



INTRODUCTION

An author visit can be a very exciting experience for young people. It may be the first time students have had the chance to talk to an author and get a glimpse into the writing process. **The key to a successful author visit is making sure that students are well prepared.** This preparation may take several weeks or even months. Also, books should be ordered well in advance. I am happy to sign books at an author visit.

This guide is intended to help teachers prepare students for my visit. Many of the ideas listed here came from teachers whose classrooms I have visited. If you have additional ideas, please e-mail them to me through this web site.



BOOK SELECTION

Make sure students have had sufficient time to read all the books which are appropriate for their age group and reading level. The books are available through many public library systems throughout the country.

Grades K-2:

Mini Waddie Wheezie Up
The Lemon Sisters
Goldfish and Chrysanthemums
Grandfather Counts
Tire Mountain
When the Bees Fly Home

Grades 3-5:

The Lemon Sisters
Goldfish and Chrysanthemums
Grandfather Counts
Shanghai Messenger
The Key Collection
Tire Mountain
Where the Steps Were
When the Bees Fly Home

Grades 4-6:

Shanghai Messenger
The Lace Dowry
Honeysuckle House
Where the Steps Were
The Bear Makers
Only One Year (Spring 2010)

Grades 7+:

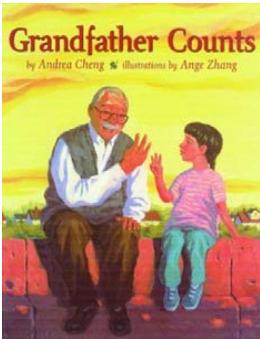
Shanghai Messenger
The Lace Dowry
Honeysuckle House
Marika
Eclipse
The Bear Makers
Brushing Mom's Hair (Fall 2009)

Send an introductory letter home which introduces my work to students and their families. This letter emphasizes the theme of my visit, "WRITE ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW," and also provides a summary of each book. At the end of the letter is a book order form. A sample introductory letter and order form are available through my website.

PROJECT IDEAS

Following is a list of possible projects relating to each book. Pick and choose from these suggestions, or come up with your own. If you e-mail them to me I can add them to the web site so that other teachers can benefit from your creativity.

picture books



GRANDFATHER COUNTS

(Go to www.leeandlow.com for a teacher's guide and book talk with Andrea Cheng)

Science/Math

Learn to count in Chinese. (See glossary at the beginning of the book) Can you count in any other languages? Practice addition in Chinese. Try counting by twos. Threes? Evens? Odds? Practice saying "hen how," very good, in Chinese. What is the word in Chinese for Grandfather?

Write simple math problems using the characters and see if students can solve them.

Social studies

Find China on a world map. Have students find their home states and see if they can find out how far China is from where they live. What other information can they find about China?

Bring chopsticks to class and let students practice picking up peanuts.

GongGong and Helen watch trains. When did trains become popular? Think about other modes of transportation.

Social Skills

Grandfather Gong Gong and Helen cannot communicate. Why? How can people who do not speak the same language communicate? Have you ever tried to communicate without using words? (gestures, expressions, pictures, music, acting)

Arts

Have students paint a simple Chinese character.

Listen to music from China. Learn a simple song.

Cut the letters of your name out of wallpaper.

Reading and Writing Skills

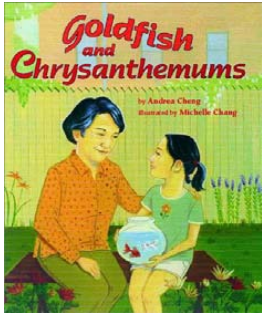
Write about your grandmother or grandfather or any other friend or relative.

Describe how you communicate with this person.

Write the events of the story on trains and put them in sequence.

Vocabulary

Chinese characters, annoyed, duty, by heart.



GOLDFISH AND CHRYSANTHEMUMS

Science/Math

What happens to the water that Nancy puts into the hole she digs for a fish pond? Try making a hole in dirt or sand. Fill it with water and see what happens. Discuss the water cycle, evaporation, condensation. Nancy and her brother transplant chrysanthemums. What does it mean to transplant something? Why is it important to get the roots? Try transplanting a chrysanthemum or some other plant. What are the parts of a plant? Why are the fish stunned in their new home? What is the natural environment for fish?

Social Studies

Why did they tear down NaiNai's old house in China? Have you ever seen a building near you that was torn down? Learn to say thank you, hello, and good bye in Chinese. When things change, people often use photos to help them remember the past. Do you have any old family photos of a place you used to live? Share. Use chopsticks to pick up goldfish crackers.

Social Skills

Nancy tries to cheer her grandmother up. Have you ever cheered someone up? What did you do to help them feel better? Has anyone ever cheered you up?

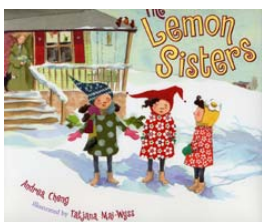
Arts

Paint a picture of goldfish in their natural environment.
Paint a picture of Chrysanthemums.

Reading and Writing skills

Write about a time you cheered someone up. How did they feel? How did you feel?
Write the events of this story in sequence.

Vocabulary: swirl, fair, chrysanthemums, tear down, stubborn, glazed, stunned, camera, especially, seep, courtyard, scanned, slosh.



THE LEMON SISTERS

Science/Math

Try making your own lemon ice. Do you need to measure the ingredients? How many lemons did you use? How much sugar? How much snow? (or ice if it's not winter!)

Social Studies

Where do you think the old lady lives? Does she live in an urban area or a rural area? How do you know? What part of the United States is it? Why do you think the old lady is living alone? Do you know any old people? Where do they live? In other cultures around the world, where do old people live?

Social Skills

How did the three children help the old lady? How did she help them? Have you ever helped an older person?
Go to a retirement center and read THE LEMON SISTERS with the elderly people who live there. Then have a lemon ice (or lemon sherbet) treat together.

Arts

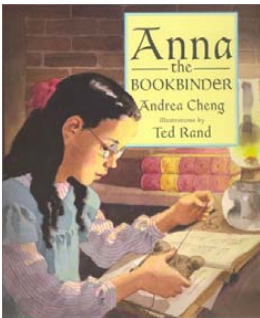
The illustrations in this book are collages. Make your own collage of a snowy scene.

Reading/Writing

Write about a time you spent with an older person.

Ask an older person to tell you a story. Write it down and illustrate it.

Vocabulary: tingle, ginkgo, scooping, piling, trio, tart, puckered, shiver, grip, celebrate, spring chicken.



ANNA THE BOOKBINDER

Science/Math

How are most books put together? Why is it better if the books are sewn?

Where does leather come from? Do you have anything made out of leather?

Social Studies

Why are people taking their books to large binderies instead of to Anna's father to be bound?

When do you think this story takes place? How do you know?

How did Anna learn how to bind books?

Social Skills

Anna takes her time when she binds her father's books. Have you ever done anything that has taken you a long time? What did you do? How did you feel when you finished it?

Arts

Bind a simple blank book and write a story in it.

Bind a simple blank book and put different types of scraps in it, like cotton, leather, string. Label each scrap.

Create a mosaic picture using torn pieces of paper or other scraps.

Reading/Writing

"Slow but steady wins the race" is the moral of one of Aesop's fables. Write about a time that this moral was true for you.

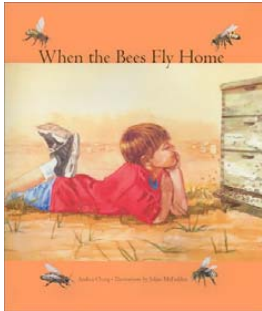
Reading and Writing Skills

Anna learned how to bind books from her father. Write about a skill that you learned from one of your parents or an older friend.

Reading is an important part of Anna's life. What is your favorite book? Read several of Aesop's fables. Which one is your favorite? Do a play of this story.

If a person is blind, how can he/she read a book? Discuss Braille.

Vocabulary: presses, snippets, stitches, threatening, ruin, bindery, tortoise, knife, shave, spine, mid-wife, scrape, tangled, borrow, pluck.



WHEN THE BEES FLY HOME

Science/Math

Write down three bee facts that you learned from *When the Bees Fly Home*.

Name some products that are made out of bees wax.

Read about how bee colonies operate.

What is the shape of a bee cell? Can you name some other shapes?

Why did Jonathan's toe swell up?

What are the parts of an insect?

Social Studies

Does Jonathan live in an urban area or a rural area? How do you know?

Bees are both consumers and producers. Explain.

Why do the candles sell well? Discuss supply and demand and opportunity costs.

Social Skills

Why does Jonathan's father get mad at him? Is it his fault? What is his reaction?

Tell about a time your mother or father or caregiver got mad at you. What was your reaction?

Arts

Cut out the shape of a bee cell. Inside the cell, write some interesting bee facts. Put several cells together to make a honeycomb.

Use pipe cleaners and pompoms to make your own honeybee.

Use bees wax to make small animals.

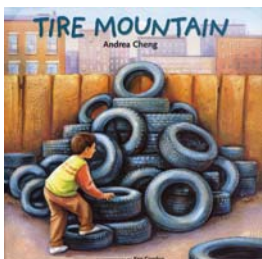
Reading and Writing Skills

Write down interesting bee facts.

Write about a time that you helped your family like Jonathan helps his.

Describe an imaginary insect.

Vocabulary: beeswax, shimmering, supers, bulge, cringe, swollen, hive, throbbing, dry spell, muscle, frenzy, batch, antennae,



TIRE MOUNTAIN

Science/math

Aaron uses tires to make a playground. What other things could you use tires for? What could you add to Aaron's playground?

Get four o'clock seeds and plant them in a sunny spot. Why are they called four o'clocks?

Social Studies

What causes neighborhoods to change? Are these changes always negative?

Why does Aaron's mother think the neighborhood is not good?

Would you like to live in their neighborhood? Why or why not?

Social Skills

Have older kids ever laughed at you? How did you react? What could you do?

How do Miss Mattie and Aaron help each other?

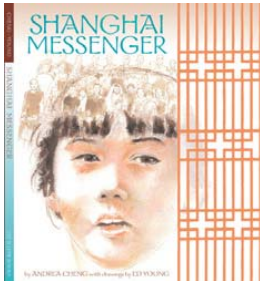
Arts

Aaron uses recycled tires to make his playground. Find objects that you could recycle? How would you use them? Make a sculpture using things that people often consider "junk."

Reading/Writing

Describe the kind of place you would like to live. Would it be in a city or in the country? Apartment or house? Draw a picture to go with your description.

stories in verse



SHANGHAI MESSENGER

Have you ever gone on a trip alone? How did you feel? What were your fears? What is Xiao Mei worried about? What is Tai Chi? How is it practiced? Nai Nai makes a family tree for Xiao Mei. Can you make a family tree of your own family?

WHERE THE STEPS WERE

List the five students in *Where the Steps Were*. Underneath each name, write a list of the characteristics of each one. For example, Anthony: helpful, likes school, likes the buckeye tree, tall, doesn't like basketball. Which character is your favorite? Why?

Like Carmen, make a timeline of your life. Add all the major events in your life and also some events that happened in the world.

What was the Civil Rights Movement? Make a timeline of the major events.

Research Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Langston Hughes, Harriet Tubman, George Washington Carver.

Read the "Dreams" poem by Langston Hughes. What are your dreams?

Where the Steps Were is illustrated with woodblock prints. How is a woodblock print made? Try making printing with potatoes or Styrofoam.

How would you feel if your school was going to be closed like Pleasant Hill School?

How do the students in Miss D.'s class react when they are not allowed to see the play? Like the students, write a letter to the theater director explaining your point of view.

Stone Soup (Vegetable soup)

If you would like to make vegetable soup like the Kayla, Dawn, Carmen, Anthony, Jonathan, and the rest of the students in Miss D.'s third grade class, follow Grams' recipe. Be safe! (See p. 69 of WHERE THE STEPS WERE)

Fill a big pot with water the bones. (A big ham bone works well, or other bones if you have them)

Boil for one hour

Cut up the following vegetables into bite sized pieces:

Carrots

Green beans

Potatoes

Celery

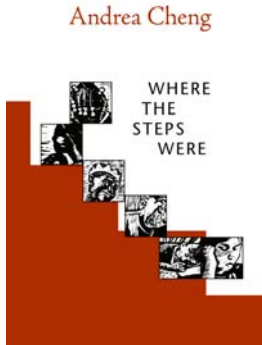
Zucchini

(Any other vegetables you happen to have are fine. Fresh vegetables are best)

Add to soup and boil for a half hour until vegetables are soft

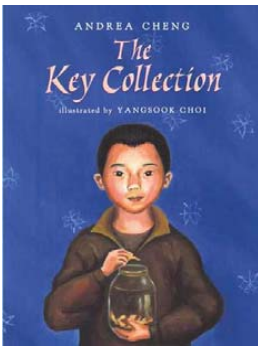
Add salt, pepper to taste.

