Title/Author: *Tikki Tikki Tembo,* retold by Arlene Mosel

Suggested Time to Spend: 4-5 Days (Recommendation: two sessions per day, at least 20 minutes per day)

Common Core grade-level ELA/Literacy Standards: RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RL.1.9; W.1.2, W.1.8; SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.5; L.1.1

Lesson Objective:

Students will engage with an ancient fable from China and use literacy skills (reading, writing, discussion, listening) to understand the central message of the poem.

Teacher Instructions

**Before the Lesson**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis below. **Please do not read this to the students**. This is a description to help you prepare to teach the book and be clear about what you want your children to take away from the work.

Big Ideas/Key Understandings/Focusing Question

* Big Idea of this Text: When we compare and contrast the experiences of the brothers in the story, we see how they react to the same situation. Their actions are what truly define the boys as individuals not their names.
* Focus Questions:
  + How are the brothers the same and different? Why is that important?
  + What is this story trying to teach us?
* Desired student responses:
  + The two brothers react similarly to the same situation.
  + As was the custom at the time, the mother names the oldest brother with a distinguished long name and the younger son with a simple name, but the actions of the brothers mean more than what their names describe.
  + One brother is thought of highly by the mother and the others in the village and one isn’t – we want them to provide evidence related to this.
  + A long and important name is not always the best to have.

Synopsis

*Tikki Tikki Tembo* is a short fable set in ancient China. During this time period parents honored their first born son with long and important names. In the story there are two brothers: Tikki Tikki Tembo and Chang. The younger brother Chang falls into a well and the older brother, Tikki Tikki Tembo, gets help. Later, Tikki TIkki Tembo falls into the well and the Chang attempts to get help for his brother. However, the length of Tikki Tikki Tembo’s name delays his rescue. As a result Tikki Tikki Tembo is in the well for a very long time and takes a long time to recover from his fall into the well.

1. Go to the last page of the lesson and review “What Makes this Read-Aloud Complex.” This was created for you as part of the lesson and will give you guidance about what the lesson writers saw as the sources of complexity or key access points for this book. You will of course evaluate text complexity with your own students in mind, and make adjustments to the lesson pacing and even the suggested activities and questions.
2. Read the entire book, adding your own insights to the understandings identified. Also note the stopping points for the text-inspired questions and activities. *Hint: you may want to copy the questions vocabulary words and activities over onto sticky notes so they can be stuck to the right pages for each day’s questions and vocabulary work.*

