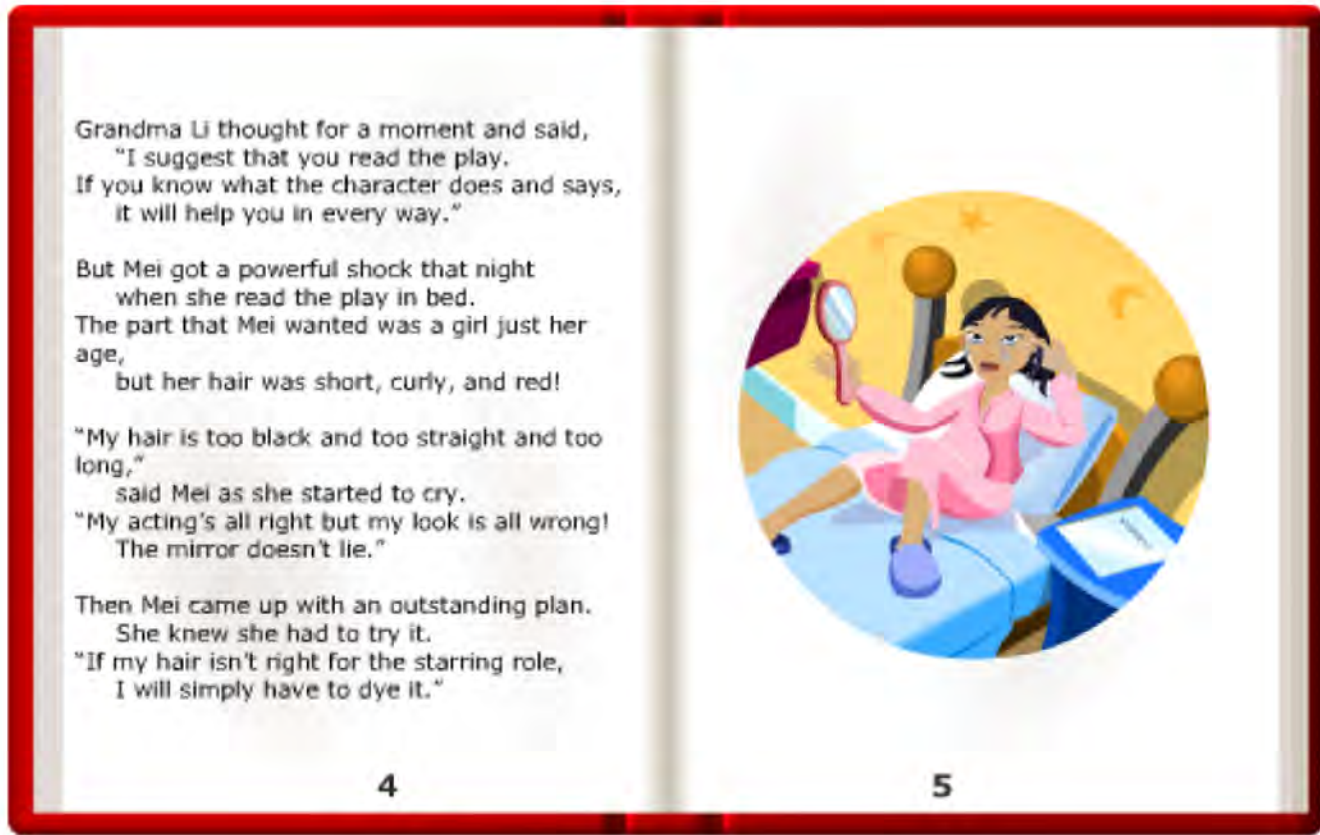




A diphthong is when two vowels combine in one syllable. The sound begins with the first vowel and moves into the other. The letters ‘o’ ‘u’ in the word ‘countless’ make the sound ‘ow’. {pronounced ‘ow’ as in cow} Here O-U is a diphthong. {say Oh – You}

DESTINATION READING COURSE 3

UNIT 17P: Into the Spotlight By Ruth Altman



Why do you think Grandma Li said that knowing what the character did and said would help Mei?



A mirror is sometimes seen as a symbol of vanity. In the next poem that you will read, the poet uses a peacock to symbolize vanity. Which symbol do you think is more effective?

DESTINATION READING COURSE 3

UNIT 17P: Into the Spotlight By Ruth Altman

So Mei was determined to transform herself,
and bought a box of dye.
She looked in the mirror at her lovely black hair
and wiped a tear from her eye.

Then she picked up some scissors and grabbed
her long hair.

She was just about to cut it!
Right then Grandma Li passed outside the door.
Luckily, Mei hadn't shut it.

"Put those down!" screamed Grandmother Li
in a voice a bit too loud.

"Those are your mother's sewing scissors.
You know you're not allowed."

"I have to have hair that's curly and red,"
said Mei. "I must have that part!"
But when she began to outline her plan
she didn't feel very smart.



