

# American Born Chinese

## By Gene Luen Yang

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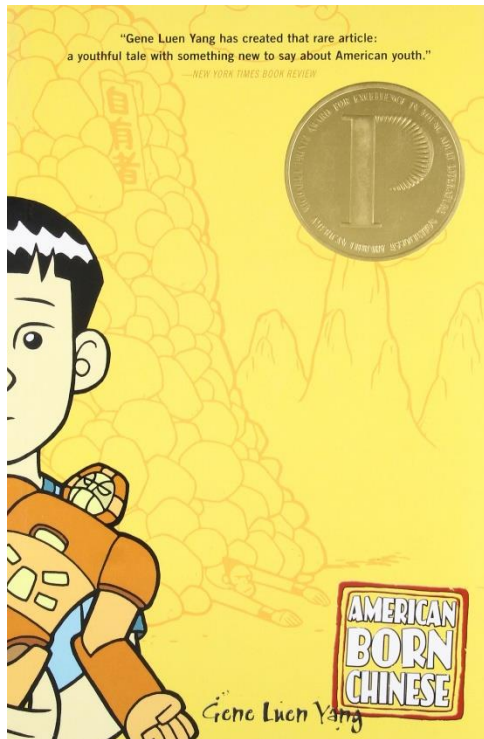
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### Background on Gene Luen Yang

Gene Luen Yang is a cartoonist and also teaches in a master's program as a creative writing professor at Hamline University. Yang is a Bay Area native being born and raised here and his parents even met in the SJSU library. He specializes in writing for children and young adults. Some of his previous and more recent popular works include: *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and DC Comic's *The New Super-man*. Yang much like in *American Born Chinese*, was a minority in his elementary school and was told many stories by his parents in his childhood. He holds a variety of awards for the works he has worked on and has been the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature in 2016. If you would like to find out more, you can go on his website here at <http://geneyang.com>.



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## Summary of American Born Chinese

*American Born Chinese* tells a story of technically three stories that all eventually merge together by the end of the graphic novel. With in the graphic novel, Yang tells the stories of the Monkey King, Jin Wang, and Chin-Kee. Through the story we see Jin, the main protagonist go through his school years while being a minority and trying to fit in. Along the side of Jin's story, we see the trials of the Monkey King and his own journey of fitting in and becoming a worth deity. Lastly, we see the third story of Chin-Kee; the personification of Chinese stereotypes and how he interacts with his cousin Danny. The three stories flow along each other smoothly and compliment each other. Eventually come together to form one surprise ending.

## Three Quotes:

Quote 1(27-29):



