



About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Legend Page Count: 12 Word Count: 188

Book Summary

Nian is a dragon beast that comes out of the ocean once a year and eats people. He especially likes to eat children. One year, an old man arrives and says he can keep the dragon beast away. Will he succeed? *The Legend of Nian* presents the classic Chinese legend with beautiful illustrations and is a great way to introduce students to the Chinese New Year. The story will also provide opportunities to teach students about characters, adjectives, and onomatopoeia.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Ask and answer questions to understand text
- Identify characters
- Discriminate consonant digraph /ch/ sound
- Identify consonant *ch* digraph
- Recognize and use adjectives
- Recognize and use onomatopoeia

Materials

Green text indicates resources are available on the website.

- Book—*Legend of Nian* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Picture of a dragon
- *Story elements, consonant ch digraph, adjectives worksheets*
- *Discussion cards*



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

Vocabulary

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

- High-frequency words: *could, would*
- Content words:
 Story critical: *China (n.), Chinese New Year (n.), dragon (n.), firecrackers (n.), noise (n.), scare (v.)*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Place a picture of a dragon on the board and ask students to identify it. Explain that dragons are legendary animals, and the story they are going to read has one in it. Have students share with a partner stories they know that feature dragons. Ask students to draw their own picture of a dragon.

- Ask students to raise their hand if they know anything about Chinese New Year. Invite volunteers to share what they know. Explain to students that Chinese New Year is a holiday that people celebrate in China, and some Asian Americans celebrate it here, as well. Point out that this story is a legend connected to the Chinese New Year.

Book Walk

Introduce the Book

- Show students the front and back covers of the book and read the title with them. Ask what they think they might read about in a book called *The Legend of Nian*. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Explain to students that effective readers ask questions before and during reading a story, and look for answers as they read. Explain to students that asking and answering questions helps readers to better understand and enjoy the story.
- Model asking questions.
Think-aloud: On the cover, a fierce dragon beast has its mouth open wide behind a group of people. They look frightened and appear to be running away. This picture creates a lot of questions. Is the dragon trying to eat those people? Where did the dragon come from? Those are just two of the questions I have. I am excited to read the story and find out the answers. What other questions does this picture make you think of?
- Record these questions on the board. Have students share with a partner one question they have on the basis of the cover. Call on random students to share their question and record a few on the board.
- 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: Identify characters**

- Explain to students that a story is made of parts such as characters, setting, and plot. These *story elements* create the story. Explain to students that the *characters* are the *people or animals* that perform the action in the story. Point out that we identify and describe characters to better understand the story.
- Review a previous story the class has read together. Ask students to discuss with a partner the people or animals in that story. Call on students to share the character's names or descriptions.
- Model how to identify and describe characters using a familiar tale.
Think-aloud: When I want to identify the characters in the story The Three Little Pigs, I think about the people or animals that are in that story. Three pigs decide to live on their own, so they leave their mother's house and set off to build houses. The first little pig decides to make a house out of straw. The first little pig is pink and has a curly tail. He is brave to leave home, but he is also a little lazy and silly, because he thinks a straw house is good enough and he doesn't want to work harder to make a better house. What other characters are in this story?
- Have students identify the other characters in the story and write the names of all the characters on the board. Underneath the first little pig's name, record the description that you used in the Think-aloud. Invite volunteers to come to the board and draw a picture of each character.
- Point out that we describe characters according to what they look like and how they act. Have students describe the characters to a partner. Invite volunteers to share their descriptions, and record descriptions in words or phrases on the board, under the drawing of the appropriate character.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- While previewing the book, reinforce the vocabulary words students will encounter. For example, while looking at the picture on page 3, you might say: *That dragon looks like a scary animal. Point to the dragon in the picture. What sound does the word dragon start with? That's right, the /drl/ sound. Find the word dragon on this page.*
- Remind students to look at the picture and use the word decoding strategy of breaking a big word into smaller pieces to decode difficult words. For example, point to the word *firecrackers* on page 11 and say: *I am going to check the picture and use my decoding strategies to figure out this word. This word is long, and I see a smaller word in it that I recognize: the word fire. That prompts me to break this word into smaller pieces. The first piece is the word fire. The second piece is another word I recognize, the word crack. The last piece is the letters ers, which makes the sound /ers/. Now I put the three pieces together: fire - crack - ers, or the word firecrackers. I will check the picture to make sure this word makes sense. In the picture, the boy and girl are holding a long strand of firecrackers. The sentence also makes sense with this word. The word must be firecrackers.*