6

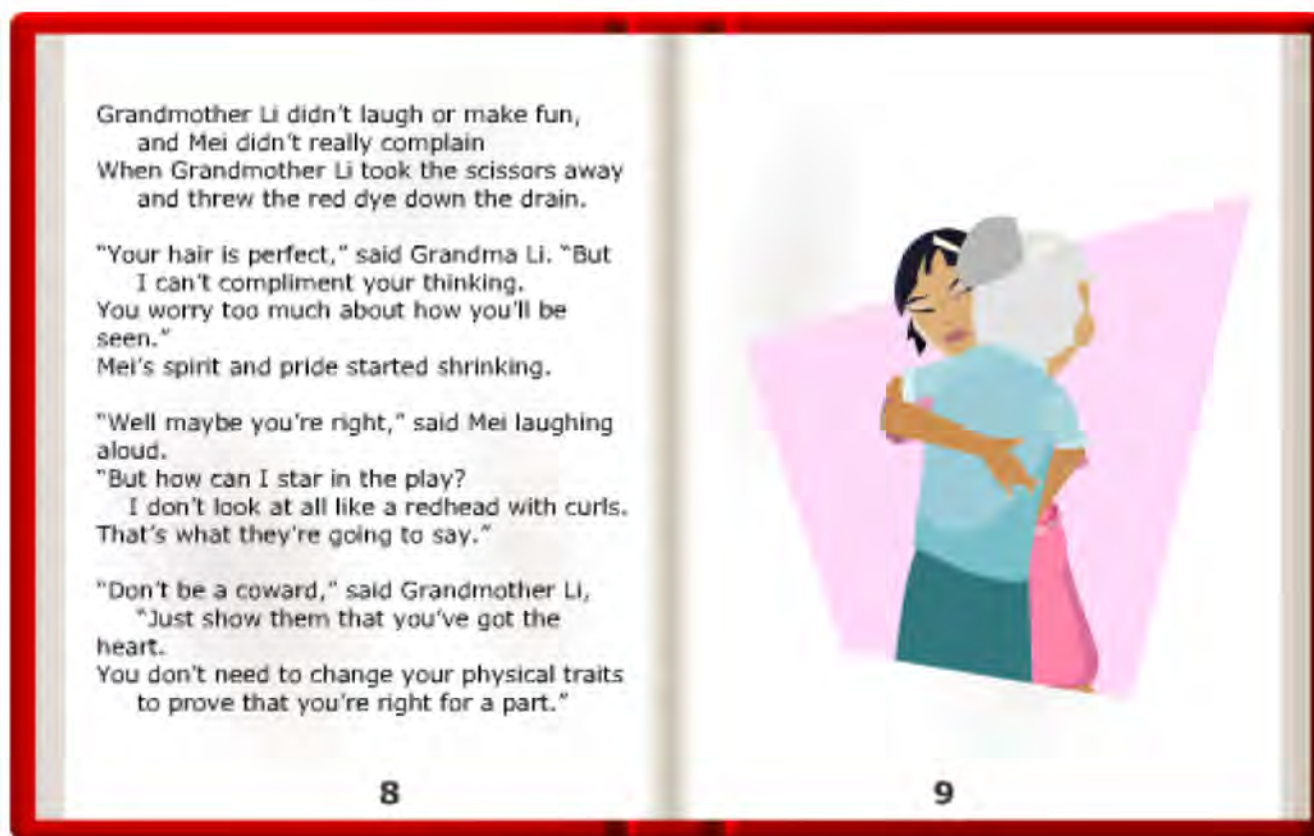
7



Homophones are two words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings. The word 'allowed' is a homophone. What context clues can you use in this stanza to understand the meaning of "allowed"?

DESTINATION READING COURSE 3

UNIT 17P: Into the Spotlight By Ruth Altman



▶ When you read about Grandma Li pouring the red dye down the drain, what sort of mental picture did you form in your mind? Do you think Grandma Li looked angry? Do you think Mei was upset?

▶ The word 'seen' is a homophone. How does the meaning here differ from the word 'scene' in this sentence: So Mei sang her song and she read from a scene."

▶ Hearts are often used as symbols. What do you think the word 'heart' symbolizes here?

DESTINATION READING COURSE 3

UNIT 17P: Into the Spotlight By Ruth Altman

The audition was held in a crowded hall.
Mei knew that she would do fine.
"My clothes complement my lovely black hair,
but my talent will truly shine."

At last the director asked Mei to step up.
He said, "Show me what you can do."
So Mei sang her song and she read from a scene,
and she danced a little bit, too.

When she was through, the director said,
"Wow,
I think you are going to be big!
I only have one question for you—
Would you mind wearing a wig?"



10

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Have you ever had to audition or perform in front of lots of people?
Did you use this experience to help you visualize the events in the poem? What did you imagine in your mind?



What do you think of the director's question in this stanza?
What do you think Mei's response was, and why?
