

A HISTORY-LITERATURE UNIT BASED ON AN HISTORICAL NARRATIVE FOR YEAR 4 STUDENTS

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Adventures of the Treasure Fleet
China discovers the World

written by Ann Bowler

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(available from Amazon Books)

This book is an historical story about the Chinese Admiral Zheng He (*pronounced Jung Huh*) and combines factual and narrative text and effective illustrations to give students a sound understanding of his voyages between 1405 and 1433.

Knowledge and understanding

- Early contacts
- Navigators and explorers charting the Australian continent and other parts of the world up to the early 19th century

Perspectives and interpretations

- Identify different points of view

Comprehension and communication

- Sequence historical people and events
- Use historical terms
- Develop historical texts, particularly narratives
- Use a range of communication forms

Introducing the book

- Introduce students to this book by opening the cover out wide so both front and back covers can be seen all together. Cover all words in the title and encourage students to use the cover illustrations to talk about what they can see, where they think the book might be set, who might be in the story, when the story is written and what might be happening in the story. Talk about whether the story is set in the past or now and what clues from the cover illustration point to this.
- Reveal the title *The Adventures of the Treasure Fleet* and establish student understanding of the words and their connection with the cover illustrations. List things students would view as 'treasure'.
- Show students all the title and discuss what *China discovers the World* means. Talk about their knowledge and understanding of who they thought 'discovered' the world.
- Open to the inside of the book and observe the map of the world. Identify and name the countries on the map and talk about other features of the map. Link the marked routes on the map with the title of the book and have students predict what they think the story will be about.
- Compare this map with a modern world map and talk about place and country names that have changed and those that are still the same. *Discuss the proximity of the marked routes of the voyages to Australia.*
- Initially walk students through the book, allowing them to identify features of the layout of the book and predict what could be happening through the story from the illustrations. Draw their attention to the *narrative text* and the *factual text*.
- Read the narrative out aloud first, then the factual text.



Admiral Zheng He's story through the narrative text

- Describe the major and minor characters in the story—the Emperor, Admiral Zheng He, Prince Parameswara, and the King of Siam.
- Identify and describe the purpose of the initial voyage from the viewpoint of the Emperor.
- Create a Qualities profile of Admiral Zheng He and explain why the Emperor chose him to lead the voyage.
- Describe how China prepared for the first voyage. List the workers involved and comment on the role of the Emperor and Zheng He in this stage of preparation.
- Name all the things (including people) that were loaded on board the ships before setting sail. Describe your impressions of the fleet.
- Describe and explain the response of the people of China to the Treasure Fleet setting sail.
- Create a correctly sequenced Timeline showing the countries Admiral Zheng He landed in, the response of the people of the different lands towards him, and what he did at each place.
- Plot the voyage on a world map as the story is read.
- Identify complications in the narrative experienced by the fleet as it sailed from place to place (eg. soldiers ready to attack the Treasure Fleet, fighting the pirates, the conflict between the King of Siam and Prince of Malacca, and the storm). Discuss the resolution of the complications. [HANDOUT 1]
- Describe the change in Malacca. Give reasons for this change.
- Identify and describe the effect of the use of descriptive vocabulary in the text including similes, adjectives and adverbs.
- Discuss the place of prayer in Zheng He's life.
- Sum up how the Emperor and Zheng He felt about the initial voyage.
- Discuss the link between the illustrations and the text. Create own art works to represent the places visited in this journey.
- Students describe their impressions, understandings and viewpoints of the voyage of Admiral Zheng He, as told through the narrative. Link this discussion with the title of the story.
- Create a frieze, or 3D sculptures, of the animals Zheng He took back to the Emperor (eg. leopards, lions, zebras, giraffe).
- Collect and display examples and pictures of the 'treasure' that Zheng He gathered from places he visited (eg. cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, incense and pepper). Talk about why they would be viewed as 'treasure' by the Chinese. Show students examples of silk and porcelain.