Serve in big soup bowls and enjoy on a cold day!



novels

THE KEY COLLECTION



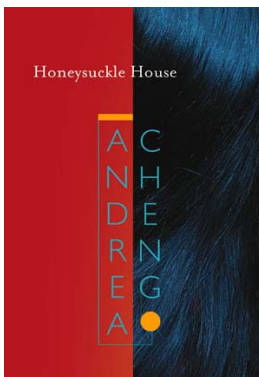
Make your own key collection. Think of ten different games you could play with the keys.

Describe a time that you moved or someone you love moved. How did you feel? Do you have any friends or relatives who live far away? How can you stay in touch with them?

Write a letter to a friend or a relative who lives far away.

Cook *Jiaoze*.

Learn how to write a few Chinese characters.



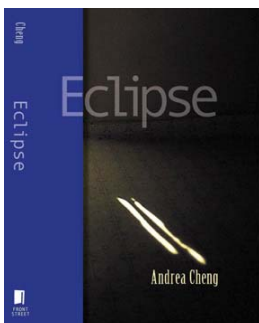
When Sarah first met Ting, she didn't think they would be friends, but she was wrong. Describe how you felt when you first met your friend.

Make a house out of honeysuckle branches

Make a bow and arrows out of honeysuckle branches.

What are buckeyes? Have you ever seen them? Where do they grow?

Sometimes immigrants have a hard time when they first come to America. Do you know anyone who came from another country?

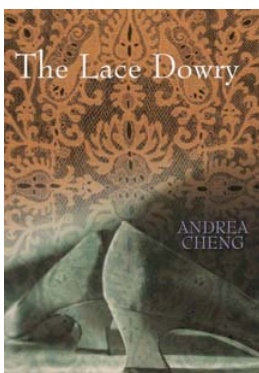


ECLIPSE

Peti is often bullied by his older cousin. Have you ever been bullied? How did you react? Why do you think Gabor is mean to his little cousin?

Do you think the problems of immigrants today are similar to the problems that Peti's family faced?

What was the iron curtain? Where does this name come from? Why was it dangerous for Peti's grandfather to have relatives in America?

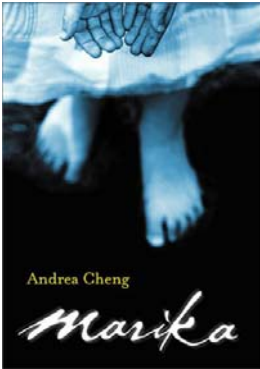


THE LACE DOWRY

What is a dowry? Is a dowry still important in some cultures today?

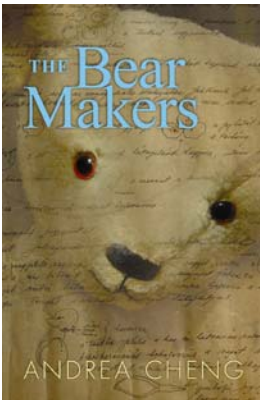
Do you think Juli made the right decision when she took the money for the dancing shoes and used it to help her friend? Have you ever been in a situation where you think you had to lie about something? Explain.

How is lace usually made? Bring in samples.



MARIKA

(See teachers' guide at www.frontstreetbooks.com)



THE BEAK MAKERS

Eleven year old Kata admires her big brother Bela. She feels especially hurt that he didn't tell her of his plans to leave the country. Why didn't he tell her? Do you think he should have?

Read about life behind the iron curtain. Why was it so difficult for Bela to leave the country? Why did Kata's father become so depressed? Why did her mother start the bear and handbag business? Why was it important to keep this business a secret?

Do you think Bela will be reunited with the rest of his family?

ALL BOOKS

What is similar about all the books by Andrea Cheng that you have read? What are some of the common themes?

Compare some of the main characters. Make Venn diagrams to show how they are similar and how they differ.

How is the style similar in all the books that Andrea has written?

AUTHOR CONTACT

Encourage students to write to me through this web site

(www.andreacheng.com) if they have questions about any of the books or more general questions about writing.