

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AP[®] Chinese Language and Culture Story Narration

Special Focus

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Introduction

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Story narration, one of the free-response questions in the AP[®] Chinese Language and Culture Exam, is a writing task in the “presentational” mode of communication. To perform this task with a high level of proficiency, the test-taker must effectively and efficiently—in 15 minutes—tell a coherent story as depicted by a set of four pictures. The test-taker must show an ability to put together a story with a beginning, middle, and an end; present the story in cohesively organized paragraphs and well-connected sentences; and use a wide variety of vocabulary and grammatical constructions as needed for telling the story. Performance data of the first exam administered in 2007 suggest that story narration was one area where student performance could improve. Specifically, improvement is needed in presenting a narration focused on the storyline and in using appropriate discourse connectors as transitional elements.

The purpose of this Special Focus Materials volume is to provide AP Chinese teachers with in-depth knowledge about and instructional strategies related to the topic of story narration tasks of various kinds: telling a story as described by a series of pictures, relaying a message, and writing a personal letter or e-mail. The content enrichment articles—one by Jianhua Bai and one by Diane Mammone—discuss in detail instructional strategies crucial to story narration. The three instructional units present specific instructional strategies—and how they are best used in classroom teaching—for enhancing students’ ability to narrate a story coherently and cohesively in writing and in speech. Xiaolin Chang’s instructional unit focuses on instructional tasks for improving students’ presentational as well as interpersonal writing skills. Yuan Gao’s instructional unit is aimed at preparing students to narrate a story related to a Chinese idiom based on an audiovisual stimulus. And Diane Mammone’s instructional unit illustrates how to use authentic audio and visual materials to teach story narration. Each of these authors does an excellent job presenting and explaining

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their ideas and approaches. Their contributions to this volume provide a wealth of information that you will undoubtedly find creative, relevant, and extremely useful to you as an AP Chinese instructor and to your students.

I am also grateful to our distinguished external reviewers, Michael Everson and Gin-Chi Wu, for their meticulous reviewing of this volume and their insightful recommendations.

Developing Competence in Story Narration: Theory and Practice

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One of the most important tasks for world language teachers of intermediate and advanced learners is to help students develop the ability to communicate in paragraph-length language such as performing the presentational task of telling a well-organized story. As teachers, we should ensure that our students not only learn words and sentences but also learn to comprehend and create textual forms that are larger than sentences. This article will address research evidence from second language acquisition that advocates the importance of teaching and learning text structures and discuss how to help students develop the ability to perform story narration tasks.

What Does Research Say About the Importance of Text Structures?

Both L1 and L2 language acquisition and pedagogical research studies have shown that the ability to follow text structures is one of the primary skills involved in successful language learning (Barnett 1984; Meyer and Rice 1984; Horowitz 1985; Hoskins 1986; Finley and Seaton 1987). For instance, Horowitz cited three studies that reveal that good readers are more aware of text patterns than poor readers. Barnett's study of 90 college students showed that instruction on research report structure leads to better comprehension. In other words, the research shows that, if students receive instruction on how texts are organized structurally, their reading comprehension improves. In addition to the above studies on languages other than Chinese, we also have some research evidence to show the importance of teaching and learning text structures that are used in story narration. For instance, Hu (1992) found that,

without proper instruction and practice, English speakers learning Chinese may overuse the definite or indefinite modifiers and lose the cohesiveness of a narration or description, as in 请您看这个红汽车, 这个车有三个门, 这个车是 Chevrolet (Please look at this red car. This car has three doors; this car is a Chevrolet), whereby the last two occurrences of 这个 led to three juxtaposed sentences rather than a cohesive description.

Another relevant study conducted by Zheng (1995) revealed that students learning Chinese as a foreign language, even at the advanced level, often have inadequate understanding of the discourse function of the Chinese language. Zheng used the following paragraph from a student composition to illustrate that, even though they can produce grammatically correct sentences, students had difficulty producing a well-structured and coherent story narration.

我来北京以来还没过一个月。有一天, 跟平常一样我坐公共汽车去上班。..... 那时候天气不错, 不热不冷, 我没穿外衣出去。我应该带走的东西都放在口袋里。总是放在胸前口袋里的钱包, 那一天我把它放在屁股口袋里

Zheng pointed out that teachers need to help students improve their command of the discourse functions of language. She suggested that the coherence and cohesiveness of the story can be improved if, among other things, “以来” is changed to “以后”; “没过一个月” is changed to “不到一个月”; and “本来” is added before “总是.” She concluded that teachers need to help their students practice the discourse function of language in addition to developing their grammatical competence at the sentence level.

These research studies demonstrate that the discourse dimension must be taken into consideration in the teaching and learning of Chinese, especially at the more advanced level, when we help our students develop paragraph language competence. Our students need to receive adequate training to improve their discourse-level performance both in terms of interpretive and presentational communication. If we want to help our students develop the ability to narrate a story, in addition to teaching them the vocabulary and appropriate grammar patterns, we need to teach them the discourse structures that are often employed for telling stories. The topics we need to address next are how different kinds of text structures such as those found in story narration are constructed and how they can be taught effectively to our students. The remainder of this article will be devoted to the discussion of these questions.

Developing Competence in Story Narration

The first order of business is to identify the text structures of story narration. What structures are most often used in various kinds of written and spoken discourse? One approach to find the answer to this question is to analyze many stories and discover the most commonly used structures, as Cheek and Cheek (1983) did with 142 content-material textbooks in English. They analyzed these writings and identified four commonly used organizational patterns: comparison–contrast and cause–effect, listing, persuasion, and problem solving. Similar research can be conducted in Chinese. Various kinds of written or spoken discourse in Chinese materials can be analyzed for the purpose of discovering what types of text structures are often used in narrating a story. The findings can be readily applied to the teaching and learning of Chinese.

Second, when we consider text structures used in story narration, we immediately think of cohesive connectors. We should help our students learn how to use text-organizing connectives like 从前、有一天、先、然后、后来 to help construct a story that flows well. For instance, when we help our students write or tell stories like the picture sequence found in the AP Chinese Language and Culture Exam, the above phrases can be used effectively to connect sentences into a coherent story such as: “有一天, 一个人…… 她先…… 然后…… 后来…… ” In order for the students to be able to use these cohesive connectors well, we need to design and implement repeated practice such as having students report what they did over the vacation, retelling a story that they read, or writing a story based on a group of pictures. Students need to practice the discourse functions of language in meaningful and contextualized communicative tasks.

Third, in addition to the use of text-organizing connectives there are other ways to organize text structures. Devices such as ellipses (省略) or zero pronouns (零形回指) can be utilized to make stories read more smoothly and cohesively. Zero pronouns refer to those pronouns that are dropped when the context is clear. For instance, in the following short narration, the pronouns in the () should be dropped in order to achieve more coherence: 我昨天晚上七點鐘起床。(我) 七點一刻吃早飯。(我) 吃了飯,(我) 就開車到學校去了。 In addition to narration, the use of zero pronouns, or ellipses, is also found in other text structures such as the following short paragraph of description. Some of the pronouns in the following paragraph are redundant and should be deleted to make the paragraph more cohesive.

我很尊敬我的老师, 他与人为善, 他与书为友。他非常关心他的学生。他每天早起晚睡, 他日以继日地工作.....

The research studies reported above show that, in order to teach and learn the text structures used in story narration, we should pay attention to the discourse functions of words and syntactic patterns, and how we can incorporate the teaching of text structures in our curriculum. Most discussions on the teaching and learning of text structures are found in books on rhetoric and tend to be too general to apply toward teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Following are some of the principles we often find in rhetoric books that deal with the teaching and learning of text structures: 文气贯通, 环环相扣, 句句紧连, 衔接紧密, 转折自然, 血脉相连, 浑然一体. These guidelines sound good in principle, but are not specific enough for us to apply in our actual teaching. The remaining part of this article will be devoted to the discussion of ideas on how to help students of Chinese develop the ability to perform story narration tasks.

First, teachers and material developers should provide discourse-oriented instruction and modeling to enhance students' understanding of text structures, as well as to heighten our students' awareness of the existence and importance of these structures. One useful technique to develop text structure awareness is to use something similar to the illustrative pattern guides suggested by Finley and Seaton (1987) and Slater (1985). These guides suggest the following procedures: (1) The teacher demonstrates the most common patterns of story narration. (2) The teacher provides students with groups of unlabeled signal words such as “有一天, 先, 然后, 后来 (for narration)” and “跟..... 比起来, 更.....” (for comparison) and then asks students to identify which group of cohesive ties is used for which text structure. (3) Students read the text, look for signal words or other devices, and identify the text structure employed. (4) While students read, the teacher can provide students with key sentences and ask them to predict which words or phrases would be used in the next section of the text. (5) The teacher tells students that there will probably be several types of text structure in one text. For instance, in a story narration, one can find the structure for description in addition to the structure for narration. The above procedures should be helpful for students to develop awareness of how different text structures are used in story narration.

Another suggestion offered by many scholars is the use of analytical reading, in which students engage in close reading of different types of stories and then discover and discuss how different stories are narrated. For instance, Yong (1993) suggests that we develop an appreciation of discourse through a close reading of many authentic

texts and an explication of discourse function at the input stage. One of the activities that she suggests is to help students realize how ellipses are used to make the text more cohesive. The following is an example: 小童赶快跑过去, (他)把老奶奶扶起来, (他)送她过马路. When words in the parentheses are deleted the text becomes more cohesive.

