

The Song of Mulan

Book, Music and Lyrics by Paul Deiss
Adapted from the epic Chinese folk poem

Teacher Resources



In the Classroom For Teachers & Students Grades K - 5

The Song of Mulan and the Classroom Connections Study Guide are produced in support of the teaching of: Art, Folk Tales, Language Arts, China, History, and supports the teaching of VA SOL: English: K.1, K.2, K.3, K.4, K.6, K.8, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.6 History : K.1, K.3, K.4, K.6, K.7, K.8, 1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7 – 2.9, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.10, VS.2.



At the Library

Fa Mulan: The Story of a Woman Warrior, by Robert D. San Souci.

Song of Mu Lan, by Jeanne M. Lee.

Wild Orchid: A Retelling of "The Ballad of Mulan," by Cameron Dokey.



On the Web

Cultural China -> The Song of Mulan
www.cultural-china.com/chinaWH/html/en/39History523.html

Heroines in History -> The Legend of Mu Lan: A Heroine of Ancient China
www.heroinesinhistory.com/mulan.html

Wikipedia -> Fa Mulan
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fa_Mulan

Wikipedia -> Hua Mulan
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hua_Mulan



Legends, like the one in Theatre IV's *The Song of Mulan*, are popular stories handed down over time. This story is based on the ancient Chinese epic poem, *Ode of Mulan*. Legends can be true, or purely myth. We don't know if the legend of Mulan is true or just a good story.

In the Theatre IV telling of this ancient tale, Mulan learns that her ailing father is drafted into Khan's army. She decides to protect him by serving in his place. Disguised as a man, she risks everything to maintain family honor and earns the love of her nation.

This noble Chinese folk tale features an extraordinary heroine, authentic costumes and props, and lovely songs. It also provides an educational journey to the heart and soul of an extraordinary ancient civilization. Join us on the journey to Ancient China and the world of Mulan!

An Acrostic Full of Character!

An acrostic is a type of poem that describes something by using each of the letters in the word as the beginning of a line of poetry. For example, an acrostic about America might read:

Apple Pie from ear to ear!
Majesty in its purple mountains
Easy to love
Revolutionary men set us free.
Independent from any other nation.
Caring people live here
America is a wonderful nation!

Write your own acrostic about Mulan.

M _____

U _____

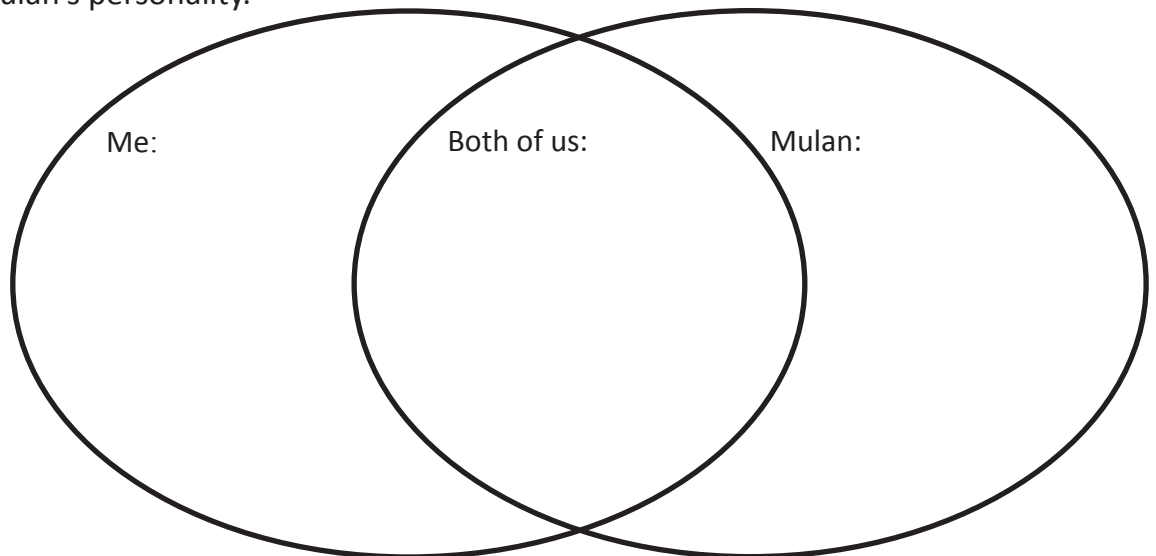
L _____

A _____

N _____

For resources on sharing and creating poetry with children, check out:
www.poetryfoundation.org

What are Mulan's character traits?
Do you have any traits in common with her?
Use the Venn diagram below to compare your personality and Mulan's personality.