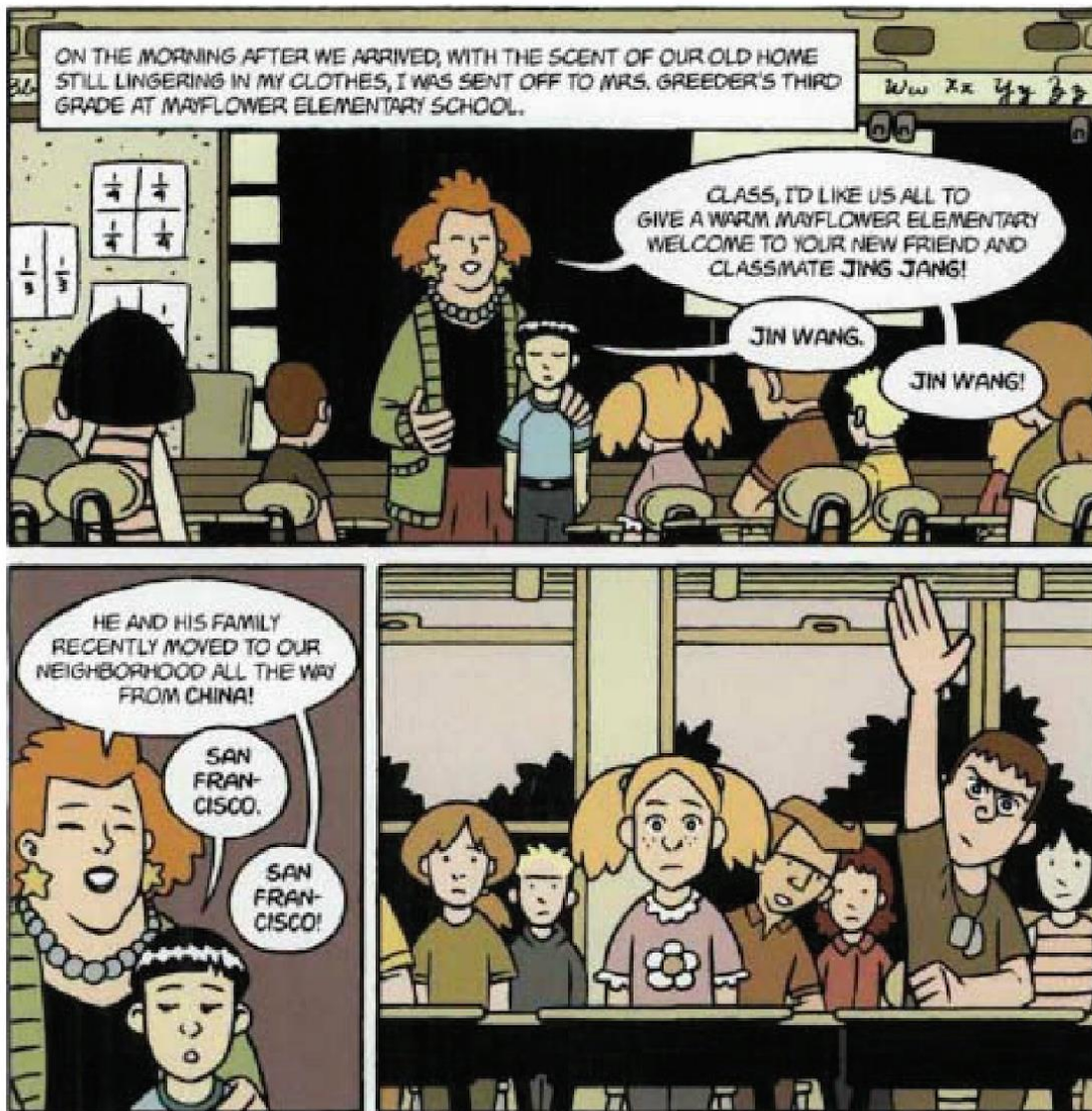








Quote 2 (30-32):



