



Context:

Southeast Asians & other newcomers in California's classrooms
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Context is published eight times during the academic year as a way to provide staff with information and ideas concerning their newcomer students and parents. While the focus is on Southeast Asians, most articles and resources apply to other newcomer groups as well. This newsletter is developed with Economic Impact Aid funds, and district staff with English learners receive an automatic subscription. Other district staff may request a subscription, at no cost. Outside subscribers pay \$10.00 per year to cover mailing and handling costs.

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Refugee Educators Network

This group of educators meets at the above address 5 times per year to share information and plan an annual conference, the Southeast Asian Education Faire—9:00-11:30, 3rd Thursdays

Join us!

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“Read with your child” What does it mean?

Reading fluency comes from reading. To read better, read more. To write better, read more. These simple prescriptions come from Stephen Krashen, guru of second language acquisition theory and methods.

The neural process by which the human brain processes information from the senses to produce generalizations, that then drive output—speech or writing—is the basis of both reading acquisition and second language acquisition.

For second language learners the task is to read in both English and the home language. Reading in Vietnamese, for example, improves reading performance in English. This is not so strange when one considers how much of comprehension consists of tying new information to old information, understanding the way in which ideas are presented in text, showing persistence, and so on. The act of reading (preferably, self-selected free reading, says Krashen) increases reading proficiency. The act of reading aloud with a parent or older sibling does not do the same thing for a child, but it does provide an opportunity for a parent or older sibling to coach the child in reading aloud, and adds valuable minutes of eye-brain activity with print text as the focus.

The assumption that parents are child-centered in their daily lives leans heavily towards the middle-class American ideal. In Hmong culture, for example, and for a variety of reasons, there is much less adult-child interaction centered around print text. Holding an expectation that a child sits with the parent, listening to a story and looking at the pictures, or reading the story out loud to someone, passively waiting for direction to answer teacher-like questions (“What is this?” “Who did that?” “What do you think happens next?”) is out of sync with many home cultures.

When teachers urge parents to read with their children, many parents think, “Fine, but what do you mean, ‘Read with my child’.” Making the procedures of reading aloud explicit can only help parents—especially newcomer parents—better understand what should be done. On the next two pages are simple hints for “read with your child” in several languages. Feel free to duplicate them. (Thanks to Gayle Heslop, who developed these hints for parents at Williamson Elementary.)

Students need to read on their own at home, but first, an expectation for reading, and a habit of daily reading needs to be established.

