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From CHÂTEAU FORT TO RENAISSANCE PALACE

Jennifer Turan Rothwell

On his deathbed, Renaissance Pope Nicholas V offered this advice on how to keep the common people loyal to Rome:

...the mass of the population is ignorant of literary matters and lacking in any culture. It still needs to be struck by grandiose spectacles because otherwise its faith...will end in due time by declining to nothing. With magnificent buildings, on the other hand... the popular conviction may be strengthened and confirmed...¹

What was good for the church might also be good for the state... or so thought kings of the Renaissance.

At the Field of Cloth of Gold in 1520, Henry VIII of England and Francis (François) I of France joined in a spectacle to end all spectacles. In tents decked with precious gold cloth, they carried on a small matter of diplomacy—whether to join forces against the new Hapsburg emperor, Charles V. More publicly, they vied in serving up a costly round of tournaments, balls, and feasts aimed at showing who was superior at the heady new game of Renaissance monarch.

One way Henry VIII made a lasting impression on his subjects was by increasing the number of royal residences in England to more than sixty.² Francis built fewer, but thought bigger, devoting his treasury to such magnificent palaces as the Louvre, Fontainebleau, and his

royal “hunting lodge” at Chambord in the Loire Valley. Moreover, he encouraged his nobles to follow suit by erecting chateaux from end to end of the valley.

Why would a king so clearly bent on increasing the royal power encourage such building? Hadn't the nobles' possession of formidable castles posed an obstacle to the expansion of the French royal domain for centuries? True. Yet the style of castles—in France and elsewhere—had for some time been undergoing a dramatic transformation. This change in architecture reflected other great changes in society, chief among them the decline of feudalism, the emergence of a money economy, and the intellectual revolution moving north from Italy to capture the soul of Europe.

The Rise and Fall of the *Château Fort*

It was in northwestern France that feudalism developed its classic form following the breakup of Charlemagne's empire.³ In the feudal system, the king stood atop a pyramid, with great lords owing him homage and military service in return for grants of land (fiefs). These higher nobles (the king's vassals) in turn granted fiefs and accepted the homage of lesser nobles (subvassals), and so on down to the lowest escheon of nobility, the simple knight. This system of military obligation evolved into a political, economic, and social order, with holders of fiefs

ruling over manors and dispensing justice to the mass of people at the pyramid's base: serfs, and later, tenant farmers.

The early successors of Charlemagne effectively ruled only Paris and the surrounding Ile de France. To the north and west were the great dukes of the seacoast (Normandy and Brittany) and the lesser, but powerful, counts of the interior (including Anjou and Blois in the Loire Valley). The king held the throne by virtue of two things—heredity and holy oil (the latter used in his coronation at Rheims to symbolize papal recognition). To expand his kingdom meant overcoming the great nobles who held sway in the thick-walled fortresses they called home.

The chance to extend the royal domain into the Loire Valley came after the death of Henry II of England in 1189. Henry, the great-grandson of William the Conqueror, was also Duke of Normandy and Count of Anjou when his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine gave him still more claim to land in France. Though Henry was a vassal of the French king, he did not think or act like one, and held court at Angers in the western Loire Valley. The squabbles between his sons—Richard the Lion-Hearted and John—allowed French king Philip (II) Augustus to extend his rule over more of the French heartland.

Philip Augustus was a scholar of ancient fortifications and had observed castles in the Holy Land as a leader of the Third Crusade. He set the style for the French fortified castle, or *château fort*. A massive keep (*donjon*) was set in a square court (*cour*) and surrounded by high curtain walls (*enceintes*) extending between four corner towers (*tour*). These round towers with their conical roofs projected outward from the ramparts and were pierced with arrow loops.

Extending along the ramparts and around the towers was a continuous wall-walk (*chemin de ronde*). This might be a covered gallery, or open with battlements (*crenellations*) for firing arrows or hurling

objects at the enemy. Later, the *chemin de ronde* rested on corbels and contained machicolations, or holes for dropping missiles on attackers. At the base of the castle was a moat or ditch, with the castle gate protected by a drawbridge and portcullises.

Possession of a *château fort*—so well designed to withstand siege—could be turned equally well against a foreign enemy (the English) or the king himself. In fact, a lesser noble in a small castle could defy his own overlord for more time than it might seem worth to lay siege to the castle. The power of the nobility as a military caste rested on two things: the ability to hold a castle and the skill to fight on horseback. The feudal system itself remained in balance only so long as the mounted knight (*chevalier*) remained the central figure in warfare.

The fall of the armored knight was presaged by the Battle of Crecy during the Hundred Years War. There, in 1346, English archers with longbows defeated successive waves of French cavalymen. The arrows released from longbows could pierce mail, while anchored pikes could gut horses and bring their riders down.⁴ Equipping man and horse with plated armor now became necessary, but impossible for most knights to afford. The advent of pikemen marching in line (as either soldiers in the king's pay or hired Swiss mercenaries), and of field artillery, spelt final doom for the knight in armor.

The decline of the *château fort* paralleled these developments. The days when castle walls could withstand siege by artillery became numbered, and the *château fort* as obsolescent as the armored knight. This does not mean that nobles ceased living in castles, or that the cavalry—a preserve of the nobility—lost its preeminence in warfare. But the tournaments held at the Field of Cloth of

Gold were already little more than a remembrance of past glory.

Background: the Vienne River at Chinon
Photograph by Priscilla Turan





Chinon

The Chateau of Chinon was built on the site of a Roman camp on a long escarpment above the Vienne River, a tributary of the Loire. It belonged to the counts of Anjou, one of whom became King Henry II of England. After Henry died here in 1189, King Philip (II) Augustus of France captured Chinon. He and later kings made additions to the castle.

Langeais

The Chateau of Langeais (1465) looks down forbiddingly on the village at its base. King Louis XI built this castle as a defense against rebellious nobles in general, and the Duke of Brittany in particular. His great aim to absorb Brittany into the royal domain was achieved after his death, when King Charles VIII married the orphaned Anne de Bretagne. Anne arrived at her forced wedding in a red velvet dress trimmed with the skins of 139 ermines.

Langeais represents a transition from the medieval *château fort* to the Renaissance chateaux. Below its conical roofed towers (Gothic) are two upper storeys meant for defense.

The lower one houses a *chemin de ronde*, or wall-walk, that extends around three sides of the castle. It projects outward from the tower wall supported on corbels and containing machicolations—holes for dropping objects on the enemy. The arrow slits are also medieval. Beyond the gateway is a “bent entrance”—a narrow passageway that turns corners as a hindrance to intruders. But the large windows on its facade, and the side of the castle facing the courtyard, are more characteristic of the Renaissance.



