



Close reading plan

The Empty Pot by Demi

Created by Sarah Worley, 2014 Connecticut Dream Team teacher

What makes this text complex?			
Text and Author	<i>The Empty Pot</i> By Demi	Where to Access Text	http://www.amazon.com/The-Empty-Pot-Owlet-Book/dp/0805049002
Text Description			
When the Chinese emperor proclaims that his successor will be the child who grows the most beautiful flowers from the seeds the emperor distributes, Ping is overjoyed. Like the emperor, he loves flowers and anything he plants bursts into bloom. But the emperor's seed will not grow, despite months of loving care. After a year, Ping goes before the emperor carrying only his empty pot. This Chinese folktale has beautiful illustrations that directly support the text.			
Quantitative			
Lexile and Grade Level	630 Grade K-3	Text Length	30 pages with illustrations
Qualitative			
Meaning/Central Ideas		Text Structure/Organization	
The text supports that it is always valuable to tell the truth as the truth provides a reward. The little boy in the text shows the importance of always trying your hardest and being determined, never giving up?		This story is a Chinese folktale that is well-sequenced.	
Prior Knowledge Demands		Language Features	
Students will need to understand that China is another country with a distinct culture. This culture includes differences in their clothing and lifestyle. Students will also need to understand that an emperor is the leader of the country.		Domain-specific words related to China.	
Vocabulary			
Tier Two Words (General academic vocabulary)		Tier Three Words (Domain-specific words)	
<i>"Words that are far more likely to appear in written texts than in speech. [They] often represent subtle or precise ways to say relatively simple things—saunter instead of walk, for example." (CCSS ELA Appendix A)</i>		<i>"[Tier Three words]...are specific to a domain or field of study (lava, carburetor, legislature, circumference, aorta) and key to understanding a new concept within a text." (CCSS ELA Appendix A)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tended • Swarmed • Perfume • Issued • Throne • Bloom • Blossom • Sprout • Transferred • Eagerly • Clever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overheard • Shame • Punished • Exclaimed • Admire • Courage • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proclamation • Palace • Succeed • China • Kingdom • Emperor • Successor • 	

Potential Reader/Task Challenges

This folktale has challenging vocabulary, so students will need to have some understanding of traditional literature as well as some background knowledge about China.

Text-dependent questions

Question	Standard alignment	Page of this document
Why was Ping so sure he could grow the most beautiful flower?	RL.2.7	5
Why was the Emperor frowning when he saw the flowers?	RL.2.1	8
How did Ping show determination throughout the year?	RL.2.7	11
The author referred to Ping's friend as clever. In this book does that trait help this character why or why not?	RL.2.3	14
At the end of the book the author states, "I admire Ping's great courage to appear before me with the empty truth." What does the author mean by this?	RL.2.2	17

Target Standards

- RL.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- RL.2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
- RL.2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- RL.2.7 Use information gained from illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

Question 1

Question 1	
Question #1	Why was Ping so sure he could grow the most beautiful flower? Use evidence from the book to support your answer.
Standard(s) covered:	RL.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
Example response that meets standard	
Look-fors	
Ping was sure he could grow the most beautiful flower because in the beginning of the book it says that Ping loved flowers and anything he planted burst into bloom, as if by magic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses key details from the story to describe the character and an event
If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:	
Objective	In this lesson you will learn how to answer a question by locating key details in the text.
Prior knowledge to review	RL.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction
1) Find the part in the text that contains key words stated in the question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hmm...the question asks why Ping was sure he could grow the most beautiful flower. • Let's look for the part where the Emperor gives Ping the seed and then look back to see if I can find another place where it shows Ping growing beautiful flowers. •

2) Ask yourself, "what text and illustrations describe the keywords in the question."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next, I am going to look for illustrations or pictures in the text that show me Ping with his flowers. • When I come to a page that shows Ping with flowers I am going to STOP! (turn pages of the text scanning the illustrations) • STOP! I see Ping on a ladder tending to the flowering tree on page 1. • Hmm...How does this show me that Ping is confident? Let me read the words on the page. (reread page 1) • It says here that Ping loved flowers and that anything he planted burst into bloom.
3) Construct a response using evidence from the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now that I went back in to the text I was able to look for illustrations and text that showed Ping confident about flowers. • The text states that the flowers burst into bloom and burst means to open suddenly. • After looking at the illustrations and rereading the text, I am going to ask myself "why was Ping so sure that he could grow the most beautiful flower?" (Ping's flowers burst into bloom when he plants them, so he thinks his flower will be so beautiful because all his other flowers are and he is confident.)