Copy these pages and send home Could be cut apart for book marks

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Parents as Teachers: Helping Your Child Read Aloud</p> <p>Provide a suitable place and time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a quiet and peaceful place • Choose a time when your child is not tired, hungry, or really eager to do something else • Provide 10-15 minutes of at-home reading 4 or 5 times each week <p>Provide suitable material.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories should interest your child • Stories should not be too difficult (no more than 5 mistakes in 50 words) • The librarians at your local library can will help you select good books for children at any age <p>Provide encouragement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk together about the story and pictures This will help your child gain interest, and to get more meaning from the story • Accept your child's efforts • Avoid criticism, threats, and comparisons with other children • Try to be relaxed Stop if you feel yourself or your child becoming frustrated Read to your child instead <p>Provide praise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When your child tries, even if it's wrong • When your child reads for meaning • When your child finds the right word after making a mistake • When your child reads a word correctly, after you have provided help <p>Provide opportunities for the child to figure out words independently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAIT! Give the child a chance to think about the word and the meaning of the story • But, if your child still doesn't respond, tell the word Don't ask him/her to sound it out <p>When the story is too hard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read it to your child, and talk about it or leave it, and try another, easier story <p>When your child is not very interested in the story:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the first few pages aloud, and talk about the story together, or help to find a more interesting story <p>When the story is too long:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read every second page (or chapter) to your child, then s/he reads one, and so on, or help to find a shorter story <p>Enjoy this time together</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ENGLISH</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">CHA ME CUNG NHU THAY CO: GIUP DO CON EM TAP DOC</p> <p>Tạo Chỗ và Thời Gian Thích Hợp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chọn một chỗ mà thật yên tĩnh và bình thản nếu có thể • Chọn một thời gian mà con em không cảm thấy mệt mỏi, đói bụng, hoặc rất háng hái để làm việc • Tạo khoảng 10-15 phút để đọc sách tại nhà bốn hoặc năm lần một tuần <p>Tạo Những Học Liệu Thích Hợp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Những câu chuyện mà làm cho con em thích thú • Những quyển truyện không khó quá (không sai nhiều hơn năm lần trong năm mươi chữ) • Nhân viên thư-viện trong địa phương có thể giúp quý vì lựa chọn những quyển sách nhi đồng hứng thú cho mọi lứa tuổi <p>Tạo Điều Kiện Khuyến Khích</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cùng nhau bàn về một quyển truyện và hình ảnh Việc này sẽ giúp cho con em quý vì này nở sự hứng thú, và để hiểu biết thêm ý nghĩa của câu chuyện • Đón nhận kết quả của con em • Tránh tình trạng phê bình, hăm dọa, và so sánh với trẻ em khác • Cần phải giải trí Ngủng lại nếu như quý vì và con em cảm thấy thất vọng Thay thế vào đó nên đọc cho con em <p>Khen Ngợi Con Em</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khi mà con em cố gắng, mặc dù nếu thấy là không đúng • Khi mà con em đọc nghĩa • Khi mà con em tìm đúng chữ sau khi làm sai một lần • Khi mà con em đọc chữ đó đúng, sau khi có sự giúp đỡ của quý vì <p>Tạo Cơ Hội cho Con Em Tự Mình Tìm Ra Những Chữ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ĐOI! Để cho con em có thời gian suy nghĩ về chữ và ý nghĩa của câu chuyện • Nhưng, nếu như con em không có phản ứng gì, nói chữ đó Không cần hỏi con em đọc ra <p>Khi mà Quyển Truyện Rất Khó Đọc (con em đọc sai nhiều hơn năm chữ trong năm mươi chữ):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Đọc sách cho con em, và thảo luận về sách đó hoặc bỏ đi, và thử quyển khác, tìm quyển truyện dễ hơn <p>Khi Mà Con Em Không Có Hứng Thú Về Quyển Truyện</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Đọc mấy trang đầu thật lớn tiếng, và cùng nhau nói về câu chuyện, hoặc giúp tìm cốt truyện làm cho con em hứng thú <p>Khi Mà Quyển Truyện Quá Dài</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Đọc mỗi trang thứ hai (hoặc một chương) cho con em sau đó con em đọc một trang (một chương) cho quý vì, rồi quý vì đọc một trang, và cứ như vậy, hoặc giúp để tìm những cốt truyện ngắn hơn <p>Hướng Thụ Thời Gian Cùng Nhau Đọc Sách</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Những người ham đọc sách thường tìm thấy hứng thú khi họ đọc <p style="text-align: