

Ancient China

Grade Level: 4

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Length of Unit: 9 Lessons

I. ABSTRACT

This unit focuses on ancient China from 618 AD to 1294. The language arts activities center on lessons including ancient Chinese dragons, Taoism, markets, writing, and the Chinese Zodiac. Chinese tangrams, the abacus, and measuring bricks for the Great Wall provide mathematics activities while the construction of “pet” crickets provide a science connection.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives

1. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its history, geography, literature, art, drama, music, dance, education, and social structure.

B. Content

1. World Civilization from the fourth grade content area.

C. Skill Objectives:

1. See individual lessons

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. For Teachers:

Teachers should familiarize themselves with the information on ancient China found in What Your 4th Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. Additional information on the development of the Chinese civilization can be found on *Encarta*.

B. For the students: Students should be reminded of previous studies in second grade on Chinese customs. A review of the continents and a general discussion on customs and cultural differences would be appropriate.

IV. RESOURCES

1. Ancient China by A. Cotterell
2. Paper Bag Princess by R. Munsch
3. Eyes of the Dragon by M. Leaf
4. St. George and the Dragon by M. Hodges
5. A Trip Around the World by Barbara Schaff & Sue Roth
6. Asian-Pacific Americans by Adrian Chan & Ingrid Seyer
7. China Then and Now by Susan Finney & Patricia Kindle
8. China A Literature-Based Multicultural Unit by Betsy Franco
9. Patterns for World Culture by M. Barr
10. Ancient China by C. Michaelson

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: Chinese Dragons

A. Daily Objectives

1. Lesson Content:

- a. Students will be taught the characteristics of both Chinese dragons and traditional western dragons.

1. Concept Objective:
 - a. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its history, geography, literature, art, music, dance, education, and social structure.
 2. Skill Objectives:
 - a. Draw conclusions
 - b. Compare and contrast
 - c. Make generalizations
- B. Materials
1. Chart paper and markers
 2. Blank Venn diagram for each student (see Appendix A)
 3. Examples of Chinese calligraphy
 4. Permanent black fine line markers
 5. Colored chalk or water colors
 6. 12" x 18" paper, one per student (extras just in case)
- C. Key Vocabulary
1. emperor- ruler of an empire
 2. wisdom- knowledge
 3. symbolize- to represent
 4. dragon- an imaginary animal with scales and claws
 5. mythology- a group of myths and legends belonging to a particular culture
- D. Procedures/Activities
1. Ask children to share stories they have heard that have dragons in them (Paper Bag Princess, St. George and the Dragon, etc.).
 2. Chart characteristics of dragons from Western literature
 3. Stress the evil nature of these dragons—eating people and breathing deadly fire. Make note of their giant snake-like bodies with small legs and claws.
 4. Read page 17 of Ancient China (Cotterell, 1994) and Eyes of the Dragon .
 5. Chart characteristics of the Chinese dragons. Stress their wisdom, strength, goodness, and long snake-like bodies with claws.
 6. Instruct students to complete a rough draft of a Venn diagram listing the characteristics of the Western dragon and the Chinese dragon.
 7. Revise and edit rough draft
 8. Make a final copy of the Venn diagram.
 9. Encourage students to decorate their diagram with Chinese calligraphy and Chinese style drawings done in permanent black fine markers and colored chalk or water colors (See Appendix A).
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Each student will decorate one piece of 12" x 18" paper with red scales to use as a section of the dragon's body. These will be assembled into one long dragon winding around the room or down a hallway.
 2. Students will display their completed Venn diagram on their section of the dragon.
 3. Student will stand by their section and read portions of it to visiting tours.
- F. Standardized Test Connections
1. Compare and contrast
 2. Classify

Lesson Two: The Chinese Zodiac

- A. Daily Objectives
1. Lesson Content:
 - a. Students will be introduced to the Chinese Lunar Calendar and the characteristics of the twelve animals in the Chinese Zodiac

