

Around the World with Picture Books

Part I

A Literature Approach *for* Primary Grades

BY REA BERG

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SAMPLE

by
Rea Berg

with nature illustrations by
Christen Blechschmid

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WELCOME TO AROUND THE WORLD WITH PICTURE BOOKS

PART I: ASIA, ANTARCTICA, AUSTRALIA, & AFRICA

This study is designed to be a notebook approach to world cultures and geography for the primary student. Using beloved children's books, *Around the World with Picture Books* includes nature study, folktales, fables, art, poetry, history, and gentle Socratic questions to prompt discussion and discovery. Geographic elements include country maps and flags for students to cut out, paint, or color. Beautiful drawings of indigenous animals familiarize students with some remarkable creatures, cultivating respect and wonder for the natural world. As the student compiles these elements in a journal, he creates a memorable keepsake recording all he is learning.

Part One covers Asia, Antarctica, Australia, and Africa. In Asia, we explore China, Japan, Thailand, and India. In Africa, we visit Morocco, Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, and Ghana. Each country on the tour includes additional picture book suggestions as well as history and biography recommendations. Chapters conclude with a fun foray into the cuisine of the country with recipes, photos, and links to create a memorable evening experiencing unique culinary creations from around the world—a perfect time for students to relate to family and friends all that they have learned.

THE LITERATURE

All of the books chosen for this study are either classic works, award-winning books, or newer selections that have achieved some critical acclaim. As a primary-level study, the book notes presented here are simple and straightforward with comprehension questions designed to enhance and draw out some of the subtleties or nuances of the books. Most selections included in this guide can stand quite well on their own. The best literature tends to inspire the student's interest and curiosity to bubble up naturally and often notes are not necessary. If this is a child's first exposure to a diet rich in literature, a little prompting helps the student to begin to look, question, and observe more keenly, which is the ultimate purpose of the notes. Allow the literature to do what it does so well, with only gentle prompting to observe something unnoticed.

NATURE STUDIES

Children take to the study of nature with keen interest and delight. The animals featured in this guide were chosen for their appeal to primary students. Helpful websites and links are included for each animal, but studying them out of a resource may be useful. *Any Child's Encyclopedia of Animals* will be sufficient for this purpose, and many are offered online for a nominal price that will provide hours of pleasure. Researching a few remarkable facts about each of the creatures will help cultivate a child's sense of wonder at the marvels of the natural world; allow time to ponder the spectacles of perfect symmetry, function, and design. Even the tiniest creature reveals something marvelous about the mind of the Creator and should inspire awe and reverence. Have the student record in the notebook the things he finds most intriguing. Alternately, if the student is not yet writing, record them for him, or he could tape an audio description of the creature to share with family and friends.

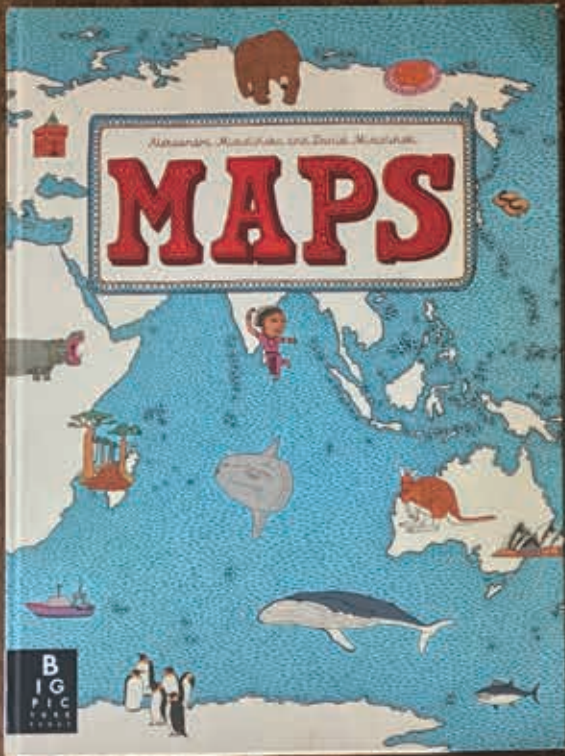
The beautiful drawings included at the back of the guide are necessarily detailed to be accurate representations of the animals. Enlarge them as needed for little hands. The images can be printed on a lightweight watercolor paper. If appropriate, a practice copy could be printed on standard paper and then proceed to the watercolor paper. The parent or teacher should also have her own copy to model the joy of taking time to paint these beautiful animals. These drawings are for the child's enjoyment so allow the student to be creative with them and relax any expectations.