center;">VIETNAMESE</p>	<p>Նախապատրաստել գրասեղանը, տեղը և ժամանակը:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ընտրել լուռ և հնարավորին չափ հաղադ տեղ: • Ընտրել այն ժամանակը երբ ձեր երեխան հոգմած չէ, սոված չէ և պատրաստ է որևէ բան անելու: • Հատկացնել 10-15 րոպե տանը կարդալու համար, շաբաթը 4 կամ 5 անգամ: <p>Նախապատրաստել գրասեղանի նյութերը:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Պատվածք որը հետաքրքիր կլինի երեխային: • Պատվածքն չլինի շատ դժվար (15 բառի մեջ 5 սխալից ավել չլինի): • Գրադարանավարը կոզմի ձեզ ընտրել գրքեր, ձեր երեխայի տարիքին համեմատ: <p>Նախապատրաստել ֆաշալեղության:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Խոսեք միասին հեմլաթի և մկարմերի մասին: Դա երեխայի մեջ կարթնացնի հետաքրքրություն և մոր գաղափարներ հեմլաթի վերաբերյալ: • Ընդունիր երեխայիդ ջանքը: • Զգուշանալ բնադատելուց, սպառնալուց և ուրիշ երեխաների հետ համեմատելուց: • Աշխատեք լինել համզիստ: Ղադարացրեք աշխատանքը երբ գգում եք անարդյունք վիճակ: Կարդացեք ձեր երեխայի փոխարեն: <p>Գնահատել արդյունքը</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Եթե րո երեխան փորձում է, թեկուզ սխալ: • Բայց եթե ձեր երեխան չի կարող պատասխանել, ասել խոսքը, մի անեք իրեն գոռալով - ասա! • Երբ պատվածքը շատ դժվար է (երեխան անում է 5 սխալից ավել 15 բառի մեջ): • Դու կարդա այդ երեխայի համար և քացատրի որ ընտրի ավելի հեշտ պատվածք: <p>Երբ երեխային չի հետաքրքրում պատվածքը:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Կարդա մի քանի էջ քարճրածայն և խոսեք միասին պատվածքի մասին <p>Երբ պատվածքը շատ երկար է:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Կարդա մեկ էջ (կամ մեկ գլուխ) երեխայի համար, հետո թող երեխան կարդա կեզ համար և հետո շարունակեք այդա՛ւս կամ օգնիր երեխային գտնելու սվելի կարճ պատմություն: <p>Որահացեք միասին կարդալու ժամանակ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Երբ կարդում ես կյանքը լցվում է ուրախությամբ: <p style="text-align: center;">ARMENIAN</p>
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<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">РОДИТЕЛИ КАК УЧИТЕЛЯ: ПОМОГАЮЩИЕ ЧИТАТЬ СВОИМ ДЕТЯМ</p> <p>Предоставте подходящее место и время</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Найдите тихое и удобное место • Выберите время для вашего ребёнка, когда он не устал, не голодный и готов делать что нибудь другое • Дайте ему 10-15 минут для чтения дома 4 или 5 раз в не дело <p>Подберите подходящий материал</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Истории должны быть интересными ребёнку • Истории не должны быть очень трудными [не более чем 5 ошибок в 50 словах] • Библиотекари в вашей местной библиотеке помогут вам выбрать хорошую книжку для возраста вашего ребёнка <p>Ободряйте ребёнка</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Говорите об истории и об рисунках Это поможет вашему ребёнку интересоваться в историях и больше знать об этом • Принимайте старание вашего ребёнка • Избегайте критики, угроз и сравнения с другими детьми • Пытайтесь быть мягкими Не расстраивайтесь и не допускайте расстройства ребёнка Читайте вместо него <p>Поощряйте ребёнка.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Когда ваш ребёнок делает даже неправильно • Когда ваш ребёнок читает для значения • Когда ваш ребёнок находит правильное слово после ошибки • Когда ваш ребёнок прочитает правильно, после того как вы поможете ему <p>Дайте удобное время ребёнку чтобы он мог решить значение слова самостоятельно.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ПОДОЖДИТЕ! Дайте вашему ребёнку время подумать о слове и значении истории • Но, если ваш ребёнок не говорит, скажите слово сами и спросите чтобы он повторил его <p>Когда история очень трудная и ребёнок делает 5 ошибок в 50 словах</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Почитайте эту историю ребёнку, поговорите о ней или оставьте её и выберите историю полегче <p>Когда история не интересная</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Почитайте несколько страниц ему и порассуждайте об истории вместе или помогите ему найти более интересную <p>Когда история длинная</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Пусть ребёнок читает страницу и вы страницу, если эта история покажется очень длинной, помогите ему найти более короткую <p>Наслаждайтесь этим временем вместе</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Люди, которые читают всю жизнь имеют интерес в чтении <p style="text-align: center;">RUSSIAN</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">PADRES DE FAMILIA COMO MAESTROS. AYUDANDO A SU HIJO/A A LEER</p> <p>Provea Un Tiempo Y Lugar Apropiado</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escoja un lugar que es tranquilo y pacifico cuanto sea posible • Escoja el tiempo cuando su hijo no este cansado, con hambre o inquieto para hacer algo diferente • Provea 10-15 minutos de lectura en la casa 4 o 5 veces a la semana <p>Provea Materiales Adequados</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Las historias que se leen deben ser interesantes para el niño • Las historias no deben ser demasiado