Introduction to China Box

The East Asian Studies Center presents China Box, a teaching tool for teachers to expose their students to the Chinese language and culture. The items were selected and obtained during our last two trips to different parts of China. Each item in the box informs and reflects on different aspects of the Chinese culture. Therefore we hope, through the concept of realia, that students can see, feel and hence experience Chinese culture.

The items are divided into 4 categories, namely- ‘Going to School,’ ‘Chinese Games,’ ‘Daily Life in China,’ and ‘Chinese New Year.’ In this guide, descriptions of the items and suggested class activities are provided for each of these categories. We have not provided any particular lesson plans with the China Box as we believe that the teacher knows how to best use and apply these items in his/her classroom. We hope that you will find this box helpful in planning your lessons.

We appreciate your comments and feedback on our China Box. In addition, when you return the box, we would like to hear how you used the items in your lessons/classroom and the outcome of your lessons. If you have lesson plans based on the materials in the box and would like to share them with other teachers, please submit them when you return the box. With your permission, we would like to include the lesson plans in the box as a resource for other teachers.

To reserve the China Box, please complete the online request form located at http://www.indiana.edu/~easc/resources/east_asian_boxes/request.htm

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I. Going To School

Children in China spend at least six years in school, beginning at the age of six in a local school. At the end of the sixth grade they must take a very difficult examination to move on to Junior High School. Again in the ninth grade, another series of examinations will determine whether they will be promoted to High School. To gain entry into a College or University, High School seniors must take a competitive College Entrance Examination for which they must study incredibly hard.

Testing is central to Chinese pedagogy and schooling in China, and it can get very competitive. Most school students hope to enter ‘Key’ Schools in their provinces, which only recruit the most able students from each local school. If you are in a ‘Key’ Junior High School, rather than an ordinary local school, your chances of getting into an excellent High School and University are greatly improved.

Chinese, Science, History, Mathematics, Music, Fine Arts and Physical Education are taught at the elementary level. A great deal of emphasis is placed on memorizing – learning by rote - in the learning process. Classes are enormous: usually 40-60 children in each class. Chinese schools are proud of their class sizes as they signify their ability to attract students. English is taught in the Junior High School and passing the English examination is a requirement to move on to the High School and University.

Education and the rigorous method of testing have been highly valued in China for a very long time, since the time of Confucius (553-472 B.C). For more than two thousand years, most of the top officials in the Chinese government have had to sit through a series of examinations before they could qualify for their positions.
Listing of Items

These items are mostly related to what kids use in schools in China.

1. Maps

![Map of China](image1)

Map of China

![Tourist Map of Beijing Downtown](image2)

Tourist Map of Beijing Downtown

2. Animal Picture Book

![Animal Picture Book](image3)

3. Audio Cassette Tape of Chinese Songs (CD version provided)

![Audio Cassette Tape](image4)
4. Red Scarf/ Bandana

5. Chinese Workbooks (Level 1, 3 and 4)

6. Xiezi (Writing) Book

7. Chinese Brush

8. Mao Pin
9. Seal and Ink Pad

10. Abacus

11. Chinese Story Books
Activities

I. Identifying Important Chinese Landmarks

Refer to Appendix E for a map of China.

On the map of China provided, trace the course of the:

A. Great Wall
B. Yangtze River

Also locate the capital city, Beijing.

Tell the Story of Meng Jiangnu and the Great Wall

The most enduring of the many legends about the Great Wall is the story of Meng Jiangnu, whose wails toppled it.

Qin Shi Huang, the First Emperor launched a grandiose project of linking various defensive walls in the north of China to create what was to become known as the Great Wall. He sent one of his generals north with 500,000 labourers. Among those conscripted for the task was Meng Jiangnu’s husband Wan Xiliang, who was seized on the night of their wedding. Before they parted, Meng took a hairpin of white jade from her head and broke it in two. She gave half to Wan Xiliang with the words: “My heart is as white and pure as this jade. Keep this half and you will feel that I am with you”.

Tales of the toll the wall was taking had reached her native place. The pace was brutal and the overseers merciless. Thousands upon thousands of labourers died of overwork and maltreatment. Ancient books were later to record that “the ditches were filled with corpses,” and that “piled-up skeletons supported one another.”

Nothing was heard of Wan Xiliang after he left. When autumn came and the birds began to fly south, Meng Jiangnu recalled that when he left he had been wearing only thin clothing. She made him some padded clothes, bade her parents goodbye and left in search of her husband.
One day, hungry and exhausted, she fainted by the roadside. When she came to, she found that she was lying on a comfortably heated kàng brick bed and a white-haired old woman was attending her. Meng was very eager to continue with her journey, and the old woman accompanied her. After three days and nights, Meng Jiangnu decided to say goodbye to her and thank her for her kindness, but when she turned to her the old woman had disappeared. The legend suggests that she was an immortal who, moved by Meng's devotion, had assumed a disguise to care for her. Once Meng Jiangnu became lost and was wandering around in the mountains. Then she heard a flock of wild geese that seemed to be beckoning her. She followed them and finally reached the Great Wall.

There she saw the workers dressed in rags and reduced to skin and bones. But where was her husband? She mounted a guard’s platform high above the wall and shouted until her voice was hoarse and the wall is said to have shaken. Alas, she found no sign of her husband. (Adapted from http://www.chinatown-online.co.uk/pages/culture/legends/meng.html)

II. Tape Listening

Listen to the audio cassette tape/CD (item #3). Identify 3 other songs that are western songs.

Answer:: Track 6 - Happy Birthday, Track 9 - Edelweiss, Track 10 - We Wish You A Merry Christmas