One way to make this an enjoyable experience may be to purchase a set of Prismacolor watercolor pencils. Color the drawing as you would with any colored pencil, then apply a wet paintbrush, and voilà, you have an actual watercolor! Another fun way to experiment with watercolor is to take a wet brush and lightly dampen within the lines of the drawing. Then the child can apply a tiny bit of watercolor wherever the paper is wet. Observe how the colors move across the wet paper and mix with other colors. Have fun with these drawings. The photographs of the colored drawings provided in each nature section are merely guides and were completed by adults, so allow your student to be creative and inventive with the drawings. As he matures, so will his skill.

THE CONTINENT SONG

Open *Maps* and study the flyleaf. Point out the seven continents. Then turn to pages 4-5 of *Maps*. See how many continents the student can identify. Then teach the "Continent Song" which sings the names of the seven continents to the tune of "This Old Man, he plays one, he plays knick knack on my thumb." It goes:
North America, South America
Europe, Asia, Africa
Australia and Antarctica.

Have students sing this while pointing to the seven continents.



Let's Travel!

ITEMS YOU'LL NEED

Maps by Aleksandra Mizzielińska and Daniel Mizzieliński

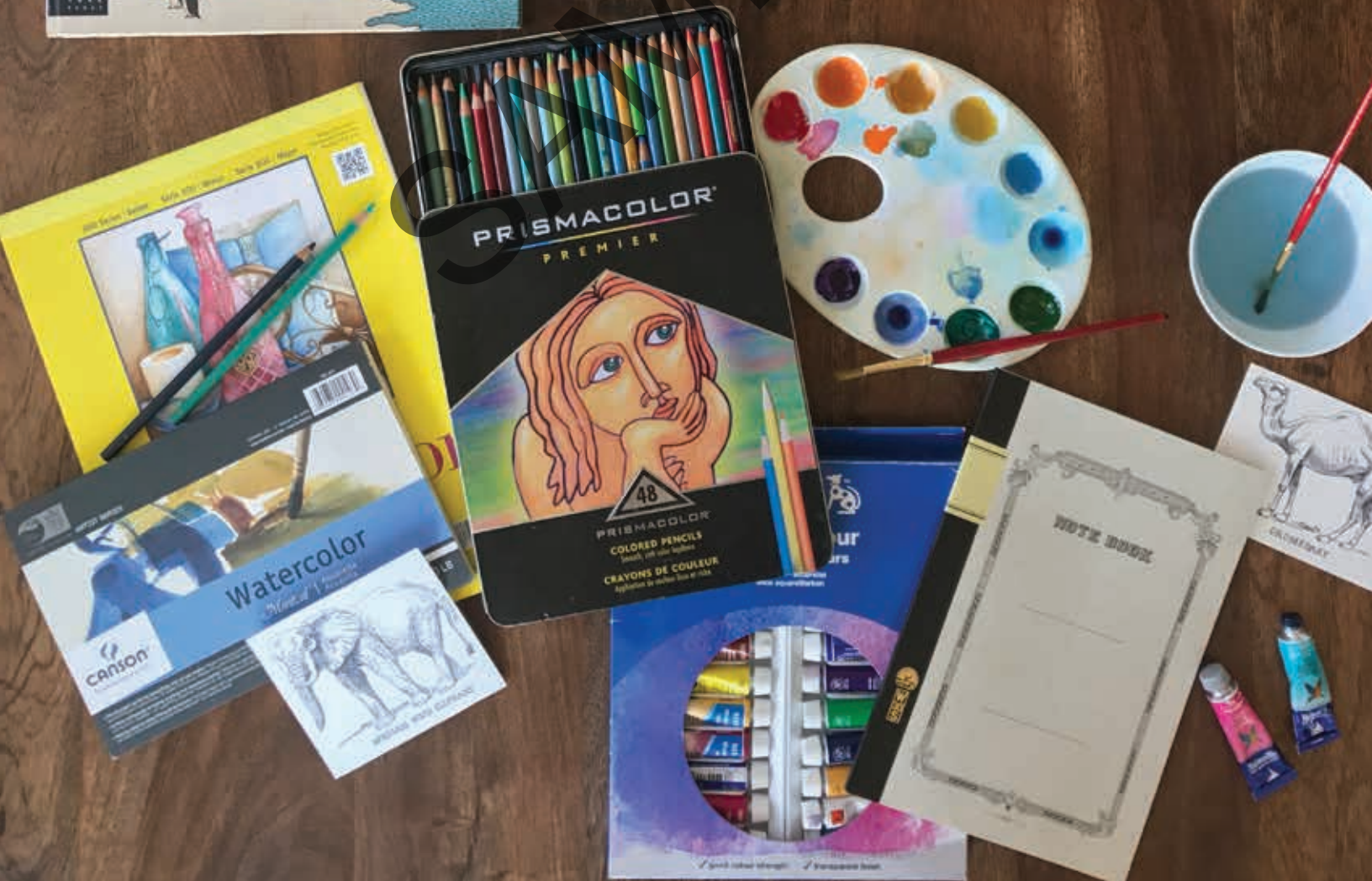
A set of Prismacolor Colored Pencils

A set of watercolors and a few nice brushes

Watercolor paper

Notebook

A spirit of adventure . . .



Using This Guide

This guide contains approximately 70 lessons and can be completed in either a single semester or over a full school year. Complete four lessons per week for a single semester schedule. A year-long study will require three lessons per week. The book pack that accompanies this guide is sufficient as a basic introduction to the four continents and eleven countries explored on this journey, but the study will be greatly enriched by taking advantage of the additional picture book recommendations in the library, history, and biography sections. If possible, plan to visit the library once a week (preferably before starting a new country), to collect as many titles as possible from these lists. Take advantage of inter-library loan systems when books are not available at your local library.

This guide is modeled after the Charlotte Mason methodology of four steps: read, reason, relate, and record. This method is designed to cultivate the student's ability to read, reason out what they have heard through discussion, relate that to other things they know, and finally to record key aspects of their discoveries. At the primary level, this is done gently through questions designed to help the student engage with what they have just heard read.

At the beginning of your around the world tour, have the student create a section in the notebook on China. Repeat this for each new country. Illustrate each section as desired. The Art Connection elements included in the back of the guide for each country, may be used to illustrate each new chapter if desired.

