Are people more **ALIKE** or different?

Have you ever been somewhere and found that the language, food, or customs were different than what you were used to? You may have felt out of place. Or perhaps you discovered that you actually had a lot in common with the people you met. In “The All-American Slurp,” a Chinese-American girl learns that people can share similarities even when they appear very different at first.

**SURVEY** Complete the survey below. Then form a group with two or three people you don’t know well. Share your surveys to see how much you do (or don’t) have in common.
Meet the Author

Lensey Namioka
born 1929

Outsiders' Stories
Lensey Namioka says that her stories tell about people who feel like “outsiders.” This is true whether the story is set in present-day Seattle or 16th-century Japan. To write these stories, she draws upon her own experiences.

Growing Up on the Outside
Namioka grew up in China. When war broke out in 1937, her family moved to western China, where the food was very spicy and the dialect (regional form of a language) was hard to understand. This made her feel like an outsider in her own country. Before the war ended, her family moved to the United States. The strange customs, food, and language of her new country made her feel even more like an outsider.

Living in Two Worlds
At first, Namioka’s father charged everyone in the family a fine for each English word used at home. He did so because he did not want his family to forget the Chinese language. Namioka’s mother ended the fines when she refused to pay. “Besides,” says Namioka, “there were words that just had no Chinese translation. How do you say ‘cheeseburger’ in Chinese, for instance?”

LITERARY SKILLS: TONE AND IMAGERY
Have you ever been embarrassed? Sometimes people use humor to make light of an embarrassing experience. Lensey Namioka writes about a series of awkward situations one family faces after immigrating to a new country. Having gone through a similar experience, she makes light of the situation by using a humorous tone and memorable imagery.

A writer’s tone is his or her attitude towards a subject. Tone can often be described in a single word, such as angry, playful, or admiring. Namioka establishes a humorous tone toward her subject through her characters’ thoughts, words, and actions. She also uses vivid imagery—words and phrases that appeal to one or more of our senses—to help you imagine the funny scenarios in her story. Most sensory images are visual, but images can often appeal to several senses at once.

READING STRATEGY: VISUALIZE
Details in a story help you visualize, or picture in your mind, what takes place. Record the ways in which the writer’s sensory images help you visualize the events in the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>What I Visualize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother combs June’s hair.</td>
<td>a mother combing her daughter’s hair in front of a mirror and smiling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT
Namioka uses the listed words in her story. To see how many you know, complete each sentence with a word from the list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD LIST</th>
<th>consumption</th>
<th>etiquette</th>
<th>mortified</th>
<th>cope</th>
<th>lavishly</th>
<th>revolting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Follow proper ______ when you meet someone new.
2. I’m ______ when I can’t remember someone’s name.
3. Their sofa was ______ decorated with fancy pillows.
4. That weird stew was absolutely ______!
5. The waiter had to ______ with the loud guests.
6. ______ of too many spicy foods makes me feel ill.

Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
The first time our family was invited out to dinner in America, we disgraced ourselves while eating celery. We had emigrated to this country from China, and during our early days here we had a hard time with American table manners.

In China we never ate celery raw, or any other kind of vegetable raw. We always had to disinfect the vegetables in boiling water first. When we were presented with our first relish tray, the raw celery caught us unprepared.

We had been invited to dinner by our neighbors, the Gleasons. After arriving at the house, we shook hands with our hosts and packed ourselves into a sofa. As our family of four sat stiffly in a row, my younger brother and I stole glances at our parents for a clue as to what to do next.

Mrs. Gleason offered the relish tray to Mother. The tray looked pretty, with its tiny red radishes, curly sticks of carrots, and long, slender stalks of pale green celery. “Do try some of the celery, Mrs. Lin,” she said. “It’s from a local farmer, and it’s sweet.”

Mother picked up one of the green stalks, and Father followed suit. Then I picked up a stalk, and my brother did too. So there we sat, each with a stalk of celery in our right hand.

Mrs. Gleason kept smiling. “Would you like to try some of the dip, Mrs. Lin? It’s my own recipe: sour cream and onion flakes, with a dash of Tabasco sauce.”
Most Chinese don’t care for dairy products, and in those days I wasn’t even ready to drink fresh milk. Sour cream sounded perfectly *revolting*. Our family shook our heads in unison.

Mrs. Gleason went off with the relish tray to the other guests, and we carefully watched to see what they did. Everyone seemed to eat the raw vegetables quite happily.