The Lesson – Questions, Activities, and Tasks

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| **Questions/Activities/Vocabulary/Tasks** | **Expected Outcome or Response (for each) aka GOAL** |
| FIRST READING:  Pull the students together or use a document camera so that all can enjoy the illustrations.  Show the cover of the book. Activate your students’ prior knowledge about China from a previous read aloud of an informational text. Questions to ask:   * What do we know about people and families in China? * What are some specific cultural traditions we have learned about in China?   Why are names important? What do names tell us about people?  Read aloud the entire book with minimal interruptions. Stop to provide word meanings or clarify only when you know the majority of your students will be confused.   * This read will focus solely on hearing the story and providing students with an opportunity to grapple with comprehension of the story. In this way, they will build skills that allow them to do this with even more complex texts.   After reading, have students retell the story using a timeline. Use chart paper, a white board, interactive Smartboard, etc. to engage in shared writing and draw pictures and write key parts of the story. Be sure to capture the characters, the setting, and key events in the plot of the story. Go back to the book to cite evidence and details from the text and illustrations.  Key Questions to ask include:   * Who is in the story? * Who are the most important characters?   + Give students a chance to practice the long name so that they can experience the joy that comes with this * Where does the story happen? How does knowing the setting help us understand the story? * What happened in the story? (Beginning, middle, end, etc.)   + As an extension, students can act out their retelling. | The goal here is for students to enjoy the book, both writing and pictures, and to experience it as a whole.  For this fable, students should understand the significance of the boy’s names and why the firstborn would be more favored.  The oldest sons were considered the heir to the family fortune. Younger sons had to make their own way in the world. Students should understand that this was a cultural difference between where we live and China.  Talk about how sometimes people are named for relatives, or because the name has significance, etc.  This will give them some context and sense of completion before they dive into examining the parts of the book more carefully.   * The goal is also to make sure students understand key parts of the story and vocab words. * Students should be able to use the pictures of the pages with the well to understand what is happening in the story. * Students should be able to comprehend the plot of the story. Draw their attention to where the story structure repeats. (But we’re not overtly teaching them the story structure- the point is for them to comprehend the sequence of events). They should know the names of the characters (Chang, Tikki Tikki Tembo, the mother, the man with the ladder) and be able to describe the characters. * They should be able to describe the setting and tell why the setting is important to the story (because knowing that it takes place in ancient China helps the reader better understand the events in the story). * Students should be able to describe key events and details from the plot including that the boys’ mother tells warns them not to play near the well, that Chang falls in and Tikki gets help but when Tikki falls in it takes longer for Chang to get help because his name is so long and as a result Tikki takes a long time to recover. |
| SECOND READING:  For the second reading, have students look at the timeline as the story is read again to them to see if they have captured all of the main events. | Have students Insert information as needed to complete the story. |
| THIRD READING:  Before Reading:  Tell students that in the story today you want them to pay attention to the two main characters in the book (Chang and Tikki Tikki Tembo). Introduce the T-Charts (on a chart paper, interactive white board, etc.) where you will take notes about the two main characters. Write the boy’s names on the left side of the T-Chart.  Start to read the book. On the first page draw students’ attention to the way the mother describes Chang and Tikki Tikki Tembo.  Ask students: Do you notice the words the mother uses to describe the two brothers? What do these words tell us about how she feels about the two boys?  Turn and talk to a partner to discuss.  If students struggle to identify the difference and what this means about others’ feelings towards the boys, use a think aloud to model for students how to notice the words the author chose.  Write the words on the right side of the T-Chart.  How does the man with the ladder react to each boy? Why?  As you continue to read and come across words in the story that describe each of the boys, encourage students to notice them and write them on the right side of the t-chart.  After Reading: With students review the words used to describe the two boys.  Discuss what those words would tell the reader about the two characters. Then go back to the text and tell students to pay attention to the things the boys did in the story.  Prompt students to pull out the actions of the characters from the story. Make sure to compare and contrast so that students see the similarities and differences. Both Chang and Tikki Tikki Tembo should have a t-chart. Make sure to include the names and the actions of each boy. Actions should be written on the right hand side. | Students understand the words used to describe Chang. Students start to realize that the words used to describe Chang don’t necessarily reflect his true character.  Words used to describe Chang: Miserable, troublesome boy, tiresome boy, unfortunate son  Words used to describe Tikki Tikki Tembo: the most wonderful thing in the whole wide world, reverence, honored son, precious pearl  The man with the ladder responds quickly to Tikki Tikki Tembo’s request to help Chang. Because he is asleep he responds slowly to Chang and calls him miserable boy for waking him up. He refers to Tikki Tikki Tembo as the mother’s pearl.  The students should realize that both boys helped each other when their brother fell into the well. The students should also realize that Chang kept asking people for help when Tikki Tikki Tembo fell into the well, even though he had to work hard and keep saying the long name over and over again.  Students start to realize that the words used to describe the brothers don’t necessarily reflect their characteristics. |

FINAL DAY WITH THE BOOK - Culminating Task

* Discussion: Review the information collected: Do you think that the names that were given to each of the characters described them accurately? Why or why not? Be ready to share at least two reasons for your opinion with your group.
  + Given the developmental level of students, give them time to think first independently and then share with their partners. Ideal student responses would have an opinion and a reason for the opinion, which is backed up by evidence from the text. If evidence is not provided it can be prompted for by the teacher. This should be a class discussion.
* Writing Task:
  + Write a moral to the story.
  + Draw a picture of each boy and give each a new long name beginning with a three-word alliteration. You can explain the term alliteration of just say three words that begin with the same letter. Each groups name should be shared with the whole class. If students have studied syllables they can mimic the name by making a new one that rhymes for each part of Tikki’s e.g Tikki Tikki Tembo becomes “Bakki Bakki Bembo” No Sarimbo Hari Kari becomes “Lo Barimbo Fasi Pasi”… Or each group of students can be asked to replace the first letter of each of Tikki’s names with a different consonant if it begins with a consonant or different vowel if it begins with a vowel.

