

Focus Question:

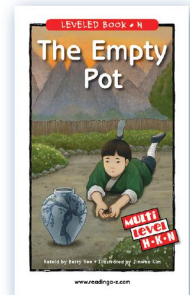
What lesson does Chen learn?

Book Summary

Text Type: Fiction/Folktale

One of the most valuable lessons a person can learn is the importance of being honest. *The Empty Pot* tells the story of a young Chinese boy named Chen, whose honesty helped him become the next emperor of China. Colorful illustrations and engaging text will keep students interested in learning this important lesson. The book can also be used to teach students how to analyze characters as well as to retell to better understand the text.

The book and lesson are also available for levels H and K.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Retell to understand text
- ☐ Analyze character
- ☐ Describe information provided by a glossary
- ☐ Identify consonant *th* digraph
- ☐ Recognize and use past-tense verbs
- ☐ Identify and use suffix *-ed*

Materials

- ☐ Book: *The Empty Pot* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Analyze character, past-tense verbs, suffix *-ed* worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

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

Words to Know

Story critical: *boiled* (v.), *emperor* (n.), *honest* (adj.), *qualities* (n.), *sprout* (v.), *weeping* (v.)

Enrichment: *encouragement* (n.), *glum* (adj.), *shame* (n.)

- Academic vocabulary:** *become* (v.), *plan* (n.), *remember* (v.), *reveal* (v.), *through* (prep.), *use* (v.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the word *honest* on the board. Ask students to turn to a partner and share what they think of when they hear the word *honest*. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class. Write these ideas on the board in a word web.
- Ask students to share a personal story about a time when they were honest and possibly a personal story about a time when they were dishonest. Invite volunteers to share their stories with the class. Explain that today's book will reinforce the important lesson of being honest.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *The Empty Pot*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Retell

Explain to students that engaged readers stop now and then while they are reading to *retell* in their mind what has happened so far in the story. Discuss how stopping to retell the events of the story helps readers understand and remember what they are reading. Explain that when retelling a story or event it is important that the details are explained in order. Point out that people retell as part of their daily lives, such as telling what they did after school or what happened in a movie they just watched. Use a book that the class has recently read or a familiar story, and demonstrate how to retell a story in correct order. Invite volunteers to help you with the retelling.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Analyze character

- Explain to students that when reading a story it is important to learn about and understand the main character. Write the word *Analyze* on the board and read it aloud with students. Point out that when readers analyze a character they are considering the character's words, actions, and thoughts. Create three columns on the board with the headings *Words, Actions, Thoughts*. Explain to students that as they read the story they should consider the main character's words, actions, and thoughts, and what these traits tell about the character.
- Read pages 3 and 4 aloud to students as they follow along. Invite students to use information from these pages to identify the main character, Chen. Then, have students identify Chen's words, actions, and thoughts from these pages. Record students' responses in the chart on the board, and then discuss as a class what this tells them about Chen as a person.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the "Words to Know" box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 16. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about what Chen learns. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- 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 a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *Who was Chen, and where did he live?* (level 1) page 3
- *What caused the emperor to give each child a flower seed?* (level 2) pages 4–5

- *Why was Chen excited to receive his seed from the emperor?* (level 3) pages 3 and 5
- *How did Chen care for his seed?* (level 2) pages 6–9
- *Why wouldn't Chen's seed grow?* (level 2) multiple pages
- *Why was Chen chosen as the next emperor of China?* (level 1) page 14
- *What lesson does this story teach readers?* (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Glossary

Explain that a glossary helps readers define the words that are in the book. Have students work in small groups to review the glossary on page 16. Ask students: *How are the vocabulary words arranged in a glossary? What is the definition of the word weeping? On which page can you find the word shame? What part of speech is glum?* Have students review other vocabulary words in the book and discuss in groups where they would be found and how they know. Invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

Skill Review

- Model for students how to retell what you have read so far, and then have them stop at certain points during the story to retell in their mind what they have read. Have students retell the story from the beginning to a partner. Listen to see whether they include the events in detail and in the correct order. Encourage students to use transition words, such as *first*, *next*, *then*, and *finally*, when retelling the story.
- Model analyzing character.
Think-aloud: As I read the story, I pause often to consider the words, actions, and thoughts of the main character, Chen, so I can better understand him. For example, I read that Chen tried many ways to make his seed grow. He watered it, moved it to a bigger pot, and had his pet cricket sing to it. On the basis of this information, I can tell that Chen is a kind and caring person. After the year was over, Chen's seed did not grow, and he was honest with the emperor about this, even though the emperor seemed upset. From this, I can tell Chen is a brave and truthful person. Pausing often while I am reading to consider the main character's words, actions, and thoughts helps me better understand the character and to enjoy what I am reading.
- Have students work in small groups to share one quality about Chen and one detail that supports this. Remind students to refer to the text for examples of Chen's words, actions, and thoughts. Have groups share their responses with the class.
- Model how to complete the [analyze character worksheet](#). Remind students to use specific examples and details from the text.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

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.

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer: **Analyze character**

Review the analyze character worksheet that students completed. Invite volunteers to share their findings with the class. Remind students that analyzing characters is one way to better understand and learn more about the characters in a story.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided to be used for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary. Samples: *Chen learned that being honest was the best way to live.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Phonics: **Consonant th digraph**

- Write the word *truth* on the board and read it aloud to students. Ask what sound they hear at the end of the word *truth* and what letters make this sound. Underline the consonant *th* digraph.
- Explain that the letters *t* and *h* together make the /th/ sound. Write the following words on the board, leaving out the consonant *th* digraph: *the, this, that, path, fifth, moth*. Invite volunteers to the board to add the consonant *th* digraph and read each word aloud as a class.
- **Check for understanding:** Review pages 5 and 6 with students and have them circle all the words containing the consonant *th* digraph. Invite volunteers to share their findings with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Have students review pages 7 through 15 and circle all the words containing the consonant *th* digraph. Invite students to share their findings with a partner.

Grammar and Mechanics: **Past-tense verbs**

- Read the following sentence aloud with students: *Chen watered his seed*. Remind students that *verbs* are action words. Have students identify the verb in the sentence, and write *watered* on the board.

- Explain that when we describe something that happened in the past we change the verb to its past-tense form. Point out that, typically, we add the letters *-ed* to create a past-tense verb.
- Write the word *dance* on the board and read it aloud. Ask students how they would change the word to show that the action happened in the past.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner to create a list of ten action verbs that includes both the present and past-tense forms. Have students create sentences for these words, and invite volunteers to share their sentences with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **past-tense-verbs worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: **Suffix -ed**

- Write the word *discovered* on the board and read it aloud to students. Ask students to identify the root word (*discover*).
- Explain that a *suffix* is a syllable, or group of letters, added to the end of a word to change its meaning. Point out that an example of a suffix is *-ed*, which shows that something happened in the past. Have a volunteer come to the board and circle the *-ed* in the word *discovered*. Then have students use the words *discovered* and *discover* in sentences, highlighting that *discovered* will show that something happened in the past.
- Write the following words on the board: *laugh, listen, flush, and push*. Read each word aloud with students, and have them act out the words. Have volunteers add the suffix *-ed* to each word and use the past-tense form in a complete sentence.
- Read page 3 aloud as students follow along. Encourage them to locate words containing the suffix *-ed*. Have students circle the suffix *-ed* and underline each root word. Review students' findings as a class.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner to reread the rest of the story and circle all the suffix *-ed* words. Then have them underline the root word. Have students share their findings with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **suffix -ed worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.