Admiral Zheng He's journey through the factual text (along the bottom of each page)

- Read the text and identify key points from the information.
- Organise factual text under headings such as Dates, Preparation, Countries visited, Interaction with leaders of countries visited, Treasure amassed, Relationships established with rulers, Inventions, Weaponry, Treasure Fleet, Culture of places visited. Students contribute information on 'post-it notes' to match the headings.
- When the information is sorted, discuss and write a summarising statement about the information under each heading.
- Compare the factual and narrative texts of Zheng He's voyage/s. Discuss the purpose and effectiveness of both. Re-read the narrative and complement with the main points from the factual text.
- Construct vocabulary lists about different parts of the voyages such as weaponry, inventions and treasure.
- Add dates and more explicit information to the Timeline created from the narrative. [HANDOUT 2]
Talk about century and the 15th century.
- Do the maths! Use the dates to work out how long ago Admiral Zheng He undertook his seven voyages.
- Use the facts to create a fact file about the ships in the Treasure Fleet. [HANDOUTS 3 & 4]

More to do

- Retell the story of Admiral Zheng He combining the factual and narrative text. Students could create a jointly constructed scroll representing each voyage and use it to support their retelling.
- Take on the role of Admiral Zheng He and the Emperor and reflect on and tell about the voyages from each person's viewpoint.

- In groups, students dramatise aspects of different parts of each voyage. Perform each part of the voyages in chronological order to give an overview of the seafaring life and achievements of Admiral Zheng He. Add large puppets of animals, treasure and pirates on long sticks to add to the dramatic effect of the performance. Use musical instruments to create an atmospheric background.
- Imagine you are a scribe on one of the ships in the Treasure Fleet. Write about an event, place or treasure that really impressed you.
- Work in pairs or small groups to create a model of one of the ships of the Treasure Fleet. Label the completed model.

Some serious discussion

- Identify and discuss the benefits of the voyages to China and to the countries the Chinese visited.
Discuss and describe any negatives to either China or the countries visited. [HANDOUT 5]
- Explain how China's inventions assisted in the success of Zheng He's voyages. [HANDOUT 6]
- Evaluate the significance of Admiral Zheng He's Treasure Fleet and his voyages.
How and why is Zheng He and his voyages important? [HANDOUT 7]
- Compare the viewpoints of Emperor Zhu Di and Emperor Zhu Gaochi towards the Treasure Fleet voyages.
Organise a debate around either Emperor's viewpoint. [HANDOUT 8]
- Hypothesise and discuss — if Zheng He had landed in northern Australia on one of his voyages to Indonesia (Malacca), what may have happened?
— if China had continued to discover the rest of the world instead of stopping the voyages after Zheng He and the Emperor Zhu Di died, what may have happened?

Further investigation

- [*Teacher note:* The Elaborations section of the draft Australian History Curriculum suggests as a possibility students describe and map the voyages of Vasco da Gama (Ref: page 16). Comparing the voyages of da Gama and Zheng He would be perfect, as both were exploring in the 1400s (Zheng He in the early 1400s; da Gama in the late 1400s), and both went to some of the same places in India and Africa.]
- Compare and contrast the voyages of Admiral Zheng He and Vasco da Gama. [HANDOUT 9]
 - Compare Zheng He's voyages with other explorers such as Hartog, Dampier, Tasman and Cook.
Use maps to show their voyages. [HANDOUTS 10 & 11]
 - Compare the First Fleet (1788) with the Treasure Fleet (1405).
Students share their impressions and understandings. [HANDOUT 12]
 - Calculate the years between each of the voyages of all the explorers investigated, and compare.
Comment on the length of time between the voyages and the kind of technology evident in each of the fleets.
 - Consider the question: *How does knowing about Admiral Zheng He broaden and influence our perspective about travel, trade and exploration of the world between the 1400s and 1800s?*

Some interesting extras

- Discuss and describe what life in China could have been like during this era using the illustrations and text as a starting point to stimulate this discussion (eg. values, protocol, lifestyle, occupations, clothing).
- Find out how Admiral Zheng He is remembered now around the world, especially in Indonesia and China.
- Find out about Saint Elmo's Fire. Write an explanation with diagrams about this phenomena.
- Find out about Tianfei, the Patroness of Sailors. Paint a picture or sculpt a model, and describe this patroness.

Another fabulous book to use in investigating Admiral Zheng He with primary students:

The Great Voyages of Zheng He by Song Nan Zhang and Hao Yu Zhang

Published by Pan Asian Publications ISBN 1-577227-088-8 (available from Amazon Books)

This book includes excellent maps, realistic illustrations and factual text.

It beautifully complements *The Adventures of the Treasure Fleet*.

For some really interesting, supportive websites for investigating Zheng He, see page 71 of this journal.

