

EXPLORING CHINA

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO CHINESE CULTURE

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As the second edition of this teaching resource pack is getting ready for more schools overseas, I feel obliged to Mr. Liao Yu for his kind support in producing demonstrative teaching videos and electronic courseware, which has enhanced this teaching resource pack. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my publisher Sinolingua Co., Ltd, in particular to Editor-in-chief Han Hui and Editor Zhai Shurong, for their continuous support over the years, in launching this project and in promoting the teaching materials, at home and abroad.

Fu Siyi (Professor)
Xiamen University, PR China
March 2022

Introduction

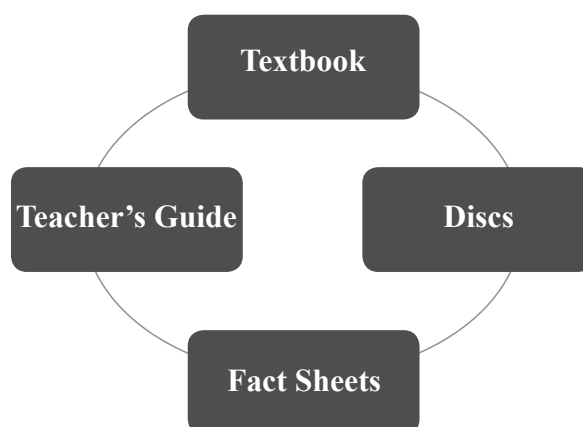
Welcome to the second edition of *Exploring China—A Teacher’s Guide to Chinese Culture!*

What is this resource pack?

This is a multimedia teaching resource pack intended for primary school children to learn about Chinese culture. With some adaptation the material can also be used for secondary school students.

This resource pack contains:

- A fully illustrated textbook
- Two discs containing video clips, animated stories and computer games
- A comprehensive Teacher’s Guide
- Eight Fact Sheets, each highlighting the key learning points in the unit



How was this resource pack developed?

This pack was developed while we were teaching Chinese in schools in Wales, the United Kingdom. We found that our pupils were fascinated in learning about China through the cultural workshops we organised for them, and their fascination for Chinese culture usually motivated their interest in learning the language. We started to think: Could we teach Chinese culture, in a didactic sense, to our pupils so that they would develop a more structured knowledge of China?

This question led to many further questions: How could we teach culture, as compared with language? How could we teach Chinese culture to young learners whose cognitive style

Exploring China—A Teacher’s Guide to Chinese Culture

is distinctively different from adults? How could we make “Chinese things” comprehensible to our pupils who have been brought up in Western cultures? How could we present historical facts and cultural knowledge, which may be profound in nature, in an easy and engaging manner so that our young pupils can understand and enjoy learning about China? Where could we source teaching materials? ...

In our search for off-the-shelf textbooks, we were disappointed to find that none could serve as a standard textbook for teaching Chinese culture to overseas school pupils, although there were many for teaching the Chinese language, both for adult learners and school-aged children. We started to think, rather ambitiously, that perhaps we could compile a textbook on our own by putting together various materials that we had used in our cultural workshops.

Fulfilling that ambition turned out to be a challenging and lengthy journey. To begin with, we were beset with further concerns: How could we select the material from the rich treasure house of Chinese culture, and what should be the criteria for selection? How could we maintain the academic quality of a textbook, but at the same time incorporate fun and motivating elements? How could we reconcile depth of knowledge with simplicity in approach? How could we remain objective and historical?...

It took more than a year for us to resolve these questions, though not to our complete satisfaction. We produced draft after draft of the Student’s Book and revised again and again the stories and video scripts. Meanwhile, we had regular meetings with our local education specialist, Mrs. Nia Jones, the Language Teaching Adviser at CILT Cymru (The National Centre for Languages in Wales). Our initial intention of writing a textbook eventually became a rather comprehensive project which developed into a multimedia teaching resource pack, to be used not only for our own pupils in Wales, but also for school pupils worldwide!

This teaching resource pack is therefore a product of teamwork led by the Confucius Institute of Cardiff University. It represents the joint efforts of our local tutors and the contributions from language and education specialists, both from China and the UK. It was published by Sinolingua Co., Ltd in 2015 and thanks to positive feedbacks from the users, we are now presenting the second edition, with some revision and improvement. We have updated the contents in each unit and made some changes according to the feedbacks from scholars and teachers who have kindly reviewed the textbooks.