Mother took a bite of her celery. *Crunch.* “It’s not bad!” she whispered.

Father took a bite of his celery. *Crunch.* “Yes, it is good,” he said, looking surprised.

I took a bite, and then my brother. *Crunch, crunch.* It was more than good; it was delicious. Raw celery has a slight sparkle, a zingy taste that you don’t get in cooked celery. When Mrs. Gleason came around with the relish tray, we each took another stalk of celery, except my brother. He took two.

There was only one problem: long strings ran through the length of the stalk, and they got caught in my teeth. When I help my mother in the kitchen, I always pull the strings out before slicing celery.

I pulled the strings out of my stalk. *Z-z-zip, z-z-zip.* My brother followed suit. *Z-z-zip, z-z-zip, z-z-zip.* To my left, my parents were taking care of their own stalks. *Z-z-zip, z-z-zip, z-z-zip.*

Suddenly I realized that there was dead silence except for our zipping. Looking up, I saw that the eyes of everyone in the room were on our family. Mr. and Mrs. Gleason, their daughter Meg, who was my friend, and their neighbors the Badels—they were all staring at us as we busily pulled the strings of our celery.

That wasn’t the end of it. Mrs. Gleason announced that dinner was served and invited us to the dining table. It was *lavishly* covered with platters of food, but we couldn’t see any chairs around the table. So we helpfully carried over some dining chairs and sat down. All the other guests just stood there.

Mrs. Gleason bent down and whispered to us, “This is a buffet dinner. You help yourselves to some food and eat it in the living room.”

Our family beat a retreat back to the sofa as if chased by enemy soldiers. For the rest of the evening, too *mortified* to go back to the dining table, I *nursed* a bit of potato salad on my plate.

Next day Meg and I got on the school bus together. I wasn’t sure how she would feel about me after the spectacle our family made at the party.

But she was just the same as usual, and the only reference she made to the party was, “Hope you and your folks got enough to eat last night. You certainly didn’t take very much. Mom never tries to figure out how

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1. *nursed*: very slowly ate.
2. *spectacle*: public display of bad behavior.
much food to prepare. She just puts everything on the table and hopes for the best.”

I began to relax. The Gleasons’ dinner party wasn’t so different from a Chinese meal after all. My mother also puts everything on the table and hopes for the best. 

Meg was the first friend I had made after we came to America. I eventually got acquainted with a few other kids in school, but Meg was still the only real friend I had.

My brother didn’t have any problems making friends. He spent all his time with some boys who were teaching him baseball, and in no time he could speak English much faster than I could—not better, but faster.

I worried more about making mistakes, and I spoke carefully, making sure I could say everything right before opening my mouth. At least I had a better accent than my parents, who never really got rid of their Chinese accent, even years later. My parents had both studied English in school before coming to America, but what they had studied was mostly written English, not spoken.
Father’s approach to English was a scientific one. Since Chinese verbs have no tense, he was fascinated by the way English verbs changed form according to whether they were in the present, past imperfect, perfect, pluperfect, future, or future perfect tense. He was always making diagrams of verbs and their inflections, and he looked for opportunities to show off his mastery of the pluperfect and future perfect tenses, his two favorites. “I shall have finished my project by Monday,” he would say smugly.4

Mother’s approach was to memorize lists of polite phrases that would cover all possible social situations. She was constantly muttering things like “I’m fine, thank you. And you?” Once she accidentally stepped on someone’s foot, and hurriedly blurted, “Oh, that’s quite all right!” Embarrassed by her slip, she resolved to do better next time. So when someone stepped on her foot, she cried, “You’re welcome!”

In our own different ways, we made progress in learning English. But I had another worry, and that was my appearance. My brother didn’t have to worry, since Mother bought him blue jeans for school, and he dressed like all the other boys. But she insisted that girls had to wear skirts. By the time she saw that Meg and the other girls were wearing jeans, it was too late. My school clothes were bought already, and we didn’t have money left to buy new outfits for me. We had too many other things to buy first, like furniture, pots, and pans.

The first time I visited Meg’s house, she took me upstairs to her room, and I wound up trying on her clothes. We were pretty much the same size, since Meg was shorter and thinner than average. Maybe that’s how we became friends in the first place. Wearing Meg’s jeans and T-shirt, I looked at myself in the mirror. I could almost pass for an American—from the back, anyway. At least the kids in school wouldn’t stop and stare at me in the hallways, which was what they did when they saw me in my white blouse and navy blue skirt that went a couple of inches below the knees.