Remember that this course not only covers literature, but also, science (nature studies), geography, art, and history. With the broad coverage offered here in the areas of the humanities and social sciences, teachers should feel confident that a full curriculum for the primary student requires only the addition of math and language arts.

A sample day using *Around the World with Picture Books* might look like this: open *Maps* and explore the continent map from the inside front cover to locate the country to be studied, observing the features surrounding the country. Turn to pages 4–5 of *Maps* and find the continent again. Sing the “Continent Song.” Identify the oceans surrounding the country to be studied and then turn to the specific country page. Spend time observing, discussing, and exploring. Ask questions about the geography, the landmarks, the wildlife, the crops, or any feature that piques your student's interest. Allow the joy of exploration to lead where it will.

Read the literature selection assigned for the country you are studying. Use the question prompts to generate discussion. Then turn to the Nature Connection and select an animal to study. After finding some basic facts about that animal, have the student cut out, color, or paint the picture from the back of the guide, and then paste it in the notebook. Select a book from the Biography or History Connection in the guide and read and discuss. If desired, have the student draw a picture about something he has learned and paste it in the notebook.

Each day following the guide will be a little different. Be flexible, allow for spontaneity, and remember that this guide is just that—a guide, and is not meant to be sacrosanct, or followed rigidly. Feel free to ramble off the trail at times as you are inspired to explore, discover, and enjoy the journey of *Around the World with Picture Books*.

Notebooking

The notebooks that are included in the *Around the World with Picturebooks Pack* have been specially chosen for the quality they will bring to your student's journaling experience. Imported from Japan, the Tsubame Fools Note Book is made from acid-free paper that is beautifully smooth to the touch, does not bleed through, and is lined for either beginning writers or the more advanced student. With a sewn binding, this notebook lays perfectly flat wherever it is opened significantly facilitating all the writing and pasting work in the course. Students who are practicing beginning manuscript will use two lines to keep letters consistent. Skip a single line between lines. The images here provide a sample of how beginning writers will use the lines to accommodate early manuscript for primary students. It is suggested that the teacher write out an example of the passage or information to be recorded before having the student write it in his notebook.