Vocabulary

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| **These words merit less time and attention**  (They are concrete and easy to explain, or describe events/  processes/ideas/concepts/experiences that are familiar to your students ) | **These words merit more time and attention**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, and/or are a part  of a large family of words with related meanings. These words are likely to describe events, ideas, processes or experiences that most of your student will be unfamiliar with) |
| Troublesome: causing difficulty or annoyance; p. 8  Tiresome: causing one to feel bored or annoyed; p. 22  Miserable: wretchedly unhappy or uncomfortable; p. 31  Unfortunate: unlucky; p. 24  Blossom: a flower or mass or flowers; p. 8  Fish him out: reach in and grab him; p. 8  Precious: an object or great value not to be wasted or treated carelessly; p. 33  Heir: a person legally entitled to another’s property upon that person’s death; p. 28  “Mind their mother”: obey; p. 5  Village: a group of houses situated in a rural area; p. 2 | Custom: a widely accepted way of behaving or doing something; p. 2  Honored: high respect or esteem; p. 2  Well: a deep hole made in the ground through which water can be removed; p. 3  Reverence: deep respect for someone or something; p. 24 |

Fun Extension Activities for this book and other useful Resources

* Act out the story using puppets
* Watch this Youtube video of the story read aloud: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOHngXg6Fts>
* Create a character foldable that looks like a picture of a boy. On the outside write the names he is called, on the inside write his actions.

Note to Teacher

* \*\*Keep in mind that this book should not be in a way to be representative of the Chinese culture but rather as an ancient fable.

**What Makes This Read-Aloud Complex?**

1. **Quantitative Measure**

Go to <http://www.lexile.com/> and enter the title of your read-aloud in the Quick Book Search in the upper right of home page. Most texts will have a Lexile measure in this database.

Most of the texts that we read aloud in K-2 should be in the 2-3 or 4-5 band, more complex than the students can read themselves.

2-3 band 420-820L

4-5 band 740-1010L

1090

1. **Qualitative Features**

Consider the four dimensions of text complexity below. For each dimension\*, note specific examples from the text that make it more or less complex.

* Most complex
* Multiple themes
* Multiple levels of meaning
* Purpose is a bit hidden; the explicit purpose is: don’t give your child a long name, but it’s more complex than that
* Students need to understand the mother’s attitude towards the sons; this is complex
* Very simple structure; repeated twice
* Very explicit structure
* Very conventional background
* Traits of typical fables- repeated structure
* Graphics are not essential but do enhance the meaning – support the plot
* Pretty clear;
* The language is more ambiguous rather than figurative; “pump the water out; push the air in”
* Varied sentence types- there were lots of varieties of sentence structure, complex sentences
* Vocabulary words: some tier 2 (custom; troublesome; tiresome); some content specific words (well)
* One of the most complex parts of the book is the references to Chinese culture
* Medium- some students will not be familiar with the concept of a well; the passing of moons, etc.
* Common everyday experience happening through a cultural lens- but we don’t need to know a lot about the culture to understand the text
* Multiple themes: pride; family; heeding warnings

**Meaning/Purpose**

**Structure**

**Language**

**Knowledge Demands**

1. **Reader and Task Considerations**

What will challenge my students most in this text? What supports can I provide?

* They won’t be able to determine the meaning because it’s not explicitly stated (layers of meaning)
* The context/setting of the story will be challenging- our kids lack exposure (knowledge demands)

How will this text help my students build knowledge about the world?

* Build cultural knowledge about China
* Reacting to emergencies (you should move fast; you should ask an adult for help)
* Family dynamics through a cultural lens

1. **Grade level**

What grade does this book best belong in?

* Multiple- we would teach in first grade