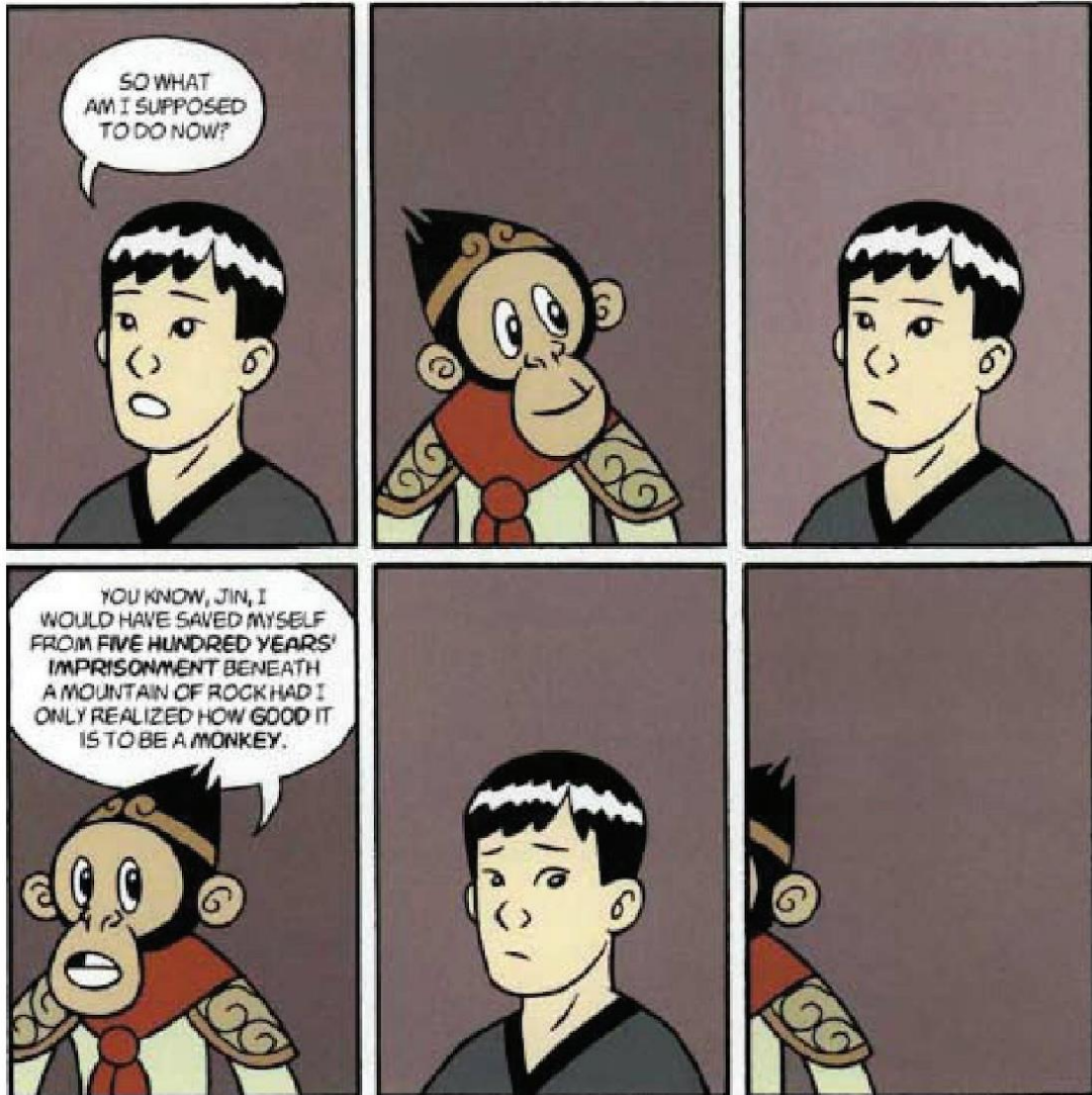








Quote 3 (223):



## Significance:

### Quote 1:

This quote sets up the entire novel by establishing the main theme through the herbalist lady's words. Through her, we see the distance between Jin's culture and the old herbalist lady's culture. Much like how the Monkey King's story is so different from Jin's while they are grouped in and share the same culture.

### Quote 2:

Quote 2 shows us the frustrating experience Jin Wang and many other immigrant minorities with native names have. From the start we already see Jin be alienated from his teacher and we also see Jin start to look for a sense of familiarity through his identity in the classroom through Suzie Nakamura. Discrimination begins at lunch for Jin when the other students bully him about what he is eating, leaving Jin feeling alienated.

### Quote 3:

The final quote is at the end of the graphic novel and is told by the Monkey King. He explains that being that truly embracing yourself is what matters the most. The Monkey King uses his experiences and tries to explain to Jin that being yourself is the best thing you can do for yourself. This quote finalizes everything the Monkey King has learned and how he has become a deity in his own right and how he wishes to teach Jin what he has learned.

## Why Should Teens Read This Book?

*American Born Chinese* is at its core a book about identity and discrimination. With so many young adults in their developing years, they seek a sense of identity and individuality. This graphic novel invokes thought in the reader, making them reflect on their own individuality. Many ethnic teens around the country could also be facing the same problem as the main protagonist in this story. They can relate to the novel and the struggles that Jin Wang faces in the novel as being a minority in their schools.

## Text complexity:

**ATOS Book Level: 3.3**

**Interest Level: Middle Grades Plus (MG+ 6 and up)**

**Lexile score: GN530L**

**Flesch Reading Ease score: 78.9**

**Flesch Reading Ease scored your text: fairly easy to read.**



Overall the text is easy to read and because it is a graphic novel the illustrations help the reader's comprehension out a lot. Most of the tests scored *American Born Chinese* as about fifth to sixth grade level. With no difficult vocabulary to grasp and inviting ideas and themes this graphic novel is perfect for grade levels 5-6.

Bryan Sit

112B Literature for Young Adults

All photos of the book's quotes are scans from *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang.