



# Confucius Sayings for Today

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**Lesson Plan by:** Megan Kuns, Hull Prairie Intermediate School, NCTA 2021 (The Ohio State University seminar)

**Title:** Confucius Sayings for Today

**Theme/Topic:** Confucius Thought Past and Present

**Introduction (2-3 sentence summary of lesson):** Students will learn about Confucianism through primary source documents. Students will learn about filial piety and Confucius Influences on China and then connect his teachings to their lives today.

**Subject(s)/Grade level(s):** 6th Grade Social Studies/ELA

**Suggested Duration of Lesson:** 3 classes, 55 minutes each

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

Ohio Content Standards 6.2 Early civilizations (India, Egypt, China and Mesopotamia) had unique governments, economic systems, social structures, religions, technologies and agricultural practices and products. The cultural practices and products of these early civilizations can be used to help understand the Eastern Hemisphere today

6.7 Political, environmental, social and economic factors cause people, products and ideas to move from place to place in the Eastern Hemisphere in the past and today.

6.8 Diffusion of agricultural practices and products, technology, cultural practices and major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism) impacted the Eastern Hemisphere

**Essential Questions (2-3 questions):** How do ideas spread (diffuse) around the globe?  
Can ancient ideas help us make sense of the world today?

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

- Students will learn about Confucianism
- Interpret his writing/sayings
- Present their findings



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## Materials Needed: Background information:

- Holcombe, Charles. A History of East Asia: From the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-first Century. 2nd ed., Cambridge [etc.], Cambridge UP, 2017. pp. 36-41
- Neuman, W. Lawrence. East Asian Societies. Ann Arbor, Association for Asian Studies, 2014. pp. 30-33

For student introduction: [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/at/conf\\_tradition/tct05.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/at/conf_tradition/tct05.htm)

[China Philosophies Notes](#)

## For interpretation:

[http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/xunzi\\_encouraging\\_learning.pdf](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/xunzi_encouraging_learning.pdf)

[http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/xunzi\\_human\\_nature.pdf](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/xunzi_human_nature.pdf)

[Confucius Interpretation](#)

<https://www.quoteambition.com/confucius-quotes/>

## Other materials:

Computers

Small Poster Paper

Sample of completed poster

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

At the beginning of the year, all students take a pretest over topics from the year, including questions about Confucianism. At the start of this lesson, students will respond to the journal question “What do you know about Confucius and/or filial piety?”

I would use this lesson as part of a larger unit on the history of China. I would insert this into the unit after we have learned about other philosophies and the early dynasties of China so that students have the background knowledge needed to interpret these primary sources. Also, journal writing is part of our daily routine, so this is a step students are familiar with.

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

1. Complete the pre-assessment prior to the lesson. Students respond to the journal prompt “What do you know about Confucius?”
2. Teacher shares key points about Confucius from the sources listed under background information and shares the series of short videos found here: [Confucius Intro](#)

[Students can add notes to this document](#)

3. Using the resources “For Interpretation” the class will examine some of Confucius' writings. Using the first link, the teacher will read the first paragraph of Confucius writings to the class. The teacher will model breaking down the passage to students for interpretation. Key questions: What does this sentence mean? What does this paragraph mean? What does this mean for a student today?

## Day Two:

1. Journal/Opener: Confucius says “When anger arises, think of the consequences”, what do you think he means by this?
2. Discuss journal responses.
3. Use another paragraph of Confucius writing from the resources listed above. Interpret this as a class. Asking for input again about: What does this sentence mean? What does this paragraph mean? What does this mean for a student today?
4. Teacher will summarize the findings on a Google Doc.
5. Put students into groups of 2-4 students. Give each student a paragraph of text from the resources listed above. The students will work together to answer the following questions: What does this sentence mean? What does this paragraph mean? What does this mean for a student today? The group should use this discussion to complete this [google doc](#). After the document is submitted, this could be a way to connect to ELA. Students could edit, revise and present their summaries to the class after getting teacher and peer feedback.

## Day Three:

1. Journal: Confucius said “The essence of knowledge is, having it, to use it” What do you think he means by this?
2. Students will choose a well-known Confucius saying from this [site](#).
3. Students will brainstorm what this quote means to them and share their interpretations with the teacher.
4. After the teacher approves it, the students will create a poster to display. The poster will include the original Confucius quote and their interpretation/summary.



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**Closing/Reflection Activity:** After completing the activity, students will share their posters with the whole class and have a discussion about how Confucius thought is relevant today. We will discuss how it has shaped culture in China.

**Post-Assessment:** Students will be assessed with a performance rubric on both assignments (group assignment and poster). Questions about Confucius will also be included on the end of unit test.

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

**Ohio Sixth Grade ELA standard:** RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices, including sensory language, on meaning and tone.

This unit could be a joint lesson with Social Studies and ELA. Students could develop their summary of a Confucius saying in ELA and write a short analysis of their interpretation.

The posters could also be a joint unit with the art class as well. The art teacher could introduce Chinese art influences and students could use that to develop their posters.