2. Concept Objective:
 - a. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its history, geography, literature, art drama, music, dance, education, and social structure.
 3. Skill Objectives:
 - a. Compare and contrast
 - b. Interviewing
- B. Materials
1. Copy of the Chinese Lunar Calendar (page 56, Schaff & Roff, 1993)
 2. Copy of the Lunar Animal Characteristics (page 103, Chan, 1994)
 3. Copy of Chinese Lunar Calendar Activity (see Appendix B)
 4. Pencil or erasable pen
- C. Key Vocabulary
1. zodiac- a figure or diagram representing the zodiac and its signs used in astrology
 2. legendary- remarkable or extraordinary; well-known or famous
 3. lunar- having to do with the moon
 4. calendar- a system of determining the divisions of a year
 5. characteristics- distinguishing traits or features
- D. Procedures/Activities
1. Distribute copies of the Chinese Lunar Calendar
 2. Tell the legend of the 12 animals of the Lunar Calendar
 3. Discuss how the Chinese Lunar Calendar differs from our calendar
 4. Distribute copies of the characteristics of each animal
 5. Have children determine their Lunar Calendar Animal from their birth year
 6. Have each child illustrate his/her animal on a sheet of paper. Encourage them to make their animal so that the animal's personality is reflected in the drawing.
 7. Distribute copies of Chinese Lunar Calendar Activity (see Appendix B)
 8. Instruct students to complete the first half of the worksheet during class and share with another individual
 9. Ask students to complete the remainder of the worksheet at home by interviewing two other family members and return it for publication
 10. Create a zodiac for the classroom by combining the students' information. Display it on the classroom wall or hallway.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Students will share information with a classmate
 2. Students will create a Chinese Lunar Calendar for the classroom
- F. Standardized Test Connection
1. Compare and Contrast
 2. Interviewing
 3. Reading and following directions

Lesson Three: Ancient Chinese Taoism

- A. Daily Objectives
1. Lesson Content:
 - a. Students will be taught the history and belief of Taoism and its connection to the Yin and Yang symbols.
 2. Concept Objective:
 - a. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its history, geography, literature, art, drama, music, dance, education, and social structure.
 3. Skills Objectives
 - a. Cause and effect
 - b. Following directions

- B. Materials
 1. Pattern of Yin and Yang symbol (page 11, Finney & Kindle, 1988)
 2. Copy of disappointing situations (see Appendix C)
 3. Thin-tipped red marker
 4. Scissors
- C. Key Vocabulary
 1. Taoism- one of the principle philosophies in China, characterized by a belief in a harmony with nature and one's fellow man
 2. Yin and Yang- symbols that stand for the balance in nature
 3. harmony- an agreeing or pleasant combination of elements
 4. philosopher- a person who accepts life and its problems with calmness and understanding
- D. Procedures/Activities
 1. Write the word Taoism on the board and introduce a Yin and Yang object.
 2. Explain the meaning of Taoism and its relation to the Yin and Yang symbol using Appendix C.
 3. Distribute copy of Yin and Yang symbol (page 11, Finney & Kindle, 1988) and red markers.
 4. Read the descriptions of Taoism and the Yin and Yang symbol. Have children read directions.
 5. Instruct students to complete their own personal strengths and weaknesses on their copy of the Yin and Yang symbol.
 6. Arrange students in cooperative groups.
 7. Distribute copies of disappointing situations (see Appendix C). Highlight different situations for each group.
 8. Have children review the beliefs of Taoism and brainstorm ideas on how to turn the disappointing situation into a positive situation.
 9. Have each group choose a spokesperson to share their ideas with the class.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
 1. Students will display their Yin and Yang symbol in the classroom or hallway.
 2. Students will share their positive ideas with the whole class.
- F. Standardized Test Connections
 1. Cause and effect
 2. Following directions
 3. Vocabulary

Lesson Four: Ancient Chinese Market

- A. Daily Objectives
 1. Lesson Content:
 - a. Students will design and complete a model of an ancient Chinese market.
 2. Concept Objective:
 - a. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its history, geography, literature, art, drama, music, dance, education, and social structure.
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Applies correct principles of grammar, parts of speech, usage, and mechanics
 - b. Writes responses to literature
 - c. Understands meaning of words
 - d. Recall details
 - e. Delivers planned oral presentation
- B. Materials
 1. Large piece of cardboard or plywood
 2. Brown butcher paper, large enough to cover cardboard or plywood

3. Chinese patterns (see pages 85-90, Barr, 1995)
 4. Different colored markers
 5. Glue
 6. Material of students' choice used to construct market stand and gate around market (toothpicks, sugar cubes, cardboard, or craft sticks)
 7. Note cards
 8. Scissors
- C. Key Vocabulary
1. Tang Dynasty- dynasty that ruled China for 300 years.
 2. Commoners- lower class citizens who dressed in dark-colored cotton clothing
 3. lanterns- lights used during festival celebrations in China
 4. pottery- clay utensils decorated with landscapes, birds, and other traditional designs
 5. Chinese Market- street market in China where goods were sold
 6. Formal Robes- robes worn on special occasions
 7. rickshaw- carriage-like vehicle that was pulled by runners and carried both people and materials
- D. Procedures/Activities
1. Read aloud pages 20-21 in Ancient China (Michaelson, 1996). Allow for discussion. Have students look at the picture of the City Market on pages 20-21. Discuss the events that are happening in the market.
 2. Explain that each student will be participating in a group activity of making a model of the Chinese Market.
 3. Show students an example of the model.
 4. Discuss the different events that portrayed on the model.
 5. Divide students into groups of four.
 6. Assign each student a job.
 7. Ask students to draw a rough design showing a projection of their final design.
 8. Distribute copies of Chinese patterns (see pages 85-90, Barr, 1995).
 9. Direct students to work cooperatively to cover their cardboard or plywood with brown paper.
 10. Encourage students to use their imaginations to complete their model of an ancient Chinese market.
 11. Have students write facts about Chinese markets on note cards.
 12. Each group should present their model of an ancient Chinese market to the whole class.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Students will participate in a group project
 2. Students will make an oral presentation to the whole class.
- F. Standardized Test Connections
1. Recalls details
 2. Applies correct principles of grammar, parts of speech, usage, and mechanics

Lesson Five: Ancient Chinese Writing

- A. Daily Objectives
1. Lesson Content:
 - a. Students will be taught Mandarin characters.
 2. Lesson Concept:
 - a. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its, history, geography, literature, art, drama, music, dance, education, and social structure.
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Compare and contrast
 - b. Vocabulary

- B. Materials
 - 1. Practice sheets to trace and draw characters (page 53, Schaff & Roth, 1993)
 - 2. Copies of activity entitled, "Writing Chinese Words" (pages 28-31, Franco, 1993)
 - 3. Copy of Ancient China (Michaelson, 1996)
 - 4. Sheet of notebook paper segmented with vertical columns approximately one inch in width
 - 5. One sheet of butcher paper approximately 2 ½ feet by 1 ½ feet (bamboo colored if possible)
 - 6. Transparent tape
 - 7. Black and brown wide-tipped markers
- C. Key Vocabulary
 - 1. Mandarin- ancient Chinese writing
 - 2. character- symbols composed of various brush strokes
 - 3. bamboo- hollow type of grass with segmented stems
 - 4. vertical- perpendicular to the horizon
 - 5. horizontal- parallel to the horizon
 - 6. calligraphy- type of fine handwriting
 - 7. calligrapher- one who writes calligraphy
- D. Procedures/Activities
 - 1. Ask students to print on a sheet of scratch paper the first few letters of the alphabet, taking note of the number of strokes needed to create each letter. For example, "A" requires three strokes.
 - 2. Explain the difference between alphabet letters and Chinese characters. (Chinese characters need more strokes, sometimes as many as 26 strokes. Also characters may represent a phrase of words instead of a singular word or sound. Use the overhead projector or board to demonstrate needed strokes for randomly selected letters and characters.
 - 3. Distribute copies characters (page 53, Schaff & Roth, 1993) and "Writing Chinese Words" (pages 28-31, Franco, 1993)
 - 4. Encourage children to practice drawing characters on scratch paper.
 - 5. Read aloud pages 48-49 in Ancient China (Michaelson, 1996). Show pictures to students. Allow for discussion.
 - 6. Ask students to fold a sheet of notebook paper into 1inch vertical columns. Using this sheet as a rough draft, they should write an imaginative story using English vocabulary and the Chinese characters presented on the pages distributed in step #3. The imaginative story should be written vertically from top to bottom on the columns.
 - 7. Ask each student to cut a sheet of butcher paper 2 ½ feet x 1½ feet. Instruct them to roll the longest edge of the paper to create a tube of ½ inch to 1 inch in diameter. Secure the tube with transparent tape. This is a replication of a tube of bamboo.
 - 8. Ask students to vertically redraw their imaginative story's Chinese characters onto their bamboo tube.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
 - 1. Students will display their finished bamboo tubes in the classroom.
 - 2. Students will share their imaginative story with the whole class.
- F. Standardized Test Connections
 - 1. Compare and contrast
 - 2. Measurement
 - 3. Following directions