Extension and practice

- Students will complete a graphic organizer to support finding the key details in the text, including the page they find the answer as well as the answer in a complete sentence.
- Students will respond to Hansel and Gretel, why did Hansel think they were in trouble when the bread crumbs were gone?
- Students can answer a question from Cinderella, why did Cinderella think that she couldn't go to the ball?

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to (name type of text and skill/standard

See more examples of how to teach (name skill and standard)

Objective: In this lesson you will learn how to answer a question by locating key details in the text.

1. Step 1: Find the part in the text that contains key words stated in the question.
2. Step 2: Ask yourself, "What text or illustrations describe the keywords in the question?"
3. Step 3: Construct a response using evidence from the text.

<http://ctdreamteam.learnzillion.com/lessons/2110-understand-a-characters-personality-traits>

Question 2

Question 2	
Question #2	Why was the Emperor frowning when he saw the flowers?
Standard(s) covered:	RL.2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
Example response that meets standard	
Look-fors	
<p><i>“The Emperor was frowning when he saw the flowers because he knew that the children cheated. He knew they cheated because the flowers were cooked and it was impossible for them to grow.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student mentions the cooked seeds and the impossible chance of them growing.
If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:	
Objective	In this lesson you will learn how to describe how a character responds to an event by reading on to gather more information
Prior knowledge to review	RL.1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction
1) Locate the part of the text that contains keywords stated in the question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hmm...I wonder which words I should be looking for in the text? • The question asks me why the Emperor is frowning. I should look for the part of the text that states the Emperor is frowning. • Now, I am going to reread this section of the text. • I see that he is looking at the beautiful flowers and frowning.

<p>2) Ask yourself, "How will reading on to clarify the meaning of the text?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The part does not tell me here why the Emperor is frowning, one thing that readers do is that they read on for further information, so I am going to read on to see if the text gives me more information. • Here it is! I see on page 29, that the Emperor states that it was impossible for the seeds to grow because they were cooked. • Look here, it also says that it was impossible for any of them to grow, so the Emperor must be confused as to how the children brought flowers when the seeds couldn't grow. • So this must mean the children lied about trying their best, and I know that it is not good to lie. • I am going to ask myself, "How does this key detail connect to the question?" • Hmm...Maybe this is why the emperor is frowning, he does not like that they lied.
<p>3) Record the answer to your question referencing key details in the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well, if the seeds were cooked and it was impossible for them to grow, how did the children grow beautiful flowers? • If I was the Emperor I would not be happy to see any beautiful flowers if I knew that it was impossible for the seeds to grow. • Maybe the children did not use the seeds that the Emperor gave them, because those were cooked. • I am going to record my answer, using the key details that I found in the text. • The Emperor was frowning because he knew the children cheated and didn't use his flowers because all the other children presented him with beautiful flowers.

Extension and practice

- Conduct a science experiment comparing and contrasting the growing of cooked vs. uncooked seeds. Explain how you discovered it was impossible for the seeds to grow.
- Read on throughout the story to find another area that supports that the children could have cheated when growing their seeds. (pg. 21 where it states "Ping's clever friend ran by, holding a great big plant...")
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What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to (name type of text and skill/standard)

See more examples of how to teach (name skill and standard)

Objective: (Lesson objective goes here)

1. Locate the part of the text that contains keywords stated in the question.
2. Ask yourself, "How will reading on to clarify the meaning of the text?"
3. Record the answer to your question referencing key details in the text.

<https://ctdreamteam.learnzillion.com/lessons/2183-describe-how-characters-respond-to-events-in-a-story>

Question 3

Question #3	How did Ping show determination throughout the year?	
Standard(s) covered:	RL.2.7 Use information gained from illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.	
	Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
	<p>(the students should include at least one piece of evidence from the text and one from the illustrations)</p> <p>"In the text the author shares that Ping showed determination and patience throughout the year by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -watering his seed every day, -transferring the seed into a bigger pot with rich black soil, -checking on the seed every day -waiting every day even when nothing happened <p>The illustrations showed that even though:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it was very windy in the fall or -very cold and snowy in the winter Ping still went to check on his seed each day." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of illustrations • Use of direct quotes from the text
If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:		
Objective	In this lesson you will learn how to understand the characters more deeply by analyzing information from the text and illustrations.	
Prior knowledge to review	RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.	
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction	
1) Locate the section of the text that has to do with the question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hmm...I am going to find the section of the text where Ping receives the seeds (because that is the beginning of the year that is referred to in the story). • Now, I am going to find the section where he presents the empty pot to the Emperor. • I am going to reread this section of the text. • I am going to mark with Post-It notes the sections of the text that show determination. 	