Photograph by Jennifer Rothwell

The New Game of Castle: the Renaissance Chateau

It was in the Loire Valley that most French Renaissance chateaux were built. This region southwest of Paris became the heartland of France after the final defeat of the English in the Hundred Years War. The Loire was a major artery of transportation; its fertile valley was a rich source of wine and grains; and its surrounding forests were replete with enough game to satisfy the favorite royal pastime of hunting.

According to architectural historian Francois Gebelin, the building of chateaux in the Loire Valley was “the deed of the monarch.”⁵ While kings did not build most of the chateaux, they strongly encouraged their nobles to do so, in order to add beauty and prestige to their realm. The great era of chateau construction in the Loire region extended through the reigns of five kings, each identified with one or more of the chateaux described in this article:

- Louis XI (1461-1483)
- Charles VIII (1483-1498)
- Louis XII (1498-1515)
- Francis I (1515-1547)
- Henry II (1547-1559)

Being a proper king of the Renaissance cost a lot of money. This golden age was paid for with new sources of wealth other than the traditional tax on land (the *taille*, paid by the peasantry, since nobles by definition did not pay taxes). The kings of France had long relied on financiers drawn from the upper middle class (*haute bourgeoisie*) to manage the royal treasury. This rising class of burghers—which everywhere controlled the trade that was enriching Renaissance states—challenged the power of the nobility even while aping its manners. Nobles in turn denounced these nouveaux riches even as some revived their flagging fortunes by marrying bankers’ daughters.

The following were among the devices used by Francis I to build the royal coffers:

- declare rents from church lands yours and not the Pope’s
- sell hereditary offices to the nobility (“nobles of the blood”)

- grant titles to middle class supporters (“nobles of the robe”)
- send explorers out for gold, settle for furs
- open new avenues of trade (Ottoman Turkey)
- open a bank to cover your overdrafts (the Bank of Lyons)
- marry your son (Henry II) to a “tradesman’s daughter” (Catherine de Medici)
- when all else fails, confiscate your favorite castles

Being a proper Renaissance noble was likewise costly, and many could not foot the bill for living nobly. The French nobility had for decades been losing ground to currency depreciations that undercut the value of their fixed rents. Those worst-off lived in deteriorating castles, dubbed *châteaux de la misère*, and further endangered their noble status if they farmed the land themselves (nobles by definition did not work).⁶ More successful nobles thrived by turning to sheepraising and enclosing the commons—a process also underway in Tudor England. Or, they learned to play the courtier and turn their position at court to their economic advantage. High or low, “nobles of the blood” acted as one in jealously guarding their diminishing stock of feudal privileges.⁷

The châteaux of the Loire reflect this transition in the role of the nobility. While kings were stripping the feudal fortifications from royal palaces, nobles were building new castles with pseudo-defensive features—such as all-but-useless moats and fake machicolations. The persistence of the Gothic tower on otherwise Italian-style buildings also partially reflects this phenomenon. Tower, moat, machicolations—even a pigeon house—were all noble privileges to flaunt in the face of any bourgeois upstart who might think to build a castle.

Consider the new Chateau of Chaumont, which replaced a chateau fort destroyed as punishment for its owner’s part in a noble revolt for military pensions in the 1480s:

Pierre d’Amboise, having compromised himself in the League of Public Good, saw his chateau at Chaumont razed to the ground and, having repented, obtained permission to rebuild it. In doing so, he deliberately chose the cause of peace and security and built a home the

uselessness of whose apparent defences was obvious to all. The drawbridge is a triumphal gateway and the walk round the battlements a pleasant promenade. It is a decor to which only the nobleman had a right; one might almost say it is theatrical.⁸

For flamboyant monarchs like Francis I, all the world was a stage. Dominating the performance was the king, whose role—though not yet absolute—was secured by his exclusive right to levy armies and taxes, a growing economy that could pay for the expensive scenery of the Renaissance, and a rising spirit of nationalism among the audience in the pit. The roles played by nobles—though changing—remained prominent, and their rivalry with the merchant class offered an endless source of interesting and comical subplots. Waiting in the wings was the remainder of the Third Estate—the great mass of people who would finally have their day when they burst on stage unscripted during the greatest show of all: the French Revolution. ❖



Photograph by Jennifer Rothwell

Amboise

King Charles VIII brought Anne of Brittany to his childhood home, the Chateau of Amboise, before departing for military adventures in Italy. He won no new land, but did return with a cohort of Italian artisans and sculptors who helped convert the medieval castle into a gracious Renaissance court. A massive tower that rises from the banks of the Loire to the high castle grounds may look like a medieval keep. In fact, it was built to house a spiral ramp for carts and carriages in order to make life easier for the pregnant Anne.

The military grounds above the great rampart wall shown here were converted into gardens. The artisans constructed royal apartments and a chapel dedicated to St. Hubert, patron of the hunt,

which was ornamented with a hunting frieze and antler-like towers. The castle moat—the den of bears and leopards—later became a tennis court. It was on his way to a tennis match that Charles accidentally struck his head on a stone doorway lintel, and died shortly thereafter.

The photograph of Amboise on the cover of this supplement illustrates changes in French chateau architecture: in the foreground, a medieval dormer; middle ground, a Gothic tower; background, the Renaissance Chapel of St. Hubert.

Blois

The Chateau of Blois, the ancient seat of counts, became a royal court under Louis XII and Francis I. Each king built an extensive wing on the castle. The picture on page M2 shows a detail from the Louis XII wing, which was built in the style of Flamboyant Gothic (decorated with flame-like motifs). The statue of the king indicates the Renaissance admiration for Roman equestrian statuary. Below the niche are the royal emblem (crown and porcupine), and the monograms of King Louis and Queen Anne of Brittany (whom Louis also married to keep her duchy in the family).

Blois was richly decorated on the interior, as befitted the homes of kings and nobles in the new era of conspicuous consumption. Francis I built the stone fireplace shown here, which uses the common Renaissance motifs of seashells and arabesques (S-shaped curves). It also contains two royal emblems—the salamander representing Francis (left) and the ermine representing Queen Claude, daughter of Anne of Brittany and Louis XII.

Children's Books

The Middle Ages

Boardman, Fon W., Jr. *Castles*. New York: Henry Z. Walck, 1957.

Brooks, Polly Schoyer and Nancy Zinsser Walworth. *The World of Walls: The Middle Ages in Western Europe*. New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1966.

Caselli, Giovanni. *The Middle Ages. History of Everyday Things Series*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1988.

Davis, William Stearns. *Life on a Medieval Barony: A Picture of a Typical Feudal Community in the Thirteenth Century*. New York: Harper & Row, 1923, 1951.

Howarth, Sarah. *The Middle Ages. See Through History Series*. New York: Viking, 1993.

Mitgutsch, Ali. *A Knight's Book*. New York: Clarion, 1991.

