By reading Jodi Picoult's 'My Sister's Keeper', I found the cultural differences between the west and China in the issue of how children treat their parents. Chinese culture emphasises filial piety by which children must be fully obedient to their parents, such as love them, take care of them and should not do anything that makes them feel worried. In Chinese culture, we think that parents love their children very much and they will do everything that is good for them. So Chinese people believe that children should follow and obey their parents whenever and whatever they ask them to do. They should behave according to their parents' standard and thinking. They cannot disobey and go against their parents or they will be treated as disrespectful children.

So, if Anna were a Chinese girl who sued her parents in order to gain the right to make the decision herself on donating one of her kidneys to Kate, she would be blamed seriously or her parents would even break off the relation with her. But in western culture, it is acceptable as it emphasises the right of the individual. Everyone has the right to control his/her life. Other people cannot affect or control the life of other people. So this is a big difference between western and Chinese culture.

Linda Yip 6B

Cultural Difference
in My Sister's Keeper

2008-2009
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April, an abandoned child found in the rubbish, started her life as a dustbin baby. In the past fourteen years, she was perplexed about her life. So, on her fourteenth birthday, she was determined to find out who she was. To do this, she began to think of many people around her and things that happened in the past. In fact, I think this is the most important day in April's life, and this is the day that changed her attitude towards her life.

After April had argued with Marion about her birthday present, she went to find her first foster mother, Pat Williams, and she met a friend, Tanya. Pat Williams said she remembered April only because she didn't want to hurt her. Then April thought of Mummy and Daddy. Daddy walked out on Mummy, so mummy committed suicide. April loved her mummy very much, so she went to the cemetery to find her gravestone. There she met a bad man. She began to think of her birthmother, and whether she had met a bad man before. After she went to the gravestone, she thought of Pearl and Gina. She visited Gina and found that she had changed a lot.
She was no longer a thief, but had become a social worker and given up all her bad behaviour. Finally, she went to the pizza place and tried to call her birthmother. I think April did these things on her birthday to try and find her own identity.

However, after finding ‘herself’, April changed to become a more grateful girl. Firstly, April was shy and felt inferior at the beginning of the story; however she became a brave and confident girl. She did not think of herself as a dustbin baby or an abandoned child any more. She began to know that a lot of people cared about her, even though they were not related. So, at the end of the story, she told the waiter: ‘I’ve got ... family coming later’. Secondly, April gave up on finding her birthmother after the conversation with Marion on the phone. She began to know that her birthmother had not been a real mum. Maybe she was silly to think of her birthmother as important when birth was the only thing that connected her. Third, she loved Marion and Frankie. “He really cares about me, even though we’re not related. Marion really cares about me, even though we’re not related.” That was what April said after talking to Marion. I think this is the great change in April and the most important message of the book. At the beginning of the story, April thinks that ‘blood is thicker than water’, but now she begins to know that Marion and Frankie are more important.

In conclusion, I think that thinking of someone you have never met before is meaningless. However, loving someone who cares about you is more meaningful.

**Who Saved the Dustbin Baby?**

**Karen Poon 3C**

April was cast away by her mother and thrown straight into the dustbin. At that time, she was newly born, with no clothes and no food. However, she did not give in. Instead, she howled at the top of her lungs, arresting the attention of Frankie, who eventually came to her rescue. At this point, it is clear that April has saved her own life.

To look deeper, April also saved her own life by surviving stacks of difficult circumstances, like being bullied by a wicked companion called Pearl. She tried to suffocate April in the bath and filled her with red, bloody tooth marks. However, April did not kneel down towards this unscrupulous girl. Instead, she was so strong that she eventually pushed her down the stairs. Of course, it wasn’t a great way of coping with the problem, but to save her life from further danger, she had no choice but to do it.

