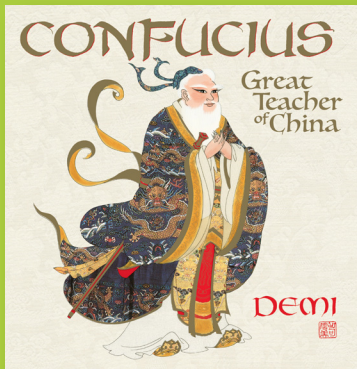


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

Confucius: Great Teacher of China

written and illustrated by Demi

About the Book

Genre: Nonfiction
(Biography)

***Reading Level:** Grade 5

Interest Level: Grades 2–8

Guided Reading Level: Y

**Accelerated Reader®
Level/Points:** N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the
Spache Readability Formula

Themes: Asian/Asian
American Interest,
Biography/Memoir, China,
Courage, Education,
Empathy/Compassion,
Forgiveness, Friendship,
Geography, Kindness/Caring,
Leadership, Optimism/
Enthusiasm, Overcoming
Obstacles, Peace

SYNOPSIS

His sayings are repeated throughout the world. His teachings set the course of Chinese society for two and a half millennia. But Confucius (551 BCE–479 BCE) remains merely a name to many readers, rather than the central figure of world history that he deserves to be. Now award-winning author-illustrator Demi illuminates his life and influence in this elegant biography that will appeal to readers of all ages.

Confucius loved books and learning, but he grew up during a time of great suffering and warfare in China. Troubled by the chaos he saw all around him, he devoted his life to reforming his society and government, with ideas about education and leadership that still resonate today. He encouraged everyone—especially rulers—to live moral lives, emphasizing the value of tradition and compassion. And five hundred years before Jesus set forth his Golden Rule, Confucius declared his Golden Mean: “Never impose on others what you would not chose for yourself.”



BACKGROUND

From the author:

“Confucius was born in 551 BCE, at a time of great war and famine in China. As he observed the suffering around him, he realized the best way to transform a society was to shift people’s thinking—to move them from callousness to compassion. So he became a teacher, and he changed the world.

Confucius taught students from all backgrounds, rich and poor. If rulers were good people—wise, trustworthy, and generous—they could lead by example, he said. He emphasized the values of virtue and tradition, propriety and humility.

Twenty-five hundred years later, Confucius’s ideas about education, government, right behavior, and compassion continue to inspire millions every day.

In China, he is known as Kongzi, or “Master Kong.” In the West, he is known by the Latinized form of his name: Confucius.

Confucius was a joyous man as well as a great teacher and philosopher. He once said, “I was not born with knowledge, but I am quick to seek it.” Though the facts of his life are shrouded in legend, the truths he found have influenced the world for generations.

Many Chinese people feel that no matter the political situation or their religious inclinations, they are followers of Confucius at heart.”

Confucius’s Analects:

Confucius’s sayings are compiled in a work called *The Analects*. Like many ancient

texts, *The Analects* did not come down to us as one complete document, but in many fragmentary and conflicting forms; you can see one version in Chinese here: <http://ctext.org/analects>. It has since been rendered in English in a variety of different translations; this link provides useful background information and a readable text for young people ([http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Analects_of_Confucius_\(Eno-2015\).pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Analects_of_Confucius_(Eno-2015).pdf)). Within *The Analects*, Confucius’s ideas and principles are conveyed through ethical terms, which include *ren*, “compassion or love for other human beings”; *de*, “virtue—acting according to moral standards”; *yi*, “righteousness”; *li*, “correctness in all actions, rituals, speech and behavior.” A person who possesses wisdom and all of these preceding qualities may become a *junzi*, “a superior human being.”

Confucius’s Analects:

PBS Learning Media’s *The Story of China* offers interactive maps and timelines for further information on not only Confucius, but the different dynasties across Chinese history. Historian Michael Wood explores Chinese history through various media forms (<http://www.pbs.org/story-china/home/>).



VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Content Specific

BCE, Kongzi, Master Kong, qilin, Lu, Mount Mu, jade, ceremonial robes, rites, carp, granary, oxen, Chengzhou, Laozi, Taoism, Zhou dynasty, ren (compassion), de (virtue), yi (righteousness), li (correctness in actions), zhi (wisdom), junzi (superior human being), Duke Ding, Chungtum, disciples, shu, Golden Mean, *Book of Changes*, *I Ching*, Qufu, pilgrims, Lunyu, *The Analects*, Han dynasty

Academic

philosopher, shrouded, inclinations, omen, bulge, humble, practical, exceedingly, auspicious, dutiful, clerk, turmoil, aristocrats, splintering, warring, peasant, virtue, righteousness, wisdom, superior, reverent, humble, tumultuous, enlighten, bribes, bandits, idealism, reproach, wither, compassion, foretold

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What do you think you know about Confucius? Have you ever heard of any of Confucius's sayings or quotes?
2. What do you think, "I was not born with knowledge, but I am quick to seek it," means? What makes you think that? Do you think you were born with knowledge? Why? Do you know of any sayings like the "Golden Rule?" How are those sayings or traditions important to you? What about your family?
3. What does education mean to you? Why do you think education is important?
4. Have you had a teacher who was influential in your life? How did that teacher inspire you to learn? What are some of your favorite memories with that teacher? What were some things that teacher did that were significant to you?
5. What values are important to you? What does it mean to you to be a good person? What are some character traits and values that one should have? Why do you think that?
6. What do you think it means to be a good person? What characteristics do you need to be a person of honor?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. Book Title Exploration: Talk about the title of the book, *Confucius: Great Teacher of China*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
2. Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they learn new



information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.

3. Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebook during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- developed his passion for learning
- became a teacher
- inspired others to live by specific values
- influenced others to live as better people
- influenced Chinese society and government

Encourage students to consider why the author, Demi, would want to share this story with young people about Confucius and his life. Point out the author's dedication and discuss what she may mean and why she would dedicate the book that way.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What appeared before Confucius's mother before he was born?

2. What did the *qilin* give Confucius's mother? What did it say?
3. What did legends say Confucius looked like? How did the legends differ in what they thought he looked like?
4. What did Confucius love to do as a child?
5. When did Confucius's father die? How old was Confucius? What did Confucius say about his father's death?
6. What kinds of activities did Confucius enjoy? What were the activities that he loved the most?
7. At what age did Confucius set his heart on learning?
8. When did Confucius get married? Who did he marry?
9. What did Confucius name his son after? Why did they name him this?
10. What expectations did Chinese society emphasize during Confucius's youth?
11. How did Confucius support his family? What kinds of jobs did he have?
12. How did Confucius nurture his passion for learning?
13. Where did Confucius meet Laozi?
14. Who was Laozi?
15. What were Laozi's beliefs?
16. What were Confucius's beliefs?
17. How long did the Zhou dynasty rule in China?
18. What happened when the Zhou dynasty started to collapse?
19. What did Confucius believe that society was?
20. How did Confucius believe societal suffering would end?
21. What did Confucius believe was the most important quality someone could have?



“This deftly illustrated picture book introduces Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher and teacher, to young readers... An appealing biography done in classic Demi tradition, suitable for readers interested in Confucianism and its impact on Chinese culture and values.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Illustrating in a delicate style that strongly evokes her ancient Chinese setting, Demi introduces the life and teachings of Confucius (known as Kongzi in China), blending facts and legends surrounding the educator and philosopher... But his true triumphs came through teaching, and Demi incorporates his philosophies throughout...”

—*Publisher’s Weekly*

22. What does the quality *de* mean?
23. What does the quality *yi* mean?
24. How could the quality *li* be demonstrated? What did *li* mean?
25. What was the quality called when an individual developed all of the qualities?
26. What did it mean when someone was called a *junzi*? What qualities does a *junzi* need to exhibit?
27. What did it mean if rulers governed with *zhi* and *ren*?
28. As a philosopher, what was Confucius the first to propose?
29. What happened when Confucius tried to look for a government position?
30. What did Confucius decide was the best way to influence society?
31. When did Confucius become a tutor? What did he teach?
32. How was Confucius’s school different from other schools?
33. What did Confucius teach his pupils at his school?
34. Where did Confucius conduct his classes?
35. What did Confucius emphasize in both society and individual thought?
36. Who appointed Confucius to his first government job? Where did Confucius become governor?
37. What was Confucius appointed to after he was governor? Why was he appointed police commissioner?
38. What does legend say that Confucius brought to Lu?
39. What was Duke Ding like? How was he different from Confucius?
40. What happened in 497 BCE? What did Confucius do after he left Ding’s court?
41. What did Confucius experience as he traveled with his students through the warring states?
42. What qualities kept Confucius from fitting in during his journey? How was he ridiculed?
43. What did Confucius teach his students that the moral purpose of humanity was?
44. How did Confucius respond when he was asked what he would do if he ran a government?
45. What was the most important word in Confucius’s government and private life? What did it mean?
46. What was Confucius’s Golden Mean?
47. When did Confucius return to Lu? What did Confucius do when he returned to Lu?



