

An Inquiry-based literary journey through China

Background: I currently work at an International Baccalaureate (IB) elementary school that operates under Primary Years Programme. During the year we have 6 units of study-6 weeks each around which we build our curriculum. One way we effectively incorporate IB learner profiles, attitudes, and themes into our curriculum is through literature. Our school's mission statement is to develop:

A family of lifelong learners committed to developing international citizens and academic excellence through inquiry.

In order to fulfill our commitment to academic excellence through inquiry, teachers must provide authentic opportunities for students to engage in inquiry. This will be fostered through the use of at least one read aloud per week that is fitting for each unit. Through this, bias, misconceptions, and stereotypes are dismissed and children have accurate representations of people and their cultures.

There are also times when we complete units of study earlier than planned, have to spend recess indoors, etc that can be specifically dedicated to learning more about China. We call this "camp" and the allotted time varies throughout the year. This time will be used to incorporate Chinese music, language, crafts, current events, and sharing artifacts from my study tour. It is also a time to complete lessons and projects throughout the unit.

Grade: 1

Duration: Ongoing

Resources used for all units:

- Artifacts (maps, guidebooks, brochures ,photographs) from site visits and lectures
- www.china.org.cn can be used in all units for current news and links to Provincial News Websites/Provincial Government Websites
- Qing, Zheng Find Out About China
Synopsis: This book is a kid-friendly resource that will be used to give students a complete overview of China. It will accompany artifacts I obtained during the program. The book includes Chinese words and phrases, information about life in China, history, and culture.
- Each unit will begin with a **KWL** chart (Know-Would like to know-Learned). Prior to the first unit, I will give a brief overview on why I visited China last summer and start recording questions that arise.
I will ask my students what they **know** about China and record their responses in the know column.
I will ask what they **would like to know** and answer ones I can and research ones I cannot answer at that time.
At the end of each unit we will review and discuss what we **learned**.

Unit 1: Who We Are

Central idea: Family relationships, where we live, and our experiences influence who we are.

We will learn that people of different cultures have different ways of life and various celebrations. An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.

Students will be asked to share their current knowledge of families, celebrations, and culture.

Students will share their questions about other cultures and celebrations.

Texts:

Young, Ed, My Mei Mei

Synopsis: Antonia gets her wish when her parents return to China to bring home a Mei Mei, or younger sister, for her.

Burckhardt, Ann, The People of China and Their Food.

Synopsis: Describes food customs and preparation in China, regional dishes, and cooking techniques, with recipes for a variety of meals.

Schaefer, Lola M, Chinese New Year.

Synopsis: Simple text and photographs describe and illustrate Chinese New Year and how it is celebrated.

Simmons, Walter Exploring Countries: China

Synopsis: This book explores the land, wildlife, people, and holidays of China.

Haskins, James, Count Your Way Through China.

Synopsis: Presents the numbers one through ten in Chinese, using each number to introduce concepts about China and Chinese culture. This book will be used to integrate math.

Other resources:

discoveryeducation.com

keyword: China

Features resources selected and created by Discovery Education's curriculum experts, this content collection offers teacher's guides, video clips, and more.

Notes from Di Yan's presentation on how in China the surname is followed by the personal name.

Unit 2: How We Organize Ourselves

Central idea: We are a small part of a larger community

An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.

This unit is a continuation of the first unit. We take a closer look at the communities in which we belong, moving from local to global. At this time we investigate our responsibilities to our largest community: our world.

Texts:

Salas, Laura Countries and Cultures: China

Synopsis: This book includes facts about China, land, climate, wildlife, history and government, economy, and culture.

Dahl, Michael. China

Synopsis: An introduction to the geography, history, economy, culture, and people of China, the third largest country in the world.

Other resources:

Brochures and notes from WWF China and current information from World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in the US that pinpoint initiatives to protect the environment and wildlife

Information from the Hong Kong Container Terminal Operator Association (HKCTOA) to discuss how the world's economic activities and consumer choices impact our environment

Notes from talk by Wu Qing on human rights. She discussed what it really means to be a person and rights/ responsibilities we have as citizens. During the first few weeks of school, we discuss rules to set up a positive classroom environment. We discuss why we have rules in the different communities to which we belong. Wu's list of rights and responsibilities of citizens will be investigated as we set up our classroom. These include:

- Protecting the environment
- Being educated
- Promoting peace
- Health and sanitation
- Economic independence
- Democracy

discoveryeducation.com

China: Protests in Hong Kong

A video clip of current anti-government protests filling the streets of Hong Kong, China.