HANDOUT 1: NAME

DATE

ADVENTURES OF THE TREASURE FLEET

After reading and discussing the story *Adventures of the Treasure Fleet*, complete the following parts of the narrative structure.

ORIENTATION

.....

.....

.....

.....

COMPLICATION

RESOLUTION

.....

COMPLICATION

RESOLUTION

.....

COMPLICATION

RESOLUTION

.....

CODA (how characters change through the story)

.....

.....

.....

HANDOUT 2: NAME

DATE

ADVENTURES OF THE TREASURE FLEET

CUT OUT the dates and events. MATCH and SEQUENCE in chronological order.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1405 | Siam sent diplomats to China with gifts of parrots, peacocks and elephants. |
| 1433 | Admiral Zheng He's seventh and final expedition left China. |
| 1415 | The construction of the Treasure Fleet began. |
| 1402 | Prince Parameswara travelled to China. The Emperor gave him an official seal that proclaimed Malacca an outpost of the Ming empire. |
| 1432 | The massive Treasure Fleet first set sail from China under the command of Admiral Zheng He. |
| 1433 | Prince Parameswara founded the trading port of Malacca. |
| 1407 | The powerful and ambitious Emperor died. The Yongle Emperor is remembered as the creator of the magnificent Treasure Fleet. |
| 1404 | Zheng He (<i>Jung Huh</i>) and Prince Zhu Di (<i>Joo De</i>) gained control of China and Zhu Di was crowned Emperor of China, the third ruler in the Ming dynasty. |
| 1424 | The Chinese Treasure Fleet stopped sailing. There was no longer support within China for the voyages to continue. |
| 1400 | The first giraffe arrived in China. |
| 1405 | Admiral Zheng He died on the return journey to China, his seventh and final voyage. |

THE SHIPS OF THE TREASURE FLEET

Use the information from the factual text to complete this profile of the ships of the Treasure Fleet.

- Material used to make the ships:
- Number of ships in the fleet:
- Number of men on board the fleet:
- The crew included:
.....
- Lengths of twelve (12) largest ships in the fleet:
- Number of masts:
- Number of silk sails:
- Speed per hour:
- Appearance of the ships:
.....
- Ways of communicating between ships:
.....
.....
- How the ships were waterproofed:
.....
- Innovations in Chinese shipbuilding that allowed the Treasure Ships to survive storms:
 -
 -
 -
 -
- Total distance travelled by the Treasure Fleet 1405 - 1433:

DRAW some dragon eyes.

It was believed that dragon eyes helped the ship to see where it was going.

HANDOUT 4: NAME

DATE

THE TREASURE SHIPS

Each Treasure Ship was like a city. DRAW what it could be like on each level of a Treasure Ship.

TOP LEVEL:

- Deck
- Observation post

MIDDLE LEVEL:

- Kitchen
- Officers' quarters

LOWEST LEVEL:

- Trade goods stored
-

ANALYSING ADMIRAL ZHENG HE'S VOYAGES

IDENTIFY, DISCUSS AND LIST ...

BENEFITS OF THE VOYAGES TO CHINA:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

BENEFITS OF THE VOYAGES TO THE COUNTRIES VISITED BY CHINA:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

ANY NEGATIVES OR DISADVANTAGES OF THE VOYAGES ...

TO CHINA:

-
-
-

TO COUNTRIES VISITED BY CHINA:

-
-
-

HANDOUT 6: NAME

DATE

CHINESE INVENTIONS

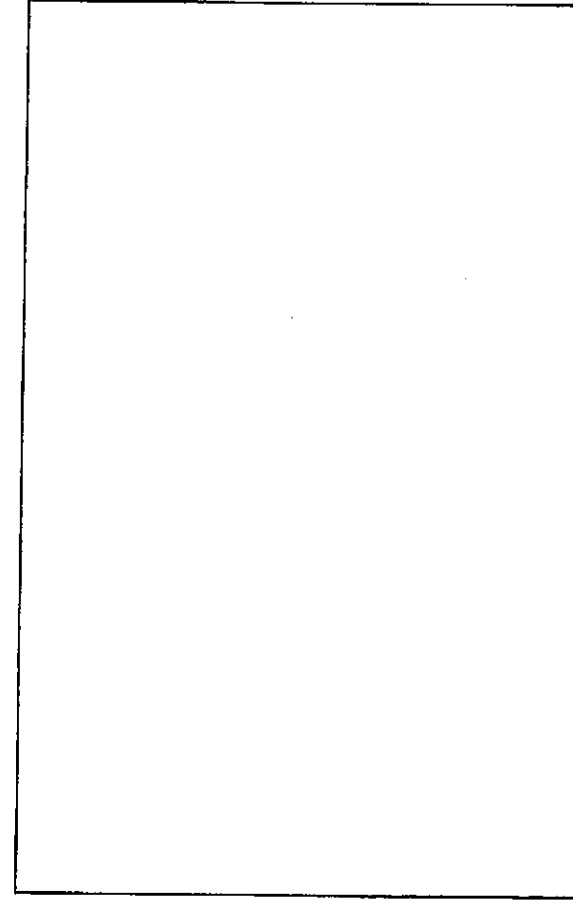
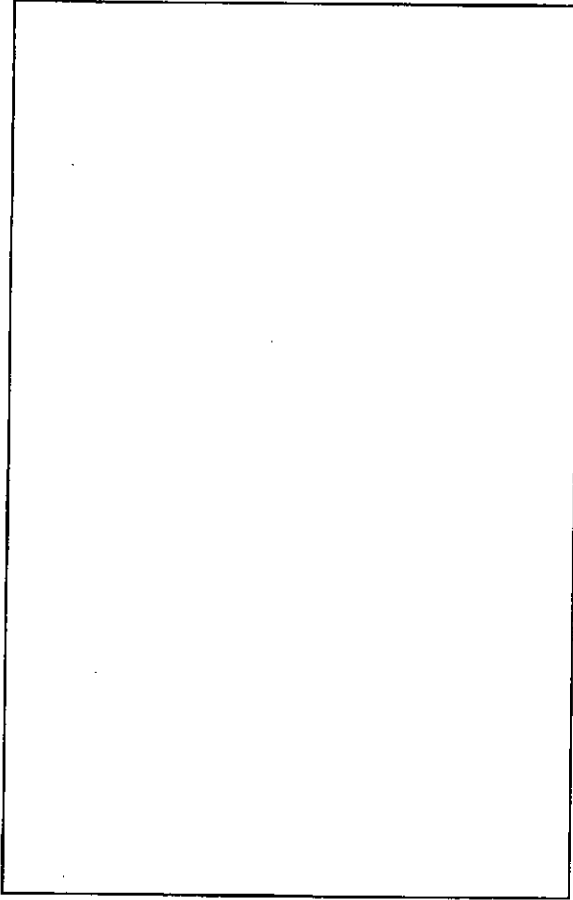
Many important Chinese inventions made Admiral Zheng He's voyages possible.

DRAW diagrams and pictures to show how these inventions contributed to the voyages:

- paper and printing
- magnetic compass
- mechanical clock
- mapping of major star constellations

EXPLAIN how these inventions advantaged the Chinese at the time:

- crossbow
- gunpowder
- using gunpowder in fireworks and weapons



EXPLANATION:

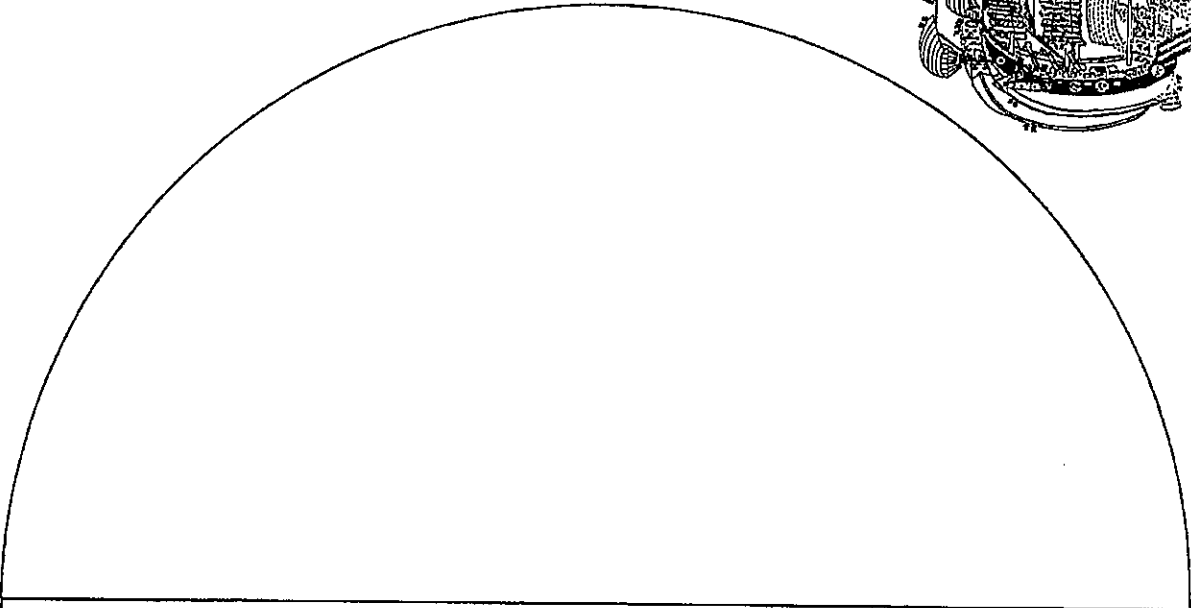
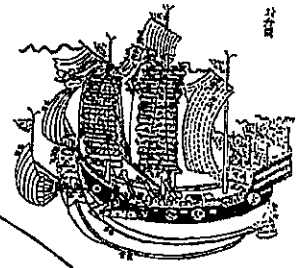
.....