Social Studies: Using Primary Sources

Easy Activity:

Read the excerpt below to your students, and discuss. Ask them to draw a picture of Mulan. Add details, based on the excerpt and the play.

Challenge Activity:

Read the excerpt below. Highlight important events from *The Song of Mulan*. Create an outline of those events. Choose your favorite event and illustrate it.

Extra Challenge:

Read the excerpt below. Think about the changes in the way we live that have occurred since this was written. List a few of these changes. Then, talk to your parents or other adults about changes they have witnessed in their lifetimes. Write a journal entry predicting how life may change during your lifetime.

Ode of Mulan

Anonymous (c.5 A.D.)

Tsiek tsiek and again tsiek tsiek,
Mu-lan weaves, facing the door.
You don't hear the shuttle's sound,
You only hear Daughter's sighs.
They ask Daughter who's in her heart,
They ask Daughter who's on her mind.
"No one is on Daughter's heart,
No one is on Daughter's mind.
Last night I saw the draft posters,
The Khan is calling many troops,
The army list is in twelve scrolls,
On every scroll there's Father's name.
Father has no grown-up son,
Mu-lan has no elder brother.
I want to buy a saddle and horse,
And serve in the army in Father's place."

In the East Market she buys a spirited horse,
In the West Market she buys a saddle,
In the South Market she buys a bridle,
In the North Market she buys a long whip.
At dawn she takes leave of Father and Mother,
In the evening camps on the Yellow River's bank.
She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,
She only hears the Yellow River's flowing water cry tsien tsien.

At dawn she takes leave of the Yellow River,
In the evening she arrives at Black Mountain.
She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,
She only hears Mount Yen's nomad horses cry tsiu tsiu.
She goes ten thousand miles on the business of war,
She crosses passes and mountains like flying.
Northern gusts carry the rattle of army pots,
Chilly light shines on iron armor.
Generals die in a hundred battles,
Stout soldiers return after ten years.

On her return she sees the Son of Heaven,
The Son of Heaven sits in the Splendid Hall.
He gives out promotions in twelve ranks
And prizes of a hundred thousand and more.
The Khan asks her what she desires.
"Mu-lan has no use for a minister's post.
I wish to ride a swift mount
To take me back to my home."

When Father and Mother hear Daughter is coming
They go outside the wall to meet her, leaning on each other.
When Elder Sister hears Younger Sister is coming
She fixes her rouge, facing the door.
When Little Brother hears Elder Sister is coming
He whets the knife, quick quick, for pig and sheep.
"I open the door to my east chamber,
I sit on my couch in the west room,
I take off my wartime gown
And put on my old-time clothes."
Facing the window she fixes her cloudlike hair,
Hanging up a mirror she dabs on yellow flower powder
She goes out the door and sees her comrades.
Her comrades are all amazed and perplexed.
Traveling together for twelve years
They didn't know Mu-lan was a girl.
"The he-hare's feet go hop and skip,
The she-hare's eyes are muddled and fuddled.
Two hares running side by side close to the ground,
How can they tell if I am he or she?"

From: *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady: Interpretations of Chinese Poetry*, by Han H. Frankel, Yale University Press, 1976.