The artwork, maps, and nature drawings should be pasted into the notebook with a very light film of rubber cement. This adhesive will ensure the pictures lie flat and don't peel up later. Make sure to have newspaper or scrap paper laid down to apply the cement. Demonstrate using rubber cement with your student, and always supervise the process.

Finally, make the note-booking part of the study a gratifying experience. Print out unusual items for the student to embellish and decorate his notebook. Keep the actual writing to a minimum and use oral reports as a vital part of the Charlotte Mason paradigm of relating—a skill as valuable as visual evidence of written work.



Books Used in the Study

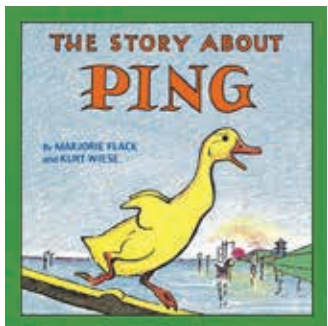


Maps by Aleksandra Mizielska and Daniel Mizielski

In a perfect world, all children would be introduced to world geography through the delightful work of Aleksandra Mizielska and Daniel Mizielski. Fortunate children will have an opportunity to revel in the beauty of the artist's whimsical and colorful depictions of the culture, foods, wildlife, plant life, architectural marvels, and key geographic features of the countries covered in this book.

Anno's China by Mitsumasa Anno

Allow Anno to be your guide to China. Through delightfully detailed watercolors, readers will explore this vast and varied land where calligraphers bestow good fortune, birds fish for men, and dragons dance. Stand with Anno on the Great Wall, visit bustling villages where the streets are waterways and everyone, even horses and bulls, travel by boat. Learn how flocks of ducks are herded on rivers and witness the discovery of thousands of clay soldiers guarding the ancient tomb of China's first emperor.

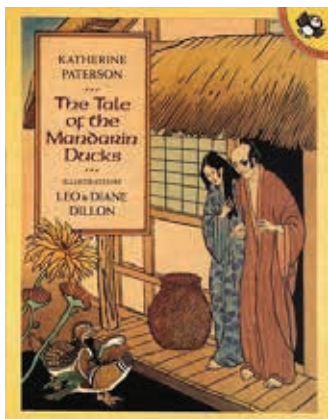
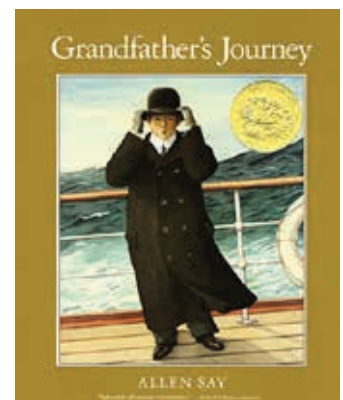


The Story about Ping by Marjorie Flack

No one can deny the appeal of the book's hero, Ping—the spirited little duck who lives on a boat on the Yangtze River. Children will relate to Ping's misadventures as he begins to explore the world around his home, only to become separated from his large duck family. Ping's quest to find his family sets the beloved duckling on a journey that is timeless in its appeal to children, and the adults who love them. Kurt Wiese's warm and poignant illustrations enhance the tender quality of this classic.

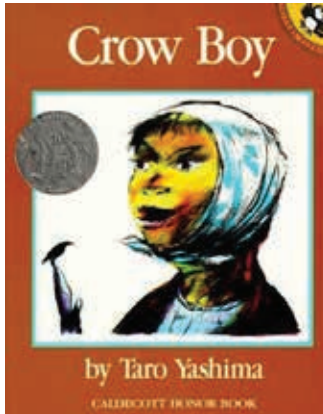
Grandfather's Journey by Allen Say

Winner of the 1994 Caldecott Medal, Allen Say's story of his beloved grandfather will evoke the emotions of all who have loved a country and then had to leave it. The longing for home when "home" is two different countries, half a world apart, is the theme of this lyrical, warm, and tender tale. The illustrations with their simple, yet deep beauty will prompt many discussions.