A third technique that we find useful is guided writing, in which we supply the students with a list of key phrases and sentences and then ask them to write a story using this list of phrases and sentences. We also give the students a framework illustrating how to approach such a task. Students can then follow the models to create their own story and share their experience and insights with their classmates.

A fourth technique that is often suggested for developing text structure awareness is that of error correction. Zheng (1995) provides an example for using error correction to improve students' awareness of text structures. He suggests that teachers (1) mark the cohesion errors in a student's composition, (2) tell the students why the marked places are not cohesive, and (3) offer advice for improving the cohesiveness of the text structure in the composition.

A fifth useful technique is 故事接龙 (Adding-More-to-the-Story). The procedure is as follows: (1) the teacher starts telling a story; (2) the teacher asks students to take turns adding to the story; (3) when the story becomes less cohesive, the teacher then discusses with students how to fix the story so that it becomes more cohesive and coherent. A more structured variation of this activity is for the teacher to provide a list of sentences for the students to rearrange into a cohesive text. Students can also add cohesive ties to connect the sentences into a well-organized text. For example, based on an interpersonal dialogue in a restaurant situation (Lesson 12 of the *Integrated Chinese*), the teacher can construct a list of sentences about what happened, such as the one below, and then ask students to put all of them in a narrative format.

1. 王先生点了三十个素饺子。
2. 饭馆儿里好像有很多客人。
3. 他们找到了两个位子。
4. 上个星期六晚上王先生和李小姐去一个饭馆儿吃饭。
5. 吃完饭以后, 他们都说这个餐馆的饭很好吃。
6. 点完菜以后, 王先生要了一瓶啤酒, 李小姐要了一杯可乐。
7. 除了素饺子以外, 李小姐还点了一盘家常豆腐, 两碗酸辣汤。
8. 因为他们都又渴又饿, 所以李小姐告诉服务员上菜快一点。

With the assistance of their teachers, students can produce something like the following:

李小姐和王先生一起去一家中国饭馆儿吃饭。那家饭馆儿的人很多, 好象一个位子都没有了。他们想去别的饭馆儿的时候, 服务员来告诉他们有一张桌子空位子。

老王和小李都吃素。老王先点菜, 他点了三十个素饺子。小李点了一盘家常豆腐和两碗酸辣汤。他们俩都又饿又渴, 所以不但要了凉水和茶, 而且还要了啤酒、可乐。他们还请服务员快一点上菜。服务员告诉他们菜很快就能做好。

Conclusion

We have shown the importance of text structure in our curriculum design and offered some suggestions that teachers may find useful in helping students develop the ability to use paragraph-level language in story narration. Understanding of text structures is essential but not sufficient. Both research findings and our teaching experience show that any skill has to be taught and practiced repeatedly in meaningful communicative contexts before our students can learn it effectively. Baker and Brown's (1984) review of such research indicates that students who receive only instruction in the skills without opportunities for practice often fail to use them effectively. If we want our students to use any text structures freely and independently, we have to ensure they get sufficient practice. To help accomplish this, the principle of spiraling has to be employed in the teaching and learning of text structures such as story narration. Spiraling refers to a systematic repetition of learning tasks that help students practice a particular discourse function of a language item. In the current practices of materials development and teaching, we do spiraling with words and sentence patterns, but not systematically with various types of paragraph language text structures, which are crucial for completing tasks such as story narration. We need to design learning activities for our students to practice using paragraph language text structures repeatedly in different meaningful contexts.

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Strategies to Improve AP[®] Chinese Story Narration Performance

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Storytelling is a medium of information transmission and entertainment across cultures. Ask students if they know a good story when they hear one. Most will assert they do. No matter how familiar students are with the medium of storytelling, they will not be familiar with the story elements required by the AP Chinese Language and Culture story narration task. The scoring guidelines for the story narration task, published on the AP Central[®] Web site, gives details of these elements.¹ Teachers may be tempted to print out the guidelines and distribute them to students. Don't do that. The guidelines are too complex. They need to be rewritten into smaller, more manageable rubrics and checklists that students can grasp. The purpose of this article is to help teachers (1) understand the critical elements of the story narration task, particularly in terms of task completion, (2) reinterpret and rewrite the scoring guidelines into student-friendly rubrics and checklists, and (3) use these rubrics and checklists in classroom activities designed to improve story narration performance.

The Basics—Understanding Task Completion, Language Use, and Register

The prompt for the story narration task on the AP Exam presents a block of four pictures. The prompt accompanying the pictures reads as follows:

*The four pictures present a story. Imagine you are writing the story to a friend. Narrate a complete story as suggested by the pictures. Give your story a beginning, a middle, and an end.*²

1. The AP Scoring Guidelines for all the free-response sections of the exam are published on the College Board's AP Central Web site: http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/ap/students/china/ap07_chinese_sgs_final.pdf.
2. AP Chinese Language and Culture Exam 2007.

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The scoring guidelines for this task are divided into three categories: task completion, language use, and register.

“Register” means the degree of formality in the writing style. The prompt instruction, “imagine you are writing the story to a friend,” sets the register. As the test results showed, proper use of register was generally demonstrated in students’ writings for the task of story narration.

“Language use” refers to the ability to complete the task with adequate vocabulary, appropriate word choice, and control of grammatical structures and patterns. Students must have enough control of structure so the response to the task is comprehensible. The use of English or Pinyin in the writing tasks is not acceptable. Students must have enough vocabulary to explain the task in Chinese, or they must be able to make use of circumlocution—explaining what they mean using other words. For example, a 很小的电话 (little telephone) at least is meaningful if the student doesn’t know 手机 (cell phone). If students have a good command of grammatical structures and vocabulary, they can use circumlocution effectively to communicate their meaning. Teachers should have students practice circumlocution rather than allowing them to insert English for unknown vocabulary words. Posttest analysis indicated that “rich vocabulary” and appropriate use of “idiomatic expressions” increased the score of the response.

Task completion has two critical elements. The first critical element of task completion is that the response must be a story “as suggested by the pictures.” This means that the response should be consistent with the pictures. For example, if the prompt shows pictures of students on bicycles the response should not discuss space travel. In the 2007 exam, some grammatically correct, well-written responses received low scores because they were considered “inconsistent with the prompt.”

The word “suggested” allows for some interpretation. Interpretation may involve writing about a character’s feelings or motivations, or filling in some events or thoughts that link the pictures. Students may interpret but should be wary of being overly imaginative—even though this imagination may be encouraged in a classroom setting. If the response is too fanciful, it may be judged inconsistent with the prompt and not fulfill the first element of task completion.

A fun classroom activity can help students understand “consistency with the prompt” and the limits of interpretation. Bring in illustrations from comics, children’s books, or other sources. Make up a series of statements about the pictures from the obvious to the wildly impossible. Students can respond “true or false,” or acceptable or unacceptable (there may be some “maybes”). Practice a range of what can be

“suggested” by the pictures. Your range may be narrower than the students. The exercise will help them to curb excessive use of imagination on the AP free-response tasks.

The second critical element of task completion is that the story must be “complete,” having “a beginning, a middle, and an end.” The beginning could be an introduction of the characters or setting. The middle refers to some complication or new event in the story. The ending is a resolution. Let’s emphasize that the story must have all three components: beginning, middle, and end. For example, it was observed in the 2007 exam that some lengthy, well-written responses had a beginning and a middle. Then the writing abruptly stopped, perhaps because of time constraints. These incomplete responses received low scores because they did not include an ending. Teachers should emphasize to their student the importance of time management in preparing for this task.

The time limit for the story narration task is 15 minutes. For students concerned about completing a story in time, suggest writing a basic story first. Students should write at least a sentence per picture and include an introduction to the situation and characters (a beginning), a complication in the action (a middle), and a resolution (an end). Because this task, like all the other writing tasks on the AP Chinese Language and Culture Exam, is word processed, it is easy to go back and add details as time permits. Task completion is primary and even a rudimentary story can earn a score of 3 on a scale of 1–6, provided it is consistent with the prompt.

A story must be more than a list or description of the pictures. Ask students if their sample responses sound like descriptions of the pictures or sound like a story. The prompt pictures should serve as illustrations for the responses. In other words, the responses should be richer than the pictures.

For example, there is a picture of a boy standing next to a dog. A mere description of the picture is: 有一個男孩子，旁邊兒站著一隻狗。(There’s a boy, at his side stands a dog.) On the other hand, a story would be: 有一天，小老虎對他狗說，“爸爸媽媽不喜歡你。我離不開你。我們一起走吧。(One day, Little Tiger said to his dog, “Mom and Dad don’t like you, but I can’t leave you. Let’s go together, all right?)

The scoring guidelines detail other elements that help the response sound more like a story. They include: “a logical sequence of events,” “paragraph organization,” and “use of cohesive devices” (also referred to as “transitional elements,” “transition,” or “linking words”). “Additional detail and elaboration” make the response even more successful.

Story Narration Rubrics for the Classroom

Once teachers are familiar with what the AP Chinese scoring guidelines regard as the essential elements of the story narration task, they must find a way to communicate these elements to students. The scoring guidelines are complex. They were designed to assess a full range of responses from a diverse population of students. Do not give the guidelines to your students. Your students will feel overwhelmed with too much information. Make rubrics and checklists that reflect sections of the scoring guidelines and use these rubrics and checklists as writing guides for students. You'll be able to target both task completion as well as specific language use elements at the appropriate level for your students, even Chinese 1 students.