deffciles (no mas de 5 errores in 50 palabras) • La bibliotecaria en su libreria le puede ayudar a hacer una seleccion buena de libros para sus niños de acuerdo a sus edades <p>Provea Mucho Estimulo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hablen juntos acerca de los dibujos y la historia leidas Esto ayudará a su hijo a tomar interest y encontrar mas sentido en la lectura • Acepte el esfuerzo de su hijo/a • Evite criticas, amenazas y comparaciones con otros niños • Trate de relajarse Pate su usted y su hijo/a empiezan a sentir frustracion Lee a su hijo/a en lugar <p>Provea Elogios A Sus Hijos/as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuando su hijo/a hace el esfuerzo qun si hace un error • Cuando su hijo/a lee para encontrar significado • Cuando su hijo/a se da cuenta de un error y trata de arreglarlo • Cuando su hijo/a lee una palabra correctamente despues que usted le ha dado ayuda <p>Provea Oportunidades Para Que Su Hijo/a Desifre Palabras Indedientemente</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deténgase! De a su hijo/a la oportunidad de pensar acerca de la palabra y el contenido de la historia • Pero si su hijo/a todavia no responde dígale la palabra No le pregunte que lo delectree <p>Cuando Una Historia Es Demasiado Dificil (el niño hace mas de 5 errores in 50 palabras)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Léalo a su hijo/a, hable acerca de la historia, o abandónelo, pero trate otra historia mas fácil <p>Cuando Su Hijo/a No Tiene Mucho Interes En La Historia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean las primeras páginas en alta voz y discutan la historia juntos o encuentre otra historia que sea mas interesante <p>Cuando La Historia Es Demasiada Larga</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lea cada segunda página (o capítulo) a su hijo/a enseguida el o ella lee una página (o capítulo) a usted, despues usted lee otra vez y asi se continua Otra alteruatira es ayudar a su hijo/a a seleccionar una historia mas corta <p>Disfruten Juntos De Este Tiempo De Lectura</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Las personas que leen para la vida tienen mas alegria cuando leen <p style="text-align: center;">SPANISH</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Niamtxiv kuj yog xibfwb: Xyuum pab koj tus menyuum nyeeem ntawv</p> <p>Nrhiav kom muaj lub chaw thiab sijhawm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xaiv lub chaw uas nriag tos tsis muaj suab sab dabtsi rau nws • Nrhiav lub sijhawm uas koj tus menyuum tsis nkees, tsis tshaiabplab, lossis tsis xav mus ua lwmyam • Muab li uas 10-15 feeb kom nws yuavtsum nyeeem ntawv, ua li no mus li plaub tsib zaug hauv ib limtiam <p>Kom muaj tej ntaubntawv nyeeem txawmpeem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cov phauntawv ntawv uas muaj zaj zoo rau nws nyiam nyeeem • Cov zaj uas nws nyeeem yuav tsum txhob yog nyuaj heev rau nws • Cov neeg pab nyob rau tom tsev cecvntawv lawv yuav paub pab koj xaiv cov phauntawv zoo rau koj tus menyuum rawv cov hnoobnyoog <p>Npaj kev txhawbnga pub rau menyuum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nrog menyuum sib tham saib nws nyeeem txog zaj dabtsi, kom nws pnav rau koj mloog Yog koj ua li no nws yuav pab tau koj tus menyuum, vim nws paub tias koj nyiam nws kev nyeeemntawv thiab yuav ua rau nws nco zaj ntawd ntev mus • Lees paub tias koj tus menyuum yeej muab siab rau nyeeem ntawv • Txhob lam tau lam hais menyuum plig, lossis hem thiab muab nws piv rau tus no • Yog koj pom tias tus menyuum nkees tsawv lawm ces yuav tau so mensis lossis koj ho nyeeem rau nws mloog, txhob yuam nws nyeeem <p>Quaab menyuum lawm ces yuavtsum qhuas thiab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thaum koj pom tias menyuum xyuum ua, txawm tias yog tsis tshua heev los koj yuav tau qhuas nws • Yog koj tus menyuum nyeeem tau zaj ua nws nyiam thiab totaub, koj yuav tsum qhuas nws • Thaum koj tus menyuum paub tias nws sau lossis nyeeem tsis tshua yog los koj pab qhia thiab qhuas nws • Yog koj pab koj tus menyuum nyeeem kom raug thiab hais kom yog mas neb yeej yuav zoo siab ib yam nkaus <p>Pub lub sijhawm rau menyuum tau xav</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ua siabntev! Cia sijhawm rau menyuum tau xav saib yog yuav nyeeem licas lossis zaj ntawd yog hais txog dabtsis • Txawm yog tias menyuum tseem teb tsis tau tau los tsis txhob maj cia nws majmam ua suab ntawm nws tus kheej <p>Yog tias zaj ntawd nyuaj nyeeem heev</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koj nyeeem pub rau nws mloog thiab nrog nws hais lus thiab nws saib nws puas totaub lossis xaiv dua lwm zaj los nyeeem <p>Thaum menyuum tsis nyiam nyeeem ntawv</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koj nyeeem ob peb nploj rau nws ces neb los tham txog zaj ntawd tias yog hais txog dabtsis, <p style="text-align: center;">HMONG</p>
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Background Knowledge for All: Equalizing Opportunities

