

# Countries Around the World™

## China

### Program Summary

Meet 12-year-old Jiang Yue. She and her family live in Shanghai, a port city located along the mouth of the Yangtze River on the eastern coast of China. Join Jiang Yue as she tours Shanghai, beginning with a trip to a paper store to browse materials used to practice Chinese calligraphy. Next, venture with Jiang Yue to the top of Shanghai's famed Oriental Pearl TV Tower to get a dizzying, bird's eye view of the city! Then, Jiang Yue wanders through Shanghai's Nanshi district and pays a visit to the beautiful Yuyuan Gardens, where she reveals aspects of Chinese religious traditions by lighting incense at a Buddhist temple. Discover some authentic Chinese cuisine when Jiang Yue dines at a restaurant before heading over to a tea house to snack on eggs soaked in tea. Finally, Jiang Yue heads to the Shanghai Grand Theatre to watch a traditional form of Chinese opera known as Yueju.

### Country Information

- **location:** Eastern Asia, bordering the East China Sea, Korea Bay, Yellow Sea and South China Sea; bordered by Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, India, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Vietnam
- **capital:** Beijing
- **official language:** Mandarin Chinese
- **type of government:** communist state
- **total area:** approximately 9,596,960 sq km
- **climate:** extremely diverse; tropical in the South to sub-arctic in the North
- **terrain:** mostly mountains, high plateaus and deserts in the West; plains, deltas and hills in the East
- **natural resources:** includes coal, iron ore, petroleum, natural gas, mercury, tin, tungsten, antimony, manganese, molybdenum, vanadium, magnetite, aluminum, lead, zinc and uranium
- **industries:** includes mining and ore processing, coal, machine building, armaments, textiles and apparel, petroleum, cement, chemicals, fertilizers, consumer products, food processing, transportation equipment, telecommunications equipment, commercial space launch vehicles and satellites
- **agricultural products:** includes rice, wheat, potatoes, corn, peanuts, tea, millet, barley, apples, cotton, oilseed, pork and fish

### Vocabulary

**Mandarin** — The official, national, standard language of China, which is based on the principal dialect spoken in and around Beijing.

**Yangtze** — Also "Yangtse." The longest river of China and of Asia, flowing about 5,551 km (3,450 mi) from Tibet to the East China Sea. The river has been an important trade and transportation route since ancient times.

**megalopolis** — An area with more than one metropolitan area.

**calligraphy** — The art of handwriting.

(Continued)

**Buddhism** — A religion based on the life and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. This religion is practiced worldwide.

**Confucianism** — The system of ethics, education and statesmanship taught by Confucius, a Chinese philosopher who lived from 551 to 479 B.C.E. Confucianism stresses love for humanity, ancestor worship, reverence for parents and harmony in thought and conduct.

**Taoism** — Also "Daoist." The philosophical and religious belief system that advocates a life of complete simplicity, naturalness and non-interference with the course of natural events, in order to attain a happy existence.

**Communism** — A political and economic system in which private property is abolished and all goods are owned jointly.

**Mao Zedong** — Also "Mao Tse-tung." (1893-1976) A Chinese Communist leader, Mao Zedong founded the Chinese Communist Party and served as chairman of the People's Republic of China from 1949-1959.

**soy** — Another name for the soybean. It also refers to soy sauce.

**yuan** — The currency of China.

**Nanshi** — The "old city" district of Shanghai.

**atheist** — Someone who does not believe in the existence of a deity or deities.

**Yueju** — A popular form of Chinese opera.

### Pre-viewing Discussion

- As a class, brainstorm a list of questions about China. Prompt students by asking them to share what they already know about China and what they would like to find out about the country. Students can make predictions about what they think they will see in the program. As they watch, have students keep track of how many of their questions were answered and if their preconceptions of China were correct or not.
- Discuss what makes places different from each other. Begin by having students brainstorm a list of things that they think make places unique. Follow up with questions, such as: How is climate a factor in defining an area? How are land formations or bodies of water factors? Are people a part of making a place unique? How? How would you characterize the place where you live? What makes it unique? As they prepare to watch the program, ask students to predict how China is different from their communities. After the program, follow-up by asking students to compare their predictions about China with what was shown. What are some of the things that were different? Is there anything that is similar to where you live?
- Ask students what they would do and show if they were going to give a tour of their community to a child from another country. In small groups, have students brainstorm a list of things they think would be important to show their visitor as well as explain why they chose the things they did. Engage the students with questions, such as: Why are these things important to you? How are they representative of where you live? Do you think your visitor would fully understand your community if he or she experienced all these things?

### Follow-up Activities

- **Nǐ hǎo!** That's Mandarin Chinese for "hello." Students can have fun learning more words and phrases in Mandarin Chinese by visiting [www.bbc.co.uk/languages/chinese/real\\_chinese/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/chinese/real_chinese/) and [askasia.org/kids/features/wordofweek/wofw\\_School\\_friend.htm](http://askasia.org/kids/features/wordofweek/wofw_School_friend.htm). Students can choose particular words or phrases and make flashcards with them. Then, have students pair up and practice saying things in Chinese with their flashcards. Students can take turns leading the class in learning their chosen Chinese words and phrases. Once all of the students have presented, post their cards on a word wall dedicated to Mandarin Chinese.