Oakes, Catherine. *Exploring the Past: The Middle Ages*. New York: Gulliver, 1989.

The Renaissance

Brooks, Polly Schoyer and Nancy Zinsser Walworth. *The World Awakes: the Renaissance in Western Europe*. New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962.

Bull, George. *The Renaissance*. New York: The John Day Company, 1968.

Harris, Nathaniel. *Leonardo and the Renaissance*. New York: The Bookwright Press, 1987.

Wood, Tim. *The Renaissance. See Through History Series*. New York: Viking, 1993.



Photograph by Brenda Luck



Francis I by Jean Clouet

Uffizi Gallery, Florence

Chambord

Leonardo da Vinci may have helped design Chambord when he spent the last years of his life in France as the guest of King Francis I. This massive "hunting lodge" was begun in 1519 and built out of the white tufa-stone (a form of limestone) native to the Loire region. The architecture of Chambord is partly Gothic—it has a central keep and corner towers with French-style roofs—but mainly reflects ideas of the Italian Renaissance. This includes large windows set between superimposed pilasters, and storeys related vertically by use of the classic orders (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian capitals), but separated horizontally by double rows of moulding.

Chambord was the king's favorite retreat, as hunting was his favorite sport. When the king went hunting, he did not go alone. How the move took place was reported in a fit of disgust by one of the king's artisans, Italian goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini:



Photograph by Brenda Luck

We followed the Court with the weariest trouble and fatigue. The reason for this was that the train of the king drags itself along with never less than 12,000 horse behind it; this calculation being the very lowest; for when the Court is complete in times of peace, there are some 18,000.

Perhaps Cellini's report should be taken with a grain of salt, since he was well known for embroidering the truth. On the other hand—considering that the royal retinue included 500 falcons—maybe not.

Notes

1. Margaret Aston, ed., *Panorama of the Renaissance* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 15.
2. Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
3. Carl Stephenson, *Medieval Feudalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1942), Chapter 1.
4. Robert S. Hoyt, *Europe in the Middle Ages* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1957), 526.
5. Francois Gebelin, *Chateaux of the Loire*, quoted in Georges Poisson, *Chateaux of the Loire* (New York: Meredith Press, 1968), 7.
6. Hoyt, 586.
7. Sidney Painter, *French Chivalry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1957), Chapter 1.
8. Poisson, 7.

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- Seward, Desmond. *Prince of the Renaissance: The Golden Life of François I*. New York: Macmillan, 1973.

Chenonceau

Chenonceau is known as the “women’s chateau” because of the many women who built and occupied it. Thomas Bohier, the king’s treasurer, began the construction of Chenonceau in 1513. When he accompanied Francis I on a military campaign in Italy, his wife took over the building. Catherine Bricconnet cast off medieval building ideas—such as narrow halls and rooms leading into one another—and built Chenonceau around a great center hall with airy and comfortable rooms opening on each side.

After Bohier died, Francis “captured” the castle by confiscating it on the grounds of debts owed to him. He gave it to Henry II, who bestowed it on Diane de Poitiers. When Henry died in a jousting accident, Catherine de Medici—now regent for her son, Francis II—took back the chateau and made it a center of court life. She added the famous double gallery on a bridge already built over the Cher River.

Photograph by Priscilla Turan



teaching activities

The following activities may be suitable for research, discussion, and class projects.

1. Ask students if they can identify the chateaux described on the back cover of this supplement (the answers are printed at the bottom this page). Help them to begin with a discussion of the historical background. Students could extend the activity by adding their own descriptions to the list and asking classmates to “name that chateau.”
2. Assign students to research one of the following:
 - a. Changes in warfare during the 14th and 15th centuries in Europe. How did this affect the position of armored knights (nobles)? How did it affect the building of castles?
 - b. Changes in domestic living brought about by the growth of trade. What were some of the household goods most desired by kings, nobles, and the rich middle class during the Renaissance?
 - c. Changes in architecture during the Renaissance. What ideas did Renaissance architects adopt from the classical buildings of ancient Greece and Rome? Where were they first used during the Renaissance? How did they affect the chateaux of the Loire Valley?
 - d. Changes in the roles of artists and workmen. Who actually built a chateau? What kinds of workers were needed? How was the role of an artist special? How did guilds protect the rights of craftsmen? Did everyone get paid?Any of these research activities could be used as the basis for a class mural or model building project.
3. Ask students what the word “noble” means to them. Then provide handouts to help them compare two ideas of noble conduct: the medieval code of chivalry and the Renaissance idea of the courtier. A good source for the latter is Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier*, which was almost “required reading” for any Renaissance man of fashion. What is similar in these codes of conduct? What is different? Do students think the behavior they describe is in fact “noble”?
4. Renaissance humanists believed in education for women. Many girls from European noble families—including Anne Boleyn of England—were educated as “maids of honor” at the court of Queen Claude, the wife of Francis I. What did they learn? How did it compare with a boy’s education? What was the least, and what was the most, a Renaissance woman was expected to learn?
5. Renaissance monarchs often travelled and held court in different castles. In England, this was called “going on progress.” French monarchs did the same. What were some of the reasons for this? Who travelled with the king and queen? What household goods did they take along? How might these journeys have provided entertainment for commoners as well as kings? Ask students to create an imaginary conversation between two peasants watching a royal household go by.

Answer key for “Name that Chateau:”

1-D, 2-H, 3-C, 4-B, 5-E, 6-G, 7-A, 8-F

Overcoming the Odds: An Easy Interdisciplinary Activity

Tedd Levy

Few would deny the effectiveness of a well-executed interdisciplinary project. However, it has been my experience that teachers are sometimes less than enthusiastic about undertaking such activities, either because they think it will call for an inordinate amount of preparation or they are under pressure to cover the “regular” curriculum. If you and your colleagues have hesitated, here’s an easy start-up project to tempt you.

Some Biographical Choices

Arthur Ashe
Harriet Tubman
Sammy Davis, Jr.
Jane Goodall
George Rogers Clark
Stevie Wonder
James Thorpe
Edgar Allen Poe
Jackie Robinson
John Paul Jones
Roy Campanella
Maria Mitchell
Sojourner Truth
Chief Joseph
Mother Jones
Helen Keller
Louisa May Alcott
Stephen Hawking
Frederick Douglass
Martin Luther King
Rachel Carson
Benjamin Franklin
Alice Walker
Marian Anderson
Geronimo
Malcolm X
Oprah Winfrey
Albert Einstein

Background

Our 8th grade team meets roughly three times a week and is composed of teachers in social studies, science, language arts, and mathematics. Our students represent a very broad range of abilities and backgrounds, and benefit from new and exciting educational experiences. Prompted by our principal to provide an interdisciplinary experience, we wanted to be responsive to student needs and what we consider important to learn.

