Discussion Qs AMY TAN “MOTHER TONGUE”

SHORT ANSWER:

1. What is Tan’s MI (Main Idea)? Her message, her purpose, the take-away?
2. Who is the author’s targeted audience? What is the author’s purpose?
3. Explain the meaning of the title.
4. “Language is the tool of my trade. And I use them all – all the Englishes I grew up with.” How many types of English does Tan use? LIST them.
5. We can call this genre and educational narrative, but what would another good genre be?

Longer discussion Qs:

1. What is the significance of the title? Why did Tan choose this title? What is the meaning of the phrase “mother tongue.”
2. What is the POWER OF LANGUAGE? What can language do? She talks about the power of language to shape you … to define you … to limit you … to make ppl respect or insult you … to show the essence of a person … to show feelings (intimacy, hostility, authority) … to shape your relationships and to shape yourself and to shape your future.
3. Tan quotes her mother’s “broken” English throughout her essay. Why does Tan quote her mother’s way of speaking English? How does that effect you the reader?
4. Tan writes about why she writes using her mother’s way of speaking, her mother’s tongue, her mother tongue. Language can reveal her mother’s “intent, her passion, her imager, the rhythms of her speech ad the nature of her thoughts” (par20)
5. Writer’s use of DIALOGUE: Find best example of Tan using dialogue in her essay.
6. Writer’s use of CREATING A SCENE: Find best example of how Tan creates a scene. What are the 5W’s.
7. A Significant Quote: Find a significant quote and explain the significance, deeper meaning.

TO DISCUSS:

Convo between stock broker and mother/Amy

WRITING PROMPT:

Do you use two different languages? How has this shaped your educational life?