Tale of the Mandarin Ducks by Katherine Patterson

A beautiful mandarin duck is captured and caged by a greedy lord who wants to show off the bird's magnificent plumage. But the wild creature pines for his mate. When Yasuko, the kitchen maid, releases the bird against her lord's command, she and the one-eyed servant, Shozo, are sentenced to death. The grateful bird intends to return their kindness, but can he outsmart the cruel lord? This is a tale that teaches the dangers of vanity and pride, but also the rewards of kindness, compassion, courage, and loyalty.

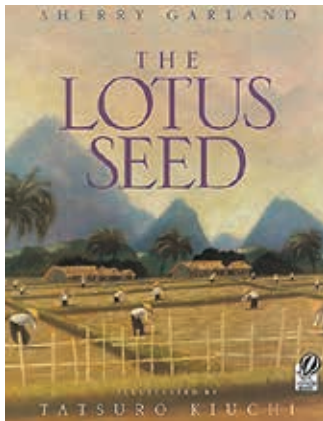
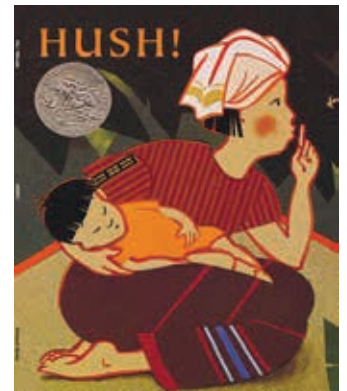


Crow Boy by Taro Yashima

A shy Japanese boy has difficulty adjusting to school and is misjudged by his classmates. Chibi has been an outcast since that frightening first day of school when he hid under the school-house. Afraid of the teacher and unable to make any friends, Chibi passes his free time alone—alone at study time, alone at playtime, always a “forlorn little tag-along.” But when Mr. Isobe arrives, the new teacher sees things in Chibi that no one else has ever noticed. This is a story about the power of kindness and patience, and being willing to see with our hearts and not just our eyes. This book won the Caldecott Honor in 1956.

Hush! A Thai Lullaby by Minfong Ho

Set in a remote Thai village, a mother hushes the animals of their jungle home, from lizard to water buffalo to elephant, trying to quiet noises that might wake her child. When the animals are finally silenced the mother falls asleep, but the baby is awake, with wide eyes and a smile. The text is rhythmic and lyrical and the rich illustrations earned this book the 1997 Caldecott Honor.



The Lotus Seed by Sherry Garland

The author relates her grandmother's story, who as a young girl witnessed the abdication of Vietnam's last emperor. Slipping inside the palace gardens, she takes a sacred lotus seed which then travels with her as she becomes an immigrant in a new and foreign place. The lotus seed becomes a symbol of her home, and of the ability to find beauty and belonging in a place far from one's country.

Once a Mouse... by Marcia Brown

This 1962 Caldecott medal winner is a re-telling of an Indian fable in which a hermit meditates about things big and small. The hermit knows the magic that can change a small mouse into a cat, a dog, and a majestic tiger. But when the former mouse gets puffed up in his power and size, he forgets his former humility and vulnerability. This is a fable that teaches gratitude, humility, and loyalty.

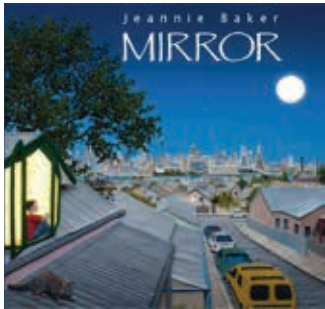
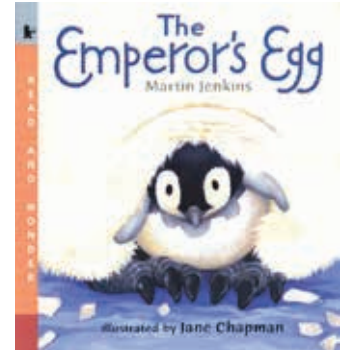


The Story of Little Babaji by Helen Bannerman

Helen Bannerman, who was born in Edinburgh in 1863, lived in India for thirty years. As a gift for her two little girls, she wrote and illustrated *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (1899), a fable that clearly takes place in India (with its tigers and “ghi,” or melted butter), even though the names she gave her characters belie that setting. This version has been revised to more accurately reflect a young Indian boy and his family. Babaji outwits the vain tigers through his quick thinking and common sense.

