



# Confucius' Teachings

**Title:** Confucius' Teachings

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**Theme/Topic:** School Life

In this unit, School Life, students will learn about school life in China and Taiwan and compare the daily schedule and the subjects taken in China with those in the United States. Confucius' Teachings is a required course in high school in China and Taiwan.

**Introduction (2-3 sentence summary of the lesson):**

Confucianism has a significant influence on Chinese culture and has an undeniable relationship to the value of education that teachers are always trying to impart to their students. This lesson is designed to help students understand who Confucius was and what Confucius' teachings are. By learning about Confucius' teachings, students will reflect on their own experiences and see how they can apply Confucius' teachings in their daily lives.

**Subject(s)/Grade level(s):** Chinese 4, 12th grade

**Suggested Duration of Lesson:** 2-3 periods

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**Connection to Standards/Common Core (2-3 standards):**

- Understand the topics and relevant information in complex authentic informational texts (INT-C, IL 3a)
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar phrases using context clues, background knowledge, and related word families. (INT-LIT-IM 1)
- Compare the relationships among everyday cultural products, practices, and perspectives in native and other cultures, such as religions. (Interpretive reading IM 1)

**Essential Questions (2-3 questions):**

- Who was Confucius?
- What are Confucius' teachings?
- How do Confucius' teachings influence Chinese society and other East Asian countries?

**Learning Objectives (2-3 objectives):**

- Students can recognize ancient Chinese characters and match them with modern Chinese characters.
  - Students can analyze Chinese characters and discover the meaning of Confucius' sayings.
  - Students can discuss Confucius' sayings from the Analects of Confucius and relate them to their own lives.
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## Materials Needed:

**Pre-Assessment of Prior Knowledge:** *How will students show what they already know about the topic?*

Pre-assessment of prior knowledge: "The top five the most famous Chinese persons" activity

- Students complete the "The most famous Chinese people" survey form <https://forms.office.com/r/4xZLcXLGMs> to show how much they know about the following five Chinese persons (with pictures): Confucius, Mao Zedong, Jackie Chan, Jack Ma, and Yao Ming.

## Lesson Activities/Instructional Strategies (5-7 steps):

- Warm-up: Discuss the daily schedule of high school students in Taiwan and the United States. Compare the subjects they are taking right now with their Taiwan pen-pals, then introduce Confucius' teachings in the Taiwan high school curriculum.
- In-class activity: Students work on the "[Confucius' Teaching](#)" student version of the activity.
  - Watch a short video, "Who was Confucius?" by Bryan W. Van Norden, TEDEd. Total 4:30, [https://youtu.be/wFt\\_VGG0kJU](https://youtu.be/wFt_VGG0kJU)
  - Students work in groups of three to decode three of Confucius' sayings.
    - Work on the "Confucius' Teaching" PPT if the class is conducted virtually, otherwise, work in person using three sets of cards in Modern Chinese characters, Ancient Chinese characters, and the English definition.
    - Analyze the two sets of character cards and match the ancient Chinese characters with the modern Chinese characters.
    - Review the characters they already know and use the clues from the ancient Chinese characters cards to find the meaning of these characters in English. Match the English definition to the Chinese characters.
    - Put the modern characters in the correct order of Confucius' saying and discuss in the group the meaning of this Confucius saying and write the meaning of the saying on the worksheet.
  - Students go to the [Padlet site](#) to post their discussion of some deeper questions and reflect on how these Confucius sayings apply to their daily lives.
  - If time permits, each group searches online and decodes other Confucius sayings and the meaning of each character in the saying, then shares their learning of their Confucius sayings to the class.
- Extended Activity: Students discuss with their Taiwan pen-pals their thoughts of Confucius' teachings, their favorite Confucius sayings, and how Confucius' teachings influence their daily lives.
- Students summarize their discussion with their pen-pals and post it on a Padlet. Students read and post comments to each other.

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## Resources:

Websites:

汉典 : <https://www.zdic.net/>

字源 : <https://hanziyuan.net/>

Analects of Confucius : <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/analects.html>

Books :

Lindqvist, Celilia. *China: Empire of Living Symbols*, translated by Joan Tate, Merloyd Lawrence Book, 1991  
Park, KunHo & Kong, Kyung Yong. *Enjoy Learning Chinese Characters: Discover their Hidden Meanings*, Kong & Park, Inc. 2013

Peng, Tan Huay. *Fun With Chinese Characters: The Straits Times Collection*, Federal Publications, 1994

Peng, Tan Huay. *What's in the Chinese Character*, 趣味汉字 New World Press, 1998

Jianhsin Wu. *The Way of Chinese Characters: The Origins of 450 Essential Words*, Illustrated by Chen Zheng and Chen Tian, Cheng & Tsui Company, 2010

左民安, *细说汉字: 1000个汉字的起源与演变*, 中信出版社, 2015

杨伯峻, *论语译注*, 中华书局, 2016

董作宾, 董敏, *甲骨文的故事: 汉字的寻根探源之旅*, 海南出版社, 2015

**Closing/Reflection Activity:** *How are students engaging with ideas from another culture? What does it mean for them?*

- Use the ten Confucius' sayings to play a karuta game with Pinyin/Characters/English to make sure students understand the meaning of these Confucius sayings.
- Students pick one of Confucius' sayings and create a picture/poster/ppt to tell a personal story related to this saying.

**Post-Assessment:** *How will students demonstrate what they have learned about the topic from this unit?*

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## Extension Activities/Extending the Lesson/Cross-Curricular Connections (2-3 ideas):

Social Studies and Statistics:

Confucius' Filial Piety concept: Students will research and collect data on the family structures of people aged sixty-five and older, study the percentage of senior citizens living with two or three generations in different countries, and examine the correlation of the percentage of these countries with the Confucian influence.

Art and Confucius:

To help other students in other subjects learn about Confucius, students can create posters with Confucius' sayings with their personal stories or drawings to place on walls in the Chinese Corner (the space between our Chinese classrooms where we have a mini Chinese library and students can post their Chinese artwork)