



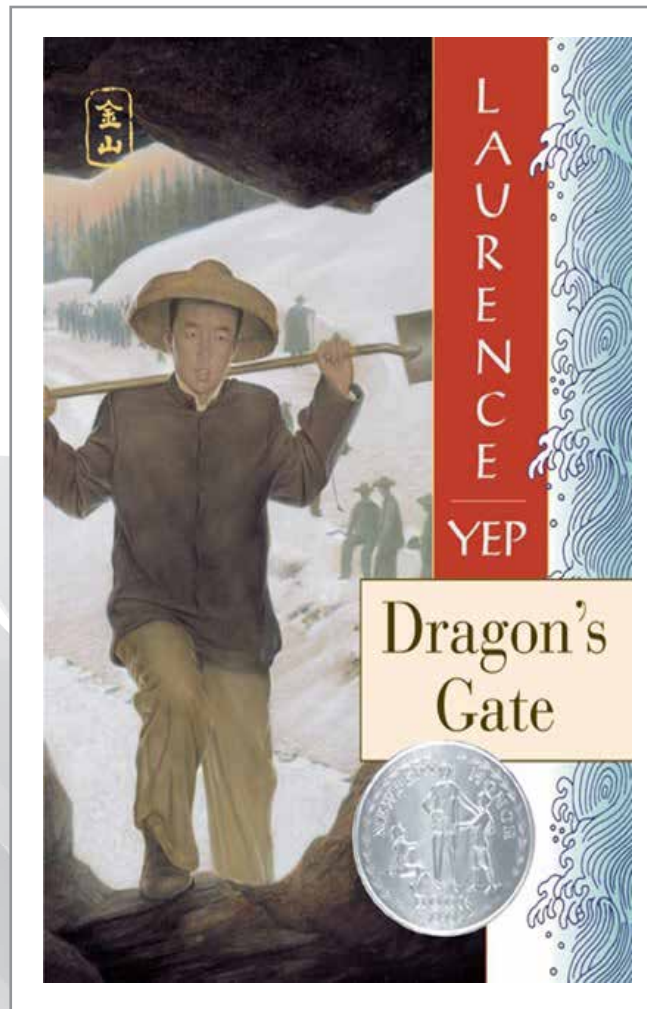
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Dragon's Gate

Laurence Yep



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Dragon's Gate

Laurence Yep

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Vocabulary

Charades, word maps, synonyms, antonyms, defining, parts of speech, and context clues

Literary Elements

Literary analysis, story mapping, plot development, setting, time line, and characterization

Writing

Character journal, personal writing, creative writing, and haiku poem

Listening/Speaking

Dramatizing, interviewing, discussion, oral reports, taping, and music

Thinking

Identifying attributes, research, compare/contrast, brainstorming, problem solving, creative thinking, and critical thinking

Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing, foreshadowing, cause and effect, inference, and anticipating

Across the Curriculum

Art—drawing, design and color, mural, puppet making, mobiles, advertisements, and comic strips; Health—first aid; Computer Science—Internet

Summary

Dragon's Gate tells the story of Otter, the son of a wealthy family, who wants to leave his mother in China to work on the Golden Mountain in America with his uncle and father. After a confrontation with a soldier, Otter is accused of murder and must flee to America. Upon joining his father and uncle, Otter discovers that America is not what he expected. His uncle is not as revered in America as in China, and work on the mountain is not glorious, but is full of danger and hard work. As Otter works for the railroad, he tries to learn about advances in technology to help free China from the Manchu rulers. As Otter encounters prejudice, loss, friendship, and the reality of his dreams in America, he matures into a person who will fight for ideals he believes are honorable.

About the Author

Laurence Yep, a Newbery Honor Book winner, was born in San Francisco, California. Yep writes both fiction books and plays. He has taught Asian-American Studies at the University of California at Berkeley and at Santa Barbara. In addition, he has won the International Reading Association's Children's Book Award. Some of Yep's books include: *Child of the Owl*, *Sea Glass*, *The Serpent's Children*, *Mountain Light*, *Dragonwings*, and *Thief of Hearts*. His wife, Joanne Ryder, also an author, lives with him in Pacific Grove, California.