Lesson Six: The Great Wall of China

- A. Daily Objectives
 - 1. Lesson Content:
 - a. Students will become familiar with various facts about the building of the Great Wall in China.
 - b. Students will be taught the process of determining the measurements for a brick in an imaginary Great Wall of China.
 - 2. Lesson Concepts:
 - a. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its history, geography, literature, art, drama, music, dance, education, and social structure.
 - 3. Skill Objectives:
 - a. Students will recognize $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and 1 inch on a standard US ruler
 - b. Students will measure and draw line segments representing $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and 1 inch
 - c. Students will measure $22\frac{1}{4}$ inches and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches and draw a rectangular box that will represent a stone for the Great Wall of China.
 - d. Uses a ruler for standard measurement
 - e. Reads and follows directions
 - f. Understands meaning of words
- B. Materials
 - 1. Standard rulers
 - 2. Markers
 - 3. Direction sheet for measuring a “stone” for the Great Wall (see Appendix D)
- C. Key Vocabulary
 - 1. measurement- a course of action to determine the dimensions, weight, extent, or capacity
 - 2. ruler- straight-edged strip used to mark off in units for measuring
 - 3. line segment- a line with a beginning and an end
 - 4. Customary measurement- units of measurement for length that include $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and 1 inch
 - 5. wall- a vertical structure that is made of stone, plaster, wood, or brick used to divide or protect
- D. Procedures/Activities
 - 1. As a whole class, brainstorm and chart all the ways that one might measure something.
 - 2. Introduce the ruler and go over each unit of measurement with the students.
 - 3. Practice drawing different line segments with different lengths on the board.
 - 4. Distribute sheets (see Appendix D) and have each student practice measuring different lengths.
 - 5. Practice drawing line segments that connect to form a rectangle.
 - 6. Have students draw a rectangular box with specific measurement to represent a “stone” on the Great Wall of China.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
 - 1. Students will accurately measure and identify specific lengths demonstrating knowledge of $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and 1 inch.
 - 2. Students will draw their “stone” on the Great Wall.
 - 3. Students will conduct “tours” of the Great Wall, pointing out the “stone” that they helped “carve.”
- F. Standardized Test Connection
 - 1. Uses a ruler for measurement
 - 2. Reads and follows directions
 - 3. Vocabulary

Lesson Seven: Chinese Tangram

- A. Daily Objectives
 - 1. Lesson Content:
 - a. Student will become familiar with tangram puzzles.
 - 2. Concept Objective:
 - a. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its history, geography, literature, art, drama, music, dance, education, and social structure.
 - 3. Skill Objectives:
 - a. Problem solving
 - b. Higher order thinking skills
- B. Materials
 - 1. Copy of the legend of the tangram (page 26, Finney & Kindle, 1988)
 - 2. Copy of the Chinese tangram puzzle pieces (page 27, Finney & Kindle, 1988)
 - 3. Construction paper to make the puzzle
 - 4. Scissors
- C. Key Vocabulary
 - 1. tangram- a type of Chinese puzzle that is made by cutting squares of material into different shapes
 - 2. legend- a story handed down from earlier times
- D. Procedures/Activities
 - 1. Tell the story of the legend of the tangram (page 26, Finney & Kindle, 1988)
 - 2. Hand out copies of the tangram puzzle (page 27, Finney & Kindle, 1988)
 - 3. Have students cut out the pieces and trace them on the heavy construction paper
 - 4. Let the students see how many different shapes they can make with the tangram pieces
 - 5. Call out different shapes for the students to try and make
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
 - 1. Teacher will observe the students using the tangram puzzle pieces to make different shapes
 - 2. Students will share at least one of the puzzles they made with another classmate
- F. Standardized Test Connections
 - 1. Problem solving
 - 2. Higher order thinking skills

Lesson Eight: Abacus

- A. Daily Objectives
 - 1. Lesson Content:
 - a. Students will be taught how to make an abacus.
 - 2. Concept Objective:
 - a. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its history, geography, literature, art, drama, music, dance, education, and social structure.
 - 3. Skill Objectives:
 - a. Understand place value
 - b. Follow directions
- B. Materials
 - 1. 6 inch by 6 inch piece of tagboard
 - 2. Masking tape
 - 3. Cheerios (or any brand O-shaped cereal)
 - 4. Yarn
- C. Key Vocabulary
 - a. abacus- Chinese tool for math operations
 - b. suan-pan- counting tray