The Emperor's Egg by Martin Jenkins

The devotion of the male Emperor penguin to the raising of its young is a story worthy of awe. For two entire months, without any food, the male Emperor nestles the fragile egg on his feet, tucked securely into his rich fur. The temperatures are brutal, and only by strategic care and attention will the precious chick survive to hatch. The text and illustrations of this book work well to introduce this remarkable feat to young children.

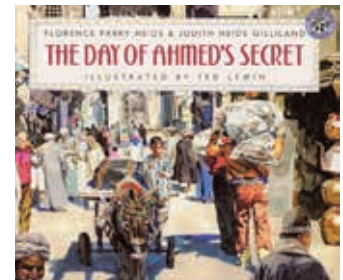


Mirror by Jeannie Baker

This book, set in both Morocco and Australia, depicts the everyday lives of two boys growing up in distinctly different cultures half way around the globe from one another. Though the foods they eat differ, the ways they shop differ, their families differ, yet in many ways the boys are similar. This book is used as the key picture book for both Australia and Morocco.

The Day of Ahmed's Secret by Florence Parry Heide

Young Ahmed is a butagaz boy, delivering butane gas to customers all over the bustling, noisy, crowded, colorful city of Cairo. He's a young boy, perhaps twelve years old, and despite working a difficult job, he has joy because he has a secret. All day long, as he maneuvers his donkey cart through streets crowded with cars and camels, down alleys filled with merchants' stalls, and past buildings a thousand years old, Ahmed takes pride in his secret. It is a secret that will bring honor and delight to his family.

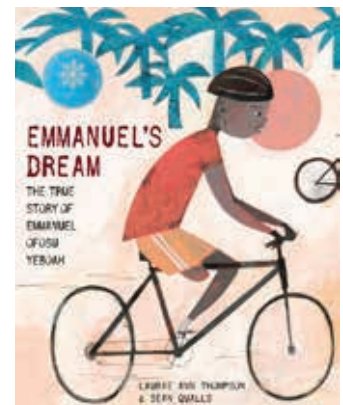


Wangari Maathai: The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees by Frank Prévot

The British colonists, in their efforts to pursue productive cash crops, deforested Kenya so completely that Kenya's native way of life was threatened and desperate poverty was the result. Wangari Maathia saw the devastation and determined to do something about it. After pursuing an education abroad, Wangari returned to her country equipped to help rebuild and replant. Over a period of 30 years, she and her followers were responsible for planting 30 million trees, restoring wildlife, native species, and prosperity to her people. For her dedication and service she was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. This is her story, beautifully told and illustrated for the young reader.

Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah by Laurie Ann Thompson

The true story of a very determined Ghanaian boy who was born with one healthy leg and one misshapen leg. For his culture and community, his kind of handicap was seen by many as a sign of a curse, and these children were often left to die. But Emmanuel's mother was a woman of faith, and she named her boy, "Emmanuel—God is with us." Emmanuel went on to become a blessing, not only to his mother and siblings, but to his entire country. This is Emmanuel's remarkable and heroic story.





1. LET'S VISIT CHINA!

LESSON 1

Open *Maps* by Aleksandra Mizelińska and Daniel Mizeliński and study the continent of Asia on pages 42-43. Note the many countries that make up Asia. Compare the size of China and Russia. Name some of the many countries that border China. Turn to pages 48-49 of *Maps*, explore the features of China, and note the details that children find intriguing. Point out key geographic features including the Yellow River, the Yangtze, Xi River, the Gobi Desert, the Himalayas, Mount Everest, the Limestone Hills of Guilin, and the terraced rice fields.

Note man-made landmarks such as the Great Wall, the Terracotta Army, the Leshan Giant Buddha, the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, the Potala Palace, the Forbidden City (Imperial Palace), the Mukden Palace and the remarkable skyscrapers of Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Guangzhou. As the student shows interest, look up the sites that pique his curiosity and explore the information.