When Meg came to my house, I invited her to try on my Chinese dresses, the ones with a high collar and slits up the sides. Meg’s eyes were bright as she looked at herself in the mirror. She struck several sultry poses, and we nearly fell over laughing.

The dinner party at the Gleasons’ didn’t stop my growing friendship with Meg. Things were getting better for me in other ways too. Mother finally bought me some jeans at the end of the month, when Father got his paycheck. She wasn’t in any hurry about buying them at first, until

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3. inflections ([in-fiˌklərˈshənz]): different tenses.

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Language Coach

Verb Forms Mr. Lin is studying verb tenses, the time of action or state of being expressed by a verb. If you struggle with verb tenses, follow the rules below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>To express an action or state of being that is occurring now</td>
<td>Father makes diagrams of verbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>To express an action or state of being that occurred in the past</td>
<td>Father made diagrams of verbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>To express an action or state of being that will occur in the future</td>
<td>Father will make diagrams of verbs tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION

The Chinese dress Meg tries on is a cheongsam ([chʰoŋgsəm]) or qipao ([kʰiˈpaaʊ]). Cheongsam is from the Cantonese dialect and translates as “long dress.” Qipao is Mandarin for “banner gown.”
I worked on her. This is what I did. Since we didn’t have a car in those days, I often ran down to the neighborhood store to pick up things for her. The groceries cost less at a big supermarket, but the closest one was many blocks away. One day, when she ran out of flour, I offered to borrow a bike from our neighbor’s son and buy a ten-pound bag of flour at the big supermarket. I mounted the boy’s bike and waved to Mother. “I’ll be back in five minutes!”

Before I started pedaling, I heard her voice behind me. “You can’t go out in public like that! People can see all the way up to your thighs!”

“I’m sorry,” I said innocently. “I thought you were in a hurry to get the flour.” For dinner we were going to have pot-stickers (fried Chinese dumplings), and we needed a lot of flour.

“Couldn’t you borrow a girl’s bicycle?” complained Mother. “That way your skirt won’t be pushed up.”

“There aren’t too many of those around,” I said. “Almost all the girls wear jeans while riding a bike, so they don’t see any point buying a girl’s bike.”

We didn’t eat pot-stickers that evening, and Mother was thoughtful. Next day we took the bus downtown and she bought me a pair of jeans. In the same week, my brother made the baseball team of his junior high school, Father started taking driving lessons, and Mother discovered rummage sales. We soon got all the furniture we needed, plus a dart board and a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle (fourteen hours later, we discovered that it was a 999-piece jigsaw puzzle). There was hope that the Lins might become a normal American family after all.

Then came our dinner at the Lakeview Restaurant.

The Lakeview was an expensive restaurant, one of those places where a headwaiter dressed in tails conducted you to your seat, and the only light came from candles and flaming desserts. In one corner of the room a lady harpist played tinkling melodies.

Father wanted to celebrate, because he had just been promoted. He worked for an electronics company, and after his English started improving, his superiors decided to appoint him to a position more suited to his training. The promotion not only brought a higher salary but was also a tremendous boost to his pride.

Up to then we had eaten only in Chinese restaurants. Although my brother and I were becoming fond of hamburgers, my parents didn’t care much for Western food, other than chow mein.5

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5. **chow mein** (chou’ män’): Chinese-American dish of vegetables and meat served over fried noodles.
But this was a special occasion, and Father asked his coworkers to recommend a really elegant restaurant. So there we were at the Lakeview, stumbling after the headwaiter in the murky dining room.

At our table we were handed our menus, and they were so big that to read mine I almost had to stand up again. But why bother? It was mostly in French, anyway.

Father, being an engineer, was always systematic. He took out a pocket French dictionary. “They told me that most of the items would be in French, so I came prepared.” He even had a pocket flashlight, the size of a marking pen. While Mother held the flashlight over the menu, he looked up the items that were in French.

“Pâté en croûte,” he muttered. “Let’s see . . . pâté is paste . . . croûte is crust . . . hmm . . . a paste in crust.”

The waiter stood looking patient. I squirmed and died at least fifty times.

At long last Father gave up. “Why don’t we just order four complete dinners at random?” he suggested.


“A Chinese can eat anything a Frenchman can eat,” Father declared.

The soup arrived in a plate. How do you get soup up from a plate? I glanced at the other diners, but the ones at the nearby tables were not on their soup course, while the more distant ones were invisible in the darkness.

