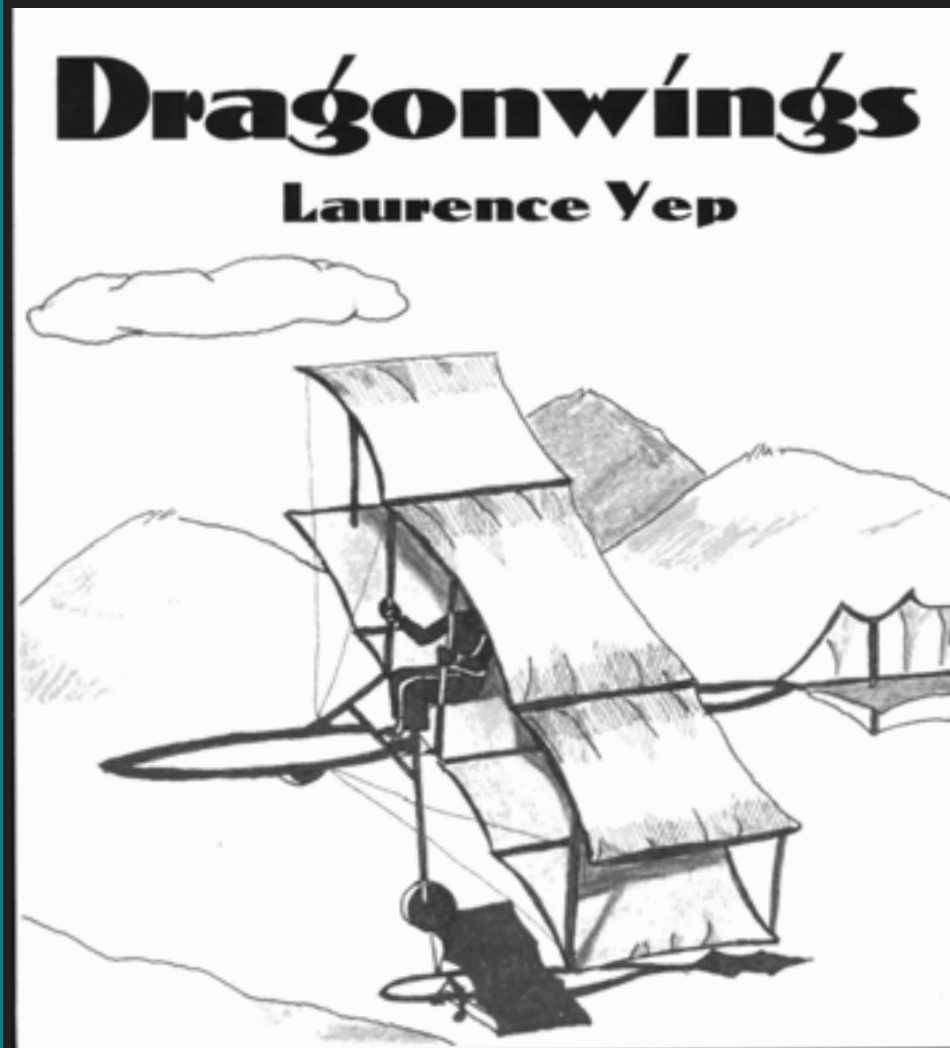


Novel·Ties

Dragonwings

Laurence Yep



A Study Guide

Written By Estelle Kleinman

Edited by Joyce Friedland and Rikki Kessler

LEARNING LINKS

P.O. Box 326 • Cranbury • New Jersey 08512

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with a specific novel consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel on its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging student's love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Chinese Immigration

From the 1850s to the 1930s, males from poor areas of southern China came to work in the United States, earning money to send back to their families. Although these men expected to stay in America for only a short time, circumstances often prevented them from returning. Because they believed their stay was only temporary and because respectable women did not leave home even with their husbands, the men did not bring their wives with them to America.