48. What animal did people in Lu bring to Confucius in 479 BCE? What did Confucius realize it was?
 49. What did the death of a *qilin* signify? What did Confucius believe it foretold?
 50. How old was Confucius when he died? Where was Confucius buried?
 51. What did Confucius disciples build on his gravesite?
 52. How did Confucius's disciples compile their master's sayings? What was the final document called?
 53. What did the Han dynasty adopt two hundred years after Confucius's death?
 54. How many centuries was the Han dynasty in place? Why did it last so long?
6. What do you think about Confucius's beliefs about society and how it should work for everyone, and not just the powerful? How is this relevant in our society today?
 7. Why was it important that Confucius was the first philosopher to propose compassion as a virtue that leaders should have? How do you think that relates to leaders in our current government? Do you think that our government leaders exercise virtue? Why or why not?
 8. Why do you think powerful rulers did not want Confucius in a government position? Why do you think Confucius's ideals conflicted with others in power?
 9. Why do you think Confucius chose a career in education? How is education important to society?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3; and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *Confucius: Great Teacher of China* mean to you after reading? Why do you think the author chose this particular title?
 2. What did Confucius ultimately want for himself and for society? How did Confucius inspire others to be better, more compassionate citizens?
 3. Why was the *qilin* important to Confucius's birth? What did the *qilin* symbolize and how was it important to Chinese culture?
 4. Why was Confucius's father's death important in his life? What did Confucius believe his father made him become? Why do you think that?
 5. How were Laozi's and Confucius's ideals different? Which philosopher do you identify more with? Why?
10. What kinds of qualities did Confucius value in learners? Why did he think that learners needed to be eager and dedicated to learning? How do you think those beliefs apply to your own education?
 11. Why was the need for order so important to Confucius? Why was Confucius a proponent of order in both society and one's thoughts? How were rituals and traditions important to Confucius's teachings and beliefs?
 12. Why do you think one biographer thought that Confucius was 'too great for the world to accept?' What do you think this means in regard to Confucius and his teachings?
 13. What do you think about Confucius's idea that the moral purpose of humanity is 'to make ourselves better'? Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why or why not?
 14. What did Confucius would believe would happen if language was 'incorrect?' How did he think that language affected all other disciplines? How do you think his beliefs about language connected with his beliefs about society and humanity?



15. Why do you think *shu*, or “compassion” or “open-heartedness” was the most important word to Confucius? What does compassion mean to you? How have you shown compassion to others? How have others shown compassion to you?
16. Why do you think Confucian learning and instruction informed basic education of the people who governed China? How do you think Confucius’s ideas are important to both government and education systems? Do you think Confucius’s teachings have inspired education in the United States? Why or why not?
17. Why do you think some call Confucius China’s ‘uncrowned king’? After reading *Confucius: Great Teacher of China*, how do you think this title is important to Confucius’s legacy?

Reader’s Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

1. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about Confucius’s dedication to his family, education, and his country. What is your takeaway from this book? What would you tell a friend about this book?
2. What do you think Demi’s message to the reader is? Think about possible motivations behind Demi’s intentions to write the book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Confucius’s experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Confucius: Great Teacher of China*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you

make from this book that relate to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?

6. What does being a good citizen mean to you after reading *Confucius: Great Teacher of China*? How do you think you could exhibit Confucius’s value as a citizen in the future?
7. What does education mean to you after reading? How does your view of education change after reading *Confucius: Great Teacher of China*? Why is education still as important as it was during Confucius’s time?

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

1. **Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers.** Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. **Have each student write three questions about the story.** Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. **Depending on students’ level of English proficiency, after the first reading:**
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. **Have students give a short talk about what education means to them or what being a good citizen means to them. Why is education and citizenship important to you?**
5. **The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students.** Based on students’ prior knowledge, review some or all of



the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Conduct a Demi author study by reading LEE & LOW titles *The Great Voyages of Zheng He* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-great-voyages-of-zheng-he>) and *Su Dongpo: Life of a Genius* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/life-of-a-genius>). These titles can be used as a unit in the following ways:
 - **Timeline:** Create a timeline of Confucius, Su Dongpo, and Zheng He. In different colors, plot the different time periods in which they lived.
 - **Geographical Location:** Using the same colors from the timeline, highlight on a map

(using the map in *Confucius* or the map from PBS's *Story of China* (<http://www.pbs.org/story-china/map/#/intro>) as a reference), and plot where each of the leaders spent their lives in China.