Chinese 1 students can tell simple story narrations. The vocabulary is rudimentary, the cohesive devices are limited, but the responses can have the essential elements of task completion: consistency with the pictures and a beginning, middle, and end. And the language use can be accurate for their level. Begin story narration activities in Chinese 1 so students become familiar with their essential elements.

The following is a simple Chinese 1 story narration rubric. The five checkpoints match elements of task completion.

Story Narration Rubric 1

- ____1. It relates to the pictures.
- ____2. Includes 有 to introduce the story.
- ____3. Introduces or describes the character(s) and situation.
- ____4. Tells what happens ("rising action").³
- ____5. Includes a resolution.

Students should practice writing a few rudimentary stories before advancing to a more complex story and rubric. The following rubric includes checkpoints that add language use elements and introduce the concept of "cohesive devices." (The terms "linking words," "transition words," and "transitional elements" are also used in the guidelines.) In the following rubric I added my own requirement for a story of a certain length, which the AP Exam does not. Brackets [...] contain clarifications related to the scoring guidelines.

3. My freshmen taught me this term they learned in English class. (Nice tie-in with the National Standards Connections and Comparisons!)

Story Narration Rubric 2

Format [Task Completion]

- ___1. Uses 有 or another word to introduce the story.
- ___2. Introduces character(s).
- ___3. Describes what happens ("rising action").
- ___4. Uses a time word, or other linking word [cohesive device].
- ___5. Completes the story.
- ___6. Sounds like a story, not a description.

Language Use

- ___1. Sentences are complete.
- ___2. 是, 很, 有 are used correctly.
- ___3. Adverbs (很, 也, 都, 太, etc.) are placed correctly in the sentences.
- ___4. Length: At least 80 syllables (characters).

If students stop making certain language use errors such as #2 ("是, 很, 有") and #3 (很, 也, 都, 太, etc., placement) drop them from the rubric and add other elements that need special attention. Since task completion is so critical, always include its elements in your rubric. The following rubric is for more advanced writing.

Story Narration Rubric 3

Format, Comprehensibility, Organization [Task Completion]

- ___1. Includes an introduction. Uses 有 or another term to introduce the story.
- ___2. Includes a description of character(s).
- ___3. Uses a time word or transition word [such as 過了一會兒 or 然後] to present a complication.
- ___4. Describes the rising action [the middle, what happens].
- ___5. Uses words for emphasis or repetition if necessary [reduplicated words].
- ___6. Uses 因為...所以 [as cohesive device].
- ___7. Completes the story.
- ___8. Story is logically sequenced.
- ___9. Story sections are balanced [e.g., they do not use 10 sentences for description with only one sentence for action].
- ___10. Story is more than one paragraph.
- ___11. Sounds like a story, not a description.

Language Use

- ___1. Sentences are complete.
- ___2. Measure words are used correctly.
- ___3. A verb complement structure is used.
- ___4. Time words are in the correct order in the sentence.
- ___5. Length; goal is at least 100 syllables (characters).

Rubrics incorporating essential elements of the scoring guidelines can be used at any level. Students cannot focus on all elements and correct all their errors at once. By designing your own rubrics, you can help your students focus on specific elements and spot their own errors. A rubric can be tailored to target common errors for a specific group of students at a specific level. Students correct errors step by step. When the rubrics are clear and appropriately written for specific levels, students can use them in peer and self-editing. Once students can spot errors in their own and in classmates' responses, they can begin to internalize the elements of the story narration task and become more aware of common language use errors.

Class Procedures

Part 1

1. Model good storytelling by presenting sets of story pictures and telling simple stories. Students then repeat them, retell them, and/or act them out. Students should be allowed to make minor changes if they are consistent with the prompt.
2. After students have some control over new vocabulary and patterns, brainstorm about what makes a good story. For example: How do you start a story in English? (You may ask this question in Chinese.) Students may suggest: once upon a time, once, there was in the past, etc. Brainstorm for suggestions in Chinese, such as: 有, 很久很久以前, 从前, etc.
3. Present a set of story pictures. Have students write a story based on the pictures. Tell the students the goal is to write the whole story in five minutes. It's OK to make it short. Even a five-minute writing session will provide enough material for the simple rubric.
4. Have students write in Pinyin or Pinyin with characters. The exercise is about fluency and completeness, not character knowledge. You can always have students rewrite some of the stories in characters. I tell my students to only write in the tones that they absolutely know. Don't try to do everything

at once. At this level, keep task completion and language use primary. (If computers are available, of course students can word process their stories.)

5. Pass out a printed simple rubric. Have students self-correct, marking the checkpoints of the elements they included in their own stories.

Part 2

1. Assign a simple story narration.
2. Have students write for a given period of time (5–10 minutes at first is good).
3. Break students into groups of three to five students. Hand out an appropriate rubric. Have students read one another's stories, then check off the checkpoints.
4. Have students in the group write one story narration, combining the best points of one another's stories being sure to cover all the checkpoints on the given rubric.

Students need a lot of practice writing stories and their work needs feedback. The peer-editing activity allows for a rapid turnaround for feedback. At the beginning stages, the teacher assessment is not as important as providing ample opportunities for practice. The teacher doesn't need to read every piece of writing because students need to write more than the teacher can be expected to read and return to students. The teacher should read some of the stories, peers should assess some stories, and students should also self-assess their work. Besides efficiency and rapid turnaround, peer editing is a valuable activity because students become sophisticated in using the rubrics and become skilled assessors of one another's stories. They begin to internalize the criteria of the rubrics and develop an active knowledge of the story format.

Finishing Touches: Improving Performance

After students are able to write a story that demonstrates task completion and adequate language use, the finer points of the story narration task can be considered. Students can go back to their stories and add details such as character, setting, and action descriptions. It may help some students to imagine people they know in the situation depicted in the prompt. This visualization may make it easier to imagine the reactions of the characters and make the stories more detailed. Additionally, students can expand the characters' relationships to one another, the characters' motivations, and their reactions or responses. These details add richness and interest to the story. As details are added and more complex situations are imagined, teach the students

how to add cohesive devices that show cause and effect, and anticipate action that may be fulfilled or disappointed.

Teachers should review transition words and cohesive devices. They may find that students use even the English counterparts incorrectly. Don't assume all students will logically use even simple connectors such as 和, 可是, 或者 (and, but, or).

Advanced students can work on adding richer vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. At this level the students are working with mood and nuance. For example, vocabulary can create a tone that is playful, or ominous, or sad. Four-character expression and other idioms add color and weight to a story. For example, in one story the character enters a room; he may do so 從容自在地 (calmly and confidently) or 油煎火燎地 (anxiously and alarmed, "oil on fire").

Students can practice writing several versions of a story ranging from basic to elaborate. This progressive layering of detail and complexity helps to clarify the process of story development. You may consider maintaining student-writing portfolios so that later in the course, students can rewrite early, less sophisticated drafts into more advanced versions.

To further illustrate this process, teachers can explain how traditional Chinese apprentice storytellers worked on the same story for months, taking a brief outline and turning it into a storytelling experience of several hours or even several days.⁴ Another source is Professor Tianwei Xie's Web site of "progressive readings" (循級閱讀).⁵ This is a collection of brief narrations that each has several versions of elaboration. Teachers may have students analyze these progressive narrations to understand what is done at each level to make the basic story more complex.

Students who analyze and practice writing progressively more elaborate stories can better understand the story narration process and improve their performance on the AP Chinese Language and Culture Exam and become better storytellers in Chinese.

Materials and Extension Activities

To simulate the AP story narration task, look for four-block comic strip stories—as long as the strip tells a complete story. Check newspapers or books of cartoon strips. AP publishes a book, for purchase, with comics that were used in previous French, German, and Spanish exams.⁶

4. *Chinese Storytellers: Life and Art in the Yangzhou Tradition* by Bordahl and Ross presents interesting research about the traditional storytellers. It is written in English, but includes lots of Chinese terminology and texts of stories in Chinese. The description of training of young storytellers is particularly interesting and relevant to the story narration task.

5. Professor Tianwei Xie, University of California State University at Long Beach, <http://www.csulb.edu/~txie/online.htm>.

6. *Advanced Placement Program® Picture Sequences from AP French, German, and Spanish Exams, 2004*. See <http://www.apcentral.collegeboard.com: http://store.collegeboard.com/productdetail.do?Itemkey=050761760>

In the classroom there is no need to limit storytelling activities to simulations of the AP story narration task. By extension there are lots of ways to practice the narrative voice. Any type of narration of any length, such as retelling folktales or children's stories, summarizing TV shows or chapters of novels, relating personal or family events, and describing dialogues, can be performed as storytelling activities.

Don't overlook the familiar. Students enjoy retelling stories that they know. One advantage of the familiar is that students can concentrate on task completion and language use rather than worrying about remembering the details of a new story.

Stories are often repetitive and provide the language practice that students need. For example, in the children's story of the "Three Little Pigs," the audience hears three times that each pig builds a house. The only new information is the material of the house and the personality of its builder. The audience hears three times how the wolf "huffs and puffs" at each pig's house. Only the results change. The repetition gives students opportunities to hear and repeat lots of the target language so they can internalize vocabulary and structures.

