

ChinaLink Lesson
NewsDepth, December 4, 2008
Classroom Activities
Additional Resources



“With China emerging as an economic superpower, some educators believe that learning Chinese -- the most widely spoken language in the world -- will give students an edge.” www.npr.org

Overview:

More and more people are trying to learn about the planet’s most populated nation – China. Elementary students at St. Jude’s in Elyria are certainly no exception, as they are hard at work learning Mandarin, China’s predominant language that’s spoken by 885 million people. St. Jude is one of several private schools taking part in a program called ChinaLink. The organization saw how many public schools were beginning to offer Mandarin and created this program. Program creators are saying “ the best thing is that there is such enthusiasm for learning about a country that up to this point the people in the US have not known much about.” In our activities today, students will be given a very basic introduction to Mandarin.

Grade Level: 6-7

Subject Matter: Social studies

Standards: Peoples in Societies: Benchmark C

Classroom Activities

1. Activity #1 **Power of Music** (15 – 20 minutes)

- What learning method were the students in the video using to help them learn Mandarin? Singing songs. Can any of you remember any of the Nursery rhymes, children’s play songs or TV jingles you chanted at a very early age when you were learning to talk? Ask your parents for help if you can’t remember. Any volunteers to sing one.
- Why does singing songs in Chinese help students remember the words? Encourage them to bring up their own learning process and the power that music had on that.
- Visit <http://www.chinese4kids.net/song.php> and listen to a couple of the children’s songs and have the students look at the words and the Chinese characters.
- Why is Chinese/Mandarin such a challenging language to learn?
- Compare the number of characters (English 26, Chinese 47,000 characters)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandarin_\(linguistics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandarin_(linguistics)) more info on Mandarin

2. Activity #2 **What's Your Name?** (5-10 minutes)
 - A Chinese name is mainly translated by the pronunciation of the name in other languages.
 - Visit <http://www.chinese4kids.net/name.php> for a sampling of some English names translated and illustrated in Chinese. These are names gathered from their site's Chinese club. See how many of your students can find their names.

3. Activity #3 **Count to 10 in Mandarin!** (flexible time period depending on how many numbers you want the students to learn.)
 - Students will enjoy the opportunity to learn a little Mandarin and counting is a good place to start. There are two web sources for this with the English characters, the Mandarin Characters, and sound bytes for the students to hear. You may also use Handout# 1 as a reference for the students.
 - <http://chinesetutorials.com/2008/01/02/level-one-lesson-one-numbers-1-to-5-2/> Mandarin Tutorial that teaches them numbers 1 thru 5.
 - http://www.askasia.org/kids/language_song_activities/chinese_numbers/one-new.php Ask Asia.org that teaches them numbers 1 thru 12

4. Activity #4 **A Few Simple Phrases for Starters** (again a flexible time frame)
 - Learning Mandarin, as you have discovered, is certainly a challenging task and one that takes many years, but as was stated on NPR's website; *"With China emerging as an economic superpower, some educators believe that learning Chinese -- the most widely spoken language in the world -- will give students an edge."*
 - Provide students with some opportunities to learn just a few phrases and encourage them to go home and share what they have learned with their family.
 - Here are some resources. You and the students can choose a category to learn a few simple and useful phrases (family, greetings, etc)
 - <http://chinesetutorials.com/tag/standard-mandarin/>
 - <http://chinesetutorials.com/lessons/>
 - <http://www.chinese4kids.net/> Lots of simple lessons
 - http://edu.ocac.gov.tw/lang/basic/ch_reader/content.htm Children's Chinese reader. This is an interactive site and is geared towards younger children, but it is a fun site to visit for some simple Mandarin
 - <http://www.csulb.edu/~txie/ccol/content.htm> Conversational Mandarin Chinese online

Additional Resources

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5191835> Teaching Mandarin for a Chinese Century: article about middle school students and other students learning Chinese. Has reference to related stories.

<http://www.chinese4kids.net/lesson.php> Chinese 4 Kids

<http://chinalinks.osu.edu/c-links1.htm#ch-cult> Marjorie Chan's Chinalinks

<http://trc.ucdavis.edu/msiacob/ChinaLinks.htm>

<http://www.askasia.org/kids/> Great interactive site for kids : maps, history, people language.

Counting 1 to 10 in Mandarin

Handout #1

1 一

yi1 [eee-]

2 二

er4 [arr\]

3 三

san1 [sahn-]

4 四

si4 [ssuh\] - like a snake with 'uh'

5 五

wu3 [wooV] not to be confused with wo [woaa] meaning I or me.

6 六

liu4 [liou\]

7 七

qi1 [chi-]

8 八

ba1 [bah-]

9 九

jiu3 [jeou]

10 十

shi2 [ser - like four, but use a slight 'r' sound]