- **Political Influence:** Using the timeline, conduct a study about the different dynasties and governments that were in place during that time period. Have students research more about the governments and study how Confucius, Su Dongpo, and Zheng He were influential in their respective dynasties.
 - **Character Study & Cultural Relevance:** Conduct a character study of each leader. Create a chart with three different columns for Confucius, Su Dongpo, and Zheng He, and list their character traits that are evident in each of the books. Then, have students write an essay about how each of these leaders share similarities, how they are different, and overall how they have influenced Chinese culture over the course of centuries.
2. Have students select a writing from Confucius and describe what it means to them. Have students write about a statement from Confucius and how it applies to their own lives. Why is this specific quotation meaningful? Why do you think Confucius wrote it? For a more comprehensive list of his sayings, see the following resource. (<http://www.sjsu.edu/people/cynthia.rostankowski/courses/HUM119AF13/s2/Confucius-Analects.pdf>)
 3. Have students create a chart with Confucius's most important values: *ren* (compassion or love for other human beings); *de* (virtue—acting according to moral standards); *yi* (righteousness); and *li* (correctness in all actions, rituals, speech, and behavior). Have students brainstorm different characteristics that correspond to each value as a whole class or in small groups. Then, have students talk about a person who has *zhi* (or wisdom), and a person who is a *junzi* (a superior human being). What kinds of actions does a person



with zhi or who is a junzi need to perform? How do you demonstrate the qualities that Confucius emphasized?

4. As a follow-up activity, have students write a brief scenario for each of the values with someone demonstrating the value. Then have students work in pairs or small groups to read their scenarios and have the other students guess which value they think it is. Why did they guess that value? Why is that value important to exhibit?
5. Have students pick a value and write about a time when they exhibited that value. Why did they pick that value? Why do they think they demonstrated that value? Why is it important to them? Have students write an essay about the value and they can either accompany it with a drawing or another artistic representation.
6. As a group, have students record all of the quotes from Confucius in *Confucius: Great Teacher of China*. Once they have been compiled, think about why Demi chose those quotations to choose (out of his many wise sayings). Have students select one of the quotes and write about it. How did this one quote change your attitude and perceptions while reading *Confucius: Great Teacher of China*?
7. Have students read and think about Confucius's Golden Mean: "Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself." Have students write an essay about what they think the Golden Mean means to them in their own life. Then have students write their own Golden Mean. Why did they choose that Golden Mean? Why is that important to them? Students should share out in pairs, small groups, and the whole class what their Golden Mean is. Have students create a drawing, poem, dance, or other artistic representations of their Golden Mean.
8. Confucius' sayings have been translated in many different languages. In *Confucius: Great*

Teacher of China, the current translation states, "Study as if you'll never know enough," he told them, "as if you're afraid of losing what you've already gained!" The Waley translation states, "Learn as if you were following someone whom you could not catch up, as though it were someone you were frightened of losing." The Lau translation states, "Even with a man who urges himself on in his studies as though he was losing ground, my fear is still that he may not make it in time." The Hinton translation states, "Study as if you'll never know enough, as if you're afraid of losing it all." Have students pick the translation that they like or identify with the most and write an essay justifying why they picked that translation.

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. Have students compare and contrast Laozi and Confucius. Have students create a Venn diagram with Laozi and Confucius. How are they similar? How are they different? Students should conduct more research to extend upon the information that's provided in Confucius. (<http://bahaiteachings.org/confucius-and-laozi-the-great-philosophers-of-the-east>)
2. Have students conduct a research project on the Zhou dynasty. Divide students into four groups: Geography, Political Leaders, Cultural Influences, and Conflicts. Have students use the following questions to guide their research in each of their respective groups: What was the geography like during the Zhou dynasty? Who besides Confucius were the political leaders? What was the culture like during the Zhou dynasty? What about artwork? What kinds of conflicts or wars happened during the Zhou dynasty? Refer to



PBS Learning Media's Timeline, "The Story of China." (http://www.pbs.org/story-china/timeline/#/*/)