Chinese stories—traditional folktales and myths to contemporary short shorts—provide storytelling opportunities and also teach Chinese cultural values. Although demonstrating knowledge of Chinese culture is not a requirement of the story narration task, it is required in many other parts of the exam and is an integral feature of the AP Chinese Language and Culture course. Understanding similarities and differences in cultural connections and comparisons is specified in the National Standards.⁷ For example, have students compare *Little Red Riding Hood* or *Cinderella* to the Chinese tale *Lan Popo*. Students can compare and contrast settings or characters (the beginning), what happens (the middle), and how the story is resolved (the ending). They can compare and contrast characters' appearances, personalities, or actions, or the moods or themes of the stories.

Talk to your school's English department to find out what terms they use in discussing literature (such as "rising action" at my school). Students will progress more quickly using terms and concepts they have already learned. It will slow progress and create confusion if you are inadvertently asking students to replace familiar terms with unfamiliar ones.

Story narration need not be limited to writing. Stories can be used for listening comprehension and speaking fluency. One popular method, TPRS (Teaching Proficiency in Storytelling and Reading), uses stories as the primary mode of teaching. In courses where TPRS is used in conjunction with a traditional textbook, stories are

7. *Standards for Foreign Language Education: Preparing for the 21st Century*. (ACTFL, 1996.)

used to preteach vocabulary and structures in upcoming lessons. Blaine Ray, a high school Spanish teacher for many years in California and founder of TPRS, explains how storytelling provides lots of practice with patterns and vocabulary without the tedium and artificiality of traditional drills. When the teacher can produce or elicit language that is interesting, comic, surprising, dramatic, or familiar, or otherwise engage students' interest—students are willing to practice. In TPRS, “stories” are broadly defined to include anything in the narrative voice and can be made up from any source: a picture or series of pictures, a student's weekend plans, a news story, a summary, or a nonsense story made up with vocabulary from a current lesson.⁸

Storytelling will help students perform well on the AP story narration task. It is also a basic mode of communication and can be a fun classroom activity.

Summary

Chinese teachers teach a specific language but are, in general, language arts teachers (and to a limited extent, social studies teachers). Improving written or spoken Chinese shows students how to use their native language better—a lifelong process. Teachers emphasize language use but also need to deal with organization, logic, and format.

The task completion category of the scoring guidelines deals with format and the essential structures of successful communication in any language. Attention to the elements of the task completion format can add structure and comprehensibility to the student's response and may make up for deficiencies in vocabulary and other language use. Stories, personal letters, announcements, movie reviews, and receipts are all language tasks that have recognizable structural elements. Teaching students to recognize these elements will help them interpret and respond to other AP tasks as well as comprehend authentic materials. That is why task completion is such a critical category of the scoring guidelines.

The AP Chinese Language and Culture Exam includes a number of free-response tasks. Each task requires the use of a required format to be considered “complete.” Each task additionally requires certain language use elements. The scoring guidelines have been designed as an assessment tool to help AP Exam Readers evaluate student responses. Rewritten, repackaged into smaller rubrics, and presented at the right level of instruction in appropriate classroom activities, the scoring guidelines can be used as writing guidelines for any of the free-response tasks and help students improve their performance.

8. Ray and Seeley, *Fluency Through TPR Storytelling: Achieving Real Language Acquisition in School*, Berkeley, CA: Command Performance Language Institute, 1999, pp. 6–7.

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Helping Students Improve Their Interpersonal and Presentational Writing Skills

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The AP Chinese Language and Culture Exam has set a higher standard for the teaching of Chinese. Besides listening, speaking, and reading, in terms of writing, students should be able to “use a variety of written discourse styles, including descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive. Employing the organization, vocabulary, and structures appropriate to the purpose of their writing, students make themselves understood to an audience of readers with whom they will not have the opportunity to exchange further information and ideas” (*AP Chinese Language and Culture Course Description*, p. 5). This goal is a challenge for both students and teachers. From a teacher’s point of view, I’d like to take this opportunity to share what I did with my students to prepare them for the presentational writing tasks in the 2007 AP Exam. Because our program is still in its infancy, we are experimenting with different ways and strategies, many of which are still in the experimental stage. After the publication of the AP Chinese Language and Culture 2007 Scoring Guidelines, I felt very encouraged because clearer guidance has now become available. It makes me more confident that we can help students improve their writing skills. I know this is 抛砖引玉 and I’m certain that more and more teachers will create teaching strategies to meet their students’ needs.

The AP Chinese Language and Culture Exam requires students to demonstrate their writing skills by relaying a telephone message, writing a personal letter, responding to an e-mail, and narrating a story based on pictures. These tasks share some basic writing skills while each of them demands its own set of unique techniques, as indicated in the *AP Chinese Language and Culture Course Description*.

Relaying a Telephone Message

(one question, six minutes)

Knowledge and skills required:

- Interpersonal communication
- Listening comprehension; summarizing message (deciding which information is most important) and note taking; conveying important details
- Time control

When it comes to listening comprehension development, speaking to students in Chinese as much as possible is the best practice. Most of my students listen to and speak Cantonese at home. They do not have the opportunity to listen to Mandarin at home. We need to create an environment where they can have daily conversations as well as content-related input on various topics in Mandarin. I told my students that they don't have to understand everything. As long as they can understand main ideas, they will be fine. However, if some phrases appear repeatedly, they should write them down and find out their meanings.

Besides immersing students in the Mandarin speaking environment, we need to practice how to relay a telephone message. In order to help students present a detailed, well-organized, and coherent message with a clear progression of ideas, we start with a simple message, such as: 小张, 我是你的同屋小李。谢谢你的电话。很感谢你能帮我。我明天五点到波士顿。请麻烦你到机场接我。After I read this message twice, most of my students can write it down. However, I noticed one common problem in their writings: many confuse the writer of the message and its receiver. Their writing might read: 小李, 我是小张... Teachers need to pay attention to this problem and explain to the students that the writer is not the designated message receiver. The writer is the person who needs to relay the message to the designated receiver.

After writing a few simple messages and familiarizing the students with the tasks, more information should be added. For example: 小张, 我是你的同屋小李。谢谢你的电话。很感谢你能帮我。我明天坐飞机从三藩市到波士顿大概要五六个小时。我可能下午六点左右到学校。我不知道宿舍楼在哪。请你六点一刻在学校门口等我。万一飞机晚点的话, 我会打电话通知你。如果你有事的话, 请麻烦你告诉柯林。非常感谢。明天见。When some students first hear this longer message, they are overwhelmed. They try to write down every word and end up missing some important information. We need to teach them how to take notes. There are two things they need to keep in mind. First, they need to identify the main idea and note the important details. In this particular message, Xiao Li is the intended receiver of the message. Xiao Zhang is coming to

school and Xiao Li should wait for Xiao Zhang at around 6:15 at the dorm. If Xiao Li can't do this for some reason, he should ask Ke Lin to help. Ask your students to read the message they have written and see if it makes sense. Second, they need to figure out the fastest way to take notes. They can write in English, Chinese characters, or Pinyin. They should write in whichever language works best for them.

I told the students to look for specific information related to events, places, times and locations. These are normally the most salient pieces of information in a message. It is also very important for the students to learn how to put a message in a clear, coherent, and detailed paragraph.

Students indicate that relaying the telephone message is the more difficult part of the AP Exam because only six minutes are allotted to this task. To help students succeed at this task, we need to have more time-controlled practice in class on relaying a phone message in writing.

Composition in Letter Format

(one question, 30 minutes)

Knowledge and Skills Required:

- Presentational communication
- Informing
- Describing
- Expressing preference
- Justifying one's opinion

Before my students practice writing letters, we do some free topic writing. This exercise allows students to focus on their language usage, including correct sentence structure and appropriate vocabulary, and learn how to organize their ideas and express their thoughts in a coherent way. Normally, the topics are related to each lesson unit or theme. For example, for the theme of “学校 / 教育”, “如果我是校长”, “一次难忘的课外活动” could be the writing topics. Topics should give students opportunities to inform, describe, and justify their opinions. In class, students can start by brainstorming. They can then make a list of things that they like or dislike. They can also make a list of things they would like to see happen at school and state their reasons. Students will use these materials in their writing. The teacher can then model a format that demonstrates good organization of information.

Topic writing and letter writing can be alternated throughout the year. Letter writing utilizes a particular format, and students have to know what that format is. For

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instance, they need to learn how to use salutations at the beginning of a letter. Below is an example letter writing task.

Imagine you received a letter from a pen pal at a Chinese sister school. The letter asks about your city. Write a reply in letter format. First write about your city in general. Then choose ONE place and describe what you like or dislike about it. Justify your opinion with specific examples.

If this is the first practice letter your students write, it's necessary to go over the format of letter writing with them. First, address the person receiving the letter in the proper letter format. Then discuss with the students the various aspects of the task. They will come up with two major ideas: information about the city in general and about one specific place in the city. Students need to develop a thorough, detailed, and coherent writing plan focused on these main ideas. The first part is about the city. Describe the characteristics of the city, for example, its location, population, weather, restaurants, diversity, etc. The second part of the letter should offer opinions. Students need to choose one place in the city and write about what they like or dislike about this particular place. Remind them to give supportive examples to justify their opinions.

When checking on students' writing, share your observations and comments with them. Classify the writing as scoring in the high, middle, or low range and illustrate the characteristics of a well-written letter. Also, provide suggestions as to how letters in the middle and low ranges can be improved. It is a good idea to let students examine samples of letters and determine their quality by identifying them as scoring in the high, middle, or low range. The names of the students who wrote the samples should be kept anonymous.