Unit 3: Where We Are In Place and Time

Central idea: People influence change

An inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; the relationships between and the interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives.

We will look at how groups of people migrate toward water and compare maps of China, the US, and other countries in terms of population density.

We will seek direct connections between the US and China within our classroom, school, and local communities.

Text:

Gresko, Marcia S. A World of Communities.

Synopsis: Presents profiles of India, China, Russia, South Africa, Israel, England, Puerto Rico, and the West Indies containing informational overviews, fact files, and color maps and photos as well as vocabulary lists, discussion questions, and community project ideas. Includes a glossary and directory of further resources.

Websites:

<http://www.brainpopjr.com/socialstudies/ancienthistory/ancientchina/> video gives an overview of ancient history, dynasties, inventions, and dispels the notion that one can “dig a hole to China”.

<http://www.railway-technology.com/projects/Beijing> for info on China’s high-speed lines

<http://www.history.com/shows/ancient-discoveries> for info on ancient machines and terra cotta warriors

<http://www.museumofthecity.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Population-Density-Map.jpg> shows a population density map that demonstrates that people tend to live near water

Unit 4: How We Express Ourselves

Central idea: Authors and illustrators use their personal experiences and interests to create different forms of literature to entertain and inform.

An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.

Texts:

Young, Ed. Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China.

Synopsis: Three sisters staying home alone are endangered by a hungry wolf who is disguised as their grandmother.

Yolen, Jane. The Emperor and the Kite.

Synopsis: When the emperor is imprisoned in a high tower, his smallest daughter, whom he has always ignored, uses her kite to save him.

Hong, Lily Toy. Two of Everything : A Chinese Folktale.

Synopsis: A poor old Chinese farmer finds a magic brass pot that doubles or duplicates whatever is placed inside it, but his efforts to make himself wealthy lead to unexpected complications.

Ginsburg, Mirra. The Chinese Mirror

Synopsis: A retelling of a traditional Korean tale in which a mirror brought from China causes confusion within a family as each member looks in it and sees a different stranger.

Demi. The Greatest Treasure

Synopsis: In this traditional Chinese tale, a poor man receives a treasure of gold and discovers the true value of simple pleasures.

Demi. The Empty Pot

Synopsis: When Ping admits that he is the only child in China unable to grow a flower from the seeds distributed by the Emperor, he is rewarded for his honesty.

Casanova, Mary. The Hunter : A Chinese Folktale

Synopsis: After learning to understand the language of animals, Hai Li Bu the hunter sacrifices himself to save his village.

Hong, Zhiming. Mid-autumn Moon, So Pretty: In the Autumn Days.

Synopsis: Illustrations and rhyming text in Chinese and English celebrate the vegetables, plants, animals, festivals, and natural phenomena associated with autumn in China.

Young, Ed. Beyond the Great Mountains: A Visual Poem About China.

Synopsis: Lyrical text and illustrations featuring Chinese characters and paper collage introduce the beauty and richness of China.

Unit 5: How the World Works

Central idea: People investigate scientific properties to better understand their world.

An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific advances on society/environment.

This unit is a continuation of Where We Are in Place and Time. We will vote on our favorite inventions from China and spend more time to see how they have developed over time.

A majority of the time in this unit will be spent exploring Chinese inventors and inventions, the development of writing and language, and the dynasties. We will learn how things invented in China directly influence us today.

We will also explore papermaking and block printing in collaboration with the art teacher and learn simple Chinese characters so that students can see the connection between the characters and what they mean.

Text:

Kenah, Katharine. Amazing Creations

Synopsis: Introduces readers to some of the most awe-inspiring, man-made creations in the world including the Great Wall of China, Stonehenge, the pyramids and Great Sphinx of Egypt, and Mount Rushmore.

Other resources:

Texts about Terracotta Army

Monki Chinese Class App for iPad

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= GPO0 Ly5LU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPO0Ly5LU) demonstrates how the Monki app works

Unit 6: Sharing the Planet

Central idea: There is a relationship between living things and the environment.

An inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things; communities and the relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution.

This time will be used to cover topic that weren't introduced/finished.

We will look at current environmental concerns in the US and China.

We will check on the status of the Occupy Movement in Hong Kong, revisit democracy (fair decision-making) and discuss the role of democracy and access to equal opportunity.

Text:

Bang, Molly Common Ground

Synopsis: Promotes thinking about how our individual actions affect the world and why we must work together to preserve our common ground.

Other resources:

Materials from the WWF

Current info from HKCTOA about the bridge being built between Hong Kong and Macao and the environmental effects of dredging for the terminals.