Another difficulty that she overcame is when her ‘Mummy’, Janet, cut her wrists and passed away. She was the only one in the entire world who did care about April. Without her, April had to live with an impassive, short-tempered woman called Sylvia, Daddy’s new girlfriend. However, she finally learned to cope by concentrating all her attention on her paper dolls. She is really a strong, tough girl, who saved her own life.
As a matter of fact, I also experienced a similar tragedy when I was young. My grandma was a merciful, caring friend to me. Every Lunar New Year, we always travelled a long way to Shenzhen just to pay her a warm visit and to see how she was getting on. However, it was not the same when I was eight. That New Year, Grandma was exceedingly sick. She lounged on the bed all day and she could no longer tell us any funny jokes or make savoury turnip cakes for us. Later I accidentally heard from my mum that Grandma was suffering from lung cancer. I stayed composed in front of my father and mother but wailed like April when I was alone in the cubicle. I was at a loss as to what to do. I had never thought of leaving Grandma. I tried to wall everything up in a corner of my mind to prevent myself from exploding. Then, a week later, the bad news we all tried to push aside, finally came. Before Grandma passed away, she asked my uncle to give me $100 to buy candy, saying it was to compensate for the turnip cake. I could not stop myself any longer. I cried and cried for an entire week. In the end, I realised that crying was meaningless. I pulled myself together and did my best to study hard, as I had promised Grandma that one day I would become a doctor and cure all her diseases. Every day, I revised till 10.00 in the evening. Then I would lie on my bed, gazing at the $100 banknote. This experience helped me to grow up. I realised that life is full of crests and troughs. We should not give in to lost causes, hoping everything will live up to our expectations. Instead, we should equip ourselves for the challenges ahead and be optimistic all the time. That is the way to give our lives meaning.
“Coco Before Chanel’, ‘Bend It Like Beckham’ and ‘Juno’, what do these movies have in common? They all have a strong female lead character rather than a male hero. These movies have a big market and are widely supported by girls.

‘Coco Before Chanel’ is a very recent film which talks about the early life of Coco Chanel and how she struggled to reach the top of the fashion industry. Girls of today are very familiar with Chanel and its products but have they ever thought about how Chanel achieved her success? I guess not but if they do, they will surely be inspired by her. From books that I read about Chanel, I know Chanel was born in a poor family in a small valley. In spite of her background, this girl, with bravery and determination, decided to go to Paris and enter the fashion industry which was run by men. She had a really bad time but she had faith in womanpower. With her faith, she made it to the top and became a legend. I expect to know more about how she achieved all this when I see the film in the cinema.

‘Bend It Like Beckham’ was quite a popular film a few years ago. The story begins with Jules, a white girl, and her friend Jess who is an Indian girl. They both like playing football but are not accepted by their families because the mothers think ladies don’t play football. Feeling stressed, they think of giving up. However, their will and belief in womanpower gives them the determination to continue their interest behind their families’ back. In the end, they win in a match with a male team and finally are approved of by everyone. These two girls are strong-willed and determined in spite of family and cultural ties, setting a good example to girls.

‘Juno’, an Academy award-winning film, portrays a teenage girl who is pregnant accidentally. The story is about how she finds she reacts to her peers. This the lead character, Juno, It tells me that I should influenced by other people. These movies are great and because the female lead characters are much ‘stronger’ than boys in psychological terms. Their themes are mostly related to womanpower.

Modern society is so different from the past. Several decades ago, women were still inferior to men and their roles in movies were for sex appeal. But the strong female lead characters in modern movies in fact provide role models for girls. They are beautiful, independent and strong. They are no longer the belongings of men and sometimes even have control over men and the whole situation. In contrast to ‘Batman’, ‘Spiderman’ and ‘U571’, these female lead characters do not need wars and fights to prove that they are strong and powerful. They just excel over men in daily life. Besides, women in the past could not make decisions and follow their will; however, in these modern films, Juno and the two football enthusiasts can do whatever they want and decide what their future will be like. Aren’t these role models good for girls?

Some people, especially boys, may argue that too much womanpower decreases the birth rate since girls want to be free and independent. Girls, if you are reading this, you definitely know how to excel both at work and in family life, just like these female lead characters. I believe, in the future, girls will be a key influence to the world.
This book is a collection of various British humour. It contains many jokes and stories that make British people laugh. Different topics are given for the jokes, such as Young Lovers, Marriage, Fishing, Children, Absent-minded Professors and Women and Men. You may easily know what the joke is about by searching through the topics.

