.  
Explain the significance of each rule in 1-2 sentences.

	Rule	Explanation
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

PREVIEW  
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**RULES OF THE GAME**  
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE  
*Vocabulary*



PREVIEW  
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

**impart**

PREVIEW

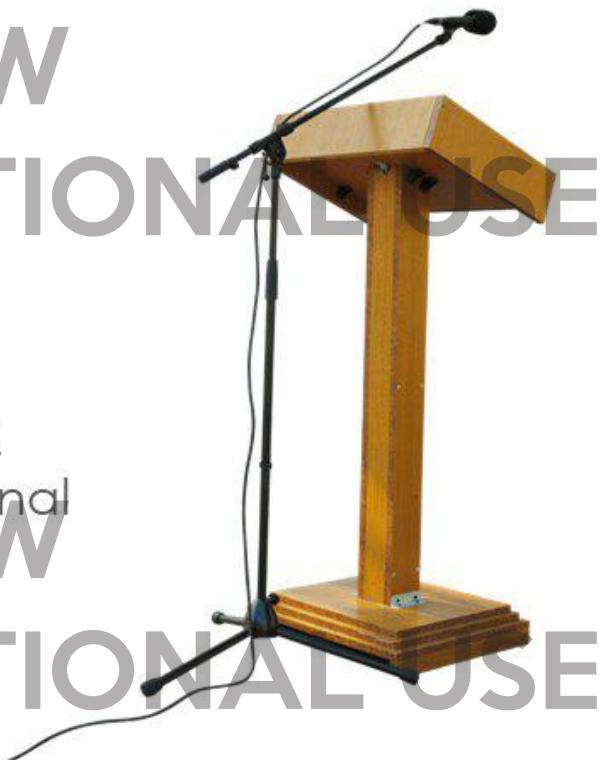
Part of speech: Verb

Definition: to communicate or make known

Example: The professor tried to impart wisdom to her students through personal stories.

PREVIEW

Synonyms: convey, transmit



# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

**obscured** PREVIEW

**Part of Speech:** adjective

**Definition:** describes hidden or made unclear

**Example:** Thick fog obscured the mountain peak from view.

PREVIEW

**Synonyms:** concealed, hidden

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**



# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

# PREVIEW NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

## **foresight** PREVIEW

Part of Speech: noun

**Definition:** the ability to predict or plan for the future

**Example:** His foresight in saving money allowed him to retire comfortably.

**Synonyms:** prudence, anticipation

PREVIEW  
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE



PREVIEW  
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

## concessions

PREVIEW

Part of Speech: noun

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

**Definition:** things given up or allowed, often to reach an agreement

**Example:** The company made several concessions during the contract negotiations.

PREVIEW

Synonyms: compromises, allowances

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE



PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

## ancestral

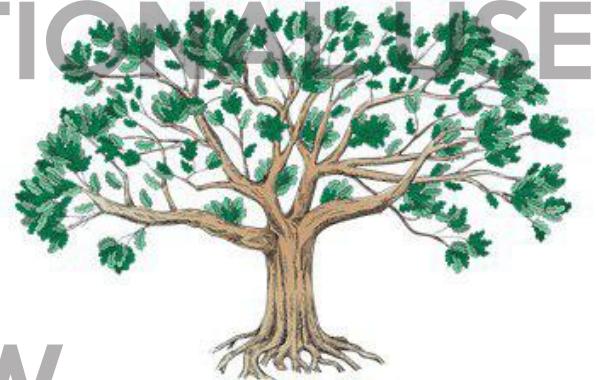
## PREVIEW

Part of Speech: adjective

**Definition:** describes related to family members from long ago

**Example:** They visited their ancestral home in the countryside, where generations had lived before them.

**Synonyms:** heritage, inherited



# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

## benefactor

Part of Speech: noun

Definition: a person who gives help, especially financial gifts

Example: The scholarship was made possible by a generous benefactor.

Synonyms: patron, sponsor



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PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

## **etiquette** PREVIEW

Part of Speech: noun

Definition: the rules of polite behavior

in society or a particular activity

Example: Good table etiquette  
requires keeping your elbows off the  
table.



# PREVIEW

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# PREVIEW

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## exhibition PREVIEW

Part of Speech: noun

**Definition:** a public display of skill or items; an exhibition game is a competitive event with no serious value, not counting towards league standings, and is held for practice, entertainment, or fundraising

**Example:** The gymnast gave an exhibition of skill before the judges at the championship.

**Synonyms:** demonstration, showcase



# PREVIEW NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

## humility PREVIEW

Part of Speech: noun

Definition: modesty; not thinking too highly of oneself

Example: Despite her grand achievements, she carried herself with humility.

Synonyms: unpretentious, humbleness



# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

## PREVIEW

## NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

# PREVIEW

# NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

## prodigy PREVIEW

Part of Speech: noun

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**

**Definition:** a young person with extraordinary talent or ability

**Example:** The math prodigy solved complex equations in front of an astonished audience.

**Synonyms:** genius, mastermind

**NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE**



PREVIEW

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