Fortunately my parents had studied books on Western etiquette before they came to America. “Tilt your plate,” whispered my mother. “It’s easier to spoon the soup up that way.”

She was right. Tilting the plate did the trick. But the etiquette book didn’t say anything about what you did after the soup reached your lips. As any respectable Chinese knows, the correct way to eat your soup is to slurp. This helps to cool the liquid and prevent you from burning your lips. It also shows your appreciation.

We showed our appreciation. Shloop, went my father. Shloop, went my mother. Shloop, shloop, went my brother, who was the hungriest.

The lady harpist stopped playing to take a rest. And in the silence, our family’s consumption of soup suddenly seemed unnaturally loud. You know how it sounds on a rocky beach when the tide goes out and the water drains from all those little pools? They go shloop, shloop, shloop. That was the Lin family, eating soup.

At the next table a waiter was pouring wine. When a large shloop reached him, he froze. The bottle continued to pour, and red wine flooded the tabletop and into the lap of a customer. Even the customer didn’t notice anything at first, being also hypnotized by the shloop, shloop, shloop.
It was too much. “I need to go to the toilet,” I mumbled, jumping to my feet. A waiter, sensing my urgency, quickly directed me to the ladies’ room.

I splashed cold water on my burning face, and as I dried myself with a paper towel, I stared into the mirror. In this perfumed ladies’ room, with its pink-and-silver wallpaper and marbled sinks, I looked completely out of place. What was I doing here? What was our family doing in the Lakeview Restaurant? In America?

The door to the ladies’ room opened. A woman came in and glanced curiously at me. I retreated into one of the toilet cubicles and latched the door.

Time passed—maybe half an hour, maybe an hour. Then I heard the door open again, and my mother’s voice. “Are you in there? You’re not sick, are you?”

There was real concern in her voice. A girl can’t leave her family just because they slurp their soup. Besides, the toilet cubicle had a few drawbacks as a permanent residence. “I’m all right,” I said, undoing the latch.

Mother didn’t tell me how the rest of the dinner went, and I didn’t want to know. In the weeks following, I managed to push the whole thing into the back of my mind, where it jumped out at me only a few times a day. Even now, I turn hot all over when I think of the Lakeview Restaurant.

**TEKS 8**

**SENSORY LANGUAGE**

Writers use sensory language to help you imagine what their characters see, feel, hear, smell, and taste. Reread lines 201–205. Write down the phrases in this paragraph that include sensory language and identify which of the five senses each phrase appeals to.

**VISUALIZE**

Many events embarrass the narrator during the dinner at the Lakeview Restaurant. Record the details and what you visualized in your chart.

**Analyze Visuals**

Does this meal look inviting or intimidating? Explain.
But by the time we had been in this country for three months, our family was definitely making progress toward becoming Americanized. I remember my parents’ first PTA meeting. Father wore a neat suit and tie, and Mother put on her first pair of high heels. She stumbled only once. They met my homeroom teacher and beamed as she told them that I would make honor roll soon at the rate I was going. Of course Chinese etiquette forced Father to say that I was a very stupid girl and Mother to protest that the teacher was showing favoritism toward me. But I could tell they were both very proud.

The day came when my parents announced that they wanted to give a dinner party. We had invited Chinese friends to eat with us before, but this dinner was going to be different. In addition to a Chinese-American family, we were going to invite the Gleasons.

“Gee, I can hardly wait to have dinner at your house,” Meg said to me. “I just love Chinese food.”

That was a relief. Mother was a good cook, but I wasn’t sure if people who ate sour cream would also eat chicken gizzards stewed in soy sauce.

Mother decided not to take a chance with chicken gizzards. Since we had Western guests, she set the table with large dinner plates, which we never used in Chinese meals. In fact we didn’t use individual plates at all, but picked up food from the platters in the middle of the table and brought it directly to our rice bowls. Following the practice of Chinese-American restaurants, Mother also placed large serving spoons on the platters.

The dinner started well. Mrs. Gleason exclaimed at the beautifully arranged dishes of food: the colorful candied fruit in the sweet-and-sour pork dish, the noodle-thin shreds of chicken meat stir-fried with tiny peas, and the glistening pink prawns in a ginger sauce.

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7. gizzards: A gizzard is the muscular pouch behind a bird’s stomach that helps with its digestion.
8. prawns (prônz): large seafood, similar to shrimp.
At first I was too busy enjoying my food to notice how the guests were doing. But soon I remembered my duties. Sometimes guests were too polite to help themselves and you had to serve them with more food.