These practices can be done as homework or as in-class work. The last stage is in the language or computer lab. Students will be given the task of writing a personal letter in 30 minutes. Teachers should offer comments after correcting the students' writings.

E-mail Response

(one question, 15 minutes)

Knowledge and Skills Required:

- Interpersonal communication
- Reading
- Responding to a request

E-mail writing involves reading comprehension and responding. While reading, students are trained to read through texts to try to grasp meanings and not to dwell on unknown words. When composing prompts for such a task, teachers need to give clear and specific instructions. Here is an example:

发件人: 王月华
邮件主题: 考大学

上封信中得知你已被三所大学录取了。恭喜你! 我知道在美国你们上大学有很多选择的余地。可是我还有一些问题不是很清楚。比如, 如果你想上的大学学费太贵, 你付不起的话, 可以得到政府的帮助吗? 如果录取你的大学都不是你想上的怎么办? 你还有其他的选择吗? 上公立大学和私立大学都各有什么好处? 选定了大学千万别忘了告诉我。盼望你的回信。

月华

There are three questions in the e-mail message that need to be answered. Giving an answer of “I don’t know” is not an option. Students must try to answer all three questions. Finally, besides answering these three questions, the sender also reminds the receiver not to forget to let them know which college they ultimately chose to attend. The writer should respond to that request as well.

Unlike personal letter writing, students don’t need to worry about using a particular written format when responding to an e-mail.

Story Narration

(one question, 15 minutes)

Knowledge and Skills Required:

- Presentational communication
- Narrating a story as depicted by series of pictures

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Story narration and other types of writing mentioned above share many common writing skills. However, story narration also uses the visual stimulus of a series of four pictures. Understanding the pictures in their totality, and how they are related and sequenced is crucial. By doing so, students can write a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Students may have different interpretations of the same pictures; therefore, some parameters should be set for them. We need to tell students that they don't have to come up with a complex background for the story behind these pictures. Their task is to write a clear, coherent story with a beginning, middle, and end. In order to reach that goal, we can start by asking some questions to help students come up with a possible story outline.

Take the story narration pictures from the course description as an example, in which a woman is shown rushing to a train station in a cab. When she arrives at the train station and tries to board the train, she finds that she has lost her ticket. Then she remembers that she may have left the ticket in the cab. She rushes out of the train station to find that the cab is still there. She retrieves the ticket, returns to the train station and finds the train leaving. The teacher may ask the students questions such as: "Who is she?" "Where is she?" "Where is she going?" "What is she looking for?" "Where did she leave the ticket?" "Is she able to find the ticket?" "What happens after she finds her ticket?"

The first draft written by the students can be very simple. The students can just write down their answers to these questions. For the second draft, students will need to add some details to the story. They may want to expand the story by adding why the woman needed to take the train and how she might feel when she found out that her ticket was missing. Keep in mind that it is also crucial to teach the students how to use cohesive devices to make the text "hang together" and move the story along. For instance, teaching connective devices such as 首先..., 然后,...and 最后 give the reader/listener a coherent sense of time and transition of events.

After a few sessions of collaborating practice, as mentioned above, brainstorming is not necessary and students can work on their own. My students do some of the individual writings as homework assignments without a time restriction. Then after a few tries with homework assignments, the students are ready to write new stories in class by hand. Finally, they are tested by typing stories in the lab in 15 minutes.

There are not many story narration practice materials available. I use many AP Spanish, French, and German pictures. They are not ideal because those pictures are designed for a different audience with different tasks, but I find them to be useful and acceptable stimulus materials for story narration tasks.

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Preparing Students to Narrate Stories Based on Chinese Idioms (Chéngyǔ 成语)

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Objective

To improve students' ability to narrate stories both in writing and speaking using visual and audio stimuli.

Pictures/Soundtrack

A set of four pictures similar to those used for the story narration task soundtrack in the AP Exam can be drawn from the video clip accessible at www.confuciusinstitute.net/resources/588.

- Picture 1 The painter Wen Tong with bamboo trees in the background.
- Picture 2 A young man visiting Wen Tong, asking the secret of painting pictures of bamboo.
- Picture 3 Wen Tong describing his experience of painting through years of observing and practicing.
- Picture 4 The metaphor of the idiom.

Transcription of the Video Clip

Xiōng Yǒu Chéng Zhú

胸有成竹

Gǔ shíhòu yǒu yí wèi huà jiā,

古时候有一位画家,

Once upon a time, there was a painter

tā tèbié shàncháng huà zhúzi。

他特别擅长画竹子。

who was very good at painting bamboo.

Tā huà de zhúzi xǔxǔ rúshēng, yuǎnjìn wénmíng。

他画的竹子栩栩如生,远近闻名。

The bamboos he painted were lively and famous.

Yǒu yì tiān, yí gè niánqīngrén lái bài fǎng tā,

有一天,一个年轻人来拜访他,

One day, a young man came to visit him and asked,

Qǐng wèn? nín de zhúzi huà dé zhème hǎo,

请问?您的竹子画得这么好,

“You paint bamboo wonderfully.

mìjué shì shénme ne?

秘诀是什么呢?

Could you tell me the secret?

Huàjiā shuō,

画家说,

The painter answered,

Wǒ jīngcháng zài zhúlín lǐ sànbù,

我经常在竹林里散步,

I often take a walk in the bamboo forest and carefully observe

zǐxì guānchá zhúzi de gè zhǒng zī tài,

仔细观察竹子的各种姿态,

the various forms of the bamboos

hé tāmen zài bù tóng jìjié lǐ de biànhuà。

和它们在不同季节里的变化。

and their changes in different seasons.

Niánqīngrén jīngtàn dào,

年轻人惊叹道,

The young man was astonished,

guàibùdé nín de yuànzǐ lǐ zhòng mǎn le zhúzi。

怪不得您的院子里种满了竹子。

“That’s why your yard is full of bamboos.

yuánlái shì nín zhào zhe huàhuàér yòng de。

原来是您照着画画儿用的。

They are the models of your paintings.

Huàjiā shuō, qíshí wǒ gēnběn búyòng zhào zhe huà,

画家说,其实我根本不用照着画,

The painter said, “In fact, I don't really need to take the bamboos

zài wǒ de xīnlǐ , zǎo jiù yǒu le zhúzi de shēnyǐng。

在我的心里,早就有了竹子的身影。

as models. I have them in my heart already.

Zhè jiùshì wǒ huà hǎo zhúzi de mìjué。

这就是我画好竹子的秘诀。

That is my secret of painting bamboo.

Xiōng Yǒu Chéng Zhú” bǐyù rénmen zài zuòshì zhī qián

胸有成竹比喻人们在做事之前

Xiong you cheng zhu.” It refers to having a plan or the confidence

yǐjīng yǒu le zhǔyì huò yǒu le chénggōng de bǎwò 。

已经有了主意或有了成功的把握。

to succeed before taking on an action.

Delivery Instructions

I. Prewriting Preparation

A. Have students answer the questions below:

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1. Imagine that you are a painter. What would you do intellectually and physically before you touch the canvas?
2. Have you ever seen or heard of a bamboo tree? Can you describe it based on what you know?
3. What would you do to gain confidence in painting? Imitate, practice, or something else?

B. Give the class the vocabulary handout.

- | | |
|---------|------------------------------|
| 1. 胸有成竹 | have a well-thought-out plan |
| 2. 著名 | famous |
| 3. 远近闻名 | be known far and wide |
| 4. 情况 | circumstances |
| 5. 阴晴风雨 | all weather conditions |
| 6. 琢磨 | think over |
| 7. 日积月累 | by gradual accumulation |
| 8. 印 | print |
| 9. 观察 | observe |
| 10. 夸奖 | praise |
| 11. 谦虚 | modest |
| 12. 成语 | idiom |
| 13. 比喻 | mean |
| 14. 成功 | success |
| 15. 把握 | assurance |

II. In-Class Activities

- A. Project the four pictures onscreen in class, followed by a handout of the four pictures, or play the video clip with the soundtrack.
- B. Divide the class into four groups of two to three students. In larger classes, increase the number of groups for the same task. Have each group take one picture. Have the students brainstorm for two to three minutes, taking detailed notes on what they see from the picture (clothes, brush, bamboo, leaves, house, paintings, courtyard, etc. The more details students can notice, the better it is.)
- C. All groups report their findings orally to the class, with key words written on the board for each picture for the class to use later in writing.

- D. After the oral reports are completed, students are given 15 minutes to complete this story narration writing task on the computer with the following instructions:
1. The four pictures present a story. Imagine you are writing the story to give to a friend. Narrate a complete story as suggested by the pictures. Give your story a beginning, a middle, and an end.
 2. Collect hard copies and/or electronic copies for immediate critique and feedback. On the screen or board, project one student's writing (in random order or one from each group, depending on time available) and invite comments from the floor based on the three major categories of the AP Exam Scoring Guidelines: task completion; delivery; language use.
 3. Back to groups. Have students grade one another's writing based on the three categories using the 0–6 scale performance levels.

III. Follow-Up Session: Make comparisons of cultural products and perspectives.

- A. Have students discuss the metaphor of the idiom 胸有成竹.
- B. What is an equivalent English proverb—or a similar English idiom—to 胸有成竹?
- C. How are the Chinese and English idioms different—in their origins, focus of perspectives, applications, etc.?
- D. Should you be 胸有成竹 in your handling of other matters? If yes, why? If not, why not? Give concrete examples in your reply.

