

Lydia Cardona

Lesson Title: Literature lesson for Dragonwings, by Laurence Yep/China

Grade/Subject: 6, Language Arts

Time: 1-2 weeks

Description: *Dragonwings* is the story of Moon Shadow, a Chinese boy who comes to California in 1903 to live with his father. The lives of the Chinese people are filled with obstacles and discrimination, but the men of Moon Shadow's Company work together in harmony. Moon Shadow relishes his new relationship with his father and shares in his father's secret ambition--to fly like a dragon. (K12.com)

Objectives: Students will identify the theme of the story. Students will analyze the characters in the story and identify character traits and motivations. Students will demonstrate comprehension of the text by answering multiple choice and extended response questions and learning new vocabulary.

State Standards: Reading Applications: Literary Text A, E
Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies A-D
Acquisition of Vocabulary: A, D-F
Writing Applications B, D

Materials: novel-Dragonwings, by Laurence Yep, handouts

Procedures:

Day One

- 1.) Begin with a discussion on why people fear the unknown. Discuss what period fiction is and how it helps us to understand history. Have students, in small groups or as a class, share what they know about an aspect of Chinese culture, for example, customs, language, art, or myths. Also explain that gangs called brotherhoods play a role in *Dragonwings*. Discuss with your students some of the forces that cause gangs to develop and establish power over a population. Explain that the brotherhoods in Chinatown were not always corrupt. Sometimes they were the main source of law and order in the Chinatown community, but eventually, most were consumed by feuds and corruption. Help students connect the information to their experience by asking questions such as the following: How are modern gangs similar? Can the formation of gangs be prevented? Should they be? If so, how can that be done without violating people's civil rights?
- 2.) Introduce the novel by giving a brief summary of the story. (Explain that this story takes place at the beginning of the 20th century where we find a family living in a small Chinese village. The story is told from the point of view of the main character, Moon Shadow: a boy who will travel to America to live with his father.)
- 3.) Review vocabulary students will encounter in today's reading.
- 4.) Begin reading chapters 1-2 (teacher can either read aloud or have students take turns reading).
- 5.) Use discussion questions either verbally or as written responses.

Remaining Days

- 1.) Use discussion questions to review previous day's reading.
- 2.) Review vocabulary students will encounter.
- 3.) Read the remainder of the book, a few chapters each day.
- 4.) Use discussion questions either verbally or as a handout for written responses.
- 5.) Use internet resources to further discussions and enhance student learning:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award99/cubhtml/cichome.html>

<http://www.sfmuseum.org/1906/06.html>

<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/drag/chinatn.jpg>

<http://www.mrcoward.com/slcusd/opium2.jpg>

<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/yep>

Assessment:

1. Written discussion questions.
2. Student's will create a character chart describing the physical traits, character traits, objects associated and important actions of the character of their choice.
3. Student's will answer one of the following questions related to theme in paragraph form:

A.) What are the elements of freedom which appear in the novel? Which characters represent these? How is freedom limited? How can it be exercised?

B.) What actions did Moon Shadow take in the novel which helped him to grow up? What decision was involved in each? You must find at least 4 important actions, and build a paragraph about each.

Discussion Questions

Why does Moon Shadow make the decision to come to America?

Explain the Tang people's meaning of the word "demon."

Explain Moon Shadow's concept of names.

Explain Windrider's feelings about machines.

What does Moon Shadow learn about the way the men of the Company feel toward one another? When does this become most apparent to him?

Summarize Black Dog's reasons for taking opium.

Explain Uncle's attitude when Windrider decides to leave the Company.

How does Moon Shadow feel during his initial visit to the Whitlaws? How does his perspective change?

Why does Robin tell Moon Shadow about Jack's fear of being punched in the nose?

How does the Lees' view of Miss Whitlaw change during the aftermath of the earthquake?

Examine the way Moon Shadow describes his view of the city. What can we tell about Moon Shadow's perspective from these descriptions?

Explain how Moon Shadow feels as the airplane nears its completion.

Why does Moon Shadow think he is so lucky?

What does Laurence Yep mean when he says the Chinese immigrants of the late 1800s and early 1900s "remain a dull, faceless mass"?

Lesson Extension:

Science: study plate tectonics and how earthquakes happen.