Biographical reports have been standard middle school assignments for a long time. We decided to elaborate on this routine assignment by having students investigate ways in which people handle difficulties in their lives and go on to become successful. The idea of “overcoming the odds” related well to student interests, it “fit” everyone’s curriculum, and it could be used to teach what we felt were important concepts. We wanted students to see that everyone faces obstacles in life, and that the individual struggle to “overcome the odds” helps shape character.

Project Organization

In organizing this project, we identified several goals for students to achieve beyond strengthening their research and writing skills. Among them were:

- to recognize similarities between one’s own life and that of another
- to develop an understanding of basic human commonalities while also recognizing the importance of cultural and historical differences
- to recognize that many factors influence individual achievement, but that a key component is individual effort
- to develop the ability to respond constructively and flexibly to challenging situations.

We now searched for a common introductory experience, meaningful activities, and some type of exciting culminating event. We had already scheduled the film *Roots* as part of the regular social studies program, and decided to use it to begin exploring obstacles and achievements. (Any number of other films could have been used.) We asked students to choose a character from the film and write an essay about how that person overcame the obstacles in his or her life.

After discussing this theme and sharing their essays with their peers, students now chose another individual to research with the aim of studying how this person overcame obstacles in his or her life. There were few restrictions on whom students could select. The person could be living or dead; American or international; of historical or cultural importance; a member of the community or a family member.

To help with the selection process, we posted long lists of individuals from which students could choose. This led to stimulating discussions about the lives of many famous and obscure individuals at the outset. Among the possibilities were politicians and military leaders who overcame superior opponents; racial and religious leaders who overcame prejudice and discrimination; explorers who overcame natural hazards; and artists, musicians, athletes, and many others who faced adversity in the form of physical, emotional, racial, socioeconomic, or intellectual challenges.

The people we recommended included Harriet Tubman, who had sleeping attacks;

Edgar Allen Poe, who was orphaned at five and struggled against alcoholism; Stephen Hawking, who must deal with physical impairments; Marian Anderson, who overcame racial prejudice; Mother Jones, who lost all her children to malaria; Jim Thorpe, who fought ethnic discrimination; and Malcolm X, who overcame a troubled youth to become a widely-followed leader.

As experienced middle level teachers, we knew that many students like to work with others, while others prefer to do “important” school assignments by themselves. Therefore, we decided that students could work alone or with a partner, and that we would slightly modify the assignment to account for this.

Activities: Research and Write

We assigned each student or pair to research and write a three- to five-page paper. In addition, individual students were asked to prepare a large poster. Students working in pairs were requested to construct a three-dimensional project or plan a dramatic performance or media presentation.

Time for student research was provided once a week for about a month in social studies, language arts, science, and mathematics classes. Students brought their own materials or used classroom resources. They also had the use of the school library and the computer room.

Students also had several larger blocks of time provided by combined class periods. On these special project days, we grouped students based on the individuals they chose to research. All students working in the same area—for example, history, science or math, literature, sports, the arts—met in the same classroom. We also combined smaller groups so that each of the four teachers would have about the same number of students.

To help structure student research, we distributed a pre-writing form for students to complete and hand in with their note cards for review by their language arts teacher. The pre-writing forms then went to the teacher leading each student’s research group for further critique and return before students wrote their papers.

Publishing a Handbook

We told students their papers would be used to prepare a Handbook on Overcoming the Odds. Each student was responsible for writing a one-page synopsis of how their person succeeded against the odds, and for drawing or attaching a photocopy portrait. We also asked students to come up with two good short-answer questions about the individual they researched. The completed handbook, with a cover design by a student artist, was distributed to all students and to other classes in our school.

The Grand Finale

Since all middle school teachers know that a prime motivating factor for students is food—particularly pizza—we decided to create a game in which the reward would be a pizza party.

Our activity consisted of posing questions to students divided into four teams (the four research groups), who prepared for the contest by studying their Handbook on Overcoming the Odds. Each team chose a representative to act as a live game piece and advance

on a giant game board that we set up in the gymnasium.

One of our teachers obtained a large roll of newsprint and, working with a small group of students, developed a series of obstacles and rewards that were written or drawn in squares on four long strips of paper. These were unrolled from each corner of the gymnasium to meet in the center, where we had placed a large drawing of a pizza. Each student team was assigned to a corner of the gym.

Then the game began, with each group in turn answering questions from those prepared earlier by the students. Many questions asked for names and dates. Others were more challenging:

- As a young boy, what difficulties did Benjamin Franklin face?
- What technical ruling prevented Jim Thorpe from keeping his Olympic medals?
- In what field was Samuel Adams a failure?
- What obstacle did Jim Abbot have to deal with?
- How did Marian Anderson’s obstacle make her a success?
- What person could not see or hear but was a literary success?

Team members discussed the questions and relayed answers to their representative on the game board. When successful, the student “game piece” advanced one or two blocks and then had to fulfill the requirements written on the block. These “obstacles” had students dancing the hokey-pokey, singing The Star Spangled Banner or the Barney song, and so forth. As we hoped, the time allotted for the game ran out before any team could be declared the winner. Then we went to the cafeteria for pizza.

After this break for lunch, we came together again to watch the film, *Wild Hearts Can’t Be Broken*, the moving story of a girl who runs away from home to join the circus, where she stars in a daring horse-diving act but is blinded by an accident. Although blind, she again performs the dangerous and seemingly impossible stunt.

Evaluation

Each of the four teachers on our interdisciplinary team reviewed student biographies and projects. We assigned traditional grades based on an outline of expectations and grading standards, which we explained to our students at the start of the project. In addition to content quality, organization, language usage, and overall appearance, we evaluated how well students adhered to rules about length, size, and time in doing their projects.

Some time after the completion of the unit, we gave students an evaluation form and asked them to comment on their “Overcoming the Odds” work. They were nearly unanimous in saying that they enjoyed and learned from the experience. As one young lady put it, in exemplary adolescent fashion: “It’s a nice break from school work, but we’re still learning things.”

It was a nice break for her teachers, too. And we’re still learning things. ❖

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In from the Cold

People with Disabilities in Juvenile Literature

Jane Manaster

Only a generation ago, schoolchildren were segregated from their physically, emotionally, or mentally challenged peers. Since then, legislation has allowed people with disabilities to lead fuller lives. Medical and technological advances and the supportive scope of rehabilitation suggest that in the future an increasing number of people will become active in society despite their special needs.

Dramatic advances have been made in public accessibility for people with disabilities since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Today's students accept special bathroom facilities, water fountains, and telephones within easier reach, reserved parking places, TTY, and Braille in public elevators. Children in wheelchairs appear in catalogue advertisements, wheelchair riders compete in marathons, and the families of Special Olympic contestants glow with pride. What today's students may not know is that most of these changes have come about in their own short lifetime.