3. Have students conduct a research project on the Han dynasty. Divide students into four groups: Geography, Political Leaders, Cultural Influences, and Conflicts. Have students use the following questions to guide their research in each of their respective groups: What was the geography like during the Han dynasty? What was the culture like during the Han dynasty? What about artwork? What kinds of conflicts or wars happened during the Han dynasty?
4. Encourage students to then compare and contrast the Zhou and Han dynasties. Have students think about how the Zhou and Han dynasties differed in their societal philosophies and expectations. Since the Han dynasty was based on Confucian principles in matters of governance and education, how was it different than the Zhou dynasty, which was marked by political turmoil?
5. Show students the map in *Confucius: Great Teacher of China* and help students track his journey during his life. Have students pinpoint on the map where Confucius lived and taught. Why was each place significant? What did he do in each place? Why was this important in his life? For further information, students can engage with PBS Learning Media's *China By Dynasty* interactive map (<http://www.pbs.org/story-china/map/#/intro>).
6. Help students investigate other great leaders in China. Have students compile a list of other governors and leaders. In small groups, have students research when these rulers governed and how they were important in Chinese society. Consider having students create posters and display them around the room. Students can use this list from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to research more Chinese leaders (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chem/hd_chem.htm).

Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. Have students create an artistic representation of one of Confucius's most important qualities. How would students demonstrate the meaning of these qualities through art? Encourage students to paint, create a collage, create a song, write a poem, or whatever medium they choose to express what *ren*, *de*, *yi*, or *li* mean or a person who is *zhi*, or a *junzi*.
2. Conduct an illustrator study with students through Demi's work in *Su Dongpo: Life of a Genius* and *The Great Voyages of Zheng He*. Have students examine Demi's illustrations across her work. What do they notice? What is similar across the titles? What are signature elements to Demi's work? How do you know? Have students select an illustration and write their reactions to it. Why did they pick that piece to write about? How does it make them feel?
3. Have students study the art that marked each dynasty from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chem/hd_chem.htm). Have students select a dynasty in small groups and study the types of art that was associated with each dynasty. Have students present with photographs and other examples of the art from that dynasty. How was this art important during that dynasty? What was typical of art during that dynasty? Encourage students to think about how Chinese art might have influenced Demi in her own artwork and illustrations.
4. Have students select a piece of artwork that was inspired by Confucius. Why do you think this piece of art was inspired by Confucius? (<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/>)



[la-ca-confucious21-pg-photogallery.html](#)) Consider extracting excerpts from “Envisioning an Abstraction Who Was Also a Man” (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/26/arts/design/26confucius.html>). Have students think and write about how Confucius inspired other artists and artworks during and after his time.

- Use the MFA Boston’s slideshow and corresponding questions in: “Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism: Art and Religion in Ancient China” (<http://educators.mfa.org/buddhism-daoism-and-confucianism-art-and-religion-ancient-china-455586?view=slideshow#7>). Have students write strictly what they observe when they first see the piece of art. Then have students think about how the art may reflect or embody Confucius’s values. What makes them think that? What evidence in the art made them think about Confucius?

School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- Have students talk with family members about their role in the family. How are they meaningful to their family? Have family members talk about roles and duties as a member of a family.
- Have students talk with family members about the qualities that they value in themselves and in their own family members. Have students share with family members the values that Confucius admires. What do they think of those qualities themselves? How do they show those qualities in their own life?
- Have students share a list of Demi’s other works with their families. Have students investigate other titles by Demi at their local or school library with their family. What

themes do these books have in common? What topics do these books share? How are the characters similar? How are they different? What do you think Demi’s message is for young readers across these books?

Additional LEE & LOW Titles to Teach Biography

Life of a Genius: Su Dongpo written and illustrated by Demi
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Demi is the author and illustrator of more than one hundred books for children. Her works have received numerous awards and accolades, appearing on lists like the ALA Notable Children's Books, the New York Times Best Illustrated Books, Notable Books for a Global Society, American Bookseller Pick of the Lists. She has also received the Middle East Book Award and the Christopher Award, which recognizes individuals whose work makes a positive difference in the world. Demi has traveled extensively and studied art in Mexico, India, and China. She lives with her husband in Carnation, Washington.

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\$21.00, HARDCOVER

978-1-62014-193-9

48 pages, 10 X 10

*Reading Level: Grade 5

Interest Level: Grades 2–8

Guided Reading Level: Y

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

THEMES: Asian/Asian American Interest, Biography/Memoir, China, Courage, Education, Empathy/Compassion, Forgiveness, Friendship, Geography, Kindness/Caring, Leadership, Optimism/Enthusiasm, Overcoming Obstacles, Peace

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

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All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.