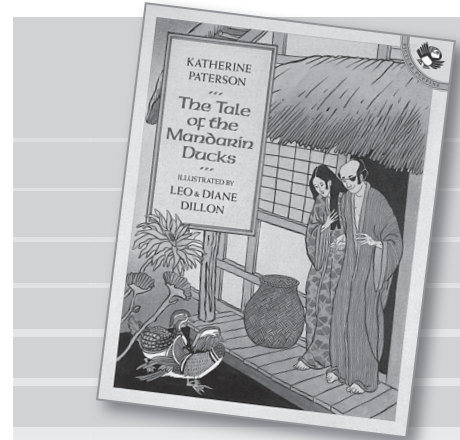


The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks

Synopsis In this Japanese folktale, a greedy lord captures a beautiful, wild drake and places it in a cage. But when the drake's health fails, the lord refuses to release it. Through the kindness of a kitchen maid and a one-eyed samurai, the drake is freed and returns to his mate. In return for this kindness, the ducks save the lives of the maid and samurai.



Author: Katherine Paterson

Genre: Fiction/Folktales

Guided Reading Level: P

TEKS: 3.1.A.v, 3.4.A, 3.4.B,
3.5.A, 3.8.A, 3.22, 3.31

Introduction: Explore Folktales

Explain to students that this is a Japanese folktale. *Folktales are stories that have been told for many years and passed down among generations. Many are common to a certain culture, such as this one that is told in Japan.*

The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks is a folktale with a lesson. As you read this book, pay attention to what happens and why so you can identify the lesson of the story. The setting is ancient Japan. The Emperor is the most powerful. There are many lords who are also powerful but have to answer to the Emperor, and there are many servants and soldiers who are powerless. One character in this story is Shozo, a one-eyed former samurai. The samurai were well-respected soldiers, but after Shozo lost his eye in battle, he could no longer be a samurai.

Vocabulary

Tier Two: cautious, delicacies, determined, haul, impenetrable, luster, mischief, relegated

Tier Three: district, drake, emperor, plumage, tatami

Word Work

3.22 Oral and Written Conventions/Conventions. Students understand the function of and use the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity.

Introduce vocabulary in context as it appears within the book before or during reading. Clarify meanings by asking questions: *If I was cautious as I walked through the woods, would I move slowly and carefully, or would I race along as fast as I could? If I was eating delicacies, would I spit them out and say, "Yuck!" or would I lick my lips and say, "Yum!" Which is an example of mischief: filling a sugar bowl with salt on purpose to trick someone or telling a funny riddle? Provide synonyms for determined, such as chose, decided, mind made up, to help students with its meaning.*

Provide synonyms for *district*, such as *area, section, part, place*. Compare *emperor* to *king*, and have students compare characteristics of a good emperor to those of a bad emperor.

English Language Support

Offer realia, gestures, or photos to support the introduction of the new vocabulary. Show a photo of a drake and describe the colors and textures of its plumage. Carry a chair or other large object across the room to demonstrate *haul*. Knock on a desk or wall as you say, *I cannot put my hand through it. It is impenetrable*. Move a few students to a corner of the room. Say, *I have relegated these students to this corner of the room*. Show a photo of a tatami mat.

Understanding the Text

Literal: Why doesn't Shozo defend himself when the lord falsely accuses him of freeing the drake? Refer to the book to find the answer. (Honesty is very important to Shozo. He had thought of freeing the drake many times, so he felt that was the same as having actually done it.)

Interpretive: Who really freed Shozo and Yasuko? Explain how you know. (the mandarin ducks. The messengers are described as having beautiful clothes, just like the beautiful plumage of the ducks, and the ducks are there at the end when the messengers have disappeared.)

Applied: Discuss the lesson of this folktale. What were the end results of Shozo's and Yasuko's kindnesses? (They fell in love. They were freed from the lord's power. They lived happily ever after.) What did the lord get for his greediness? (nothing. He lost the drake, his maid, and his chief steward.)

Phonics and Word Recognition

3.1.A.v Decode multisyllabic words in context and independent of context by applying common spelling patterns including: Using knowledge of derivational affixes (e.g., -de, -ful, -able)

3.4.A Identify the meaning of common prefixes (e.g., in-, dis-) and suffixes (e.g., -full, -less), and know how they change the meaning of roots.

List adverbs from the book with the *-ly* ending: *exactly, secretly, gracefully, gently, quickly, ghostly, radiantly*. Discuss the *-ly* suffix and its meaning ("in a certain way" or "like"). *An adverb describes a verb. It tells how an action happened or how it was done.* Point out that each base word's pronunciation remains the same, but the sound /lee/ is added at the end.

Fluency

3.4.B Use context to determine the relevant meaning of unfamiliar words or distinguish among multiple meaning words and homographs.

Have students turn to the pages describing the couple's journey through the woods and take turns reading sentences from the passage. Say, *This story contains words that may be difficult to pronounce and understand. Read each sentence silently the first time, imagining how each word should sound aloud. Then read the sentence a second time aloud.* Monitor students' understanding and pronunciation of difficult words, such as *retainers, impatient, compassion, cruelty, and rustling*, and model as necessary. Afterward, model reading the same passage aloud, and have students note how your reading changes between the narrative and the dialogue. Point out the tone you use to convey the tension and scariness of being lost in the dark woods. Then read the final page of the book, and have students identify the difference in your tone as you read about the couple living happily ever after.

Reading Literature

3.5.A Paraphrase the themes and supporting details of fables, legends, myths, or stories.

3.8.A Sequence and summarize the plot's main events and explain their influence on future events.

On a large sheet of paper, write *Characters, Setting, Plot*. Have students discuss each story element, and record their responses on the paper. Discuss the lesson of *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks*, and have students compare this folktale to others they are familiar with.

Writing

3.31 Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate in teacher and student-led discussions by posing and answering questions with appropriate detail and by providing suggestions that build upon the ideas of others.

Have students work in pairs. Say, *A fable usually has a lesson, or moral, that is clearly stated at the end. For example, the story of The Tortoise and the Hare has the moral: "Slow and steady wins the race." What moral could you write for The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks?* Have pairs write morals for the story and then share.