The well-being of people with disabilities and their integration into mainstream America are an important social concern. Authors of juvenile fiction and non-fiction have written some excellent books that can be used by teachers to heighten awareness of this issue among students. For example, this year's Newbery Award winner, *The View from Saturday*, by E.L. Konigsburg, features a teacher in a wheelchair who supervises four very bright students in their team effort to win a major contest. The teacher's wheelchair is in no way an impediment to her ability to teach and live life to the full.

Several dozen books now feature children or adult characters who have disabilities that are a result of congenital factors or accidents, or who have chronic or progressively incapacitating diseases. The books demonstrate accepting attitudes, either in content or the tone of writing. Although the quality of the books is not uniform, I highly recommend the following books.

Three Classics

Standing the test of time well, *Face to Face* by Ved Mehta and *My Left Foot* by Christy Brown were not written as juvenile books, but advanced students will be able to empathize with the authors. Ved Mehta is a philosopher and writer who became blind at the age of three as a result of meningitis. At fourteen, realizing there was no advanced education available to him in India, he applied to a boarding school for African Americans in Arkansas. He crossed the world alone, and humorously recalls memories of his adolescence and his struggle, eventually successful, to win a place in a highly-respected university. He has written many books, several about his zany relatives.

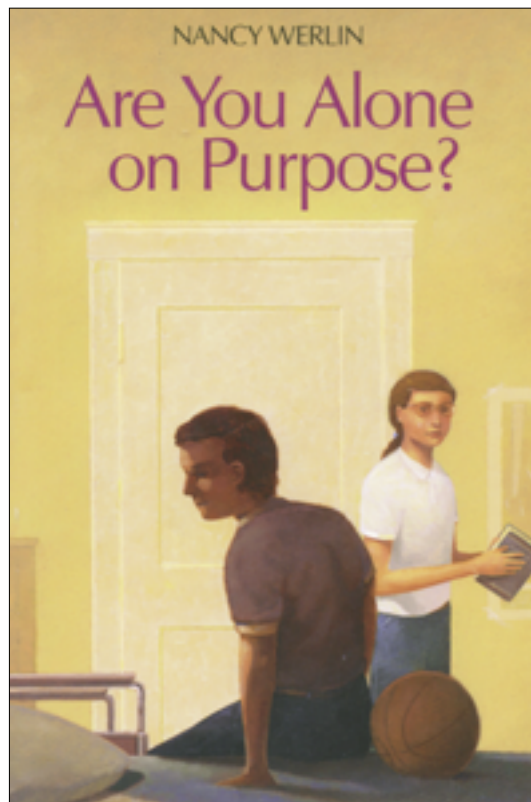
Christy Brown, who had very severe athetoid cerebral palsy, was immortalized in the film version of *My Left Foot*. At twenty-two, he wrote a vigorous autobiography about his rough and tumble childhood in a large Dublin family, his fearful pilgrimage to Lourdes, his emotions, and his ambitions. Popular children's author Jean Little, who is blind, fictionalized her childhood in the veiled autobiography, *Mine for Keeps*, where protagonist Sal has cerebral palsy. First published in 1962, the book has recently been republished.

This trio of books reveals a lot about the attitudes of the writers and the attitudes shown to them. In these books, several factors emerge over and again:

- Compassion is always implicit, never explicit.
- Despite mental, emotional, or physical limitations, the characters are accepted as people with distinct personalities whose disabilities, though pivotal, are only part of the story.
- All characters are viewed, in their different ways, as members of society.
- Everybody, including the sound in mind and body, confronts problems and needs help at one time or another.
- The human spirit transcends even the direst obstacles.

The Trend toward Realism

One notable change in recent books is



Jacket illustration by Robert Wisniewski

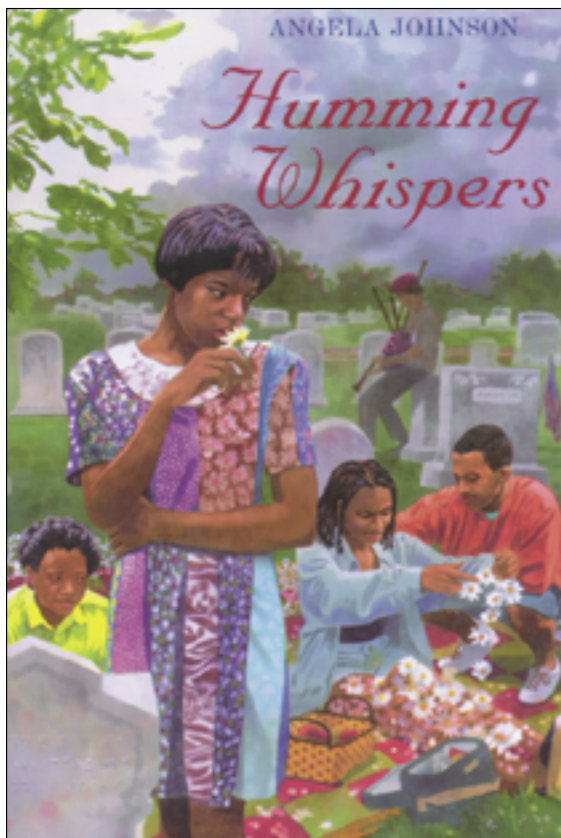
their level of realism about the situation of people with disabilities. (This reflects a trend to realism prevalent in all juvenile literature.) In contrast, an early twentieth century favorite, *The Secret Garden*, is still every bit as magical as when it first appeared. However, Mary is the central character, and it is her unshakable resolve to get the petulant Colin to walk that makes the story. It is her story, rather than his.¹

Nancy Springer's *Colt* is an admirable example of recent trends. *Colt* has spina bifida (this is the only book here to address that condition). He is scared when taken to ride in a *Horses for the Handicapped* program, but finds the experience exhilarating, and wheedles permission to ride alone. Despite people trying to discourage his efforts, *Colt* does a grand job of rescuing his athletic older stepbrother when he is injured in a bad fall. The book cuts no slack on how it feels to be imprisoned in a wheelchair, but the perspective is *Colt's* and without tears.

Another book portraying heroism, *Fire in the Wind*, extols Orin, the retarded cousin of Meg. When the family homestead is threatened by a fire burning the landscape, Meg as usual tries to take control and protect both Paul, her little brother, and Orin. She fears that Orin is a pyromaniac, not understanding his sophisticated method of saving the farm by setting a ring of fire to protect the buildings. Although the story doesn't move as fast as the fire, the author has found a fine way to demonstrate how we can sometimes learn lessons from those whom we expect to teach.

