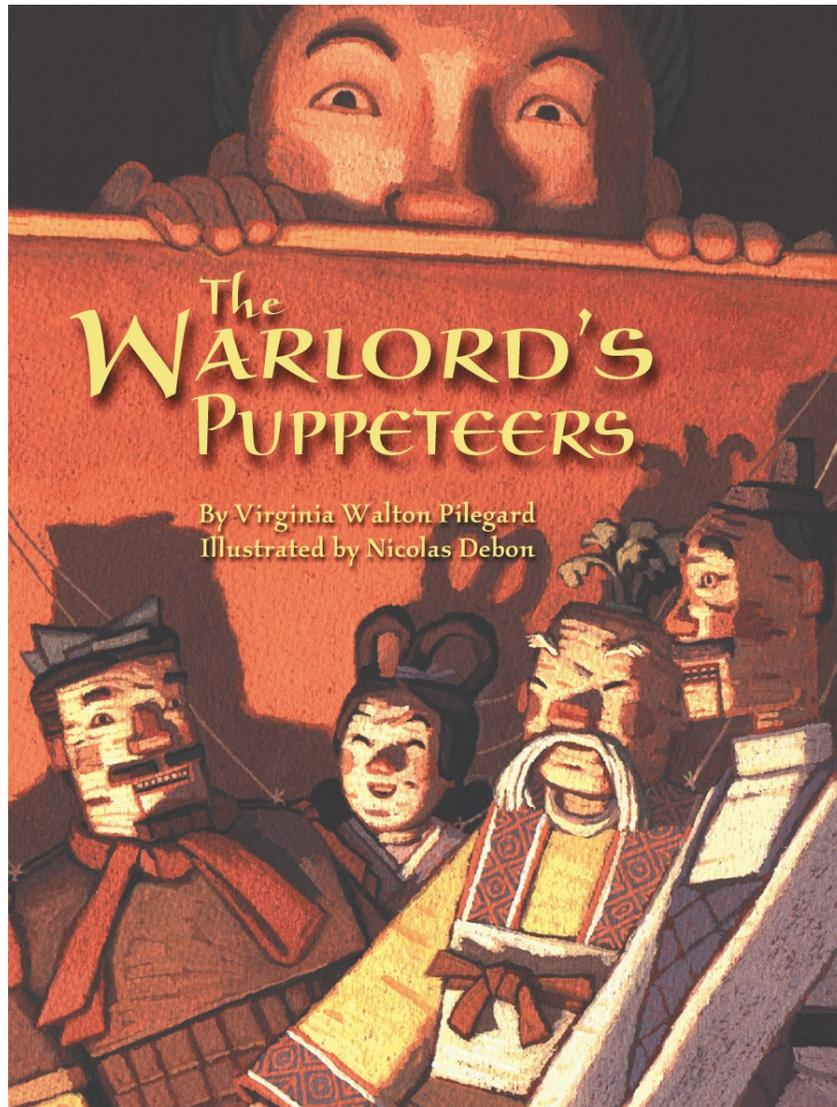




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Study Guide for
The Warlord's Puppeteers



This Study guide includes:
Comprehension and critical thinking exercises
Ratio and proportion skill-builders
Shadow puppet theatre craft
Chinese Poetry Games

Study guide created by
Virginia Walton Pilegard

☞ Work sheets are reproducible ☞

Study Guide for
The Warlord's Puppeteers
By Virginia Pilegard
Illustrated by Nicolas Debon

🍷 Comprehension and Critical thinking 🍷

Suggested Materials: white tube socks, marking pens, rubber bands, *The Warlord's Puppeteers*.

Background:

Chinese children are named with special care. It is said boys have names of the "head," words that symbolize bravery and strength such as "sturdy pine." Girls are given names of the "heart" which include words relating to beauty and grace, such as "flower." The heroine in ***The Warlord's Puppeteers*** is named "Jing Jing" meaning "quiet." The hero's name, "Chuan," may be pronounced "Chwan" and means "river."

(Before the story is read)

1. Discuss the meaning of the words "caravan," "oasis," and "bandits."
2. What does the picture on the front cover of *The Warlord's Puppeteers* show us?
3. Who do you think is looking in the box?

(As the story is read)

1. If listeners are familiar with ***The Warlord's Fish***, the reader may pause after the first page and ask how the Chuan and the artist came to be at an oasis far from the warlord's palace. (Kidnapped by silk road traders, Chuan and the artist were given their freedom at the edge of the Taklamakan Desert.)
2. The picture of the bandits riding into camp is an appropriate place for conjecture about what will happen next.

