

# FIRE UP WITH READING!

LIBRARY LESSONS



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# FIRE UP WITH READING

The Fire Up with Reading program can be run at any time during the school year. In the book *Fire Up with Reading*, it runs from September 2 (the first day of school at Liberty Elementary) to March 2 (Read Across America Day, Dr. Seuss's birthday). However, it can be adapted and even presented as a full-year or a single-month program.

Begin by announcing the program at a school-wide assembly. If you are anything like Mrs. Skorupski, you might decide to dress in keeping with the theme (she wears fire engine tights and a dragon ring). Mrs. Skorupski was also wise to get her principal, Mr. Moriarty, to join her on stage and encourage student participation. This lends a whole-school feel to the program.

## A SET OF SIMPLE RULES

- Each student will record the number of minutes he or she reads during the program. Use the Student Reading Log (see page 6). Decide whether to have these returned weekly or monthly.
- For every thirty minutes a student reads, he or she pastes a scale on the dragon.
- The teacher of the Top Reading Class is declared the Dragon-headed Teacher and wears the dragon head in the culminating parade.
- The Top Reader in each grade also marches in the dragon costume.

## THE PROCESS

- A paper dragon decorates the wall outside each classroom and is accompanied by a fishbowl full of paper dragon scales with a sticker stating the rules (see the sticker pattern on the back cover or purchase in sets of 100 from Upstart). You may want to ask your art teacher to design the wall dragons.
- The first class to paste up 5,000 dragon scales receives Fire-breathing Dragon Status. Add a few yards of red, yellow, and orange cellophane dragon flames to the dragon when this happens.
- Once a month, during the program, announce the Top Reading Class on the intercom as well as the Top Reader at each grade level. This keeps students engaged and motivated. In order to do

so, keep track, monthly, of student minutes read on the Classroom Reading Tally (see page 7). A volunteer parent can be a huge help with this task.

- All forms of reading—including audiobook listening, listening to read-alouds, and reading to others—are included in the tally.
- At the close of the program, announce the final winners.
- The teacher of the Top Reading Class and the Top Reader from each grade level march in the dragon costume in the culminating parade.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- paper dragons for the wall outside each classroom
- fishbowls to hold the dragon scales
- stickers for the fishbowls
- dragon scales for each fishbowl
- red, yellow, and orange cellophane for flames
- Student Reading Log sheets
- Classroom Reading Tally sheets
- a method for maintaining a tally of the minutes each student—and each class—has read (Consider a dedicated parent volunteer for conducting this task.)

- a dragon costume (Check with your local costume rental shop or find a community member who can design something simple using a length of fabric and a somewhat more elaborate head and tail. Since the dragon costume for the parade is likely to be the most challenging, start looking for—or designing one—early so that you are ready for the big day.)

## CELEBRATING CHINESE NEW YEAR

Patty Lee is excited by Mrs. Skorupski’s arrival in the dragon head on the first day of school because it reminds her of the head of the Chinese New Year dragon dancing through the streets of her old Chinatown home. Therefore, *Fire Up with Reading* is a perfect book to introduce a study of Chinese New Year. Here are several other wonderful titles to share:

- Chinn, Karen. *Sam and the Lucky Money*. Lee & Low Books, 1995. The sights and sounds of the Chinese New Year celebration come alive as Sam and his mother make their way through the crowded streets. Sam, who is intent on spending his four dollar bills, his “lucky money,” comes to realize that the homeless man he encounters needs it more than he.
- Demi. *Happy New Year/King-Hsi Fa-Ts’Ai!* Crown Publishers, 1997. This book focuses on the customs, traditions, and lore of Chinese New Year with many Chinese words and phrases included.
- Holub, Joan. *Dragon Dance: A Chinese New Year Lift-the-Flap Book*. Puffin, 2003. A comprehensive but simple introduction to the celebration of Chinese New Year for primary grade children with the added fun of lift-the-flap elements.
- Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Celebrating Chinese New Year*. Holiday House, 1998. Set in San Francisco and enhanced by color photographs, this book tells the story of Chinese New Year through the eyes of a ten-year-old Chinese-American boy.
- Vaughan, Marcia K. *The Dancing Dragon*. Mondo, 1996. Told in rhymed couplets, this accordion-folded book brings alive the preparations and celebration of Chinese New Year, including a parade with a fabulous dragon displayed as a foldout panorama.

- Waters, Kate. *Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan’s Chinese New Year*. Scholastic, 1991. This photo-essay tells the story of a six-year-old Chinese American boy preparing for his first Lion Dance in New York’s Chinatown Chinese New Year celebration.
- Wong, Janet S. *This Next New Year*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000. The young narrator of this free verse story is half Chinese and half Korean, making his family celebration of the Lunar New Year with his many friends of other ethnicities unique and multicultural.
- Zhang, Song Nan and Hao Yu Zhang. *A Time of Golden Dragons*. Tundra, 2000. Starting from the Chinese calendar, this beautifully illustrated book of the dragon throughout Chinese life and history is suitable for older elementary students.