.....

.....

REMEMBERING ADMIRAL ZHENG HE

- Complete the stone tablet, recording your thoughts about Admiral Zheng He and his achievements.
- Decorate the top of the stone tablet with Chinese dragons.



-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

- Admiral Zheng He was described as having a commanding presence. Explain what this means.

.....

.....

VOYAGES OF THE TREASURE FLEET

Brainstorm and list reasons FOR and AGAINST the Treasure Fleet continuing its voyages.

(From Emperor Zhu Di's viewpoint)
FOR

(From Emperor Zhu Gaochi's viewpoint)
AGAINST

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Develop these reasons into a debate.

My viewpoint about the voyages of the Treasure Fleet continuing:

.....
.....

ADMIRAL ZHENG HE / VASCO DA GAMA

Compare the voyages of Admiral Zheng He and Vasco Da Gama—two explorers sailing around parts of the world in the 1400s.

ADMIRAL ZHENG HE	VASCO DA GAMA
<p>○ Country of origin:</p> <p>○ Reasons for voyages:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Dates of voyages:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Attitude towards people and places visited:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Types of ship, and fleet size:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Crew size:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Countries visited:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Achievements:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>○ Country of origin:</p> <p>○ Reasons for voyages:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Dates of voyages:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Attitude towards people and places visited:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Types of ship, and fleet size:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Crew size:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Countries visited:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>○ Achievements:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Google images: Maps of Vasco Da Gama's voyages
 Maps of Zheng He's voyages

Discuss and compare these maps.

HANDOUT 11: NAME

DATE

ADVENTURES OF THE TREASURE FLEET

- Compare the explorers and their voyages.
- Enlarge onto a class chart.

	Place of origin	Dates	Places visited	Purpose	Actions	Achievements	Consequences of voyages
ADMIRAL ZHENG HE							

TREASURE FLEET / FIRST FLEET

COMPARE and CONTRAST significant features of the ships in the Treasure Fleet (1405-1433) and ships in the First Fleet (1788).

TREASURE FLEET	FIRST FLEET
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.....
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.....
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.....
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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.....
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.....
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.....
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.....

Comment on your views of both fleets.
.....
.....

If you were a sailor, which fleet would you prefer to sail with? Why?
.....
.....

HANDOUT 13: NAME DATE

ADMIRAL ZHENG HE

These words describe his qualities, and the kind of man Admiral Zheng He was:
loyal bright tough leader diplomatic prayerful calm brave capable devout
Rewrite them in alphabetical order:
.....

DRAW the most unexpected
surprising treasure Admiral
Zheng He took back to China.

Unjumble these words to find some of the treasures Admiral Zheng He collected for the Emperor.

nbeoy
ulcose
ogdl
ydse
nilos
viroy
ingre
bursei
sotirhc
ehbrs
untgem
faigrfe

eppre
dameerls
inamoncn
senicne
aezbrs
erspal
megstnose
cpsise
aidmnodes
iiemdcnse
raelopds
lisvre

I have chosen this treasure
because
.....
.....

Circle the three (3)
treasures you'd most like
to receive if you were
the Emperor.