

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Narrative Page Count: 16 Word Count: 684

Book Summary

Li's Tangram Animals is about an eight-year-old boy from China who has recently moved to the United States. He is worried about fitting in with his second-grade classmates. When Li gives his teacher a tangram, the students become interested in how it works and friendships blossom. Illustrations and diagrams support the text and introduce readers to basic geometry concepts.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Visualize

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of visualizing to understand text
- Identify story elements
- Identify quotation marks in text
- Arrange words in alphabetical order

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Li's Tangram Animals* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Story elements, quotation marks, alphabetizing worksheets
- Tangram sheet
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

Content words:

Story critical: **clever** (adj.), **language** (n.), **parallel** (adj.), **riddles** (n.), **symbol** (n.), **tangram puzzle** (n.)

Enrichment: **cartilage** (n.), **China** (n.), **marsupial** (n.), **parallelogram** (n.), **square** (n.), **surprise** (n.), **triangles** (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Have students share memories of times when they were new to a group. Invite students to explain the feelings and events associated with being new (feelings: scared, nervous, excited, and so on; events: moving to a new home, making new friends, learning about a new school, and so on).

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Guide students to the front and back covers of the book and read the title. Have them discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what kind of book this is and what it might be about.
- Preview the title page. Talk about the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).
- Have students find the glossary at the back of the book. Review or explain that the glossary contains a list of vocabulary words along with their definitions and the pages in the book on which the words are used.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Visualize**

- Explain to students that good readers often visualize, or create pictures in their mind, while they read. Explain that visualizing is based on what a person already knows about a topic.
- Model how to visualize.
Think-aloud: Whenever I read a book, I always pause after a few pages to create a picture in my mind of the information I've read. This helps me to understand the ideas in the story. For example, if I read the word elephant, I picture a large gray animal with long white tusks.
- Write the word *lion* on the board. Invite students to share what they picture in their mind when they hear this word. Write their descriptions on the board. Point out that even though their descriptions of a lion may not be the same, they were each able to picture the animal in their mind.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Story elements**

- Explain that there are five different elements in a fictional story. Write the following on the board: *characters, setting, problem, events, and solution*. Explain that the *characters* are the people in the story, and the *setting* is when and where the story takes place. The characters usually are faced with a *problem*, or some difficulty that must be worked out or solved. The *events* are what happens to the characters as they are finding the *solution* to the problem. Write each definition next to the story element on the board.
- Ask students to turn to page 3. Read the first page of the story aloud as they follow along silently. Have students discuss the story elements that are already disclosed, such as characters (Li and his teacher), the setting (at school, during the daytime), and a problem (Li misses his home in China, he feels alone).
- Point out that as the story progresses, the elements will be added to and expanded upon.
- *Think-aloud: To better understand what is happening in a story, I think about the characters, setting, problem, events, and solution. I know that I remember more about the story when I do this, so I'm going to think about the elements of this story as I read.*

Introduce the Vocabulary



- Cut apart and place the following shapes from the tangram sheet that accompanies the book, in a place where students can see: one parallelogram, one square, and five triangles (two small triangles, one medium triangle, one large triangle).
- Write the word *tangram* on the board. Explain that a tangram is a puzzle from China that uses seven shapes to make different pictures. Have students name the shapes on the board. Write the name next to each shape. Encourage students to share what they know about the shapes (a square has four sides, the sides are parallel in a parallelogram, and so on). Tell students that the words *tangram, parallelogram, parallel, square, and triangle* are new vocabulary words in the story. Encourage students to find each word in the text.
- Have students preview the rest of the book.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to find out what a tangram puzzle is and how it is used. Remind them to stop every few pages to visualize the story in their mind and think about the elements of the story.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 7. Encourage students who finish early to go back and reread.
-  **Model visualizing parts of the book.**
Think-aloud: When I read Miss Hess's description of parallel lines, I paused to picture in my mind how that would look. I envisioned railroad tracks running side by side, always remaining the same distance apart.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students share pictures they visualized in their mind while reading.
 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Ask students to explain or show how the strategy of visualizing helped them understand and remember the story.
Think-aloud: When I read about the shark Li created with his tangram cards, I paused to picture in my mind the shapes fitting together to create the animal's outline. I envisioned Li moving the shapes until all of the triangles, squares, and parallelograms fit into the shape of a shark. This helped me to understand what I had read and to remember that part of the book.