The most impressive topic among all of them is certainly the one about 'Black Humour'. Black humour is something funny about unpleasant or dangerous people or conditions. Though the tone of black humour compared to others is sarcastic, the content of the joke is still very hilarious. For example, one of the black humour jokes is about a terrible person called Charles Addams. One day, he went to a horrible hotel, which was filthy, dingy and with a weird atmosphere. When he arrived at his room, it was dark and odd. The hotel servant told him, 'This is your room. If you need anything, just scream.'

I think this book is engrossing and attractive. It is not about any long story or fiction, but its content is as interesting as those plots. Although it contains mainly jokes, it is neither ridiculous nor exaggerated. It is meaningful instead. This is because it reflects the life style and culture of the British people. From reading it, I have learnt a lot indeed. Moreover, the author has chosen some of the words that have special meaning, and also given the explanations. Therefore, I can learn new vocabulary when I read it as well and I think they are extremely beneficial and useful. This book is highly recommended to my classmates.
**Charlotte's Web**

*By E.B. White*

Joy Chung 1C

If I were Fern, I would try my best to save Wilbur, the pig.

I would save my pocket money and buy Wilbur back from Mr Zuckerman.

I would talk to the animals in the barn and tell them to bite the people who want to kill Wilbur. I would give a lot of tasty food to them and make them listen to my orders.

Also, I would cry in front of my mother and father and tell them how sad I would be if Wilbur was killed. If they really love me, I think they will spare Wilbur.

Then I would call the SPCA and tell them Zuckerman wants to kill Wilbur. They may think that it is very cruel. They may then let me take care of Wilbur!

If my plans did not work, I would escape with Wilbur and live forever in a place where no one knows us.

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**The Piano**

*Wong Ching Man 2D*

The book tells the story of Sir Antony Evans. When he was young, he was poor and was called Tony. He did not enjoy his lessons at school and was silent. He began to work on a farm when he was thirteen. One day, the farmer told him to take the rubbish out of the building and throw it away. When he cleaned the building, he discovered an old piano. He sat at the piano and started playing the piano easily. He found that he was good at playing the musical instrument. Afterwards, he kept it in the village school and played it every day.

When he had some difficulties, his friend, Linda, would teach him to read the music. Therefore, he became a skilful piano-player. And his life was changed forever.

After I read this book, I have learnt that we should make progress and insist on our targets or dreams because our future is in our hands. Although we may have many problems when we seek our dreams, our family, teachers and friends will help us to solve them. If you abandon your target, you will regret it when you are old. Therefore, we should seize the present moment and start to work hard now!

I recommend this book to my friends because I think it is an educational story. The book is easy to understand too.

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*Charlotte's Web*
Rebecca
By Daphne du Maurier

‘Rebecca’, a tale of love, mystery and suspense, is worth reading and can keep you reading until the last page.

The story is about the marriage of Maxim de Winter with his two wives. After returning to Manderley with his second wife, a discovery of a sunken boat has revealed the truth about Rebecca’s death. As Maxim is the murderer, the case has put Maxim and his new wife into trouble.

Rebecca, the first wife of Maxim de Winter, is dead before the story starts but plays a very important part in the story. She is en evil and selfish woman to Maxim, while others see her as a perfect wife. She forces Maxim to make a deal with her and cheats on Maxim.

The fancy-dress dance leads to the climax of the story. The new Mrs de Winter is really depressed because she thinks she and Maxim are not meant for happiness. She feels so hopeless in their marriage. But later something unexpected happens. The truth is revealed little by little after the dance.

I learnt that things you know are not always as good as they seem, and justice is not always done. I do sympathise with Mr de Winter who has had a miserable marriage with his first wife, but he does kill his first wife and so he shouldn’t get away free. Maybe the writer thinks the loyal new Mrs de Winter deserves someone that loves her, so that they can live happily ever after.