We have also added electronic courseware to each unit and provided two demonstrative teaching videos, which we hope will draw forth more creative teaching. The courseware and videos can be downloaded from the official website of Sinolingua.

How are the components organized in this pack?

To facilitate easy management of the resource pack, here is further information about each component of it.

I. The Textbook for Students

There are eight units in the textbook, each covering a particular aspect of Chinese culture. The contents of the eight units are:

1. **LAND** (China's geographical location, land features, mountains & rivers, climate, animals & plants, and administrative divisions)
2. **PEOPLE** (China's population, ethnic groups, Chinese families & homes, and the daily life of Chinese people)
3. **HISTORY** (China's major historical figures and events)
4. **LANGUAGE** (The earliest Chinese written records, Chinese characters and their pronunciations, Mandarin Chinese or Putonghua and local dialects, and calligraphy)
5. **EDUCATION** (Confucius, ancient Chinese schools, the Imperial Examinations, and education in China today)
6. **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY** (The Four Great Inventions, Chinese Blue-and-White Porcelain, pioneers of Traditional Chinese Medicine, early Chinese seismograph, the invention of hybrid rice, space programmes, and new hi-tech developments in people's daily life today)
7. **FESTIVALS** (The Chinese lunar calendar, the Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, Qingming Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, and National Day)
8. **TOURIST ATTRACTIONS** (The Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Terracotta Warriors, the Huangshan Mountain and the other five well-known mountains)

The pupils are guided through **four learning stages** in each unit:

1. Firstly, they are challenged with **QUESTIONS**, which project the learning outcomes or the learning areas in the unit.
2. Secondly, they watch a **VIDEO**, which highlights the key learning points covered in the unit.
3. Thirdly, they read the **TEXT**, which is broken down into sections, each focusing on a particular learning point.
4. Fourthly, they take part in a variety of **ACTIVITIES**, ranging from stories, hands-on

Exploring China—A Teacher’s Guide to Chinese Culture

activities, games and mini-projects.

The sequence of these four learning stages is reflected through the headings used in the textbook, namely:

- **Let’s find out** - projecting learning areas
- **Let’s watch a video** - highlighting key messages
- **Do you know** - presenting knowledge & facts
- **Activity time** - reinforcing what has been learned

II. The Discs

In order to make the learning process fun and engaging, each unit is supplemented with a video, one or two animated stories and some interactive games, all carefully chosen to relate to the theme and content of the unit. These are provided on two discs, which contain 8 video clips, 12 animated stories and 20 games. Directions and guidance for using these resources are provided in the Teacher’s Guide.

Activities and games on the discs are designed to enhance our pupils’ learning or to check their understanding, although presented in the form of entertainment. This is indeed a feature that distinguishes this teaching resource pack from traditional teaching materials.

III. The Teacher’s Guide

The Teacher’s Guide is organised in this format for each unit:

1. **Teaching Objectives and Summary of Contents**
2. **About the Video**
3. **Notes on Each Section**
4. **Guide to Activities and Games**
5. **Script of the Story**

Each of the five parts contains detailed information and guidance for the teacher. This aims to save the time that the teacher would normally spend on preparation. We also hope that the

detailed guidance provided for the teacher will make it possible for someone who is not necessarily a specialist in Chinese culture or a native speaker of Chinese to lead a Chinese culture class.

IV. The Fact Sheets

There is a fact sheet in each unit, designed as an individual loose sheet for our pupils to use for revision. These will be especially useful when pupils do not have their own copies of the textbook. The fact sheet is printed on both sides: the front lists the key points that our pupils are expected to have learned from the unit, while the back provides some knowledge or information that is not covered in the textbook, but is related to what pupils have learned in that particular unit. We hope that this will further engage our pupils and expand their learning.

What is special about this resource pack?

Parts of this teaching resource pack have been used by our tutors at schools in Wales and have been very well received. The teaching resources we have provided in the pack have been found to be:

- **Informative** — covering a wide range of topics and providing facts and knowledge in simple language, suitable for school pupils
- **Interactive** — engaging pupils in various activities rather than merely citing knowledge
- **Interesting** — making learning fun and engaging with a fresh teaching approach
- **Flexible** — easy to use as a supplement to general school modules such as History, Social Studies, Sciences etc., though the pack itself provides ideal teaching materials for an individual Chinese module

We hope that you will find this multimedia teaching resource pack helpful, and that both you and your pupils will enjoy using it. We value your feedback, so please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions.