<p>2) Ask yourself, "What does this section of the text tell me?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After rereading this section, it says on page 13, "Day after day passed, but nothing grew in his pot." • This shows me that it took a very long time because it says day after day and he never gave up. • Let me see how the illustrations help me better understand how long it took and how Ping felt.
<p>2) Ask yourself, "What do the illustrations show me?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now, I am going to refer back to this section and record on Post-It notes what I see in the illustrations. • Here, on page 13 the illustration shows Ping checking on his seed at night, since the moon was in the sky. • I am going to mark this page with the illustration so I can come back to it if I need to.
<p>3) Record the answer to your question referencing the characters actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Well, Ping just didn't give up throughout this section, he went out late at night even when he probably was tired to check on his seed. This shows me that he is really determined." • I am going to record my answer, using some of the parts that I marked with my Post-It notes. • I am going to make sure that I include some information from the text and some from the illustrations in the same answer. The information that I now have from the text and illustrations show that Ping showed determination throughout the year by checking on the seed every day and night and by not giving up and transferring the seed into a new pot.

Extension and practice

- Find another example of how Ping showed determination from the text and the illustration.
- Compare and contrast other characters that showed determination.
- Make a web to brainstorm all of the ways that Ping showed determination throughout the year.

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to (name type of text and skill/standard)

See more examples of how to teach (name skill and standard)

Objective: In this lesson you will learn how to understand the characters more by analyzing information from the text and illustrations.

1. Locate the section of the text that has to do with the question.
2. Ask myself, "What do the illustrations tell me?"
3. Record the answer to your question referencing the characters actions.

<https://ctdreamteam.learnzillion.com/lessons/2087-analyze-the-effect-of-setting-on-a-story>

Question 4

Question #4	The author referred to Ping's friend as clever. In this book does that trait help this character why or why not?	
Standard(s) covered:	RL.2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.	
	Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
	<p>In this book, being clever does not help this character because the seeds were cooked and were unable to grow. The children thought they were being clever by switching the seeds, but that is not being honest. The Emperor needs to be able to trust his successor and the other children cheated to bring the Emperor the most beautiful flower.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The answer should include how the friend was dishonest or cheated.

If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:

Objective	In this lesson you will learn how a character responds to an event by rereading key details.
Prior knowledge to review	RL.1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction
1) Locate the section of the text that contains key words from the question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hmm..let me find the section of the text where the author refers to Ping's friend as "clever." • Here it is, it says that his friend is clever. I know that being clever means that you can be sneaky or smart. • Hmm... being sneaky isn't really a good trait to have, but I think being smart is a good trait to have. • Now, I am going to find the section where the children show the Emperor the beautiful flowers, so that I can see if his friend is the successor because then it would be a good trait, since they all want to be the Emperor.
2) Ask yourself, "what do these sections tell me about the characters?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here on page 25 and 26, the Emperor is looking at all of the flowers that the children brought. I can see smiles on their faces in the illustration and this tells me that the children are proud of their flowers. • But here on page 30, the Emperor announces that Ping is the new successor, but he doesn't have a flower in his pot. • So I am thinking, "Ping's friend has a beautiful flower and Ping has an empty pot, but Ping is the successor and the friend is not." • Here, his friend didn't end up getting what he wanted and Ping did, so that shows me that being clever isn't good. If it were good, then the friend would have gotten to be the successor because of his flower. • •
3) Jot the key details that answer the question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I look at the Emperor's face and see the frown that tells me that he is unhappy that he sees so many beautiful flowers. • I will record my answer and include that in this book clever is not a good trait because the Emperor wasn't looking for the most beautiful flower. The Emperor was looking for honesty, since the seeds were special and they were cooked. • Jot down the key details that I will need for my answer • So...being clever in this book is not a good trait to have because the seeds were cooked and unable to grow, but the friend brought a beautiful flower to the Emperor. He must have cheated and that is not being honest or a good trait to have as an Emperor.