While Meg's attempts to control a situation are foiled, other books have protagonists going to bat for peers or friends with special needs. In *Barry's Sister*, Barry is born with cerebral palsy. After initial recoil, twelve-year-old Ellen changes her attitude and cares for him obsessively, despite warnings from their mother's friend, Maribeth.

An exquisite book about a family situation is *Humming Whispers*, by Angela Johnson. Sophy is a fourteen-year-old African American and an aspiring dancer. She lives in inner-city Cleveland with her aunt and Nikki, her schizophrenic older sister. Nikki, in and out of hospital, is being courted by the damaged Reuben. Sophy, deeply distressed by Nikki's anguish, starts shoplifting and cannot stop herself. So both girls are disabled, and no solution is offered. This book is highly recommended.



Jacket illustration by Peter Catalanotto

In *Are You Alone on Purpose?*, Alison is defensive about her autistic twin, Adam. She especially resents the jeers of Harry, the bullying son of their widowed rabbi. When Harry becomes paraplegic after an accident, Alison intuitively recognizes his emotional hurt and the two develop a close friendship, largely through Alison's persistence. The book is quirky, moving, and humorous. Both Adam's and Harry's disabilities, while an integral part of the story, actually provide a catalyst for strong character development.

In the dramatic recent novel, *Midget* by Tim Bowler, bravery is a good peg on which to hang the message that we should look for ability rather than disability. The distressingly small protagonist of the story is being terrorized by his older brother, Seb, who appears loving and helpful to others. Seb's alert girlfriend and a

psychiatrist see what is going on and help Midget recognize his physical limitations. But this comprehension only spurs his ambition to sail alone, which leads to the gripping climax, when Seb tries to kill him. Midget learns that Seb, all along, has been seeking vengeance for Midget's birth causing their mother's death.

I have chosen to omit from this list books that introduce terminal illness, in part because illness and disability differ, and in part because medical advances can switch "terminal" to either "treatable" or "curable" quite fast. However, one other book that ends with the death of a character wins a place. In *See Ya Simon* by New Zealander David Hill, Nathan's closest friend, Simon, has advanced muscular dystrophy. Information on his disease is skillfully woven into a narrative that involves a sequence of adolescent crushes and new friendships. The unsentimental approach is nonetheless emotional and very moving.

Assertiveness Creates Opportunity

Assertiveness in the face of need is echoed in several books. *Emily Good as Gold* spotlights a young teenager with retardation who defies her overly protective parents. She is encouraged by Phyllis, her laid back sister-in-law, who treats her as a regular kid. When Emily has a close call with a neighbor who lures her into a compromising situation, she uses good judgment to extricate herself and wins her parents' respect. Emily's assertiveness is not only a challenge to her parents, but to all of us who underestimate people

Some Recommended Children's Books

- Bowler, Tim. *Midget*. New York: Margaret McElderry, Simon & Schuster, 1995.
- Brown, Christy. *My Left Foot*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.
- Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1911.
- Byars, Betsy. *The Summer of the Swans*. New York: Viking Press, 1970.
- Cheney, Glenn A. *Teens with Physical Disabilities*. Springfield, NJ: Enslow, 1995.
- Gleitzman, Morris. *Blabber Mouth*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1995.
- . *Sticky Beak*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1995.
- Haas, Jessie. *Uncle Daney's Way*. New York: Greenwillow, 1994.
- Hahn, Mary Downing. *Following My Own Footsteps*. New York: Clarion Books, 1996.
- Hill, David. See *Ya*, Simon. New York: Dutton, 1994.
- Johnson, Angela. *Humming Whispers*. New York: Orchard Books, 1995.
- Konigsburg, E.L. *The View from Saturday*. New York: Atheneum, 1996.
- Levin, Betty. *Fire in the Wind*. New York: Greenwillow, 1995.
- Little, Jean. *Mine for Keeps*. New York: Little, Brown & Company, 1962.
- Mehta, Ved. *Face to Face*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1957.
- Metzger, Lois. *Barry's Sister*. New York: Atheneum, 1992.
- Philbrick, Rodman. *Freak the Mighty*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1993.
- Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Emily Good as Gold*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993.
- Sirof, Harriet. *The Road Back*. New York: Macmillan, 1993.
- Springer, Nancy. *Colt*. New York: Dial, 1991.
- Werlin, Nancy. *Are You Alone on Purpose?* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1994.
- Wilson, Nancy Hope. *The Reason for Janey*. New York: Macmillan, 1994.
- Wrightson, Patricia. *A Racecourse for Andy*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1968.

who may at first appear helpless.

An equally touching story unfolds in *The Reason for Janey*. Philly Mason can't figure out why Janey, an adult with retardation, has moved in with them after a lifetime in the state school. Preoccupied by troubling visits to her divorced father, Philly's anguish is mitigated by seeing how Janey, with her very limited experience, is learning to handle daily life tasks with a special wisdom. When she learns the reason for Janey's presence, she becomes more sympathetic toward her parents' erratic behavior.

Misapprehensions about helplessness are confronted again in *Uncle Daney's Way*. Twelve-year-old Cole admires his paraplegic great-uncle's resourcefulness and skill as a horse trainer. In an attractive rural setting, the pair figure out a way to solve the family's financial shortfall. With the feisty old man as role model, Cole learns how to take advantage of opportunities, rather than resign himself to negative situations. Uncle Daney simply ignores his wheelchair and concentrates on the strength in his wiry old arms.

Realism often falls short on humor, which is not the case in two successive Australian books, *Sticky Beak* and *Blabber Mouth*. Rowena, who is mute but can hear, thinks she confronts almost equal challenges from her physical impediment and her bizarre widowed father with his penchant for cowboy shirts and western music. She tests out new friendships and struggles to help her father fit in better. Her efforts succeed all the way. Rowena never once imagines (nor lets the reader imagine) that her tribulations will be lasting problems.

Two Non-Fiction Books

The authors of all these books have successfully shown that many traits make up every individual. Two unusually good non-fiction books allow young people with disabilities to "tell it like it is." In *The Road Back*, Trisha and Steve have been permanently injured in accidents, and Christopher diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. All have to come to grips with fundamental changes that will affect their future. Author Harriet Sirof traces their emotional paths through denial, self-pity, fear, anger, and coping. Real-life, first-person stories describing a range of difficult challenges are recounted in *Teens with Physical Disabilities*. The stories are dire, forthright, and often numbing. The most lasting impression is that each teenager has a distinctive personality. Their disabilities make them neither better nor worse, stronger nor weaker.

Conclusion

These children's books build respect for the individual coping styles of persons with disabilities, as well as their families and friends. They are testimony to a remarkable change in social attitudes about disability that has been brought about by politically active people with disabilities and their families and supporters. ❖

Note

1. Some fine books published before the recent spate also focus on characters who surround disabled persons. In Betsy Byar's *Summer of the Swans*, Sara's protective love for her challenged younger brother Charlie is more central than his disability in this tale of his disappearance. And in Patricia Wrightson's *A Racecourse for Andy*, the focus is on a dilemma faced by the friends of the mildly brain-damaged Andy as they all play a game that gets out of hand as much as on Andy himself.