Teach the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Create a chart on the board with the headings *characters*, *setting*, *problem*, *events*, and *solution*. Review the story elements already identified in the previous discussion (*character*, *setting*, *problem*). Ask students to explain whether or not information needs to be added to those elements (*characters* also include Li's classmates and his father; *setting* and *problem* have remained the same).
- Review the meaning of the word *problem*. Have students discuss the problem of the story (Li feels lonely in his new country). Discuss some of the events leading to the solution of Li's problem (Miss Hess is warm and welcoming, Li answers riddles by arranging tangram patterns, Li's dad makes tangram puzzles for the whole class, and so on). Ask students to identify the final solution to Li's problem (he becomes friends with the students in his class and he isn't as lonely).
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [story elements worksheet](#). When students are done, discuss their responses aloud.
- **Extend the discussion:** Discuss how identifying story elements helps readers understand and connect with what they have read. Have students reread page 12 in their book. Ask if they have ever been in a situation where they were not sure if they were doing something correctly. Ask how that made them feel and what they did to solve the problem. Relate their feelings to Li's feelings and actions in the story.

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Quotation marks

- Have students find the first paragraph on page 4. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Ask students to tell who is speaking and what she is saying. Review or explain that quotation marks are placed around words a character actually says or thinks in a story. Point out the comma and explain that the comma is placed before the quotation marks to separate the speaker's words from the rest of the sentence.
- Have students point out other quotation marks on the page. Have them identify who is speaking and what the character is saying. Invite students to explain why the author doesn't tell who is speaking after the second quote. (The speaker was identified in the first sentence.) Ask students to tell who is speaking.
- Have students suggest quotes. Write them on the board, leaving out the quotation marks and punctuation. Have volunteers come to the board to add the correct punctuation.



Check for understanding: Ask students to highlight the sentences with quotation marks in the book. Next to each highlighted sentence, have them write the name of the character speaking. Have students use a separate sheet of paper to write a sentence using quotation marks.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [quotation marks worksheet](#).

Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Review or explain the process of putting a list of words in alphabetical order. Remind students that if the first letter of two words is the same, they must compare the next two letters instead (such as *square* and *symbol*).
- Write the words *triangle* and *square* on the board. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order and why (*square* because *s* comes before *t* in the alphabet). Write the words *puzzle* and *parallel* on the board. Point out that the words begin with the same letter (*p*). Ask a volunteer to tell which word would appear first in alphabetical order and explain his or her thinking (*parallel* because *a* comes before *u* in the alphabet).
- Write the words *parallel* and *parallelogram* on the board. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order and why. (All of the letters in *parallel* and *parallelogram* are the same except for the final letters *ogram*. Since there are no other letters to compare at the end of *parallel*, it comes first in alphabetical order.)
- **Check for understanding:** Write the words *tangram* and *triangle* on the board. Have a student come to the board and circle which word would appear first in alphabetical order. Have another student explain whether he or she agrees with the choice and why.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [alphabetizing worksheet](#). Discuss answers aloud after they are finished.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students ask someone at home to describe a favorite story by discussing the story elements.

Extend the Reading

Writing and Art Connection

Have students create their own riddle on a separate sheet of paper for other animals or objects, similar to the ones that Miss Hess shared with her students. Provide a set of tangrams for students to use to create their picture. Invite them to illustrate their riddle with their tangram picture. Allow time for students to read their riddle aloud and for others to guess the answers by creating tangram pictures.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on narrative writing.

Social Studies Connection

Provide print and Internet resources for students to research China and the history of tangram puzzles. Ask them to look for answers to questions such as: *How old is the tangram tradition in China? Who invented it? What ages of people play with the puzzles? Are the puzzles used in schools and, if so, in what subject? What other cultures now use the puzzles?*

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the strategy of visualizing to comprehend text while reading
- identify story elements during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify and use quotation marks during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly place words in alphabetical order during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)