*The Core Knowledge Series,
Resource Books for Grades One through Six*
E D Hirsch, Jr., editor Doubleday, 1993

E.D. Hirsch, Jr., publisher of *Cultural Literacy*, has edited a series of Core Knowledge resource books for parents and teachers: *What Your 1st Grader Need to Know*, *What Your 2nd Grader Need to Know*, and so on, through 6th grade. He and his group of writers and consultants are attempting to make the "background knowledge" of American culture explicit. His first book, a list of 5,000 items that comprised a core list of important American concepts and topics, was greeted by many as racist and Eurocentric. Certainly it is Eurocentric; American culture for the past 200 years has been European in nature, even though Amerindians, Africans, and Mexicans have been part of the population mix. It is true that their cultural contributions are a small proportion of the core list, but it is probably Hirsch's call to use the core list as the *definition* of our national culture that evokes strong reaction.

The issue is not whether schools should pass on a common culture; they do. It is, rather, whether the common (national) culture should reflect more of its constituent cultures (it should, it has, it does, it will even more so in the future), and whether people who live in one cultural world should have access to the unwritten assumptions of the other.

Listing the implicit

Despite the controversy, the core list is important because it is available. What the core list attempts to do is to identify items that are necessary background knowledge for comprehending American speech and text. I know that if I went to

live in Laos, my adaptation and acculturation would be immeasurably easier if I had a resource book that identified the essential elements of Laotian languages and cultures, whether the concepts originated with the indigenous peoples, the Lao immigrants, the French colonials, or their Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer, or Burmese neighbors.

For newcomers to America, a core list of important concepts and words gives people a place to begin in understanding what they see, hear, and read. Making explicit a core of knowledge is akin to handing a rule book to a group of novice football players who suddenly find themselves playing in the most important game of their lives.

In societies that use education as a way to divide people into higher and lower social classes, having specialized knowledge available only to a few is important. However, American education, compulsory and free, is supposed to be a social equalizer. In America, it is not education, but achievement—seen as the result of taking advantage of opportunity and exerting effort—that creates social divisions. By keeping secret the background knowledge upon which school achievement is at least partially based, American education becomes more elitist and restrictive.

Teaching core knowledge

The Core Knowledge books contain the expanded core list, with portions of background knowledge assigned to various grade levels.

These books give teachers a great resource for newcomer pro-

grams. They could be especially important for newcomers who have little prior education and restricted access to American cultural antecedents.

Here is one possible scenario, using bilingual aides to teach background knowledge to newcomer students:

Divide bilingual aides into grade level teams of various languages.

Train each team on the book at their grade level(s). Train the aides in motivation, lesson pacing, and group dynamics.

Schedule the aides and students in extended day programs to cover the Core Knowledge book at their level(s), using the primary language to explain.

Ideally, students would work through the books from 1st grade to their assigned mainstream grade level. Junior high, senior high, and adult newcomer programs would cover books one to six.

Compensatory education programs are also concerned with providing disadvantaged students with the tools and resources necessary to compete on an equal footing with their more advantaged peers. Compensatory education aides and bilingual aides could be trained together, working on the same material in different languages.

As teachers, we know that children come to school with different exposure to nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and visits to zoos and museums, but we have only instinct to guide us in filling in the gaps for all

children. The Core Knowledge series, with all its flaws and controversy, is an available resource that can help us in our attempt to level the playing field for all comers.