Set the Purpose

- Have students ask questions while they are reading and search for the answers. Encourage them to identify all the characters in the story.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Give students their copy of the book. Have a volunteer point to the first word on page 3 (*Long*). Point out to students where to begin reading on each page. Remind them to read the words from left to right.
- Ask students to place their finger on the page number in the bottom corner of page 3. Have them read to the end of page 5, using their finger to point to each word as they read. Encourage students who finish before others to reread the text.
- Model asking and answering questions.
Think-aloud: *On page 5, I learned that Nian the dragon beast lived under the sea, which answered my question: Where the dragon came from? My other question was if the dragon was going to eat those people. I learned on page 4 that he was! The story answered my questions. I remembered that effective readers ask more questions as they read, so I continued to ask questions. I asked myself, is anyone going to stop this dragon? I knew that I would look for the answer to this question as I read further.*
- Record the answers to your questions under the appropriate question on the board. Ask students to identify the questions on the board, those they had earlier, that have been answered. Invite volunteers to share the answers to the question and record the information on the board.
- Have students discuss with a partner new questions they have for the story. Have students record their questions on a separate sheet of paper, and encourage them to search for answers as they read.
- Review the characters from the Think-aloud. Point out that this story, too, has characters, and they are the people or animals that perform the action in the tale.
- Have students share with a partner the names of the characters from the story. Explain to students that when a character doesn't have a name, they can use a simple description to name the character, such as old man or little girl. Invite volunteers to identify characters from the story and record their names or descriptions on the board. Have students draw a picture of each character on a separate sheet of paper.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Ask students to review the questions on their separate sheet of paper. Have them write down any answers they found and new questions they have. Invite volunteers to share their questions with the class.
- With a partner, have students identify new characters from the book. Have students draw pictures of these characters on a separate sheet of paper, as well. Ask students to imagine that their partner has never read the story, and have them describe the characters from the story to their partner.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to ask and answer questions and record them on their separate sheet of paper.



Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in the discussion that follows.

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

- **Think-aloud:** *When I finished reading the story, I discovered that someone was able to stop the dragon. An old man, using red shirts and firecrackers, scared the creature away. The story answered all of my questions. Did the story answer all your questions?*
- Have students review their sheet of paper with questions, and have them write answers for every question they can. Point out that some questions won't have answers, and explain that when that happens, students can either do more research to find the answer, or if it is a fictional story, they can imagine their own answer. Ask students to decide how they would answer their unsolved questions.
- Ask students to explain how asking and answering questions helped them to understand and enjoy the story.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Have students identify any remaining characters from the story and draw them on a separate sheet of paper. Discuss the descriptions of the characters, and ask if students have any more details to add. Record this information on the board. Have each student choose a character to "introduce" to a partner. They will point to their character's picture in the book, name the character if applicable, and describe the character as if their partner were meeting that character in real life. Invite volunteers to introduce their character to the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [story elements worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, an old man stops Nian from bothering people by using firecrackers, noisy sticks, and the color red. Do you think this is the real reason people have these traditions on Chinese New Year? Why do you think the Chinese people created this story?

Build Skills

Phonological Awareness: **Consonant digraph /ch/ sound**

- Say the word *China* aloud to students, emphasizing the initial /ch/ sound. Have students say the word aloud and then say the /ch/ sound.
- Say the words *chin* and *shop* aloud, emphasizing the initial digraph phoneme. Have students discuss with a partner the beginning of the words and how they are different. Point out that the first word has a harder sound. Have students practice making the /ch/ sound with a partner.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

The Legend of Nian

- Have students work in groups to think of other words that begin with the /ch/ sound. Have the groups begin by saying the /ch/ sound aloud until it makes them think of a word. Call on groups to share, and record their words on the board to use in the Phonics lesson.
- **Check for understanding:** Say the following words one at a time and have students give the thumbs-up signal if the word begins with the /ch/ sound: *corn, chin, ship, church, children, shirt, car, chop,* and *cold*.

