



INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUD PLAN

Engage in an interactive read-aloud by taking time before, during, and after reading to ask questions and think aloud. Encourage responses among students with the following conversation guide:

Before Reading

- Introduce the book's major theme by saying, "This story is about a boy who worries that he's not big enough to do something a grown up asked of him. Have you ever felt like you were not big enough to do something you were asked to do?" Allow students to share their thoughts.
- To encourage responses to the text, tell students to give silent hand signals during the reading of the book. When students can sense the boy is having an important emotion, they can put their hand on their heart. When students have a prediction, they can put a finger to their head.

During Reading

- After Ah-Fu talks with the frog, pause and ask students, "How do you think the boy feels? Why do you think he feels that way?"
- After Ah-Fu sees the ox and trips, pause and highlight the boy's cry: "I'm just not big enough . . ." Explain that when people say "not big enough" they might mean someone is not tall enough or old enough. They might also mean that someone is not responsible enough or not smart enough. Ask, "Why does the boy say he is not big enough to take the ox home?"
- If you notice students giving a hand signal during the reading, acknowledge them with a nod or brief statement, such as "I see that [child's name] is noticing how Ah-Fu is feeling" or "I like seeing the reading work you are doing while coming up with predictions." Call on some students to share their observations or predictions if you feel that it will not disrupt the reading.

After Reading

- Encourage text-to-self connections by asking, "Have you ever been told that you are not big enough to do something?" and "How did it make you feel and do you think it's ever okay not to follow someone's advice?"
- Explain that when we are challenged to do something new, it can feel scary but may be a good opportunity to learn what we are capable of. Ask, "Can you think of an example of when you overcame a challenge?"

MAPPING OUT JOURNEYS

Making maps is an engaging way for children to develop spatial reasoning skills, visualize pathways and relationships between places, and foster creativity and fine motor skills through drawing. Moreover, maps that are created in connection to books and stories encourage students' critical thinking skills as they "map" their own understanding of the characters' growth and story elements, such as setting and plot.

Ah-Fu undergoes a physical, as well as metaphysical, journey to bring the ox home. Task children to draw a map of the path the boy takes to reach the ox and then return home. Depending on the age and ability of the children, encourage them to include various elements of a map, such as a title, key or legend, landmarks, and labels. The map should show the physical journey of the boy leading the ox home and can include places such as the ox's field, the thicket of trees, the creek, the cow path, and the boy's home. It can also include pictures or symbols of the boy's metaphysical journey, such as the boy riding the ox, the boy leading the ox by the horns, and the boy herding the ox from behind.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Ah-Fu experiences many different emotions, ranging from fear and self-doubt to calm and pride. Help students reflect on the boy's feelings during different parts of the story using the following questions as a guide:

- What feelings can you identify the boy having?
- How can you tell he feels a certain emotion?
- Why is Ah-Fu surprised by the ox's fear of the dark?
- Why does Ah-Fu begin feeling more confident?
- How does the ox help Ah-Fu respond to obstacles on their way home?

After thinking about and discussing these questions together, lead children in a role-playing exercise. Select pages of the story in which a character is feeling a strong emotion and reread these aloud, one at a time. For each example, ask for volunteers to show how Ah-Fu, the ox, and/or others might express their feelings. Afterward, connect these scenarios to the students' own lives by role-playing imagined situations that elicit similar emotions. For example, students can act out how they feel when taking on a new responsibility for the first time or feeling afraid of something new.



ART EXPLORATION: TRADITIONAL CHINESE PAINTING

Author and illustrator Regina Linke's illustrations for *Big Enough* take inspiration from traditional Chinese art styles called *gongbi* and *xieyi*. Gongbi (GOHN-bee) is a painting technique that layers ink and colors over time to make finely detailed, realistic pictures. This style is seen most clearly in the illustrations of the human and animal characters. Xieyi (sheh-EE) is the opposite of gongbi, with its freer, more sketch-like style. This is seen in the outlines of trees and mountains in the background of many of the pages.

Take a few minutes to share some examples of gongbi and xieyi paintings outside of the text through an internet image search. Afterwards, have children paint a picture using one or both of these styles. Choose a simple model to start, such as a leaf or piece of fruit. Follow the guide below to create your own painting.

Materials: White paper, pencil, watercolor paints, black ink or paint, different sized soft brushes, a small cup of water, and a paper towel or sponge



Procedure:

1. Explain to children that gongbi is a Chinese painting style that is very detailed. The picture should have clean lines and soft layers of color. Begin by directing children to use a pencil to lightly sketch their model or object with smooth, clean lines. They should focus on their model first.
2. Use a thin brush and dip it into black ink or paint. Trace the sketch with thin, fine lines and include as many details as possible. Do not rush.
3. Next, dip a larger soft brush into water and use the watercolor paints to fill in the pencil outlines. Layer the colors, beginning with light colors. Gongbi typically uses soft and gentle colors, so avoid very bright or saturated paints. Let dry, then continue to layer colors.
4. Use a thin brush and black paint to add more clean, detailed lines.
5. If your students would like to try the xieyi technique as well, guide them to use pencil lines to quickly sketch out a background. Xieyi focuses on expressing the feelings of a subject rather than the fine details. Students can focus on the movement or mood in their picture.
6. Using a brush dipped in watercolors, try long sweeping strokes, basic lines, and bold curves. Paint freely and quickly and don't worry about details.
7. When students are done with their picture, they can add a signature with their name or a simple mark in the corner with black ink. Then, step back and admire the work!



These Teaching Tips were created by Joanne Yi, PhD