Multimedia motivation

Computer-based multimedia encyclopedias for each of the different core knowledge books (enticing, self-pacing, and attention-riveting) would make a truly useful educational resource. Having translations into the major newcomer languages would be an obvious and valuable addition.

Finally, the Core Knowledge computer or print encyclopedias (arbitrarily divided into grade levels) provide a good model for similar programs that would make explicit the important elements of other cultures. Each classroom could choose among Hispanic cultures (including Mexican-American), Native American cultures, Asian cultures, Baltic cultures, Russian cultures, Middle-Eastern cultures, African cultures (including American black), and so on, depending on the school's population. Each would be available in English and various languages, so that newcomers can learn about their new peers.

For more information on the Core Knowledge series, or the non-profit Core Knowledge Foundation ("dedicated to the improvement of education for all children"), write to 2012-B Morton Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901

Dragons. A recent trip to a multicultural book seller's browsing room resulted in a remarkable variety of children's books with dragons in the titles or story contexts. There are tantalizing possibilities for classroom activities based on dragons, looking for similarities and differences in cultures from all parts of the world rather than studying Chinese culture in isolation. For example:

What other cultures have dragons? What do they look like? Why do they look the way they do? Make up a tale that tells how dragons came to have the parts they do.

Are dinosaurs America's dragons? How do they compare to mythical dragons in other cultures?

European fairy tales have dragons. How do they compare to Chinese dragons, and dragons from other cultures? Are there any cultures that don't have dragons?

What are Chinese dragons' powers? How do they compare to the powers of dragons from other parts of the world? Why do the dragons' powers take different forms in different cultures? How can you explain that (think about livelihood, geography, climate, man's relationship to nature, etc.)

Collect proverbs and idioms from different languages that feature dragons. Group similar ones together; is this a case of "diffusion" (borrowing from other cultures that come into contact with one another)? What could the path of contact be? If there's no contact between the cultures, how can the similarities be explained?

In other cultures, what creature or person or spirit takes the place of a dragon? How does the tiger compare? What about the snake? The crocodile? The wild stallion? (and so on)

Create a dragon that represents you or your family or your group. What parts will you borrow from other animals? Think of animals that represent your qualities or desires.

Interview people from different cultures about their dragons—appearance and powers. Make graphs or charts to display the results. What features are common to most dragons? Which characteristics are specific to certain groups' dragons?

The Dragon's Robe

Deborah Nourse Lattimore, HarperTrophy, 1993.

A young weaver in 12th century China saves her people from drought and foreign invasion by weaving the imperial dragon's robe.

Dragon Kite of the Autumn Moon

Valerie Reddix, illustrated by Jean and Mou-Sien Tseng. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1991.

In Taiwan (called Formosa from 1590 until WWII), Kite's Day is in the ninth month, six days before the rising of the full moon. The custom probably came with the Chinese, when they began to settle on the island in the 800's. When the kites are set free, all the troubles are carried away, but when they fall to earth, they must be burned.

Eyes of the Dragon

Margaret Leaf, illustrated by Ed Young. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1987.

There is a temple in present-day Nanking that bears two eyeless dragons. Legend has it that originally there were four dragons, but two came to life and broke loose when Chang Seng Yung, the painter, added their eyes. There is a proverb, made up of four characters that refers to this story: paint-dragon-put-eye.

The Luminous Pearl, A Chinese Folktale

Betty L. Torre, Illustrated by Carol Inouye. New York: Orchard Books, 1990.

Tale of the Dragon-King who lives at the bottom of the sea (compare this to the Dragon-King in Hmong tales.)

The River Dragon

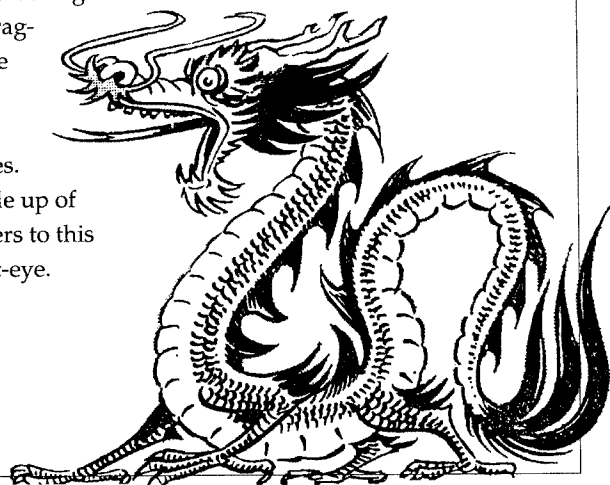
Darcy Pattison, illustrated by Jean and Mou-Sien Tseng. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1991.