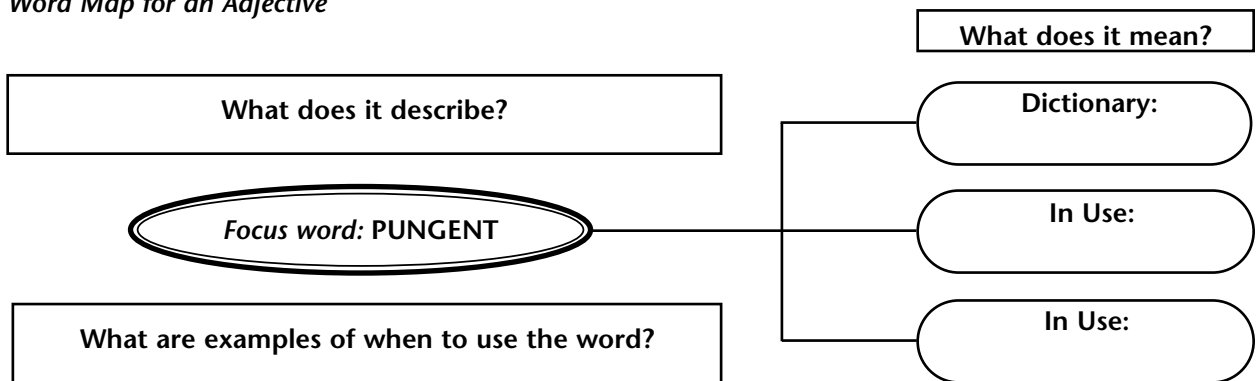
Introductory Activities

1. **Previewing the Book:** Have students look at the cover and answer the journalist's questions about what they see: Who? Where? What? When? and Why? Based on their answers, students predict what the book will be about.
2. **Predicting:** Given the following clues, students write a paragraph predicting what they think will happen in the story.
China Culture Sacrifice Immigration Loyalty Railroad
3. **Character Journal:** List the main characters from *Dragon's Gate* and have students choose one. As they read the book, students write regular entries from that character's point of view. Journal entries should reflect on the events of the story. At various points in their reading, have students share their journals with classmates.
4. **Brainstorming:** Create an attribute web (see page 9 of this guide) with students for each of the following ideas: mother, decision, bravery, hero, and courage. Ask students to brainstorm what each word brings to mind. Encourage students to elaborate on particular ideas.
5. **Prediction Chart:** Have students set up a prediction chart (see pages 5-6 of this guide) to use as they read the book.

Vocabulary Activities

1. Target Word Charades: Have students act out some of the vocabulary words and have classmates guess the target word. Some suggested words for *Dragon's Gate*: entwined (10), sidled (50), swaggered (72), pelt (135), junction (167), torso (191), sullen (218), diminutive (279), surly (298).
2. Target Word Maps: Have students complete word maps for vocabulary words of a certain part of speech. For example, adjectives from *Dragon's Gate* would include: vulnerable (72), bulbous (98), scummy (107), panicky (140), formidable (159), pungent (160), withered (174), disembodied (197), smoldering (203), deftly (256), raspy (302).

Word Map for an Adjective



3. Sentences: Have students select five or six vocabulary words and use as many of the words as possible in one sentence.
4. Synonym Match: Have students select vocabulary words from a chapter and list one synonym for each vocabulary word on a small piece of paper. Students mix the pieces of paper and match each synonym to the appropriate vocabulary word.
5. Vocabulary Sort: Have the students sort vocabulary words into categories (e.g., nouns, verbs, and adjectives/adverbs).
6. Odd One Out: Use vocabulary words from one or two chapters. Have the students make a chain of four words. One word in the chain is the vocabulary word, two words are synonyms for the vocabulary word, and one word does not go with the others. Mix the sequence of the words in the chain. Students should exchange their chains, underline the word that does not belong with the others, and explain why it does not belong.
7. Vocabulary Boxes: Cut a pattern for a cube from construction paper. Before the cube is glued together, each face should contain one of the following: a vocabulary word, the definition of the word, an illustration of the word, a synonym of the word, an antonym of the word, and a sentence using the word. Display the vocabulary boxes in the room.

Chapters XXII–XXIV, pages 225–261

Vocabulary

scrounge (226)	sentiment (226)	amidst (227)	mutilated (228)
agitated (229)	extinguishing (230)	flurry (235)	tantrum (236)
intuition (240)	eloquent (240)	desperation (244)	bluff (244)
scowled (245)	anxieties (247)	complexion (247)	pragmatically (249)
wolfed (250)	methodically (252)	intrepid (253)	deftly (256)

Discussion Questions

1. What shows the crew that they have to depend on one another? (*Otter's punishment and Squeaky's blindness*)
2. Why do the men go to bed as early as they can? (*They have very little to eat and very little fuel. They go to bed to keep warm.*)
3. What excuse does Doggy make for not singing? (*He can't sing unless the moon guitar can accompany him.*)
4. Why does Packy point to Bright Star's boot? (*He is suggesting that by tomorrow they will be eating the boot because there will be no more food.*)
5. Why are the men suddenly startled as they hear the word "avalanche"? (*They know that the camp is in danger.*)
6. Why does Kilroy tell the men to start working? (*Answers will vary.*)
7. How do the Americans get the men to go back working? (*They begin to beat the workers who want to dig in the snow to find the lost men.*)
8. Do the men stick together to find the lost workers who were buried in the snow? Why? (*No, they are scared of the Americans so they go back into the tunnels to work.*)
9. How do you think Foxfire feels as all the workers abandon the search for the men under the snow? (*Answers will vary.*)
10. Why does Kilroy appoint another head crewman? (*Foxfire gives the Americans nothing but trouble.*)
11. Why does Foxfire continue to dig for the lost men even after all of the other men leave? (*Foxfire believes that someone needs to care.*)
12. Does Bright Star really want to be the crew leader? (*No, he just pretends to take over.*)
13. Why doesn't Foxfire want to be the crew leader? (*He knows that the men voted with their feet when they abandoned him by the snow-covered cabin.*)
14. Why does Otter admire Foxfire? (*Foxfire does not sulk because he lost the leadership, but continues to work beside the men who abandoned him.*)

-
15. Why does Foxfire say that you can never go home? What does Foxfire mean? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? (*because you will always look at your home with western eyes; that your home looks differently after experiencing something different; Answers will vary.*)
 16. What does Otter come to believe after Foxfire tells him about his childhood? (*Otter realizes that his uncle and mother were outcasts as much as he was.*)
 17. Why does Foxfire want to go with Otter to set the charge? (*Answers will vary.*)
 18. How does the crew treat Otter after they find out he is going up the mountain? (*They can't do enough for Otter.*)
 19. Why does Foxfire insist that Otter eat the food? (*He says that Otter needs every ounce of strength for the climb up the mountain.*)
 20. How does Otter plan to find his way back down the mountain? (*He uses brightly-colored patches and freezes them in water to use as markers.*)
 21. Why does it seem as if Foxfire lost his one last friend, Squeaky? (*Squeaky blames Foxfire for everything that had recently happened.*)
 22. How do you think Sean feels as he realizes he must go back to camp and not continue up the mountain with Foxfire and Otter? (*Answers will vary.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Research: Have the students research avalanches. What causes an avalanche? How do ski resorts control avalanches? Have the students report on actual avalanches that have occurred in the United States.
2. Critical Thinking: Have the students make a Venn diagram that compares the relationship between Sean and his father with the relationship between Otter and his father.

Chapters XXV–XXVII, pages 262–294

Vocabulary

transformed (266)	surged (267)	summit (268)	contrite (269)
perspective (269)	tauter (271)	cleft (272)	infectious (273)
recruit (273)	sorcerer (274)	diminutive (279)	impale (281)
trough (282)	obscuring (283)	deliriously (284)	irritably (284)
groping (284)	intricate (289)	mementos (289)	ironic (291)

Discussion Questions

1. How does Foxfire get Otter to get up and begin walking again? (*He tells Otter to take one step at a time.*)
2. Why does Foxfire get angry at Otter as he tries to stop and rest in the snow? (*He is trying to get Otter mad enough so he will make it up to the top of the mountain.*)