Phonics: **Consonant ch digraph**

- Write the word *China* on the board and say it aloud with students.
- Have students say the /ch/ sound aloud. Then run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the whole word aloud. Ask students to identify which letters represent the /ch/ sound in the word *China*.
- Review the words written on the board with the *ch* digraph. Invite volunteers to come to the board and circle the letters that make the /ch/ sound. Have the rest of the students trace the letters *ch* in the air.
- Point out that when these two letters are together they almost always make the /ch/ sound, whether they are at the beginning of the word or not. Write a few more examples on the board, such as *rich, such, and witch*. Have students read the words aloud.
- Have students practice writing the letters *ch* on a separate piece of paper while saying the /ch/ sound.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words that begin with the /ch/ sound on the board, leaving off the initial consonant digraph: *chair, child, chug, chip, check, Chinese, and choke*. Say each word, one at a time, and have volunteers come to the board and add the initial *ch* digraph to each word.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [consonant digraph ch worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: **Adjectives**

- Place the picture of the dragon on the board again. Remind students that the dragon is a noun, because it is a thing. Ask students to discuss with a partner words that describe the dragon. Call on pairs to share their descriptive words and write them on the board.
- Explain to students that *adjectives* are words that *describe nouns*. Point out that the words on the board are all adjectives that describe the dragon. Explain to students that adjectives help readers visualize the story more clearly.
- Have students turn to page 8. Ask them to read along as you read the first sentence aloud. Have students point to the word *man*. Ask them to whisper out loud the word that describes the man (*old*). Explain to students that the word *old* is an adjective that describes the word *man*.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *The old man sleeps in bed*. Have students work with a partner to think of other adjectives to describe the man. Call on volunteers to share their adjective, and erase the word *old* to replace it with a new adjective. Point out that changing the adjective can change the meaning of the sentence.
- Have students discuss with their partner words that could describe the bed. Call on random students to share their adjective suggestions. Add these adjectives to the sentence on the board, and ask students to share with their partner how the sentence is different with the different adjectives.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students choose four sentences from the story and write them on a separate sheet of paper. Have them work with a group to find and underline the nouns, and circle all the adjectives. Then, have them think of four new adjectives that can describe any of the nouns they found and add them to the sentences.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [adjectives worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: Onomatopoeia

- Have students read along as you read page 4 aloud, emphasizing the word *glump*. Ask students why the writer chose to use that word. Explain that sometimes writers use words that imitate a sound. The word *glump* makes the sound of the dragon swallowing people.
- Have students read page 9 with a partner. Have them point at all of the words on the page that imitate sounds (*boom*, *bang*, and *clang*). Have students call the words to the front of the class.
- Explain to students that these special words are called *onomatopoeia*. Have students repeat the word with you.
- Write a few more examples of onomatopoeia on the board, such as *buzz*, *crash*, and *slam*. Have students read the words aloud with you and then have them think of what things might make these sounds. Have students think of more sounds, and invite volunteers to share them with the class. Write onomatopoeia words that represent these sounds on the board.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students choose five of the onomatopoeia words from the board and use them in oral sentences with a partner.

Build Fluency
Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can 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 them identify the characters with someone at home.

Extend the Reading
Legend Writing and Art Connection

Have students think of traditions associated with a holiday they celebrate, such as Christmas trees at Christmas time or egg hunts at Easter. Ask students to work with a partner to think of a story that explains why people celebrate that tradition today. Have them write a story together that tells the origin of the tradition, and have the partners draw pictures to illustrate their story.

Social Studies Connection

Invite the school counselor, school resource officer, or principal in to talk about what programs your school has in place for bullying prevention, and to lead a discussion that reinforces or connects to the information in this book.

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 ask and answer questions to understand text
- accurately identify characters during discussion and on a worksheet
- consistently discriminate the consonant digraph /ch/ sound during discussion
- correctly identify and write the letter symbols that represents the /ch/ sound during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly use adjectives during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify and use words of onomatopoeia during discussion

Comprehension Checks

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