You may also want to do some online research with your students. *Chinese New Year* is a useful, kid-friendly, photo-enriched resource hosted by the University of Victoria at [www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/chinese\\_new\\_year.html](http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/chinese_new_year.html) with links to four other sites: *The 15-Day Celebration of Chinese New Year*, *Traditional New Year Foods*, *Chinese New Year Decorations*, and *Taboos and Superstitions of Chinese New Year*.

## EXPLORING DRAGONS

Kids (and some young-at-heart adults) are undeniably fascinated by dragons. *Fire Up with Reading* is a great entrée into the subject of dragons, so jump right in. It may be fun to begin by sharing a great PowerPoint® on dragons created by a professional author/illustrator team, entitled *Ancient Chinese Dragons* and accessible at [presentations.pppst.com/index.html](http://presentations.pppst.com/index.html).

Of course, you’ll also want to share some fabulous dragon books with your students.

- Chan, Arlene. *Awakening the Dragon: The Dragon Boat Festival*. Tundra, 2004. This colorful book is a nonfiction introduction to and history of the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival.
- Steer, Dugald A. *Dr. Ernest Drake’s Dragonology: The Complete Book of Dragons*. Candlewick Press, 2003. A fictional “nonfiction” guide to all things dragon in an exciting format with large foldout pages and small foldout insets as well as maps. It

includes information on habitats, biology, and behavior as well as information about finding, tracking, taming, and flying dragons.

- Gibbons, Gail. *Behold ... the Dragons!* HarperCollins, 1999. This book presents the history of dragons throughout time, literature, and culture with beautiful accompanying illustrations.
- Grant, John. *Life-Size Dragons*. Sterling Publishing, 2006. A tongue-in-cheek “nonfiction” study of dragons that will convince the firmest believers that they are on the right track with detailed to-scale illustrations and pseudo-scientific arguments.

- Penner, Lucille Recht. *Dragons*. Random House, 2004. Penner’s chapter book explores dragon lore, myths, and beliefs from several cultures and time periods.
- Peffer, Jessica. *Dragonart: How to Draw Fantastic Dragons and Fantasy Creatures*. Impact Books, 2005. This highly creative and imaginative drawing book will inspire your students to both draw and design their own dragons.
- Prelutsky, Jack. *The Dragons are Singing Tonight*. Greenwillow Books, 1993. Peter Sís beautifully illustrates this collection with two-page color spreads to accompany Prelutsky’s dragon poetry.





# FIRE UP WITH READING



## STUDENT READING LOG

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**Dear Student:** Record the number of minutes you read each day. Each thirty-minute block of reading equals one dragon scale. Ask your parent to sign this form before you return it to school.

**MONDAY**

**TUESDAY**

**WEDNESDAY**

**THURSDAY**

**FRIDAY**

**SATURDAY**

**SUNDAY**


Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# FISHBOWL STICKER AND SCALE PATTERN

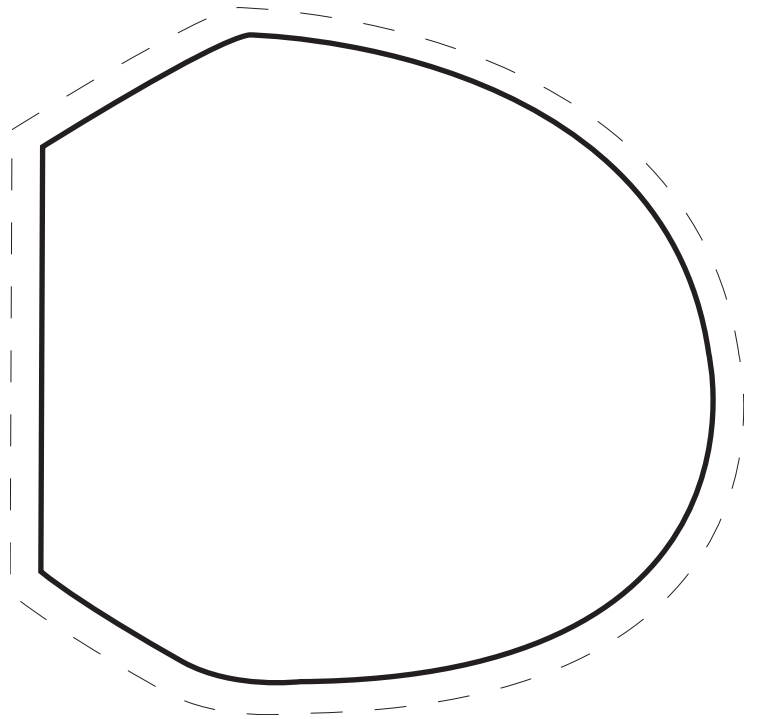
**Each Dragon Scale Represents  
30 Minutes of Reading.**



**The First Class To Paste Up All 5,000  
Dragon Scales Will Have  
Fire-breathing Dragon Status.**

Affix this sticker to each fishbowl (or other container) that holds your dragon scales.

Prepare scales in advance of the program to get students started, and line up a team of volunteer scale-cutters to continue to produce them as the program launches. (As an alternative, scales can be purchased from Upstart in sets of 100.) Be sure to count out the scales you give to each classroom, and keep a tally.



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Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin