



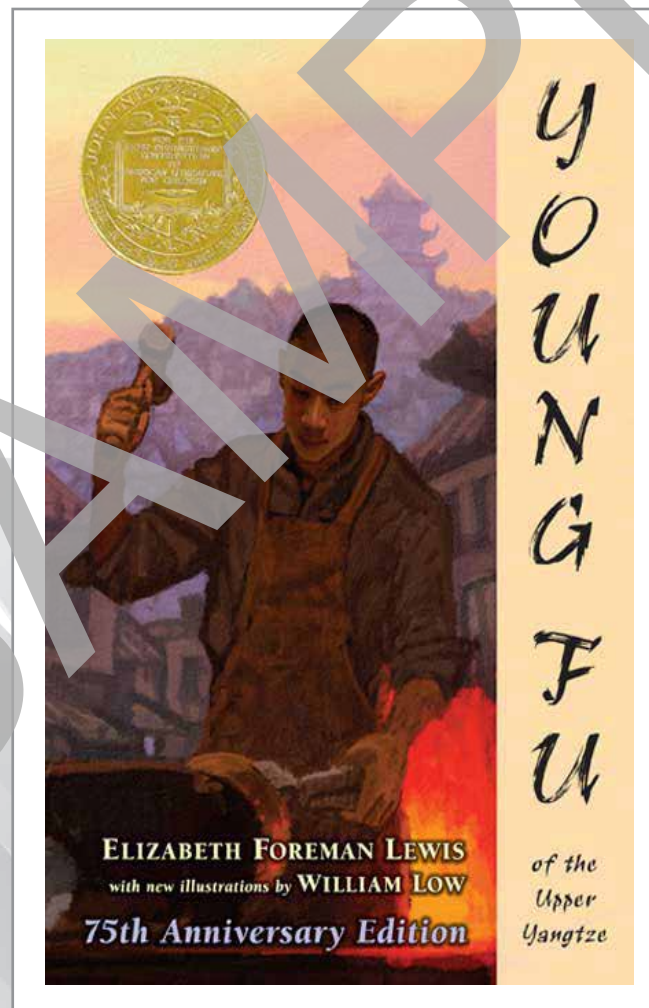
# TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 6-8

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

## Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze

Elizabeth Foreman Lewis



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

# Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze

Elizabeth Foreman Lewis

## 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

### Literary Elements

Metaphors, similes,  
personification, mood,  
conflict, theme, setting,  
plot, characterization,  
point of view

### Writing

Poetry, retelling, journal

### Vocabulary

Context clues, synonyms,  
antonyms, definitions,  
puzzles

### Critical Thinking

Main idea, recalling,  
summarizing, deduction

### Comprehension

Identifying attributes  
and values, motives,  
compare/contrast,  
predicting, evaluating,  
supporting judgments,  
research

### Across the Curriculum

Art—Chinese numerals,  
Chinese lanterns, illustrating;  
Math—abacus; Social  
Studies—Chinese culture;  
Drama—skits, reenacting,  
puppetry; Listening/  
Speaking—discussion

**Genre:** fiction

**Setting:** Chungking, China

**Point of View:** third person

**Themes:** coming-of-age, growth through adversity, honesty, friendship, loyalty, family

**Conflict:** person vs. self, person vs. person, person vs. society, person vs. nature

**Style:** narrative

**Tone:** light, darkening in times of adversity

## Summary

Thirteen-year-old Young Fu and his recently widowed mother, Fu Be Be, move from their village to Chungking, China. Young Fu finds work as an apprentice to Tang, a coppersmith. It is a turbulent and dangerous time in China as warlords fight for supremacy. Young Fu is frequently the victim of chaos in the city as he eagerly sets out to explore his new surroundings. He learns much about himself and life through each of his adventures. The reader watches Young Fu steadily mature until, in the end, there is little doubt that Young Fu has found his way in the world and is destined for success.

## About the Author

Elizabeth Foreman Lewis, born in 1892, drew upon her extensive years in China as inspiration for her books for young adults. Lewis moved to China in 1917 to work with the Women's Foreign Missionary Society in Shanghai. She later became a teacher at schools in Nanking and Chungking. She married John Abraham Lewis, the principal of the boys' academy where she taught. Lewis embarked on her writing career when illness forced her to return with her husband and their son to the United States. She wanted to educate young Americans about the Chinese culture, as well as demonstrate the universality of human dreams and aspirations. *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze* (1932), Lewis's first novel, won the Newbery Medal. In addition to her young-adult books, she also wrote two adult nonfiction books. Lewis died in her home state of Maryland in 1958.

## Characters

**Young Fu:** a young Chinese boy who moves with his mother to Chungking and works as an apprentice to a coppersmith

**Fu Be Be:** Young Fu's mother

**Wang Scholar:** Young Fu's upstairs neighbor who teaches Young Fu to read and write

**Tang:** a coppersmith in Chungking; Young Fu's employer

**Tsu, Lu, and Dsen:** journeymen at the shop

**Small Den:** a journeyman at the shop; dislikes Young Fu

**Li:** a journeyman at the shop; special friend to Young Fu

**Wei:** Tang's employee; leaves the shop in disgrace after trying to implicate Young Fu in a crime

**foreign lady:** person whom Young Fu encounters repeatedly throughout the novel; changes Young Fu's views of foreigners

## Initiating Activities

1. Background Information: Assess the students' knowledge of China.
  - a. What percentage of the world's population lives in China? (20%) What percentage of the world's population lives in the U.S.? (4.5%)
  - b. How do you think China compares in geographic size to the United States? (*China is slightly smaller.*)
  - c. When did the United States become a country? (1776) When did China become a country? (221 B.C.)
  - d. What form of government does the U.S. have? (*Democratic*) China? (*Communist*)
  - e. Which country has the highest rate of poverty: the United States, China, or France? (*the U.S., 12%; China, 10%; France, 6.5%*)
  - f. How many characters does our alphabet have? (26) the Chinese alphabet? (40,000+)
  - g. Where did the fortune cookie originate? (*America by Chinese Americans*)
  - h. What fruit does China produce more of than the rest of the world put together? (*apple*)
  - i. When and where was ice cream invented? (*China in 2000 B.C.*)
  - j. Which of these was not invented in China: paper, pasta, or television? (*television*)
2. Geography: Have each student design a travel brochure for Chungking, the city to which Young Fu and his mother move. They should include the following information: terrain (*hilly to mountainous*); elevation (*1,000 feet at river's edge, 2,000 feet in nearby mountains*); river (*the Yangtze*); distance to and location of the major city of Shanghai (*approximately 1,200 miles at the mouth of the Yangtze river*); population in 1920s (*approximately 225,000—difficult information to find, may need to tell students*); region (*Sichuan or Szechuen*).
3. Films: View a movie featuring China. Possibilities: *The Good Earth*, 138 minutes, Not Rated, based on Pearl Buck's novel; Plot Synopsis: A story of humility and bravery about a farmer in China. *Empire of the Sun*, 153 minutes, Rated PG, based on J.G. Ballard's autobiographical novel; Plot Synopsis: The story of a boy, James Graham, whose privileged life is in disarray after the Japanese invasion of Shanghai.

## Understanding Values

**Values** represent people's beliefs about what is important, good, or worthwhile. For example, most families value spending time together.

**Directions:** Think about Young Fu, Fu Be Be, and Tang and the values they exhibit. What do they value? What beliefs do they have about what is important, good, or worthwhile? On the chart below, list each character's three most important values, from most important to least. Be prepared to share your lists during a class discussion.

```
graph TD; Values([Values]) --- YoungFu[Young Fu]; Values --- FuBeBe[Fu Be Be]; Values --- Tang[Tang];
```

The chart is a hierarchical diagram. At the top is an oval labeled "Values". Three lines connect this oval to three rounded rectangular boxes below it. The first box is labeled "Young Fu" and contains three numbered lines: "1.", "2.", and "3.". The second box is labeled "Fu Be Be" and also contains three numbered lines: "1.", "2.", and "3.". The third box is labeled "Tang" and contains three numbered lines: "1.", "2.", and "3.".

After you have finished the chart and participated in the class discussion, think about which character seems to have values most like your own. Write a paragraph that explains why you chose this character.

4. Writing/Tone: Pretend that you are Fu Be Be and writing in your journal. Describe your return to Chungking and everything that happened while you were gone. Keep in mind the tone of voice you imagine Fu Be Be to have, her feelings about leaving the countryside to return to Chungking, and her response to Young Fu's story.

## Chapters XIII–XIV, pp. 220–252

Li marries the woman his mother chose to be his wife. Young Fu insists that he buy a tailor-made suit for this and future occasions to lose his country-boy image. Tang is called to the *ya-men*, where he learns that Lu is a suspect in an opium smuggling operation. He employs Young Fu to help clear Lu's name. After Lu's arrest, Young Fu comes upon a man near Lu's property engaged in smuggling opium. He follows him and gets all the information he needs for the police to implicate the man and his accomplices in the smuggling operation. Lu is released from prison. Young Fu learns a valuable lesson when Tang scolds him for his resistance to working on the anvil. Disappointed in himself, Young Fu sets his mind to prove to Tang that he can do good work on the anvil. Clearly, Tang was never as angry as Young Fu imagined. Tang tells Young Fu that if he is hard on him, it is because he sees Young Fu as his son who needs to be taught life's lessons. Tang informs Young Fu that he intends to adopt him. As the novel ends, Young Fu expresses excitement and joy about his future.

### Vocabulary

impending (221)  
 apparel (224)  
 elated (225)  
 intimacy (226)  
 aversion (228)  
 sinister (230)  
 devious (232)  
 edict (233)  
 endeavored (235)  
 raucous (239)  
 anvil (242)  
 shirked (245)  
 reminiscent (248)  
 squalor (251)

### Discussion Questions

1. Whose mother forces her son into an arranged marriage? What is an arranged marriage? How were arranged marriages in China during the 1920s different than American marriages of today? (*Li is forced into marriage. The parents find a spouse who they consider to be suitable for their son or daughter. The son or daughter has little to no say in the matter. Marriage was about economics, not about love. Answers will vary. pp. 220–221*)
2. When Young Fu takes the fabric to the tailor who will make the suit, how is it apparent that he is no longer the same naïve young boy? (*Young Fu refuses to allow him to cut the fabric in his absence. p. 224*)
3. Considering who Fu Be Be hopes will eventually marry Young Fu, how is it apparent that Fu Be Be is still not comfortable with city life? What is her complaint against city girls? (*She wants to find a country girl for Young Fu. She thinks they don't know how to work hard and care for a household. p. 226*)
4. Opium use in China was very common until the ruling powers finally decided to make it illegal. What provoked them to take that action? Why did it eventually become common once again? (*Opium use was destroying the minds and bodies of China's people. It was driving families into ruin. In the absence of a strong central government, competing generals found it necessary to sell opium to raise funds to fight their wars. Therefore, they encouraged farmers to resume growing it. p. 233*)
5. When Young Fu makes his dislike of welding obvious to all, why is Tang clearly disappointed in him? (*He believes Young Fu thinks he is too good for certain work and that he doesn't recognize that a true craftsman needs to be well-versed in all aspects of his trade before he can claim to be a master. p. 243*)

6. Upon reflecting on Tang's words to him, how does Young Fu respond to working with the anvil? (*He is determined to prove that he can work hard at the anvil and do fine work. He hopes to show his gratitude toward Tang. p. 245*)
7. As poor as he and his mother are, what is Young Fu's chief pleasure in learning that Tang wishes to adopt him? (*He feels that the most important side of the affair is that Tang obviously loves and respects him. p. 251*)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Journal: Complete your proverb log.
2. Characterization: Finish your character analysis of Young Fu.
3. Characterization: Using your character analysis of Young Fu as an aid, complete the Characterization chart for Young Fu on page 11 of this guide.
4. Writing: Write your own "coming-of-age story" about a time in your life when you realized you had mentally matured.
5. Thinking: Complete the Fallen Phrase Puzzle on page 12 of this guide. (Answer: One must first scale the mountain in order to view the plain.)