- D. Procedures/Activities
 1. Review lessons on place value
 2. Introduce the history of the abacus (page 54, Schaff & Roth, 1993)
 3. Distribute materials and directions for constructing an abacus (pages 54, Schaff & Roth, 1993)
 4. Solve simple mathematical problems using newly constructed abacus (page 55, Schaff & Roth, 1993)
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
 1. Students will demonstrate the use of the abacus by solving simple math problems
 2. Students will display their abacus for others to see.
- F. Standardized Test Connections
 1. Place Value
 2. Following directions

Lesson Nine: Crickets as Pets

- A. Daily Objectives
 1. Lesson Content:
 - a. Students will learn how to construct a paper cricket.
 2. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will learn about the nature of a given culture: its history, geography, literature, art, drama, music, dance, education, and social structure.
 3. Skill Objectives:
 - a. Learns the terms that describe the various stages involved in the incomplete life cycle of the cricket (and other insects)
 - b. Recalls the characteristics and classification of the cricket
- B. Materials
 1. Tape
 2. Scissors
 3. Glue
 4. Spring type clothespin for each student
 5. Green construction paper for wings
- C. Vocabulary
 1. bamboo- a tall treelike grass of tropical or semitropical regions
 2. characteristic - a distinctive quality, trait, or feature
- D. Procedures/Activities
 1. Tell children that the Chinese have a custom of having crickets as pets.
 2. Tell them that crickets are considered good luck.
 3. Discuss the proper care of a cricket and the characteristics of an insect.
 4. Have students complete a chart or poster citing the stages of an insect.
 5. Distribute instructions for making a paper cricket (page 39, Franco, 1993)
 6. Construct paper cricket.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
 1. Students will display their completed crickets.
 2. Students will present their poster depicting the stages of an insect.
- F. Standardized Test Connections
 1. Life stages of an insect
 2. Classification

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

The students will set up an Ancient Chinese Museum. All arts and crafts created throughout the unit will be displayed and children from all the other grade levels will be invited to tour the

museum. The students that participated in the unit on Ancient China will dress up in traditional Chinese attire and will act as tour guides. Friends and parents will also be invited to tour the museum. Additional crafts may be introduced at this time to decorate for the museum visitors. Classes may choose to make lanterns for the Chinese lanterns festival (page 30, Fries, 1995), construct a dragon for The Ribbon Dance (page 29, Fries, 1995), or demonstrate the use of chopsticks.

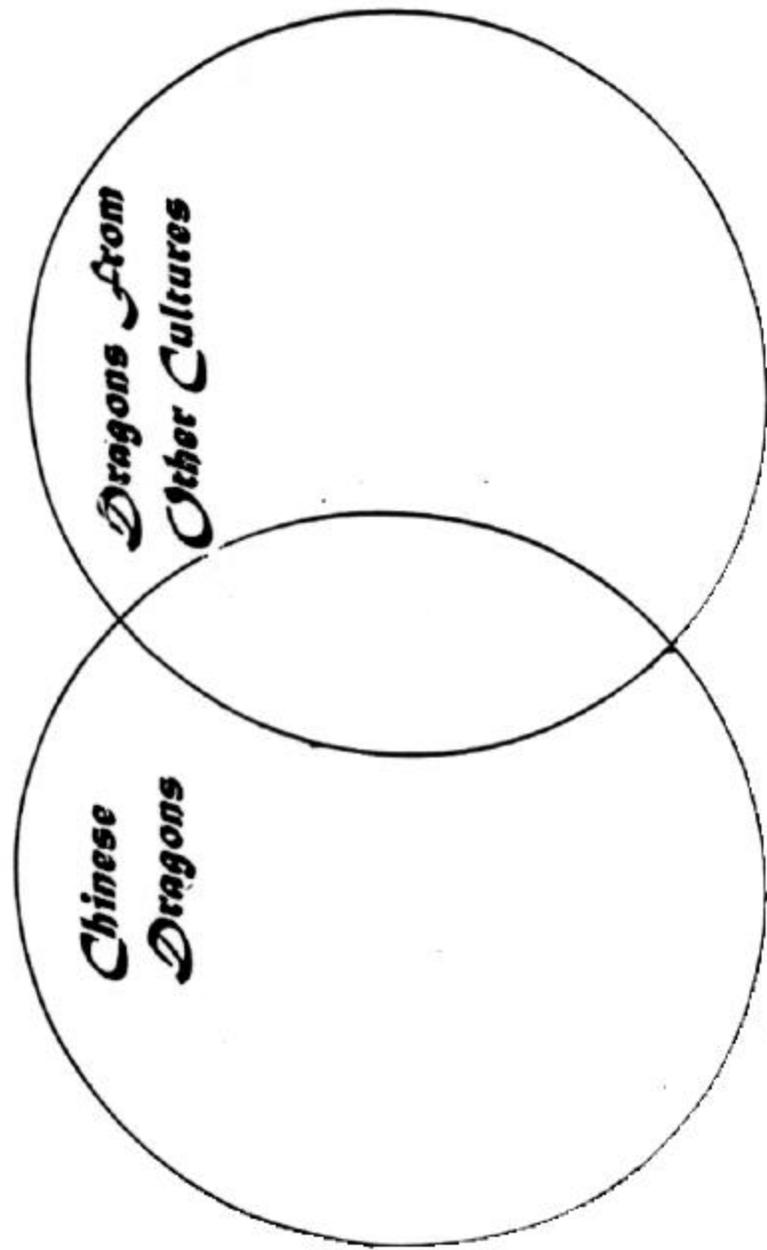
VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