The Chinatowns in America between 1850 and 1940 were “bachelor societies.” The men earned very little money, and almost everything they earned was either sent home or saved for a visit to the homeland. Some men tried to escape their loneliness by taking drugs, especially opium. Others tried to get rich faster by gambling, sometimes losing everything.

Because the Chinese never intended to set down roots in America, they learned little English and held fast to their customs. Chinatowns were set up to be miniature Chinese cities. Men with the same surnames grouped together to form clan associations, which in turn combined to form district associations. These associations, or companies, would help newcomers by providing them with food, housing, and job information. The companies would also act as chambers of commerce for businesses run by members, keep in contact with families in China, protect members against injury, and settle arguments. Along with the district companies, and in some cases serving the same individuals, were the secret societies, or *tong*, which often engaged in illegal activities and secret rituals.

In the early days of Chinese immigration, San Francisco welcomed the Chinese. They were needed as cheap labor to provide services to miners and later to help build railroads. But Americans expected these immigrants to return to China. Not only did most of them stay, but more immigrants arrived in America because of worsening economic conditions in China. An anti-Chinese movement arose, and the Chinese were blamed for California’s worsening economic problems. Gangs began to attack any Chinese they saw on the streets. It became popular to catch Chinese and chop off their queues. In July of 1871 thousands of unemployed workers rioted in San Francisco’s Chinatown. Soon similar violence spread through the Western States. In addition, anti-Chinese legislation for Chinese living in America and Exclusion Laws limiting Chinese immigration made life very difficult for the Chinese.

The San Francisco Earthquake of 1906

At 5:12 AM on April 18, 1906, a major and devastating earthquake hit San Francisco. The earthquake lasted only two minutes but left buildings in rubble and led to an inferno that raged for three days. The earthquake severed the city’s three main water

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? Where and when does the story take place? Have you read any other books by the same author?
2. **Social Studies Connection:** *Dragonwings* tells about the Chinese living in San Francisco's Chinatown in the early 1900s. Read the Background Information about Chinese Immigration on page three of this study guide and do some additional research to learn about Chinatowns at that time. In what ways were the Chinatowns like ghettos of other minorities? In what ways were they different?
3. Do some additional research to learn why the Chinese, beginning around 1848, referred to America as "the land of the Golden Mountain."
4. The Chinese immigrants in this novel encounter prejudice in the United States. Discuss other groups of immigrants who have met with prejudice. What are some reasons for prejudice? What can be done to fight it?
5. Do you think that immigrants who come to the United States should hold fast to their culture or should they assimilate? Hold a class debate on this subject with classmates who hold opposite opinions.
6. **Science Connection:** This novel takes place around the time the Wright brothers made their historic flight in the first powered airplane. Read the Background Information on Orville and Wilbur Wright on page four of this study guide and find photos of the airplane that the Wrights and other early aviators flew. Display these pictures in your classroom. With your classmates, discuss the qualities a person would need in order to build and fly such airplanes. Why might some people believe that early aviators were more daring than today's astronauts?
7. In this novel a man holds fast to his dream despite ridicule and hardship. Think of a time when you or someone you know pursued a difficult goal. What problems were faced? How was the goal accomplished, or was it necessary to abandon the goal?
8. Obtain a map of San Francisco. You might find one in your library, or you can write to The San Francisco Visitor Information Center, 900 Market Street, San Francisco, California 94102. As you read the novel, locate the streets and areas referred to in the story. Read the Background Information on the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 on page three of this study guide.
9. Laurence Yep, the author of *Dragonwings*, wrote the following about the wide appeal his writing has for young adult readers of many backgrounds:

Probably the reason that much of my writing has found its way to a teenage audience is that I'm always pursuing the theme of being an outsider—an alien—and many teenagers feel they're aliens.*

Do you agree with Yep's assessment of teenagers? Have you ever felt like an outsider?

* From *Something about the Author*, Vol. 69, p. 231. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1992.)