(After reading the story)

1. Why didn't the artist want to travel alone? Was his fear justified? Why or why not?
2. What do you remember about the puppets that the master puppeteer brought with him? What were the heads made of?
3. Where did the travelers sleep at night? Which do you think was the safest?
4. Where were they when the bandits attacked?
5. Why do you think the bandits took only the most valuable things?
6. Why did the puppet master think the artist would have an easier time continuing the journey?



7. Why did Chuan need to understand ratio to make new puppets from vegetables? What would you tell him to help him understand the ratio of head to body?
8. Why were the travelers frightened to see the donkey again?
9. How do you think the powerful warlord felt about Chuan and the artist? Why? How do you think he felt about the puppet troupe? Why?
10. Following the directions on the craft page of The Warlord's Puppeteers, help children create glove puppets and act out the story as it is read again.

🌸 In memory of 🌸
 5th generation puppet master, Yang Feng
 who graciously offered his expertise to
 the author. Mr. Yang passed away in Jun
 of 2003 in China.



* Still from THE ART AND LIFE OF YANG FENG, a documentary by Warner Blake

🌸 Here are a few examples of Chinese Puppets 🌸

"Marionette puppets, about two feet high and manipulated by 11 to 14 strings, are usually presented in front of a simple backdrop." (this quote is from the now defunct web page "Puppetry in Taiwan" by The Republic of China - Taiwan - Official Home Page and Lotzdollpages.com)



Photos of marionette puppets from a private collection
 cited on Lotz Studio Doll web
 site www.lotzdollpages.com

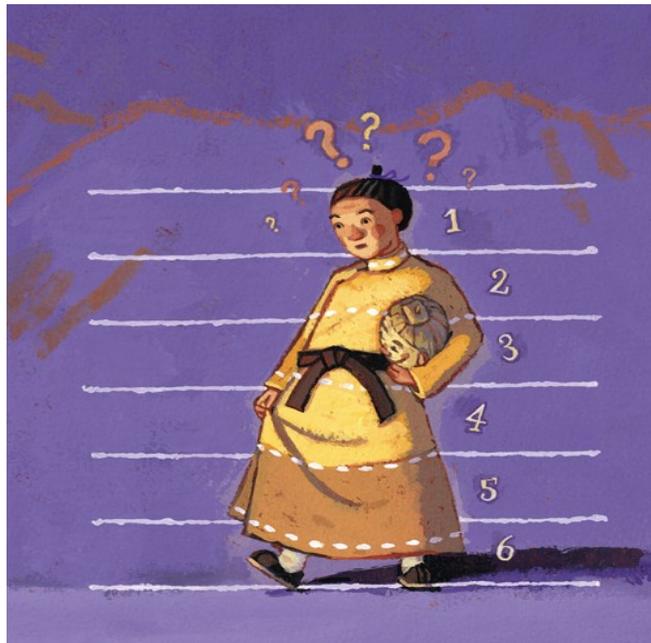


Credit for this picture is given to
 Wood Carver's Cottage and Lotz Studio Dolls
www.lotzdollpages.com

* Permission to use this photo courtesy of
 Warner Blake. To see more about the life of
 Yang Feng visit Mr. Blake's website at
www.angelarmworks.com

Helping Chuan!

1. If there is one centimeter between each white line in the picture at the bottom of the page, how many centimeters is it from the line at the top of Chuan's head to the line at the bottom of his feet? _____ Think of this as Chuan's "whole" height.
2. How many centimeters is it from the line at the top of Chuan's head to the line at the bottom of his chin? _____ Think of this as the fraction $\frac{1}{6}$ of his height.
3. Ratio is a way to compare the size of two numbers. What is the ratio of the length of Chuan's head to his whole height? ____ : ____



🍷 Reckoning Ratios 🍷

1. Help children measure the length of their own heads and compare to their heights. What fraction of their height is the length of their head?
2. Ask children to guess (hypothesize) how the head to body ratio might change as baby grows to adulthood. To test their guesses, children can compare the head to body ratios of baby pictures (their own or ones cut from magazines) with their present head to body ratios and those of parents or teachers.
3. An old-fashioned way to measure a child for socks was to wrap the foot of the sock, heel to toe around the child's fist. Do you think this works? To check, measure the circumference of the fist and compare with the length of the foot. Equal??