I glanced at Meg, to see if she needed more food, and my eyes nearly popped out at the sight of her plate. It was piled with food: the sweet-and-sour meat pushed right against the chicken shreds, and the chicken sauce ran into the prawns. She had been taking food from a second dish before she finished eating her helping from the first!

Horrified, I turned to look at Mrs. Gleason. She was dumping rice out of her bowl and putting it on her dinner plate. Then she ladled prawns and gravy on top of the rice and mixed everything together, the way you mix sand, gravel, and cement to make concrete.

I couldn't bear to look any longer, and I turned to Mr. Gleason. He was chasing a pea around his plate. Several times he got it to the edge, but when he tried to pick it up with his chopsticks, it rolled back toward the center of the plate again. Finally he put down his chopsticks and picked up the pea with his fingers. He really did! A grown man!  

All of us, our family and the Chinese guests, stopped eating to watch the activities of the Gleasons. I wanted to giggle. Then I caught my mother’s eyes on me. She frowned and shook her head slightly, and I understood the message: the Gleasons were not used to Chinese ways, and they were just coping the best they could. For some reason I thought of celery strings.

When the main courses were finished, Mother brought out a platter of fruit. “I hope you weren’t expecting a sweet dessert,” she said. “Since the Chinese don’t eat dessert, I didn’t think to prepare any.”

“Oh, I couldn’t possibly eat dessert!” cried Mrs. Gleason. “I’m simply stuffed!”

Meg had different ideas. When the table was cleared, she announced that she and I were going for a walk. “I don’t know about you, but I feel like dessert,” she told me, when we were outside. “Come on, there’s a Dairy Queen down the street. I could use a big chocolate milkshake!”

Although I didn’t really want anything more to eat, I insisted on paying for the milkshakes. After all, I was still hostess.

Meg got her large chocolate milkshake and I had a small one. Even so, she was finishing hers while I was only half done. Toward the end she pulled hard on her straws and went shloop, shloop.

“Do you always slurp when you eat a milkshake?” I asked, before I could stop myself.

Meg grinned. “Sure. All Americans slurp.”

**TONE**

Reread lines 257–273. Is it the Gleasons’ actions, the narrator’s responses, or both that add humor to the story? Explain.

cope (kōp) v. to struggle to overcome difficulties

**TONE AND IMAGERY**

What does the tone and imagery in lines 290–295 tell you about how the narrator feels after her parents’ dinner party?
Comprehension

1. **Recall**  What two types of food served at the Gleasons’ dinner party are unusual for the Lin family?

2. **Recall**  How does each member of the Lin family learn English?

3. **Clarify**  Why do the Lins slurp their soup in the French restaurant?

Literary Analysis

4. **Visualize**  Review the chart you created while reading. Which sensory details helped you picture the story events most vividly in your mind? How do these details help you understand the Lin’s experiences?

5. **Analyze Imagery**  Look back through the story and list some of the images the author uses to describe the events that take place, noting which sense—sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste—each image appeals to. Then explain how the use of imagery adds humor to the story.

6. **Compare and Contrast Characters**  Find examples of similarities and differences between the Lins and the Gleasons. Do you think the narrator feels more like or different from her neighbors by the end of the story? Support your answer with evidence from the story.

7. **Evaluate Tone**  Find examples of characters’ thoughts, words, and actions that contribute to the humorous tone of “The All-American Slurp.” Record the examples in a chart like the one shown. Which details do you think have the strongest effect on the tone of the story?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thoughts</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Extension and Challenge

8. **SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION**  Imagine that you are preparing the Lin family for their dinner at the Gleasons’ house. Write a summary, or a brief retelling, of the article on page 457 for the Lins. Remember that your summary should only include information from the article, and not your personal opinions.

Are people more ALIKE or different?

Namioka seems to think people are more alike than different. Do you agree?
Vocabulary in Context

**VOCABULARY PRACTICE**

Choose the letter of the item you would associate with each vocabulary word as it is used in “The All-American Slurp.”

