

Chinese Lesson Plan
Shadow Puppets
(A Chinese Tradition)
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Level and Subject Area:

- 8th grade
- Language Arts

Length of Lesson:

- 8 days (if classes are 40 minutes in length)

Objectives:

- Discuss the brief history of Chinese shadow puppets and how the puppets are created.
- Read and discuss the moral of the Chinese folktale, "The Three Precious Pearls".
- Create a retelling of a Chinese folktale from the book of Lawrence Yep, and brainstorm the moral of the folktale.
- Create shadow puppets and scenery for their Chinese folktale retelling.
- Present folktales, with shadow puppets, to the class.
- Complete a PMI (plus, minus, interesting) reflection on shadow puppets.

Ohio Content Standards:

- **C.8.6** - Adjust volume, phrasing, enunciation, voice modulation and inflections to stress important ideas and impact audience response.
- **WP.8.5** – Use organizational strategies (notes and outlines) to plan writing.
- **WP.8.9** – Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, colorful modifiers and style as appropriate to audience and purpose.
- **WP.8.10** – Use available technology to compose text.
- **V.8.4** – Discuss the function of figurative language, including metaphors, similes and idioms.
- **IT.8.7** – Explain the development of key points.

Materials:

- "The Three Precious Pearls" a Chinese folktale
- Lawrence Yep's books of Chinese folktales
- "Ways that Work: Putting Social Studies Standards into Practice" by Tarry Lindquist.
- Overhead projector
- Chopsticks
- Transparent tape
- Brads
- Colored paper
- Paper punches
- Markers
- White sheet

- Butcher paper
- Tape/CD player
- Tape of Chinese music
- Samples of Chinese puppets
- Pencil/paper
- Chalkboard/chalk

Day 1:

- Give a brief history discussion on Chinese shadow puppets.
- Introduce the Chinese folktale, "The Three Precious Pearls".
- Discuss the story, analyzing the key elements of plot, conflict, and resolution.
- Examine the moral of the story and discuss how effective it is in teaching behavior valued by the Chinese culture.
- Introduce Lawrence Yep's books of Chinese folktales.
- Hand out group assignments (3-5 per group).
- Show the students some examples of shadow puppets.

Day 2:

- Allow the group of students 10-15 minutes to select a folktale for retelling.
- Introduce the "Write Track" strategy of retelling. When students are ready to write their retelling they will use the A-Z retelling strategy. Students will start each sentence with a letter, or word containing that letter of the alphabet. An "A" word being the first sentence, a "B" word being the second sentence, and so on.
- Once students have chosen a Chinese folktale the group will read the folktale together and decide on the folktale's moral.
- After the moral has been decided on, the group can start on the retelling of their chosen folktale.

Day 3:

- Discuss figurative language and descriptive words with the class, especially similes and metaphors. Have the groups of students edit their retellings by adding similes, metaphors, and descriptive words. Students will also need to add speaking parts, dialogue, to their retelling.
- Students will continue to work on their A-Z Chinese folktale retelling.
- Students will need to finish their retelling and editing today in class.
- Each student will need a typed copy of their retelling.

Day 4:

- Today, the class will discuss the challenges they may face when they present their shadow puppet retelling. The students should recognize that the audience will not see facial expressions and that range of movement is limited. Explain that students will have to use very expressive voices, and the puppet who is talking should move in some way.
- Explain to the students that each member in the group will need to be a character in the folktale and that they could have more than one part depending on the amount of characters in the Chinese folktale.

- Show the students that the people puppets will be 12 inches in height and the animal puppets will be in proportion to the people puppets.
- Students will begin creating their shadow puppet characters and scenery.
- The paper punches are for the students to use and punch out designs on their puppets. Students can also use bright markers to help create different shadow affects. The chopsticks are used to mount the puppet on, and the brad is used to connect the moving body part to the character figure. All of this information can be found in "Ways that Work: Putting Social Studies Standards into Practice" by Tarry Lindquist.

Day 5:

- Students will continue to work on their shadow puppet characters and scenery.
- The white sheet and overhead projector will be set up for students to practice their retellings.
- To make the white sheet, screen, fancier, a group of students can create a frame around the sheet using butcher paper. Chinese characters, letters, can be added to the butcher paper for a more authentic look. The butcher paper will be hung from the ceiling like the white sheet.

Day 6:

- Have a class discussion on the presentation of their retelling. Explain how volume and enunciation of words are important to their retelling. Answer any student questions.
- After the class discussion students will continue to work on their presentations with the white sheet and overhead projector.
- Students must finish up on character puppets and scenery today. Presentations start tomorrow.

Day 7 and 8:

- Students will present the Chinese folktale retelling to the whole class.
- Once all retelling presentations are complete the students will complete a PMI Reflection on shadow puppets.

References:

Lindquist, Tarry. Ways that Work: Putting Social Studies Standards into Practice.

Portsmouth, NH:

Heinemann, 1997.