Standards Targeted in this Instructional Unit:

Cultures

Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied. 胸有成竹 is a Chinese cultural product. By studying this idiom and how it is used, students learn the cultural perspective embedded in this Chinese idiom and acquire the understanding that Chinese culture is transmitted every day through the use of this and other 成语, which are four character expressions that convey a great deal of meaning because they are drawn from stories from the Chinese classics, or other sources from Chinese antiquity.

Connections

Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language. Through learning the Chinese idiom of 胸有成竹, students are asked to reflect upon connections between Chinese and English languages.

Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures. The idea and metaphor embedded in the image of 竹 are characteristic of the unique Chinese language, culture, and environment.

Comparisons

Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own. By comparing 胸有成竹 with the English equivalent, students become more aware of the nature and perspective of their own language.

Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own. Learning 胸有成竹 make students more sensitive to the cultural components in the target language and their own.

Assessment

Since *formative assessment* is often referred to as “assessment for learning” and *summative assessment* as “*assessment of learning*,” the former is generally carried out throughout a course or a project while the latter is usually carried out at the end of a course or project.

Formative assessment can be used to diagnose and measure a student’s current knowledge and skills for the purpose of identifying a suitable program of learning. It can also be used as a forward-looking assessment asking the students to consider their performance in hypothetical future situations. The role of the teacher in formative assessment is mostly to provide feedback on a student’s work.

Summative assessments are generally given at a particular point in time to measure student achievement relative to the learning goals set for the course. Summative assessment in a language class should be performance based. Responses to questions requiring the students to perform a particular task involving the use

of real-world application of knowledge and skills, for example, should be scored by human scorers using standards-based rubrics.

Two Sample Assessments for the Unit

1. Diagnostic and Self-Assessment of Vocabulary (Formative)

Depending on the time allocated for the unit, the teacher may choose to quiz on all 15 or any number of selected vocabulary. With the vocabulary handout distributed the day before, students are given ample time for study on their own.

In class, a vocabulary quiz can be administered in the form of dictation, which provides a useful aural component to reinforce listening comprehension.

Grading suggestions: Each word may be weighted a total of 7 points, with 4 points for characters, 2 for Pinyin, and 1 for meaning in English as an example for quick tabulation. This weighting scale is designed to emphasize the importance of acquisition of Chinese characters.

Grading can be done by the teacher at the end of class or by students themselves with the above set of guidelines. Students can also be asked to grade their peers' quizzes using the same guidelines. Student/peer grading has the added value of emphasizing honor, responsibility, and respect for oneself and others. Pedagogical gains are also evident in terms of heightened sensibility and awareness of their own mistakes.

2. Evaluation of Research Results (Summative)

Students are asked to search for English equivalents of the Chinese proverb 胸有成竹 to present later to the class in the form of an individual slide presentation or group presentation. Such a research project—and the various tasks the students are required to do—targets all five goals of communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.

Each presentation is evaluated based on both its form and content such as accuracy in use of the language, the scope and richness of the cultural content, and the appropriateness of the comparisons made between the Chinese and English languages. At the beginning of the session, students are given an evaluation sheet with three categories as suggested below.

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The purpose of this student/peer evaluation is twofold. First, the evaluation engages the students in self-assessment and contributes to their sense of ownership, which is crucial for active and positive learning. Second, this assessment process can be used as a supplement to the teacher's evaluation.

The sample evaluation form below is a rubric whereby each of the three categories is assigned a number, based on a three-point scale, with each number representing a description of the performance.

1. Clarity and fluency of speech (pronunciation/intonation)

3 = speech is delivered with minimal hesitation and errors

2 = speech is delivered with some hesitation and errors

1 = speech is delivered with frequent hesitation and errors

Points assigned: _____

Comments: _____

2. Precision of language (grammar/vocabulary)

3 = rich vocabulary and wide range of grammatical constructions with minimal errors

2 = appropriate vocabulary and grammatical constructions with some errors

1 = frequent errors in choice of vocabulary and grammatical constructions

Points assigned: _____

Comments: _____

3. Quality of information (scope/depth)

3 = response addressing the prompt completely and thoroughly

2 = response addressing the prompt partially with some details

1 = response addressing the prompt minimally

Points assigned: _____

Comments: _____

4. Efficiency of communications (interaction)

3 = delivery of information and exchange of ideas with audience are clear and succinct

2 = delivery of information and exchange of ideas with audience are at times unclear and wordy

1 = delivery of information and exchange of ideas with audience need frequent clarification

Points assigned: _____

Comments: _____

5. Artistic merit (multimedia)

3 = presentation is delivered with creative audio, visual, and audiovisual techniques

2 = presentation is delivered with some audio, visual, and audiovisual techniques

1 = presentation is delivered with few audio, visual, and audiovisual techniques

Points assigned: _____

Comments: _____

In designing an evaluation rubric like the one proposed above, teachers may wish to have a five-point scoring system, thus allowing the students to do a more detailed analysis of the performance data. Additionally, teachers can inform the students what points are considered acceptable for each individual category and what the composite acceptable points are.

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How to Teach and Use Story Narration with Authentic Materials

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Unit Overview

This unit will teach you the interactive use of story narration and authentic materials (i.e., materials meant for native speakers). Its essential goal is twofold: (1) use authentic materials to generate story narrations and (2) use story narrations to help students understand authentic materials. In this unit, story narration is used to introduce and preteach place words, locations, and movement. The stories also teach vocabulary needed for the authentic materials featured in this lesson: maps of China, pages from a Chinese middle school geography book, and a popular song, “假行僧 False Traveling Monk” by Chinese rock musician 崔健 Cui Jian.

This thematic unit contains a number of activities and materials that may seem unrelated at first. The obvious objective is the development of presentational writing and speaking, and the generation of good story narrations. Learning to do story narrations is an end task in itself, but story narration can also be used to make authentic materials and aspects of culture accessible to students.

This unit is set at a Chinese Level 2 and illustrates how story narration activities and authentic materials can be introduced at the pre-AP level. By the time students are at the AP level they will be familiar with the requirements of the story narration task on the AP Chinese Language and Culture Exam.

This unit may be used as is, but hopefully will serve as a model and encouragement to teachers to create their own story narrations for other classroom topics.

Discussion

This unit came out of two or three years of lessons with classes at different levels. There was no suitable lesson in the textbook on place words and location, so I created a lesson about place and location combined with Chinese geography. This added authentic materials and cultural knowledge and also incorporated the connections and comparisons goals in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*.⁹ Meanwhile, in another class I had been playing bits of popular music. Students especially liked “假行僧 False Traveling Monk” but found parts of it difficult to understand. I wanted to teach this song but didn’t want to hand it out with a huge vocabulary list and have it degenerate into a long decoding exercise.

While prepping for these two classes, it became apparent that these two separate activities could be combined. My students enjoyed story narration activities so I made up stories that would teach the needed vocabulary and structures. This reinforced the character vocabulary students needed for the geography materials, and when the students heard the song at the end of the unit they were well prepared to understand it. Authentic materials are very interesting but can be intimidating. My students were especially thrilled that they could understand something as relevant to them as a rock song. The exercise increased their confidence to work with authentic materials, as well as improved their story narration skills and cultural knowledge.

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to, orally or in writing:

- Understand, retell, and rewrite in Pinyin (or type in characters) four complete stories using featured vocabulary and patterns.
- Describe location and relative location of objects or of places on maps. (湖南在湖北的南边, etc.)
- Express movement to and from a location (for example, 从北边走到南边).
- Read and write the required character vocabulary.
- Locate provinces and cities on authentic Chinese maps and atlases and translate the place names.
- Interpret the featured rock song (which contains vocabulary and patterns learned from the stories).

9. *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3324>

Unit Contents

1. Classroom procedures for the first story narration (which can be applied to the other three).
2. Four four-block, student-drawn cartoons to be used for four days of story narrations.
3. “假行僧 False Traveling Monk” lyrics.
4. Notes for second, third, and fourth stories.
5. Suggestions for map and geography activities, including character vocabulary list.
6. Suggestions for extension activities.
7. Final assessment and closing.

The geography activities are offered after the first story and concurrently with the other stories. They are a good change of pace from the intensive story narration interaction. Additional drills, worksheets, and activities should be added to extend this unit to about two weeks. My students make simple maps or diagrams of our region and describe the location of their town, home, bedrooms, and items in their bedrooms. We play hide-and-seek with objects in the classroom. I make up Pinyin crossword puzzles using patterns from the stories and students do traditional translation exercises and grammar worksheets as needed. Sometimes I show photos or short video clips of places in China. Make use of whatever materials you have available that support your lesson objectives.

Procedures for First Story¹⁰

Situating the Lesson

The day's lesson uses storytelling to practice talking about location and direction. Students have previously studied simple location sentences such as: 我住在____. (I live in____.) or 我在这儿. (I am here.). Students practice story narration elements such as writing a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end. They use “有 there is/was” to introduce characters and setting and “有一天 one day” to introduce an event in the story, describe what happens, and write a resolution.

10. For more detail about storytelling techniques, see Ray and Seeley.

Objectives and Standards

Students will do the following tasks.