Venn Diagram (use with lesson 1)
Chinese Lunar Calendar Activity (use with lesson 2)
Disappointing Situations (use with lesson 3)
Measuring stones for the Great Wall (use with lesson 6)

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Appendix A



If you added eyes to your dragon, he might

Appendix B

Chinese Lunar Calendar Activity

Student Name _____ *Year of Birth* _____

Lunar Calendar Animal _____

Characteristics:

Do you agree with these characteristics? Why or Why not?

Family Member's Name _____ *Year of Birth* _____

Lunar Calendar Animal _____

Characteristics:

Do you agree with these characteristics? Why or Why not?

Family Member's Name _____ *Year of Birth* _____

Lunar Calendar Animal _____

Characteristics:

Do you agree with these characteristics? Why or Why not?

Appendix C

Taoism was started by Lao Zi in 604 BC. He believed that people should live in harmony with nature. Taoists believe that if you look at life and think about things in the right way you will be much happier. The word, Tao, translates as “way” or “path.”

Disappointing Situations

Directions: Work with your cooperative group to come up with a positive way of handling the disappointing situation that is highlighted. Challenge your beliefs and attitudes that cause you to feel negative. Think about what you might learn from the situation. Also, decide whether or not the situation really is awful. Come up with responses that would agree with Taoism.

- Situation:** Your class trip is canceled because your teacher is out sick.
- Situation:** You can't go to your friend's party because you are grounded for fighting with your sister.
- Situation:** You miss a softball game because you are too sick to go.
- Situation;** You forget to do your homework and have to do it during recess.
- Situation:** You are talking in class (after you were asked to stop) and lose two points off your conduct grade.
- Situation:** Your parents can't take you to your friend's house because their car broke down.
- Situation:** You have to eat lunch in "time out" for being silly during class.
- Situation:** Your friend gets mad at you for telling a secret he/she told you.
- Situation:** You miss the bus and your mom has to come to school to pick you up.
- Situation:** You lose your soccer game.
- Situation:** You forget to get your Weekly Report signed.

Appendix D

Measuring a Stone for the Great Wall of China

1. Draw a line segment for the following:
 - a. $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches
 - b. $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches
 - c. 13 inches
 - d. $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches
 - e. $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches

2. Measure the following line segments:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

3. On the back of this paper, draw the following rectangles:
 - a. $13\frac{3}{4}$ inches long by 4 inches wide
 - b. $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches long by 11 inches wide
 - c. $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide

4. Go to the "Wall of China" and draw a rectangle that measures $14\frac{3}{4}$ inches long and $22\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. Have a friend check your measurements.

5. Using a permanent black marker, write at least one fact that you have learned about the Great Wall of China. Be sure to use your very best handwriting. Sign your name!