🍷 Create Your Own Shadow Puppet Theatre 🍷

Background: Shadow puppets are first mentioned in a Chinese legend recorded 2000 years ago. They are still popular with people of all ages. Shadow plays are most often performed in China during the week between Chinese New Year and the Lantern Festival. Originally made from paper, shadow puppets are now constructed from leather. Plays begin with loud music. Each puppet introduces himself with a bow and a rhyme at his first appearance. Puppeteers carry bundles of handwritten scripts, handed down for generations. These scripts are only outlines of the plots and notes about the characters from which the plays are improvised. Each performance is a special, unique telling of the story.

Directions for Puppets & Stage:



*Shadow Puppets, Hong Kong Museum of History
Photo credit given to Neil Walton Pilegard*

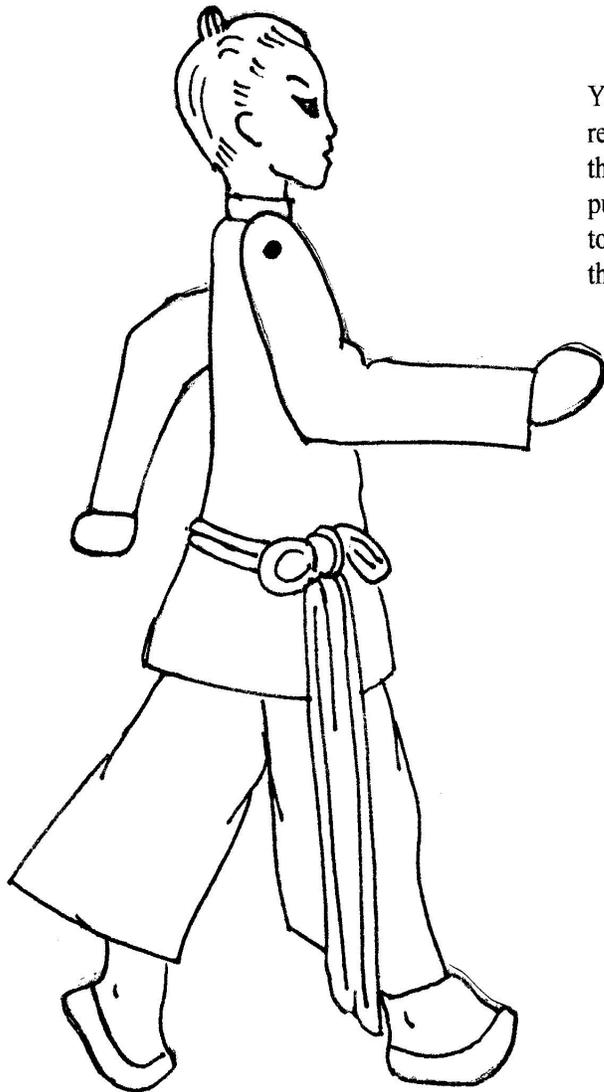
Puppet Supplies: heavy construction paper, scissors, tongue depressors or large craft sticks (available at craft stores or Walmart), pencils or marking pens. (Optional: tracing paper & tag board, plastic straws, masking tape and brads).

Students may draw characters with marking pens, use puppet given in this study guide, or trace characters from any of the Warlord books onto tracing paper or light-weight copier paper and then glue onto heavier paper before cutting. A tongue depressor or craft stick is taped to the back for a "rod" to hold the puppet upright.

Stage Supplies: large cardboard box (about 15"x 21") white cloth to cover end, stapler, light source such as a desk lamp.

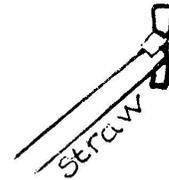


Shadow Puppet and Stage



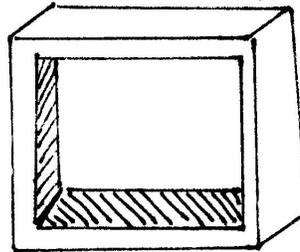
Younger students may color puppet, cut a rectangle around the outside edges to avoid the frustration of intricate cuts, and hold puppets in front of stage for performance. A tongue depressor is glued onto the back of the puppet.

Hint: For authenticity, older students may wish to design movable arms and attach with paper fasteners. Plastic straws may be attached with "hinges" of masking tape to control the puppet.

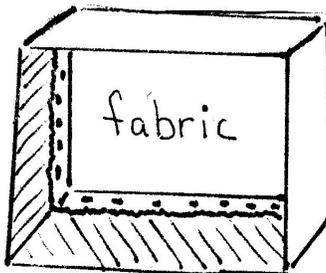


Masking
tape
hinges

1.



2.



Cut flaps off box. Cut out bottom leaving a 2" frame.

Stretch fabric over opening and stapled on the inside of the box. Place light source behind puppets and stage.

🍷 Chinese Poetry Game 🍷

Background: Lu shi, or rhyming pairs, is a game to stretch the mind. To play, two people take turns composing a parallel couplet, a favorite style of poetry during medieval China. Although most English translations are in free verse, the original poetry rhymed, making the game even more challenging. Try with free verse, and then for fun, try rhyming the last words of each line.

The following poem by famous Tang dynasty poet Du Fu is an example of parallel couplets.

A Curtailed Verse

Two yellow orioles sing in an emerald willow tree.
One row of white egrets soars to the blue sky.
My window frames the Western Divide's snows of a thousand autumns,
And by the gate is anchored East Wu's barge of ten thousand miles.

1. Notice the matching words in the first two lines of the poem.
Orioles and Egrets are both birds.
Willow tree and blue sky are both places birds would go.
Sing and soar are both things birds do.
2. Matching the words in the poem's second parallel couplet is trickier.
The snow and the barge are both things the poet can see from his window.
The snow has been recycled through melting and evaporation and fallen on the Western Divide at least one thousand autumns.
East Wu's barge has floated at least ten thousand miles.
3. Chinese poetry seeks to form a picture in the reader's mind and share the poet's feelings about the scene. "A Curtailed Verse" is further unified by the number words in each line.

🍷 Chinese Poetry Game Directions 🍷

1st player says a word (for example, "dove").

2nd player answers with a matching word (for example, "pigeon").

1st player adds a descriptive word (for example, "white" dove).

2nd player answers with a matching word (for example, "gray" pigeon).

1st player adds an action word (for example, white dove "flies").

2nd player answers with a matching action word (for example, gray pigeon "hops").

1st child completes line (for example, "The" white dove flies "away").

2nd child completes line (for example, "The" gray pigeon hops to me).





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THE WARLORD'S PUPPETEERS

By Virginia Walton Pilegard

Illustrated by Nicolas Debon

"The messages of friendship, cooperation, and creativity, as well as the math lesson, make this book a good choice for group sharing and individual enjoyment." --School Library Journal

"Although useful as a curriculum tie-in, this volume is an equally enjoyable read simply for the story of Chuan's suspenseful journey back to his warlord. Few children will even realize that they are getting an extra math lesson along with the story." --ForeWord

Clever young Chuan and his artist mentor are back in this fourth book of the Warlord's series. This time, the two are journeying across the desert to find their master, the warlord, when they meet up with a group of traveling puppeteers. When bandits attack and steal their trunk of puppets, Chuan knows that he must step in to help his new friends in order to finish the journey.

Using a melon and his imagination, Chuan tries to make a new puppet so the performers can earn enough money to finish their trip through the desert. Despite his good intentions, Chuan discovers that he has a lot to learn about their craft, and he takes a few lessons in proportions. With Chuan's resourcefulness and the puppeteers' help, the troupe is able to create all new puppets and put on the show that will save the day.

Children learn about creativity and compassion in a lesson in math that's as fun as it is fascinating. Directions for making their own puppets follow the story.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Virginia Walton Pilegard studied elementary mathematics and completed both a B.A. and M.A. in education. A resident of Fresno, California, she is the author of seven books in the acclaimed *Warlord's Series*, including *The Warlord's Puzzle* (\$15.95), which was selected by the California Department of Education as recommended reading for grades K-12, *The Warlord's Beads* (\$15.95), and *The Warlord's Fish* (\$15.95). All books in the series are on the Accelerated Reader list.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Nicolas Debon is a French citizen living in Canada. He has worked for the visual-arts department in the French Ministry of Culture and for the cultural service of the Consulate General of France in Toronto. His first picture book, *The Warlord's Puzzle*, debuted at number two on the BookSense '76 list shortly after publication. He is the illustrator for all of the books in *The Warlord's Series*.

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32 pp. 8½ x 11

31 color illus. Ages 5-8

ISBN: 1-58980-077-X \$15.95