- Describe locations using direction words, retell stories with partners. (interpersonal communication)
- Use new words to tell a story. (presentational communication)
- Write a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end.
- Use the story narration rubric to correct errors.
- Comprehend the spoken story. (interpretive communication)
- Recognize and write new characters.
- Learn etymology of given characters. (cultural products and practices)
- Compare typical renderings of “mountain” in the United States and in China. (cultural comparison)

New Vocabulary and Structures

Listening and speaking (Pinyin): 北边、弹吉他、吵、对、别、走, north side, play guitar, noisy, toward, don't, leave

- Functions: 有: there is/are/was/were; existential usage; 在.....边; location pattern
- Reading and writing (characters, Pinyin): 东西南北边, east, west, south, north, side (to support geography lessons)

Materials

Overhead or PowerPoint for attached cartoon, stroke order sheets for new characters, kitchen timer (optional).

“MUSIC TALES” STORY 1



Warmup

Students practice previously learned simple location sentences in the target language using 在 and 住在, responding to such questions as: Where are you now? Where do you live?

Presentation

A. Introduce and practice new words: Write the Pinyin vocabulary words on the chalkboard. (Substitute words as needed.) Introduce each word with a simple gesture (TPR). Briefly give the English definition, but stay in the target language for the rest of the exercise.

1. 北边 north: point to the north side of the room
2. 彈吉他 play guitar: pantomime “air” guitar
3. 大声 loudly: cup hand around mouth, mime shouting
4. 吵 noisy: cover ears
5. 有一天 one day: index finger up, hand in other palm.
6. 对 toward: face students, gesture two hands from head forward

7. 别 don't: raise one hand, palm out (Stop!)
8. 走 leave: "run" fingers in direction of door, wave "bye"
9. 有 there is/are: put fist down into open palm
10. 在...边 located, side: put open hand edge down on one side of the open palm.

Students may offer suggestions and the class can decide on the best gesture.

- B. Embed the new vocabulary into easy sentences and questions for practice. Check students' understanding by watching them perform the correct gesture as they hear the word. You may have students shut their eyes while doing the gestures and open them only if they don't remember the meaning of the words. Students should be able to demonstrate the new vocabulary before going on. Practice the vocabulary in meaningful sentences with previously learned vocabulary: 别看, 别说, don't look, don't speak, etc.
- C. Basic Story 1: 有一个男孩子。他叫____。他和爸爸妈妈住在一座山的北边的一个小房子里。这个男孩子爱好音乐。他爱弹吉他, 弹得很好, 可是弹得很大声。他觉得很好听。可是爸爸妈妈觉得太吵。有一天他弹吉他又弹得很大声。爸爸妈妈很不高兴, 就对他说, “别弹了。吵死了!” 可是男孩子弹得很大声没有听到爸爸妈妈在说什么。爸爸妈妈很生气, 觉得儿子很不听话, 就对儿子叫着, “要是你想弹吉他, 就得出去!” 男孩子不知道为什么爸爸妈妈那么生气, 也不知道该怎么办, 就走出去了。

There's a boy. His name is _____. He lives with his parents in a little house on the north side of the mountain. He loves to play guitar. He plays very well but very loudly. He feels it sounds great. His parents think it's too noisy. One day he was playing the guitar very loudly. Dad and Mom didn't like it. His parents said to him, "Don't play, it's too noisy!" The boy was playing so loudly that he didn't hear. Dad and Mom were a little angry. They felt the boy wasn't listening to them. They shouted to their son, "If you want to play that guitar, you'll have to leave. Go out." The boy didn't know why Dad and Mom were so angry, and didn't know what else to do, so he left.

On an overhead or PowerPoint slide, present each block of the story one at a time. Ask questions and have volunteers retell the story. Ask questions to have students repeat patterns and vocabulary. 他们住在山的北边还是南边? 男孩子跟谁住在一起? Start with multiple-choice questions and yes/no questions and progress to harder questions. Practice previously learned structures and vocabulary in this new context.

After two pictures, have a volunteer retell the story. Calling on volunteers gives quicker students chances to demonstrate their skills while other students hear the story again. After checking mid-range students' comprehension, continue with the story. Time the length of the presentation of each story block with the students' understanding.

- D. At the end of the teacher's first telling of the story, have student volunteers retell or act out the story. Increase the difficulty of the questions and encourage use of linking words (cohesive devices) such as 可是, 因为, 所以, 要不然、, etc., to make longer sentences.
- E. Have students break into pairs. Give students two minutes each to retell the story to their partner. Have students retell as much of the story as they can. A timer is useful for this activity. After two minutes, have students switch partners and retell.
- F. After adequate practice (20–30 minutes), have students rewrite as much of the story as they can in five minutes. Students may write in Pinyin or characters but should write as fast and as much as they can. Tell them that they can add whatever details they want such as names, description, etc. The goal is to write at least 100 syllables/characters for a small (not punitive) class work grade. The purpose of this exercise is to encourage production and fluency, so misspellings and minor grammatical errors are not critical.
- G. After the first story but before the second, present the sample story narration rubric (below) or similar rubric to have students assess their stories and correct mistakes. Comments in brackets [...] are added for clarification.

Story Narration Rubric

Format, Comprehensibility, Organization [Task Completion]:

- ___1. Includes an introduction. Uses 有 or another term to introduce the story.
- ___2. Includes a description of characters in the story.
- ___3. Uses a time word or transition word [such as 過了一會兒 or 然後] to present an event.
- ___4. Describes what happens, using new words.
- ___5. Uses linking words. ["cohesive devices"; you may specify how many and which ones.]
- ___6. Story is logically sequenced.

SPECIAL FOCUS: Story Narration

____7. There is a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Language Use [Use this section of the rubric to focus students on their most common mistakes.]:

____8. Sentences are complete (contain a noun and a verb).

____9. 是、很 are used correctly.

____10. Adverbs (很、太、都、也) are used correctly.

____11. Measure words are used when necessary.

____12. Time words are in the correct order.

____13. Location pattern is used correctly.

____14. Story is at least _____ syllables/characters long. [My own requirement.]¹¹

The rubrics should be commensurate with the students' proficiency levels and the level at which the students are expected to perform. A fuller discussion of making rubrics and checklists for story narrations can be found in the companion article on story narrations, "Strategies to Improve AP Chinese Story Narration Performance."¹²

A. Peer Editing: Divide students into groups of three to five and have them read one another's writings. They can use the rubric as a checklist. The group can then write a story together that incorporates the best qualities of each and matches the requirement of the rubric. Students may work with several sets of partners to peer edit their stories to revise or expand the original story. Peer editing is an effective activity that provides quick feedback on stories and helps students understand the essential elements of story narration.

At this stage, assessment of the written stories is limited to "effort" grades—that is, being on task. The number of words written can be entered to check for improvement, as well as a holistic "plus," "check," or "minus" for meeting the elements of the story narration rubric. The final story narration is graded using the scoring rubrics.

B. If time and interest allow, students should be encouraged to add picture blocks to the story, rewrite the story with more dialogue as a play, or otherwise revise the story. This need not be done with each story.

C. The teacher presents new characters for reading and writing and explains etymology if relevant. Students practice stroke order.

11. Adapted from the AP Chinese Language and Culture 2007 Scoring Guidelines.

12. Mammone, *Strategies to Improve AP Chinese Story Narration Performance*.

Recap of Student Activities

- Students memorize meanings for nine new vocabulary words.
- Students respond to meaningful questions using the new vocabulary.
- Students listen to the story, block by block.
- Volunteer students retell and/or act out the story.
- Students practice retelling the story to partners.
- Students write as much of the story in Pinyin as they can within a time limit.
- Students self-assess or peer edit using the story narration rubric.
- Students rewrite their stories.
- Students memorize stroke order and Pinyin for new characters

The first story narration session should last no more than 50 minutes.

Extension

Cultural connections: With the overhead off, the teacher should ask students in the target language to draw a cat (or some other object) on a mountain (formative assessment). The teacher should then compare student drawings of “mountain” to the cartoons. Students may note that a typical gesture for mountain is making a triangle with both hands and arms. The teacher may reference the pictograph for 山 and mention 黄山 Huangshan.

Assessment

Assign a vocabulary listening and character writing quiz for the following day.

Volunteer students retell the previous day's story.

False Traveling Monk

Jia xing seng

假行僧 (词、曲 : 崔健)

I want to go from south to north.
I also want to go from white to black.
I want everybody to see me,
But not know who I am.

If you see me looking a little tired,
Then please pour me a bowl of water.
If you've fallen in love with me,
Then please kiss me.

我要从南走到北
我还要从白走到黑,
我要人们都看到我
但不知道我是谁

假如你看我有点累
就请你给我倒碗水
假如你已经爱上我
就请你吻我的嘴

I have these feet and legs.

I have so many mountains and rivers.

I want all of this everything—but not hate or regret.

If you want to love me, you'd better not fear regret,

Because one day I will go far and fly high.

I don't want to stay in one place,

And never want anyone to follow me,

I only want to see your beauty,

But don't want to know about your suffering.

I wish to attain the waters of heaven,

But not your tears.

I have no wish to believe in demons,

And no wish to oppose anybody.

Don't try to figure out who I really am,

And don't try to see through my hypocrisy.

La la la la la la la.....

我有这双脚, 我有这双腿

我有这千山和万水

我要这所有的所, 但不要恨和悔

你爱上我你别怕后悔

总有一天我要远走高飞

我不想留在一个地方

也不愿有人跟随

我只想看到你长得美

但不想知道你在受罪

我想要得到天上的水

但不是你的泪

我不愿相信真的有魔鬼

也不愿写任何人作对

你别想知道我到底是谁

也别想看到我的虚伪

嘞嘞嘞.....

(Lyrics source: <http://www.cuijian.com/ENGLISH/Pages/works/music/nlm/05.htm>.