Min-Yo and the Moon Dragon

Elizabeth Hillman, illustrated by John Wallner. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992.
A tale of the origin of stars.

Dragon Parade: A Chinese New Year Story

Steven A. Chin, illustrated by Mou-Sien Tseng. Austin: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1993.
Story that is set in the Chinese New Year celebration in San Francisco, for Norman Ah Sing, a newcomer from China.



Emma's Dragon Hunt

Catherine Stock. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1984. Generations, customs, and Chinese dragons.

The Moon Dragon

Moira Miller, illustrated by Ian Deuchar. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1989. Boastfulness and building a dragon kite to go to the moon.

The Dragon's Pearl

Julie Lawson, illustrated by Paul Morin. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993. Story of a Chinese boy who changes the lives of his people when he finds a magic pearl.

Yang the Youngest and his Terrible Ear

Lensey Namioka. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1992. Children's novel of nine-year old Yingtao, son of an immigrant family from China living in Seattle. The story explores issues of diversity, self-realization, friendship, and traditional duty to family, all with dead-pan delivery and sensitivity.

Legends of the Ten Chinese Traditional Festivals

Dolphin Books, Beijing, 1991. Ten Chinese festivals: Spring Festivals, Lantern Festival, Dragon Head Festival, Clear and Bright Festival, Double Ninth Day, Laba Festival and Kitchen God Day.

(China International Book Trading Corporation, PO Box 399, Beijing 100044, China) China Books and Periodicals, Inc., 2929 24th Street, San Francisco CA 94110 (415) 282-2994

China Then and Now: Independent Learning Unit

Good Apple Activity Book for Grades 4-8. Susan Finney and Patricia Kindle, illustrated by Ardis McKay. Carthage IL: Good Apple Inc, 1988.

History, customs, art, language, puzzles, higher level thinking; it's all here.

From the title page of Pattison's *River Dragon* comes this note: "Chinese dragons are traditionally portrayed with very specific characteristics: the head of camel, horns of a deer, eyes of a demon, ears of an ox, neck of a snake, scales of a carp, palms of a tiger, and claws of a hawk. Beings of great power, they control the thunder and lightning and live in the heavens under the waters of the earth. They fly without wings, usually surrounded by clouds or mist, and are frequently shown clutching a great pearl in their claws or jaws. Passionately fond of swallows, they have a keen sense of smell and are afraid only of centipedes and five-colored silk scarves."

Lawson's *The Dragon Pearl* says of Chinese dragons: "Unlike the fierce fire-breathing dragons of European mythology, Chinese dragons were believed to be water-gods who ascended into the skies each spring to make rain for the benefit of humans. In autumn, they would return to their underwater homes in lakes, pools, rivers, and seas. Since good harvests were so essential to the well-being of the people, it is not surprising that the dragon was worshipped and honored, often at shrines set up in the fields."

Although dragons were always connected with water, their powers went well beyond controlling the tides, creating thunderstorms, breathing clouds, and sending rain. Dragons had the power of transformation. They could become visible or invisible at will, alter their size, or appear as humans, animals, birds, or fish. By controlling the rain, dragons also had the power to protect those who pleased them and punish those who did not.

The dragon was described as having the head of a camel, the horns of a deer, eyes of a rabbit, ears of a cow, neck of a snake, belly of a frog, scales of a carp, claws of a hawk, and soles of a tiger. His voice was like the jingling of copper pans. A pearl was the dragon's most precious possession, which he carefully guarded, keeping it inside his mouth or under his chin. The magic pearl gave off a radiant light that never faded, and had the power to make things multiply.

From the most ancient time in China, the dragon was considered the emblem of royalty and the symbol of greatness. Only the Emperor and his sons were able to use the five-clawed dragon as an ornament on their robes and household effects. A man of great ability or courage was said to be like a dragon. There was no greater honor than to have the dragon's name associated with one's own."





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