

Gurpreet Gill
Contemporary China
Spring 2024

Curriculum Project – Lesson Plan

In Kindergarten we learn about different cultures and traditions, and also focus on different holidays celebrated around the world. Students love learning about cultures and traditions different to their own, and exposing them to various new cultures and languages is a great way to engage them in learning about the world we live in. I created a unit plan to integrate teaching about Chinese culture and the holiday of Lunar New Year into our Kindergarten social studies curriculum. These lessons will integrate social studies, art, and literacy to engage students. Throughout these lessons, the goal is to keep the activities interactive, hands-on, and age-appropriate while encouraging curiosity, exploration, and appreciation for Chinese history and culture in a fun and inclusive environment.

Standards:

K.6: Students understand that history relates to events, people, and places of other times.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.6:

Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

Day 1: Introduce China

Show students where China is on the map. Talk about Asia, China, and its geography.

The Great Wall of China:

Show pictures and/or videos of the Great Wall and explain its significance.

Let them participate in building a mini Great Wall using blocks or cardboard.

Discuss the purpose of the wall and its historical importance in protecting China from invaders.

Traditional Chinese Clothing:

Show pictures of traditional Chinese clothing like the qipao (cheongsam) for girls and the changshan for boys.

Discuss the significance of clothing in Chinese culture and its connection to festivals or special occasions.

Chinese Folktales:

Share age-appropriate Chinese folktales such as "The Story of the Moon Festival" or "The Legend of the Chinese Zodiac."

Act out the stories through simple role-play or puppet shows.

Encourage discussions about the moral lessons or themes of the stories

Day 2: Chinese Art and Festivals

Review the topics covered yesterday to activate students' prior knowledge

Discuss and show Chinese Art

Chinese Calligraphy and Brush Painting:

Provide basic materials like watercolors, brushes, and thick paper.

Teach them simple Chinese characters such as "人" (person) or "山" (mountain) and guide them in practicing basic brush strokes.

Let them create their own brush paintings inspired by nature or traditional Chinese motifs.

Exploring Chinese Festivals:

Highlight other important Chinese festivals like the Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, or Mid-Autumn Festival.

Engage them in related activities such as making lanterns, crafting dragon boats, or enjoying mooncakes.

Explain the cultural significance and traditions associated with each festival.

Music and Dance:

Play traditional Chinese music such as guzheng or erhu melodies.

Teach them simple dance moves inspired by traditional Chinese dance styles like the ribbon dance or the lion dance.

Encourage them to create their own dance routines using scarves or ribbons.

Day 3: Introduction to Lunar New Year

Objective: Introduce kindergarteners to the concept of Lunar New Year, its significance, and cultural traditions.

Start the lesson with a brief discussion about different cultural celebrations and festivals.

Introduce the concept of Lunar New Year, explaining that it's celebrated by many East Asian communities around the world.

Discuss basic Mandarin greetings like "Xin Nian Kuai Le" (Happy New Year)

Story Time:

Read a story about Lunar New Year, such as "Bringing in the New Year" by Grace Lin or "Sam and the Lucky Money" by Karen Chinn.

After reading, discuss key elements of the story, such as family gatherings, special foods, and traditions like giving red envelopes.

Art Activity:

Engage students in creating Lunar New Year decorations, such as paper lanterns, paper dragons, or red paper cutouts of zodiac animals. Encourage students to use bright colors and traditional symbols.

Day 4: Learning About Zodiac Animals

Objective: Teach kindergarteners about the Chinese zodiac animals and their significance in Lunar New Year celebrations.

Review what students learned about Lunar New Year from the previous day.

Introduce the Chinese zodiac and its 12 animal signs.

Story Time:

Read a story about the Chinese zodiac, such as "The Great Race: The Story of the Chinese Zodiac" by Dawn Casey. Discuss each zodiac animal and its characteristics.

Art Activity:

Have students create their own zodiac animal masks or puppets using paper plates or craft sticks. Provide materials for students to decorate their masks with colors and features representing their chosen zodiac animal.

Day 5: Exploring Traditions and Celebrations

Objective: Explore traditional Lunar New Year customs and encourage creativity through art and literacy activities.

Discuss different Lunar New Year traditions, such as cleaning the house, setting off firecrackers, and watching dragon dances. Ask students if they have any family traditions for celebrating holidays.

Story Time:

Read a story about a specific Lunar New Year tradition, such as "Dragon Dance: A Chinese New Year Lift-the-Flap Book" by Joan Holub. After reading, encourage students to share their thoughts and questions about the story.

Art Activity:

Invite students to create their own dragon puppets or masks using paper, craft sticks, and other materials. Encourage students to use their imagination to design their dragons, incorporating elements from the stories they've heard.

Reflection and Assessment:

Recap what students have learned about Lunar New Year over the past few days.

Encourage students to share their favorite parts of the lessons and what they enjoyed learning about the most.

Provide an opportunity for students to showcase their artwork with parents and other classes in the grade level, and share what they have learned about Lunar New Year.