Translation adapted from

<http://www.poetry-cn.com/forum/read.php?id=18827&bbsid=1012>.)

Notes for Second Story

Situating the Lesson

This lesson reviews and expands location words vocabulary through storytelling.

Students review “的时候 when.” Students should have some previous experience with simple time words such as today, tomorrow, etc.

'MUSIC TALES" STORY 2



New Vocabulary and Language Functions

- 听音乐 listen to music, 在一起together, 流泪 shed tears, 后悔regret, 的时候 when, 歌 song, 里 inside, 外 outside
- Functions: 在... 边有 located somewhere there is
- Pinyin and characters: in 里、out 外、right 右、left 左、located 在

Warmup

- Quiz students on yesterday's new vocabulary (alternatively use TPR for a formative assessment).

SPECIAL FOCUS: Story Narration

- Volunteers retell (act out) first story.
- Students recognize direction character flashcards.
- Practice the 的时候 (when) pattern. What do you like to do while you do your homework? (watch TV, listen to music, eat or drink something)

Presentation

- The teacher introduces the new words and story. See procedures for Story 1.
- The teacher should emphasize the use of “有” (there is) in the narrative voice. Practice with meaningful sentences.
- After storytelling, the teacher introduces new characters: 里外右左在.
- The teacher points out the girl’s “come here” gesture in the cartoon. Take the opportunity to discuss cultural differences in the gesture between China and the United States.
- To further practice “right” and “left” vocabulary, the teacher may ask students to describe the drawing. Alternatively, the teacher may describe a room or place using direction words and students will make an accurate drawing.

TPR Vocabulary

1. 姑娘 girl: pantomime looking into mirror (let class help to find an appropriate gesture)
2. 听音乐 listen to music: hands over ears for headphones, rock head back and forth
3. 在一起 together: hands clasped together
4. 流泪 shed tears: run index fingertips from eyes down face
5. 后悔 regret: sadly shake head back and forth. gesture “what have I done?”
6. 里 in: cup left hand, put right two fingers into left hand
7. 外 out: keep left hand cupped, pull two fingers out of left in a big gesture
8. 右 right: hold right hand up
9. 左 left: hold left hand up

As with the first story, students use the story narration rubric in peer or self-editing activities to improve story narrations.

Notes for Third Story

Situating the Lesson

The day's lesson uses the third story to emphasize movement to different locations.

"MUSIC TALES" STORY 3



New Vocabulary and Language Functions

- Listening and speaking: 去 go、外面 outside、牛棚 cowshed、走 walk、到 to、从 from、远 far、累 tired、睡觉 sleep、想知道 wonder
- Characters and Pinyin: 去 go、走 walk、飞 fly、从 from、到 to

Warmup

- Given a map of their own state, have students describe the locations of given towns and landmarks.
- Quiz students on previous vocabulary (alternatively use TPR for a formative assessment)
- Have students identify learned characters.
- Brainstorm and review body parts and feelings.

Presentation

TPR Vocabulary

1. 去 go: “walk” fingers from one hand to over shoulder
 2. 外 outside: point to somewhere outside the window
 3. 牛棚 cowshed: pantomime horns and draw “house” with two fingers
 4. 走 walk: “walk” fingers on open palm
 5. 到 to: point to students
 6. 从 from: move pointing finger away, back away from students
 7. 远 far: shade eyes to look into distance
 8. 累 tired: yawn
 9. 睡觉 sleep: two hands to side of face, tilt head
 10. 想知道 wonder: scratch chin, show puzzlement
- Include more movement words with this unit. Brainstorm with students. How did the boy get himself to the mountain?
 - TPR walk, run, stroll, dance, fly, jumped, slid (just a few terms are needed).
 - Practice “to” and “from” in the context of the story, using different locomotion words.

Notes for Fourth Story

Situating the Lesson

The final day of storytelling practices music terminology and feelings, and prepares students for hearing and reading the Cui Jian song.

"MUSIC TALES" STORY 4



New Vocabulary and Language Functions

- Listening and speaking: 醒了 wake、里头 inside、愿意 willing、歌 song、吹小号 play trumpet、点头 nod head、所有 all
- Functions: 觉得、想 feel, feel like
- Character and Pinyin: 觉得 feel、恨 hate、怕 fear

Presentation

TPR Vocabulary

1. 醒了 wake up: pantomime sleep and open eyes quickly
 2. 里头 inside: two fingers inside cupped hand
 3. 愿意 willing: gesture “acceptance”
 4. 歌 song: pantomime singing, get suggestions from students
 5. 吹小号 play trumpet: pantomime
 6. 点头 nod head: pantomime
 7. 所有 all: gesture “everything”
 8. 觉得 feel: two hands on heart
- The teacher reviews radicals used in feelings vocabulary, body parts (review “flesh” radical).
 - The teacher introduces the proverbs: 对牛弹琴 “playing the qin for the cows,” “casting pearls before swine,” and the expression 吹牛 “to brag.”

Suggestions for Geography Lessons

Situating the Lesson

Students use maps and other authentic materials to learn about places and place names in China.

Objectives and Standards

Describe locations of places in China.

Locate given places on a map of China.

Translate place names in China.

Students recognize and write new characters associated with place names.

Learn about geography of China.

New Vocabulary and Structures

- Functions: 在... 边有 located someplace is _____
- Essential characters 东西南北中 京地区 海河江湖湾黄长省台 four directions, middle, capital, district, sea, rivers, lake bay, yellow, long, province, terrace

Materials

Large outline map (provinces, cities unlabeled) or overhead transparency

- Blank paper outline maps for students, list of provinces, cities, rivers
- Authentic political map
- Authentic topographic map
- Dictionaries
- Authentic geography texts, other brochures, atlases, etc.
- Pictures of different areas of China (optional)

Presentation

1. Pass out a list of places in China that exemplify direction words and place compounds, for example: 湖南 Hunan, 湖北 Hubei, 河南 Henan, 河北 Hebei, 北京 Beijing, 南京 Nanjing, 山西 Shanxi, 山东 Shandong, etc.
2. Students translate the place names (for example, inferring from the water radical the significance of place names of Hunan, Hubei, Henan, Hainan, etc.). They should demonstrate they understand word order and can differentiate 山东 from 东山.
3. Give out additional place names (such as 上海、桂林、西安、云南、青海、海南、新疆、陕西、西藏、四川、黑龙江、广东), defining individual characters for students or requiring them to look them up. Students translate the names.
4. Students locate places from atlases and write on blank maps (Pinyin or characters depending on the usefulness of the characters at this level). A small group may work on one large map. (Note: An overhead projector may be used to trace a large map on bulletin board paper.)
5. More place names can be added and regional boundaries marked. My students used the geography textbook table of contents to find the regional boundaries.
6. Students discuss relative positions of China locations using place vocabulary, such as: 北京在河南的北边。Beijing is north of Henan.
7. Individuals or small groups research a location and create a brief travelogue (facts regarding famous locations, weather, language, etc., including several visuals).
8. Students may make up their own “guide to Chinese places and their names” for visitors to China.
9. Discuss culturally perceived differences between different regions of China.

Suggestions for Extensions

By the end of the story narrations and geography exercises, students should be able to comprehend most of Cui Jian's song when played in class, accompanied by written lyrics. Teachers may decide to do more activities on Cui Jian, depending on student interest. One well-known textbook contains a chapter on Cui Jian that students could use to get more background information.¹³ Students can create a biography project for Cui Jian by looking up information on the Internet in English and Chinese. Teachers can provide a list of questions to help students structure a biography. Students can narrate a biography of Cui Jian in Chinese even if they have found the information in English.

1. Where did Cui Jian grow up? 崔健是在哪儿长大的?
2. What work did his parents do? 他爸爸妈妈是做什么工作的?
3. What were Cui Jian's interests when he was little? 崔健小的时候, 对什么感兴趣?

Chinese musical instruments, traditional and/or modern music, and the political and social culture of the '80s are also possible extension topics.

Final Assessment and Closing

Assessments include listening and reading vocabulary quizzes, translations and problem solving, and also a final story narration writing assignment. The story narration rubric used as a writing guide in the self-assessment and peer-editing activities is based on the AP Scoring Guidelines. This unit was designed with pre-AP level students in mind, and the expectation of performance on some elements are lower than AP. However, the rubric still reflects the essential elements of good story narrations.

The final writing of one of the stories is holistically graded on consistency with the pictured story, completeness (having a beginning, middle, and end), logical organization, some use of transition words (cohesive devices), and being free of errors—particularly errors that are mentioned in the story narration rubric. I also require a minimum of 150 syllables/characters.

It will take a good deal of practice for students to learn how to do story narrations well. At this stage, it's not necessary to be overly punitive in grading. Save some of

13. Jin Hong Gang and Xu De Bao, *Shifting Tides: Culture in Contemporary China*, Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 2003, pp. 159–180.

your students' early story narrations. Several months later or the following year, have students rewrite them.

This unit does not aim to offer a crash course in story narration, but to encourage teachers to use story narrations more often in class and at the pre-AP level. Story narration is a versatile way of teaching that can be combined with textbook lessons and authentic materials.

While it seems convenient to rely on published picture stories for story narration tasks, sometimes these won't match the level of your students, the sequence you want to follow, and other materials you have at hand. It's not necessary to limit story narration exercises to AP Exam style picture stories. Decide what you want to teach and find artistic students to draw simple but suitable drawings. You can create interesting and effective activities that teach a number of skills.

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