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Asia in the Classroom

HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Mary Hammond Bemson

ASIA TODAY includes the world's largest democracy (India), the nation with the world's largest population of Muslims (Indonesia), and the country with the longest life expectancies (Japan).

These realities are different from the exotic images of a tradition-bound Asia that students frequently acquire in their early school years through the folktales and fantasies that are often their first contacts with other cultures. Good teaching about Asia will help students to understand the complexity of modern Asia as they also learn about the histories, cultures, and underlying values of its different countries.

Many teachers across the country have found innovative and valuable ways to introduce modern Asia to their students. Trade books, maps, pictures, brief discussions of issues in the news and biographies of key individuals can be building blocks for constructing distinct impressions of the many countries of Asia. But because even exemplary books about Asia can contain flaws or present simplistic images, teachers need to be selective in choosing materials and to take the initiative to draw the attention of students to modern realities.

As associate director of the East Asia Center at the University of Washington, my primary goal is to help teachers incorporate teaching about East Asia into their curricula. There are a number of useful tools that can help teachers to make their classes on Asia memorable and avoid common pitfalls, especially if children's literature is used frequently in their classes.

First, here are some of the pitfalls.

Even exemplary classroom books can contain one or more of the following failings:

- Over-emphasis upon the exotic. Just as travelers rarely take photographs of people and buildings that look exactly like those at home, authors and illustrators frequently depict the most exciting, colorful, or different aspects of another place and time, even if those aspects are not generally representative.
- A monolithic view of Asia. Relatively few U.S. teachers have had an opportunity to study Asia in college or to travel there, so they are often unfamiliar with the striking differences among various countries in Asia. Their book selections and classroom discussion topics may not reflect those differences.
- Homogeneity within countries. There is great social diversity within Asian countries.
- Asian traditionalism. U.S. citizens often think of others, particularly Asians, as traditional by comparison with ourselves. Focusing on these images can cause us to overlook aspects of tradition in the United States, and evidence of dynamism and change in Asia.
- Poverty. Along with the image of Asia as a place of enduring traditions exists the image of Asia as the home of hundreds of millions of impoverished people. Both are incorrectly static images of an unchanging Asia.
- Misrepresentation of Asian immigration to the U.S. The experiences of all Asian Americans have not been the same, having taken place in different eras and under different conditions of welcome or hostility.

- Inadequate portrayal of Asian values. Many children's books espouse contemporary American values, such as the importance of self-esteem, in stories set in mythical or traditional Asia. Books that do this deny students the opportunity to explore different values, making it difficult for them to develop an understanding of the strongly-held beliefs that can drive people into conflict.

I offer the following suggestions for providing students with a balanced awareness of Asia that will provide a strong foundation for further study in later grades.

- ▶ Use a variety of books.

A number of popular books present folkstories or original stories set in Asia. These can spark interest and provide insights into different cultures, but should be supplemented by a short classroom discussion reminding students that these stories are no closer to Asian children's everyday lives than Rumpelstiltskin is to their own. Using pairs of books in conjunction can help teachers make this point. For example, any of the fanciful stories set in ancient China could be paired with *The Silk Route: 7,000 Miles of History*, which situates China historically and geographically, or *Ancient China*, with its striking illustrations. When reading a folktale such as *Nine-In-One GRR! GRR!: A Folktale from the Hmong People of Laos*, follow it with *The Whispering Cloth*, which traces a contemporary Hmong child's immigration to the United States. *Nine-In-One GRR! GRR!* is illustrated in a culturally-authentic style and provides a context for *The Whispering Cloth*.

► Differentiate among countries.

Using supplemental resources can help children learn to differentiate among the many different countries and cultures of Asia. Students can analyze the commonalities among Asian traditions and historical experiences while refining a sense of their striking differences as well. Just as references to Italy and Norway conjure up quite different images in the minds of those aware of Europe, Indonesia and India should also become conceptually distinct entities, rather than part of one exotic, distant blur labeled "Asia." Because few U.S. teachers study Asia in college, an examination of the distinctive features of different countries can be an occasion for the teacher and the class to learn together, with everyone bringing in new information to share. The teacher becomes a role model for the idea that we continue to deepen our understanding of the world well beyond the completion of our last diploma or degree.

► Explore complexity.

Once students have developed some awareness of different Asian countries, they can begin to examine the diversity within them. Monitor classroom materials for dominant images and be cautious of presenting a one-dimensional view of a country. For example, not all Japanese teenagers obey their parents and study diligently throughout their school years. Not all Thais live in rural villages, and not all Indians are impoverished. Counter such generalizations by discussing the complexities of life in Asia (as elsewhere), and by bringing up such topics as Japanese social concerns, Thailand's economic development, or the booming Indian computer software industry.

► Examine tradition.

Unfortunately, modern Asia is the subject of far too few children's books, making it hard for a teacher to balance past and present, static and dynamic. Numerous books and classroom activities reinforce

the conceptualization of "traditional" Asia with images of colorful clothing, old-fashioned ways, festivals, and customs that seem odd to us. Try turning that idea around for a moment by showing how some of our practices can also be considered traditional. A child dressed as a pumpkin, cowboy, or princess going from door to door saying "Trick or treat" is definitely doing something that could be called traditional. Sleeping on a bed is as "traditional" as sleeping on a futon. All cultures maintain traditions to some degree. From the perspective of the social studies, a problem arises when we are unaware of our own traditions, or when traditional aspects of another culture provide our only images of it, blinding us to change.

Modernity is a fact of life throughout much of Asia, bringing with it everything from rising standards of living to traffic jams and environmental pollution. In fact, some Asian countries are world leaders in devising ways to avoid or ameliorate some of the negative aspects of our modern lifestyles.

Something as simple as a teacher's comment can help bring these countries into the here and now in students' minds. If tigers populate a folk tale, a teacher might bring in some information about habitat destruction or preservation in that country today. If haiku poetry appears in the curriculum, include a contemporary poem from *Festival in My Heart: Poems by Japanese Children*,

such as the one in which a child writes that autumn cricket noises make him so lonely that he decides to turn on the television.¹ Students can begin constructing an understanding of life in contemporary Asia, rather than forever locking it into its cultural traditions.

► Discuss economic development.