1. **revolting**: (a) a borrowed sweater, (b) a spoiled sandwich, (c) an old car
2. **lavishly**: (a) a generous amount, (b) a large classroom, (c) a crowded train station
3. **mortified**: (a) playing a trick, (b) going to a meeting, (c) falling down in public
4. **etiquette**: (a) fixing a bicycle, (b) writing a thank-you note, (c) baking a dessert
5. **consumption**: (a) taking an elevator, (b) finding a lost hat, (c) eating lunch
6. **cope**: (a) get angry, (b) finish a project, (c) manage stress

**ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING**

- aspect • distinctive • interpret • perceive • sensory

Write a paragraph in which you discuss how the writer’s **distinctive** use of **sensory** language and hyperbole in “The All-American Slurp” added to your enjoyment of the story. Use at least two Academic Vocabulary words in your response.

**VOCABULARY STRATEGY: SIMILES AS CONTEXT CLUES**

When writers want to compare two things, they sometimes use figurative language called similes. **Similes** are comparisons that use the words *like* or *as*. In “The All-American Slurp,” the narrator’s family leaves the buffet table at a party “as if chased by enemy soldiers.” The simile here is humorous and helps you understand how quickly the family left.

Similes can also give you context clues to help you figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words. If you can form a mental picture of the comparison, you understand the meaning of the unfamiliar word.

**PRACTICE** Use the simile in each sentence as a context clue to help you define the boldfaced word.

1. She was stepping as **gingerly** as the parent of a sleeping baby.
2. Storm clouds **loomed** like Friday’s spelling test.
3. He felt like a caged bird in the house’s **confining** guest room.
4. Her sloppy handwriting was as **cryptic** as any secret code.
5. The awkward fit of his clothes made him feel **gawky**, like a newborn giraffe.

Go to thinkcentral.com. KEYWORD: HML6-455
Conventions in Writing

◆ GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: Avoid Clauses As Fragments

A clause is a group of words that has a subject and a verb. If a clause states a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence, it is called an independent clause. Fragments, or incomplete sentences, occur when dependent clauses (subordinate clauses) are used on their own. To correct such a fragment, simply join the dependent clause to an independent clause. Here is an example with the independent clause highlighted in yellow and the dependent clause highlighted in green:

Original: I put down my chopsticks. Because everyone was staring.
Revised: I put down my chopsticks because everyone was staring.

PRACTICE Find four fragments in the following paragraph. Then fix the fragments by correctly combining independent and dependent clauses.

The Lins invited us to a Chinese dinner at their house. Because we had them over for dinner. I wasn’t expecting any surprises. Since we ate at Chinese restaurants all the time. I piled a heap of the sweet-and-sour meat on my plate with all the other food. As Mrs. Lin passed the dish around. Most of the food was pretty good. Dad didn’t embarrass me. Although he picked up a pea with his fingers.

For more help with independent and dependent clauses, see page R62 in the Grammar Handbook.

READING-WRITING CONNECTION

YOUR TURN Broaden your understanding of “The All-American Slurp” by responding to this prompt. Then use the revising tip to improve your writing.

WRITING PROMPT

Extended Response: Write About Etiquette
The Lin family learned American etiquette the hard way. Read “American Lifestyles and Habits” on page 457. In two or three paragraphs, explain what information from the article would have helped the Lins.

REVISING TIP

Review your response. Have you used any fragments, or incomplete sentences? If so, revise your writing.
Etiquette and traditions for guests in an American family

There are some significant differences between cultures concerning etiquette and hospitality. The role of the guest is quite different in America than it is in other countries. In America, guests are generally urged to “make themselves at home.” Americans believe that both guests and hosts are most comfortable when neither is anxious about being too polite or reserved. For instance, if you are hungry you should not wait for your host to offer you food. It’s perfectly normal to ask for a snack, or to make one yourself! . . .

The types of food that Americans eat shock many people and it sometimes takes time to adjust. If you are longing for some “normal” food, you should offer to cook a national meal. Americans are almost always interested in trying new foods and would be honored if their guest(s) offered to cook a dinner.

When you are sitting at the table, you will generally have to help yourself. You may be offered food once, and if you refuse, it will not be offered again. As mentioned before, Americans tend to give honest, straightforward answers rather than feign politeness. While in your country it may be considered polite to answer “no” when food is first offered, American hosts will take “no” as exactly that and will not offer you the food again. If there is something additional that you would like at the table, you should ask for it or just take it.

When it comes to food, you may find that Americans

- Love vegetarian, low-fat salads with different salad dressings
- Eat most of their food quickly, and often take a meal with them to eat en route somewhere
- Put ice in almost all beverages—one American favorite is ICED tea!
- Use lots of spices and often like ethnic foods
- Eat dinner as the main meal of the day
- Often eat little or no breakfast—so be sure to ask for food in the morning