



The Booklist Project



Focus: Culture-Specific Booklist

Chinese

Developed by: Donna Adler

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Books Specific to Chinese Culture

藏書

Donna Adler
TESL 507

Chinese Culture Specific Book List

1. At the school I currently work in we have a small population of children who have been adopted from a variety of provinces in China. This, in turn, has inspired me to create a book list that would build a multi-cultural diverse library for my classroom. The following book list can be used any classroom to connect to children from Chinese cultural backgrounds. Here is a list of websites that can be useful when working with children of this background.
 - <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/articles/article/China/Chinese-Children-Culture/1782>
This website acts as a resource to teachers who are looking for Chinese specific traditions and culture. Here you will find links that will bring you to culturally specific information about the Ancient Chinese culture, children, family life, art, symbols, and religion.
 - <http://chineseculture.about.com/> Another resource for educators to navigate through the history, geography, the government, laws, the language, music and art. Multiple links are available equipped with pictures, maps and links to learn about the art of Chinese calligraphy.
 - www.chinesechildbook.com This website offers videos, books, and audio books and textbooks by age level. Chinese and bilingual literature is available for purchase.
 - www.chinasprout.com This website offers literature for children and adults. You will find links with books listed in English, Chinese or both. Links on the side of the page will guide you through the culture. Food, traveling, holidays and festivals, tales, adoption books and crafts specific to the Chinese culture can be found.
 - www.cynthialeitichsmith.com Another website that provides an extensive list of authors and books for the Chinese-American culture. On this website you will find brief synopsis of featured books and links for author interviews, resources for parents/grandparents in a list that is broken down by culture specific domains, for example: Korean American or Japanese American.
2. The following book list is appropriate for children between the ages of six through ten. Some books may be used as read-alouds while others can be used for a progressing English Language Learner to read independently or with instruction. I have included children in first and second grade because some of these books can be used classroom libraries for children to see the culture or as a read aloud to share culture specific traditions or festivals.

Book List:

Bridges, Shirin Yim. (2002). *Ruby's wish*: New York: Scholastic Books

[ISBN: 0-439-70958-x]

Book Summary: A true story about a little girl named Ruby who lives in China with her large family. Ruby likes going to school however Ruby is anxious about her destiny as a girl in China. She would like to continue going to school and be treated just like the boys in her family. After a talk with her grandfather Ruby's problem is solved. Traditions and festivals are also discussed in this story.

WIDA level: Expanding to Bridging

Book available in: Paperback, Hardcover

Chin, C. (1993). *China's bravest girl*. San Francisco, California: Children's book press.

[ISBN: 0-89239-148-0]

Book summary: A bilingual book written in rhyme in both English and Chinese. A story about the legend of how a young girl named Hua Mu Lan, disguises herself as a soldier to save her elderly father from battle. She fights along soldiers for many years. When returning home, a fellow soldier discovers her secret and asks for hand in marriage.

WIDA level: Bridging

Book available: Hardcover, paperback

Crane, Carol. (2006) *D is for dancing dragon*: Farmington Hills, MI: Sleeping Bear Press

[ISBN 1-58536-273-5]

Book Summary: An alphabet book all about the Chinese culture. On the side of each page a bit of historical information is shared as well as beautiful illustrations.

The following website has activities and pictures on the celebration of the Chinese New Year. As well as a lesson to compare and contrast Chinese dragons to European dragons.

<http://lessonplans.craftgossip.com/read-it-d-is-for-dancing-dragon/2009/01/28>

WIDA level: Expanding to Bridging

Book available in: Hardcover, paperback

Online Resources: Carol Crane has her own official website with a list of all of her books.

Demi. (2007). *The boy who painted dragons*. New York, New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books.

[ISBN: 978-1-4169-2469-2]

Book Summary: A little boy named Ping liked to draw dragons. He felt they were a symbol of strength even though he was secretly terrified of them. Until one day a dragon comes down from the heavens to visit him in his sleep.

WIDA level: Expanding to Bridging

Book Available: Hardcover

Demi. (1999). *Kites; Magic wishes that fly up to the sky*. New York: Crown Publishers, INC.

[ISBN: 0-517-80049-7]

Book Summary: A painter who lived in China long ago painted only holy paintings until a local woman came for a symbol for her son that she could fly in the air so he would grow up big and strong. As other villagers heard about the kite, they began to come to him for symbols of flight for their families.

WIDA level: Expanding to bridging

Book available: Hardcover, paperback, turtleback, school/library bound

Dowson, Nick. (2007). *Tracks of a panda*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

[ISBN: 978-0-7636-3146-8]

Book summary: A mother panda is taking care of her cub. Join her through a dangerous journey of trying to tend to her cub while she relocates their home.

WIDA level: End of Developing to Expanding

Book available: Hardcover, paperback

Hong, Lil Toy. (1995) *The empress and the silk worm*. Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman & Company.

[ISBN: 0-8075-2009-8]

Book Summary: Unexpectedly an empress comes across a silk cocoon that has fallen into her cup of tea. The silk from the worm turned into clothing and, from that day forward, Si Ling-Chi was known as the Lady of the Silkworm. She made beautiful pieces of clothing out of the silk for many people.

WIDA level: Bridging

Book available: Hardcover, paperback

Krakauer, Hoong Yee Lee. (1994) *Rabbit mooncakes*: Canada: Little, Brown & Company

[ISBN: 0-316-50327-4]

Book Summary: A story about a family preparing for the Harvest Moon Festival at her house. The family spends the day preparing for guests to visit that night for the festival. Hoong Wei was nervous about her piano performance she was going to have to do in front of entire family. As the story progresses Hoong Wei nerves get the best of her until she performs and no one laughs at her mistake. At the end she is rewarded with a rabbit mooncake to celebrate the year of the dragon.

WIDA level: Expanding to bridging

Book available in: Hardcover, library bound

Lewis, Rose. (2000) *I love you like crazy cakes*. Singapore: Little, Brown & Company
[ISBN 0-316-52538-3]

Book Summary: A true story about a woman from America who feels like something is missing. She begins the story of how some children in China are missing something as well, a mother. This story brings you through her journey of adopting a child from China from beginning to end.

WIDA level: Developing to Expanding

Book Available in: Board book, Hardcover

Lin, Grace. (2004) *Fortune cookies fortunes*: New York: Alfred A. Knopf
[ISBN: 0-375-81521-x]

Book Summary: A story about a young girl who questions if the fortunes inside of her fortune cookies actually come true. As she travels through her day she encounters different members of her family. At each encounter she sees how the fortunes are coming true in very different ways.

For this particular book, some suggested activities include:

- Write your own fortune
- Make fortune cookies
- This book was also adapted as a dance performance
- May be downloaded from her website: <http://www.gracelin.com/>

Grace Lin has an official website. Here you can find books that she has authored, illustrated and any upcoming books in her collection. On this site you will be able to find activity ideas or suggestions to do after you read some of her books.

WIDA level: Developing to Expanding

Book available in: Hardcover, Paperback or Library Bound

Porte, Barbara Ann. (2000) *Ma jiang and the orange ants*: New York: Orchard Company
[ISBN: 0-531-33241-1]

Book Summary: A story about a little girl named Ma Jiang and her family a long time ago in China. Ma Jiang takes care of her baby brother Bao while the boys in her family go out and catch orange ants to sell to support the family. When Ma Jiang's brothers and fathers are taken away from the home, she finds a way to gather the ants and continue to make money for the family.

WIDA level: Bridging

Book available in: Hardcover, Library Bound

Rattigan, Jama Kim. (1993). *Dumpling soup*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company.
[ISBN: 0-316-73445-4]

Book Summary: A story about a young girl and her family celebrating the Chinese New year. Only this year Marisa gets to help make the dumplings. Marisa's extended family is a mixture of Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Hawaiian cultures.

WIDA level: Bridging

Book Available: Kindle version, hardcover, paperback, school/library bound

Schaefer, C. (2007). *Dragon dancing*. New York, New York: Viking.

[ISBN: 978-0-670-06084-9]

Book Summary: This story is about a group of young children celebrating Mei Lin's birthday. As a part of a celebration decorations are made from paper and ribbons to create a dragon that travels to many imaginary places.

WIDA level: Beginning to Developing

Book Available: hardcover, paperback

Online Resources: Carole Schaefer has an official website with a complete listing of her books.

Young, Ed. (2005) *Beyond the great mountains*: San Francisco: Chronicle Books

[ISBN: 0-8118-4343-2]

Book Summary: A beautifully illustrated poem about China. On each page, you will find an illustration to match the words to each line and a Chinese symbol to match the words.

WIDA level: Bridging

Book available in: Hardcover

Online Resources: Ed Young has a website (<http://edyoungart.com/about.html>) with book lists that he authored. However, there are no links for lessons for ELL learners.

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The Booklist Project

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M.Ed. In TESL Program,



Feinstein School of Education and Human Development
Rhode Island College

For Further Information, Contact:

Nancy Cloud, Ed.D., Director

ncloud@ric.edu

Rhode Island College

600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue

Providence, RI 02908