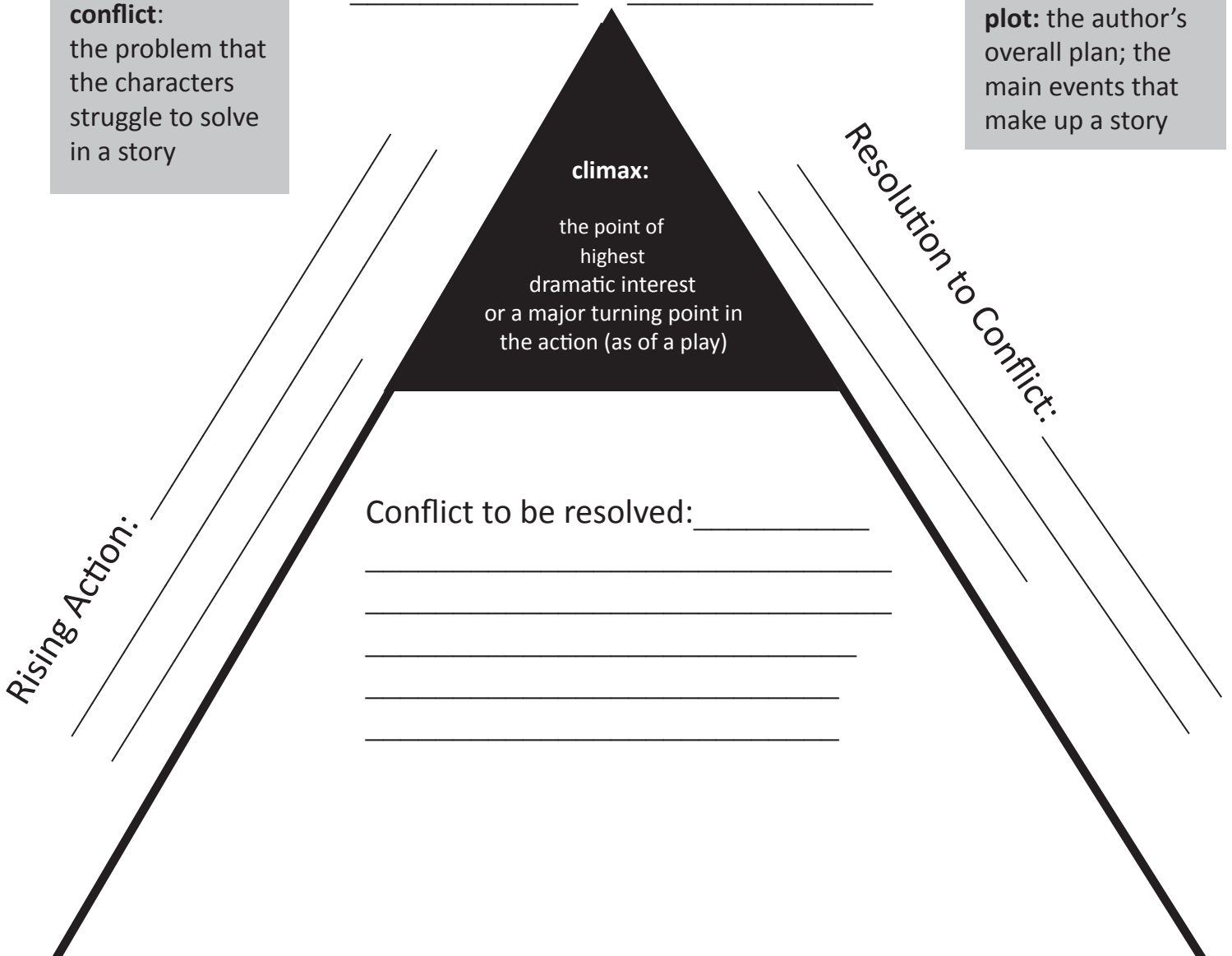
Plotting the Action!

When an author writes a book, or a playwright writes a play, they develop the plot of the story by creating a conflict, building the conflict to a climax, then ending the story with a resolution to the conflict. Analyze the action in the play, *The Song of Mulan* on the chart below.

Climax: _____

conflict:
the problem that the characters struggle to solve in a story

plot: the author's overall plan; the main events that make up a story



Extend it!

Use what you have learned about plotting the action of a story to write your own! Create a plot triangle to record some ideas about the conflict, action, climax, and resolution in your own story.



A Time Capsule from the Past

Think about *The Song of Mulan*. What items were important to the characters in the play? Do we use any of these items today? If you were to create a time capsule with important items from the time of Mulan, what three items would you choose to put into it? List the items below, then write a letter to a modern-day discoverer of the time capsule.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Dear Time Capsule Discoverer,

_____ Items in this time capsule are from China, during the time of Mulan, a famous warrior. _____, _____, and _____ are inside the time capsule. They are important because _____

You should know that China is _____

Mulan is _____

She went to the army because _____

_____. She is a very _____ girl. Please tell everyone in the future the story of Mulan!

Your Friend From China,

Time Capsule

(noun): a container holding historical records or objects representative of current culture that is placed (as in a cornerstone) for preservation until discovery by some future age.



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www.TheatreIV.org

Theatre IV Presents...

