

## Lesson Plan 1: China: Mulan and The Female Hero

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9<sup>th</sup> grade Humanities

Time: two 45-55 minute class periods or one blocked class period

### Materials:

Copy of the poem, "Mulan"  
Chart paper, markers

### Activities:

1. Opening: have students respond in writing to the following journal question. What does it mean to be heroic? Has there ever been a time you have felt heroic? At what length would you go to be heroic? Ask students to share answers.
2. Give students a brief introduction of the poem Mulan. (See attached notes) Distribute copies of the poem, *The Ballad of Mulan*. Students will read independently and annotate. Specifically instruct them to circle poetic devices, underline any examples of the protagonist being heroic, place an exclamation mark next to text that is interesting or memorable, and a question mark next to text that is confusing or needs further explanation.
3. Following the independent reading, read the poem again out loud as a class and then conduct a whole group discussion of the annotations. Discuss the literal meaning of the poem, identify and explain the poetic devices, and answer students' questions. Allow students to comment on interesting or memorable parts of the text.
4. Next, divide students into small groups. Give each group a sheet of chart paper and a marker. Ask students to choose a recorder, a presenter, a task manager and a citation finder. Ask students to identify text that would support the assertion that Mulan is a hero.
5. Next, groups will take turns sharing answers with the class.
6. Closing assessment: Ask students to respond to the question, Why is Mulan a hero?

## Mulan notes

- Chinese poem about a legendary female warrior who disguises herself as a man in order to take her father's place in battle
- She may or may not have been a real person
- Written around 6<sup>th</sup> century China during the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534)
- Originally spread orally and later recorded in written word
- Written in the Chinese poetic genre of yuefu, which are Chinese poems written in folk song style
  - Composed in 5 syllable (Chinese character) lines
  - Length varies
  - Every other line rhymes
- Illustrates themes of the journey of a woman, gender identity, heroism, family honor and commitment, filial piety, coexistence of dual identity

## ***The Ballad of Mulan (Ode of Mulan)***

Tsiek tsiek and again tsiek tsiek,  
Mulan weaves, facing the door.  
You don't hear the shuttle's sound,  
You only hear Daughter's sighs.  
They ask Daughter who's in her heart,  
They ask Daughter who's on her mind.  
"No one is on Daughter's heart,  
No one is on Daughter's mind.  
Last night I saw the draft posters,  
The Khan is calling many troops,  
The army list is in twelve scrolls,  
On every scroll there's Father's name.  
Father has no grown-up son,  
Mulan has no elder brother.  
I want to buy a saddle and horse,  
And serve in the army in Father's place."  
In the East Market she buys a spirited horse,  
In the West Market she buys a saddle,  
In the South Market she buys a bridle,  
In the North Market she buys a long whip.  
At dawn she takes leave of Father and Mother,  
In the evening camps on the Yellow River's bank.  
She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,  
She only hears the Yellow River's flowing water cry tsien tsien.  
At dawn she takes leave of the Yellow River,  
In the evening she arrives at Black Mountain.  
She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,  
She only hears Mount Yen's nomad horses cry tsiu tsiu.  
She goes ten thousand miles on the business of war,  
She crosses passes and mountains like flying.  
Northern gusts carry the rattle of army pots,  
Chilly light shines on iron armor.  
Generals die in a hundred battles,  
Stout soldiers return after ten years.  
On her return she sees the Son of Heaven,

The Son of Heaven sits in the Splendid Hall.  
He gives out promotions in twelve ranks  
And prizes of a hundred thousand and more.  
The Khan asks her what she desires.  
“Mulan has no use for a minister’s post.  
I wish to ride a swift mount  
To take me back to my home.”  
When Father and Mother hear Daughter is coming  
They go outside the wall to meet her, leaning on each other.  
When Elder Sister hears Younger Sister is coming  
She fixes her rouge, facing the door.  
When Little Brother hears Elder Sister is coming  
He whets the knife, quick quick, for pig and sheep.  
“I open the door to my east chamber,  
I sit on my couch in the west room,  
I take off my wartime gown  
And put on my old-time clothes.”  
Facing the window she fixes her cloudlike hair,  
Hanging up a mirror she dabs on yellow flower powder  
She goes out the door and sees her comrades.  
Her comrades are all amazed and perplexed.  
Traveling together for twelve years  
They didn’t know Mulan was a girl.  
“The he-hare’s feet go hop and skip,  
The she-hare’s eyes are muddled and fuddled.  
Two hares running side by side close to the ground,  
How can they tell if I am he or she?”

## **Standards**

### **KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

7. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
8. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

### **CRAFT AND STRUCTURE**

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

### **INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS**

7. Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

### **RANGE OF READING AND LEVEL OF TEXT COMPLEXITY**

10. By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

### **TEXT TYPES AND PURPOSES\***

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

### **COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION**

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.