Extension and practice

- Students will read Little Red Riding Hood and respond to whether they think the wolf is clever? Little Red Riding Hood?
- Experiment with planting different seeds to see what type of flower is the most beautiful.
- Write an opinion or argument text defending the decision that their flower is the most beautiful.
- Students will read The Three Little Pigs and create a response to defend their reason they think the wolf was clever.

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to (name type of text and skill/standard)

See more examples of how to teach (name skill and standard)

Objective: In this lesson you will learn how a character responds to an event by rereading key details.

1. Locate the section of the text that contains key words from the text.
2. Now, I am going to ask myself, "What do these sections tell me about the characters?"
3. Jot the key details that answer the question.

<https://ctdreamteam.learnzillion.com/lessons/2183-describe-how-characters-respond-to-events-in-a-story>

Question 5

Question #5	At the end of the book the author states, “I admire Ping’s great courage to appear before me with the empty truth.” What does the author mean by this?	
Standard(s) covered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RL.2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. 	
	Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
	<p>The author means that it takes courage to show up with an empty pot, with no flower. The truth was that the seed couldn’t grow and Ping was honest by going to the Palace with his empty pot instead of switching the seeds like his friend and the other children did.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to identify the significance of the empty pot. Able to explain that Ping was honest and that is a trait that is important in being an Emperor.
If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:		
Objective	In this lesson you will learn to determine the central message of a story by analyzing the key details.	
Prior knowledge to review	RL.1.2 Retell stories, including key details and demonstrate understanding of their central message.	
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction	
1) Reread the text to locate keywords from the question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hmm...the question asks about Ping appearing before the Emperor so the first thing I need to do is find the places that talk about Ping appearing before the Emperor. I am going to mark them with a Post-It note to refer back to them to formulate my response. Here on page 20, it says that Ping was ashamed of his empty pot. I am going to mark this page with a Post-It note. I also notice that Ping is with the Emperor or discussing his empty pot on pages 21, 22, 25, 27, and page 28 so I will mark these with a Post-It note to refer back to. 	

<p>2) I am going to ask myself, "How do these words help explain the central message?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now that I have marked all of these sections, let me go back and think about the words that I read. • Here on page 21, his clever friend comes by with his beautiful flower and comments to Ping about his empty pot. Well, that is twice now that the empty pot was mentioned. • Here on page 22, his father comments that Ping did his best and his best is good enough to present to the Emperor. I know that if you do your best then you should be proud of yourself. • Here, on page 25, the Emperor is looking at all of the beautiful flowers and frowning. I usually look at beautiful flowers and smile, but I remember from reading this before that the seeds are cooked so he is confused as to how they have such beautiful flowers when the seeds were unable to grow. This helps me to know that the Emperor is not happy with the flowers he sees. • Here on page 27, the Emperor asks Ping why he brought the empty pot. • On page 28, Ping explains why he has brought the empty pot that he tried his best and explains how he was determined for the seeds to grow, but that he had to bring an empty pot. This shows me that Ping was bring honest about what he had done to try and grow the seed. Since he is the only one with an empty pot and throughout the story it shows what Ping did to try and grow the seed, so he must be telling the truth.
<p>3) Jot your answer to the question.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hmm...the question talks about the empty truth. Ping has an empty pot and we know that he was telling the truth, so the empty truth must be that he has nothing to actually show the Emperor but the truth which is nothing. • I am going to record my answer discussing the central message which is that it is important to tell the truth. When the author states that it takes courage to appear before me with the empty truth, the author means that telling the truth is important even though if it is with nothing to show. • The author means that it takes courage to show up with an empty pot, with no flower. The truth was that the seed couldn't grow and Ping was honest by going to the Palace with his empty pot instead of switching the seeds like his friend and the other children did.

Extension and practice

- Students will read a variety of folktales and determine the central message of the story.
- Create a timeline graphic organizer to record the major events that lead to the central message of the story.
- Pretend that Ping’s friend doesn’t agree with the Emperor’s decision. Write a letter to Ping’s friend that defends the Emperor’s decision of having Ping be his successor.

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to (name type of text and skill/standard)

See more examples of how to teach (name skill and standard)

Objective: In this lesson you will learn to determine the central message of a story by analyzing the key details.

1. Reread the text to locate keywords from the question.
2. I am going to ask myself, “How do these words help explain the central message?”
3. Jot your answer to the question.

<https://ctdreamteam.learnzillion.com/lessons/1892-recount-key-events-using-illustrations>