How can you contact us?

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Prof. Fu Siyi
Editor-in-chief
March 2022



Contents

Unit 1	_____	
	Land	1
Unit 2	_____	
	People	15
Unit 3	_____	
	History	31
Unit 4	_____	
	Language	52
Unit 5	_____	
	Education	69
Unit 6	_____	
	Science and Technology	85
Unit 7	_____	
	Festivals	102
Unit 8	_____	
	Tourist Attractions	120



Unit 1 Land

I. Teaching Objectives and Summary of Contents

This unit gives general information about China's geography, focusing specifically on:

- China's geographic location: neighbouring countries and territorial seas
- China's 3-tier land features
- China's famous mountains, deserts and rivers
- China's diverse climate and weather conditions
- Animals and plants unique to China
- China's administrative divisions

Questions at the beginning of the unit indicate the contents your pupils will focus on in this section. The knowledge they acquire will facilitate their understanding of other aspects of the country as they proceed to the later units.

II. About the Video

This video clip is intended as a “trailer”, presenting a panorama landscape of China. It is presented from the point-of-view of David, a British school boy, who will be the protagonist in all the videos in this teaching resource pack.

In this video, David is on a flight to China. A stewardess announces that the plane will land shortly in Beijing. He looks through the window with great anticipation, and the following highlights of China's scenery are brought into focus:

- Mount Qomolangma (Everest)
- The Taklamakan Desert
- Inner Mongolia Prairie

- The Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau
- The Mountains and Rivers of Guilin
- The Three Gorges
- The Greater Hingan (Khiban Mountains)
- Suzhou Gardens
- Hainan Island in the South China Sea

David is excited by what he sees and sets out on a journey to learn about this amazing country. It is hoped that your pupils, like David, will be interested in finding out more about China.

III. Notes on Each Section

1. China’s Geographic Location

The name “China” in Chinese is pronounced as “Zhōngguó”, literally meaning “the middle country” or “the central kingdom”, as the ancient Chinese believed that their homeland was the geographical centre of the world.

You may generate interest from your pupils by referring to this ancient belief, encouraging them to test this assumption against the knowledge they gain from this unit about China’s geographic location in relation to other countries of the world. The process of coming to an answer will be a process of refreshing learning for the pupils.

2. China’s Land Features

The key point of this section is to emphasize the 3-tier land feature of the country.

If you take a bird’s-eye view of China, you will find that the terrain gradually descends from west to east like a giant staircase in three tiers, as illustrated in the map using different colours: brown, yellow and green.

Tier 1: The Qinghai-Xizang (Tibet) Plateau rises more than 4,000 m above sea level and forms the highest tier. It is a land of peaks and valleys and is covered with many lakes.

Tier 2: The vast area north and east of the Qinghai-Xizang (Tibet) Plateau drops to an elevation of 1,100-2,000 m and forms the second tier. It is a land consisting of extensive basins and highlands.

Tier 3: The vast area of rolling hills and plains in the east has a maximum elevation of 500 m and forms the third tier. It is where the most fertile land and abundant resources of the country lie.

Such a marked topographic feature is directly related to China's regional developments, projecting a very developed area along the eastern coast, and a remote and underdeveloped western region. It is important that your pupils are aware of such diverse natural conditions and the resulting disparity in social and economic developments in China, among different regions. This awareness is essential for them to appreciate the various aspects of Chinese culture that will be covered in the later units.

3. Mountains, Deserts and Rivers

In this section, your pupils are led through China with a focus on mountains, deserts, and rivers.

Your pupils will find that the 3-tier terrain is also relevant here. They will find two-thirds of China's land is made up of mountains (Tier 1) and deserts (Tier 2). Although China has some of the best land in the world (Tier 3), its arable land covers just around one-third of the country's total landmass.

You may want to encourage your pupils to find out more about these famous mountains, deserts, and rivers. Here is some additional information for your reference:

The Himalayas is a mountain range which crosses China, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and India. It is in the Himalayas that Mount Qomolangma (Everest), the world's highest mountain is located. Mount Qomolangma is 8848.86 metres (29,032 ft) high, and it was formed by the movement of the Indian tectonic plate pushing up and against the Asian continent over 60 million years ago. It consists of different types of shale, limestone, and marble and grows by about a quarter of an inch (0.25") every year. Due to the height of the mountain, the rocky summit is covered in deep snow all year long.