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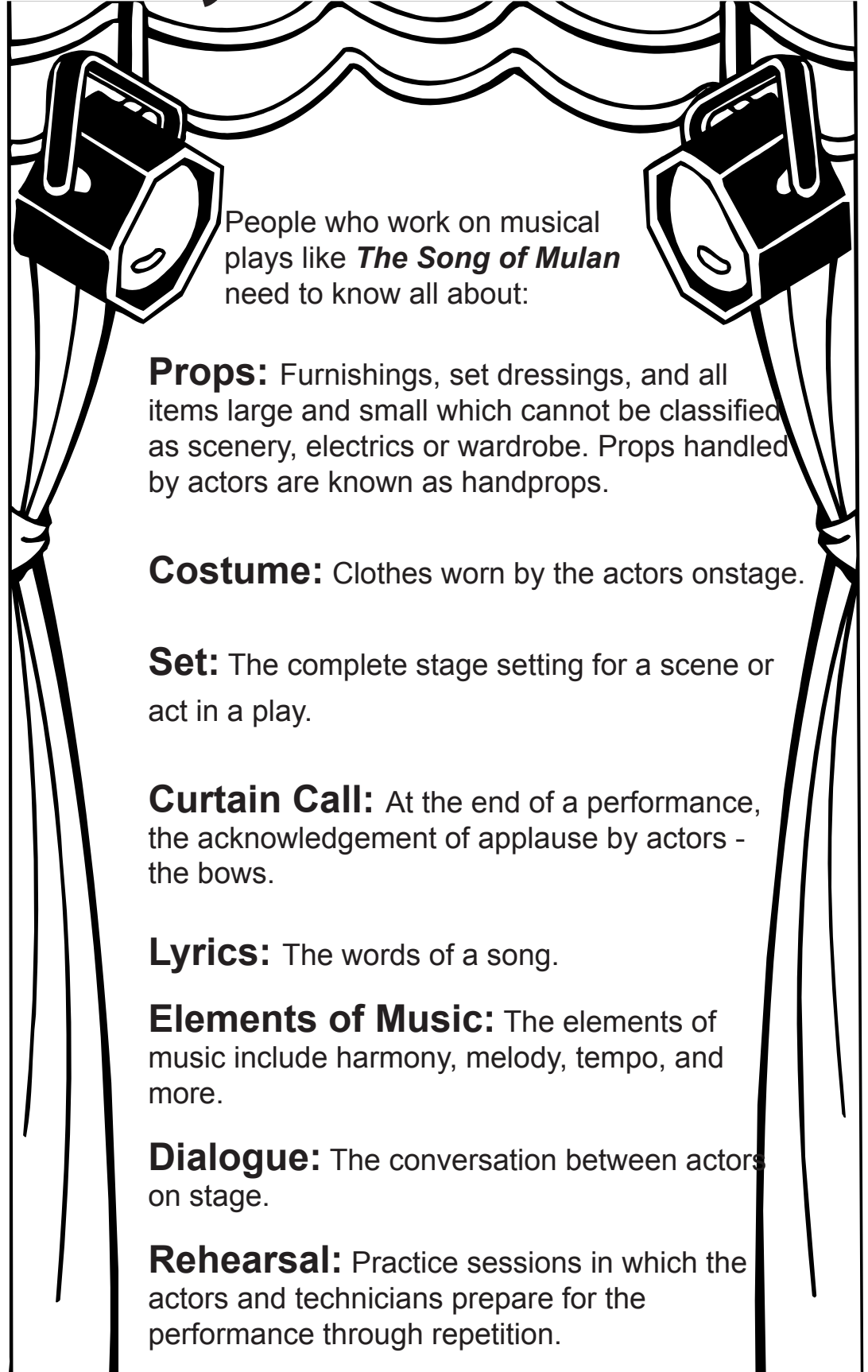
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Classroom Connections Study
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Play with Words!



People who work on musical
plays like *The Song of Mulan*
need to know all about:

Props: Furnishings, set dressings, and all
items large and small which cannot be classified
as scenery, electrics or wardrobe. Props handled
by actors are known as handprops.

Costume: Clothes worn by the actors onstage.

Set: The complete stage setting for a scene or
act in a play.

Curtain Call: At the end of a performance,
the acknowledgement of applause by actors -
the bows.

Lyrics: The words of a song.

Elements of Music: The elements of
music include harmony, melody, tempo, and
more.

Dialogue: The conversation between actors
on stage.

Rehearsal: Practice sessions in which the
actors and technicians prepare for the
performance through repetition.