One of the changes taking place in Asia is a rapid improvement in living standards. While poverty is undeniably a fact of life for millions in Asia, not to mention the rest of the world, poverty has declined faster in Asia than anywhere else. According to an item in the excellent new teaching journal, *Education about Asia*, "this decline in poverty is probably completely unprecedented in human history. . . . In the mid-1970s, six out of 10 households in East Asia lived in absolute poverty. In the mid-1990s that [figure] has declined to two out of 10."²

Few children's books, fact or fiction, give a clue to this dramatic



A Selection of Children's Trade Books about Asia

Jiang, Ji-li. *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.

Major, John S. *The Silk Route: 7,000 Miles of History*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

Namioka, Lensey. *The Loyal Cat*. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, 1995.

Paterson, Katherine. *The Master Puppeteer*. New York: HarperCollins, 1989.

Say, Allen. *Grandfather's Journey*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

Shea, Pegi Deitz. *The Whispering Cloth*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mill Press, 1995.

Takaaki, Nomura. *Grandpa's Town*. Brooklyn: Kane/Miller, 1991.

Williams, Brian. *Ancient China*. New York: Viking, 1996.

Xiong, Bli and Cathy Spagnoli. *Nine-In-One GRR! GRR!: A Folktale from the Hmong People of Laos*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1989.

change. In fact, few address modern Asian countries at all, except when wars are fought there. It is up to the teacher to bring in other kinds of materials, and to use them to draw students' attention to the Asian sources of high tech and high value imports, or to trade and resource allocation issues resulting from the expansion of Asian economies. Because of our close economic ties, both growth and problems in those economies affect the United States.

► Treat immigration realistically.

Our students need to know more about Asia, in part because our population includes Asian Americans from so many different Asian countries. Here, too, the story is far more complex than can possibly be conveyed by a few children's books, however exemplary they may be. The ancestors of some Asian Americans arrived here earlier than the ancestors of many European Americans, and more Asians continue to arrive daily. Historic reality included individuals who came to the United States hoping to stay and others who fully intended to return home once they had made their fortunes. A compelling story like *Grandfather's Journey*, based on the life of author Allen Say's grandfather, can prompt sophisticated discussions about the complexities of immigration and the effect it has on individual lives. Although Say's grandfather returns to Japan, he never feels fully at home in either

country.

It is also important to remember that once people immigrated here, their experiences were different from those of people who remained in Asia. It really is not possible to teach about contemporary Japan by relying on a book about a Japanese American child's travails during World War II. Nor is it possible to use a Chinese American's recollection of folktales as a major component in introducing the turmoil of modern Chinese history. Those are books about the lives and memories of individuals who chose to become Americans and follow a different path from the people they left behind. Children of Asian descent should not be expected to be the classroom "experts" on their ancestral homelands any more than European American children are "experts" on Europe.

► Clarify values.

As students learn to analyze historic issues and draw comparisons among cultures, they will begin to notice that people from other cultures do not necessarily share the students' values. Discussing values is difficult and controversial, and each teacher must find a comfortable personal balance in drawing students' attention to values that are different. Yet it is important to make the effort, so that students do not conclude that their own values are universal—an assumption reinforced by some books written by

American authors and set in Asia. Books classified under topics such as "self-confidence-fiction" or "twins-fiction" may be fine works of fiction, but they do not necessarily convey accurate information about the country in which they are set.

One particularly thoughtful approach to using literature for social studies purposes is contained in *Cooperation in Japan*, one of many exemplary teaching units from the SPICE Project at Stanford.³ It explores the concept of cooperation, highly stressed in Japan, as it is taught in a Japanese book used in the primary grades.

Helping students see beyond the limitations of their first-hand experience is one of the greatest gifts we can give them. Whether or not their lives will include actual experience in Asia, their world will inevitably include Asia, with influences and connections both evident and unacknowledged. ❖

Notes

1. Bruno Navasky, ed., *Festival in My Heart: Poems by Japanese Children* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 59.
2. The World Bank, "Everyone's Miracle: Revisiting Poverty and Inequality in East Asia," *Education about Asia* (Fall 1997): 37.
3. Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education, *Cooperation in Japan* (Stanford, CA: SPICE, 1995).

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citez le CHâteau!



Name That Chateau!

Can you match the following chateaux with their descriptions? Try books about castles, the history of architecture, or the Renaissance in France. But your best source may be travel guides to the Loire Valley, many of which have good historical information.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1 amBOISE | 5 CHENONCEAU |
| 2 azay-le-riDEAU | 6 CHINON |
| 3 Blois | 7 saumur |
| 4 chambORD | 8 ussé |



A This chateau was built by the Duke of Berry, the brother of a French king. He paid artists to illustrate beautiful "books of hours" for use at prayer time. The chateau appears in the "September" miniature in the *Très Riches Heures de Duc de Berry*.

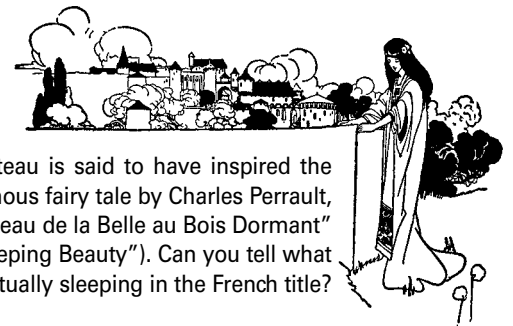


B Under King Francis I, this "hunting lodge" grew from a small wooden dwelling to a 440-room palace with 14 grand stairways, 365 fireplaces, and 700 salamanders lurking in the decor. The king and his nobles hunted in the nearby Forest of Boulogne.

D Leonardo da Vinci spent the last years of his life in the town below this chateau. His villa was connected to the chateau by a tunnel. One story says that da Vinci died in the arms of Francis I, the king who brought both him and the *Mona Lisa* to France.



C This chateau was the site of a royal murder during the religious "War of the Three Henrys" in the late 16th century. The Duke of Guise (Henry) climbed a famous staircase to be murdered in the antechamber of his cousin (King Henry III); the revenge killing of that king put a third cousin (King Henry IV) on the throne and began the Bourbon dynasty.



f This chateau is said to have inspired the famous fairy tale by Charles Perrault, "Chateau de la Belle au Bois Dormant" ("The Sleeping Beauty"). Can you tell what is actually sleeping in the French title?



e This chateau has a long gallery that straddles the Cher River, a tributary of the Loire. During World War II, the gallery was used as a safe passageway from Nazi Occupied France on the north side of the Cher to Vichy France on the south side.

H This is sometimes called the perfect French Renaissance chateau. It "floats" in a moat created by diverting the flow of the Indre River. But the moat, the towers, and the machicolations (above the second storey) are "fake" defenses that could not protect the castle.



G In this ancient chateau, Joan of Arc first met the Dauphin (uncrowned prince) of France and persuaded him to let her fight the English then occupying the country. He said yes, but later betrayed her by refusing to pay a ransom when she was captured.