LESSON 2

Introduce *Anno's China* by Mitsumasa Anno. From the back of the book, read the Afterword, Cover, and Frontispiece notes. The author was inspired by Zhang Zeduan's mural *Along the River During the Qingming Festival*. This masterpiece from the 12th century depicts everyday life during the Song dynasty in intimate detail and gives a true sense of what the country was like around 900 years ago.

At the World Expo in 2010, the original painting was remade into a 3D animated version about 30 times the size of the original scroll. You can enjoy this here.¹ At 12 minutes long, it is well worth taking the time to view as it is a marvel of modern technology bringing an ancient work of art to life. It is no wonder that Zeduan's work is considered the Chinese *Mona Lisa*.

1. On YouTube look for *Zhang Zeduan: A Moving Masterpiece: The Song Dynasty in Living Art*.

PASSPORT TO CHINA!

Before exploring *Anno's China*, study the images at right. Each of these images presents something the artist has included in the book. See how many of them are familiar and which pique the student's interest. Research and explore those that do. Starting at the top from left to right the images are as follows:

(1) Cormorant fishing (2) Herding ducks on a rice paddy (3) A stone arch bridge (4) The Peking Opera (5) Guilan (6) Wuzhen (7) Chinese New Year Dragon dance (8) Traditional Miao wedding (9) The Terracotta Army (10) Mogao Caves (11) Loess Plateau before reforestation (12) Loess Plateau after reforestation (13) The Great Wall.





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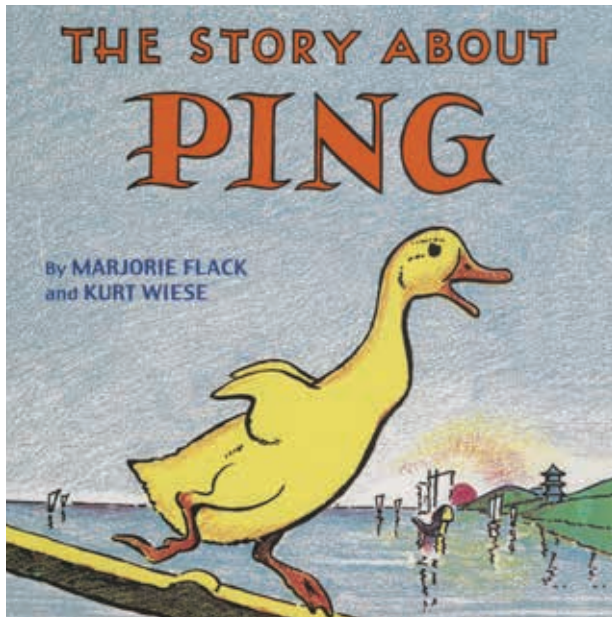
11



12



13



LESSON 3

From *Maps* page 48–49, locate the fisherman at the bottom center. He is fishing in a unique way. What is it? This ancient way of fishing using cormorants trains the birds to fish, but not swallow the fish.

Explore scenes 1–8 of *Anno's China*. Be sure to read the description of each scene at the back of the book. Scene 1 features two types of fishermen—describe both kinds. From scene 2 refer back to *Maps*, and locate both the Yellow River and the Yangtze. The Chinese name for the Yangtze River is Chang Jiang, and it is the longest river in Asia and the third longest in the world.

In scene 8 an arch bridge is being constructed while a boat is about to crash into the pontoon footbridge downstream. Anno designed this humorous scene to mimic the most well-known scene in *Along the River During the Qingming Festival*. The pontoon bridge is a clever invention which has been used since ancient times. Small floating boats are used to buoy wooden planks so that men and cargo can pass over rivers.

LESSON 4

Read *The Story About Ping* by Marjorie Flack. Ping and his duck relations are herded on the river in a manner similar to how Westerners herd cattle or sheep in pastures—only the duck's pasture is a river! Why is the river a good place to herd ducks? The ducks are trained to come when called by their owner.

One reason the Chinese raise ducks is to make a popular dish called Pidan Egg or Century Egg. If interested, look up this dish. It is a duck egg that is preserved in a unique way and can be purchased at Asian markets.

See if students recognize the now familiar scene of fishing using cormorants on pages 12–13. How does the boy in the river stay afloat? Why is the boy sad after catching Ping? What does he do about it? How does Ping know (on page 25) that the sun is about to set? How is the boy kind to Ping? Why is Ping happy at the end of the book?