(Continued)

- The Chinese language, in addition to several other Asian languages, is comprised of a series of symbols known as “characters,” and the modern-day Chinese characters evolved from pictographs. Students can experience the evolution of the Chinese writing system for themselves by creating their own pictographs and characters. Begin by having students draw pictures representative of everyday objects and ideas. Students can take turns showing their pictographs to the class and having their classmates guess what the pictographs mean. After students have all shared their pictographs, have them invent stylized symbols to represent their original pictures. Using the new symbols, students can write messages to each other and decode them. As an extension, students can practice the art form based on the Chinese characters, calligraphy. For information about Chinese calligraphy and some sample characters, visit [library.thinkquest.org/3614/drawing.htm](http://library.thinkquest.org/3614/drawing.htm). Students can pick particular characters and draw them or use the different brush strokes to create their own characters. Display students’ characters in the classroom.
- With over 1.3 billion people, China is the most populous nation in the world, but how do other countries compare with China? Students can choose four other countries and find facts about their populations. Students can use the information they find to create bar graphs that compare China’s population with those of the other countries, express greater than/less than relationships and find the differences between numbers. As an extension, students can pick another aspect of China, such as total area or yearly rainfall, and create companion charts comparing China with other countries. An interactive tool for comparing various aspects of countries can be found at [cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation3/menu/advanced.asp](http://cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation3/menu/advanced.asp).
- Distribute outline maps of China to the class. Have students label the capital, other major cities and bodies of water. Then, divide the class into small groups. Have each group choose another characteristic of the country, such as yearly precipitation, terrain, climate regions or population density, and use different colors and symbols to mark its map. Each group can make a puzzle out of its map and exchange it with another group to see who can put the puzzles together the quickest. When all of the puzzles have been completed, students can give a brief presentation to the class, describing what their maps show about China.
- Students will have fun creating their own “Navigating the Chinese Rivers” board games. Divide students into small groups and, using pieces of cardboard and various craft materials, have them design and fashion their game boards to resemble China’s rivers, such as the Yangtze, the Yellow and the Pearl Rivers, while inventing the rules for their games. The games can include facts about the Chinese Rivers, like the length and location of the rivers or the folklore associated with them, and may even include playing pieces that resemble the types of watercraft used on the rivers! Once they have finished making their boards, students can take turns playing each others’ games.
- The Chinese herald in each New Year with festivities that feature lively music, elaborate costumes and decorations, scrumptious food and exciting fireworks displays. Students can find out more about the celebrations that surround the Chinese New Year, including its origins, the meanings of the zodiac symbols and the different ways the holiday is celebrated, by visiting [library.thinkquest.org/04oct/01913/](http://library.thinkquest.org/04oct/01913/). Students can then plan and participate in a classroom Chinese New Year celebration. Students can adorn the classroom with decorations, such as paper lanterns and the animal symbols of the zodiac, make masks and costumes, play games and enjoy foods associated with the holiday. At the end of the celebration, have students discuss what they learned about the Chinese New Year.
- For thousands of years, China was ruled by a succession of dynasties, and each dynastic era brought about major changes in China in areas such as government, art, language and medicine. In fact, some of the changes that took place during the dynasties still affect China today! Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a Chinese dynasty. Have the groups find facts about their dynasties and create time lines for them. The time lines can feature facts about the dynasties in addition to pictures or illustrations. Then, have the students plan and give short presentations about their assigned dynasty. As a culmination, have the students work together to post their sections for a classroom time line of the Chinese dynasties. For information about the Chinese dynasties, visit [library.thinkquest.org/12255/library/dynasty/dynasty.htm](http://library.thinkquest.org/12255/library/dynasty/dynasty.htm).
- Built in various stages from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E. as a bulwark against invaders, the Great Wall of China spans over 4,500 miles and inspires countless visitors with awe at its sheer size and scope. Students can experience the grandeur of the Great Wall, without ever leaving the classroom, by visiting [www.world-heritage-tour.org/asia/cn/greatWall/map.html](http://www.world-heritage-tour.org/asia/cn/greatWall/map.html) for a 3-D, virtual tour of the structure. After they have finished exploring the wall, have students collect facts about it and create a classroom display dedicated to the Great Wall. The displays can feature fact posters, time lines, pictures or illustrations, maps and even a miniature model of the wall itself! As an extension, students can create posters that promote the Great Wall of China for inclusion on the list of the Wonders of the World.
- What do gunpowder, kites, compasses and paper have in common? They were all invented by the Chinese, of course! Have students investigate these and other Chinese inventions by visiting [library.thinkquest.org/23062/frameset.html](http://library.thinkquest.org/23062/frameset.html). Based on their findings, students can create fact posters that feature different Chinese inventions. Then, as a class, students can generate a list of other major inventions (e.g., cars, TV, Internet) and investigate when they were invented. Students can share their findings with the class. As an extension, have students get some firsthand experience at inventing by making their own paper. Directions on how to make paper can be found at [www.wipapercouncil.org/makepaper.htm](http://www.wipapercouncil.org/makepaper.htm).
- Read Ai-Ling Louie’s *Yeh Shen: A Cinderella Story from China* (Penguin, 1996) or Ed Young’s *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China* (Penguin, 1996) to the class. Afterwards, discuss the similarities and differences between these stories and their European counterparts. Explain that the Chinese stories predate the European versions by hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Then, have students pair up and find other Chinese folktales to share with the class. Instruct each pair of students to write and illustrate a modern-day, American version of the original, Chinese folktale. Each pair can read both versions of its folktale to the class. After each reading, students can explain the changes they made to the original folktales and why they made them.

## Suggested Internet Resources

- [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/18902.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/18902.htm)  
This site, assembled by the U.S. Department of State, presents information on the geography, history, people, culture, government and economy of China.
- [www.historyforkids.org/learn/china/](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/china/)  
Learn more about ancient China. This site, by History for Kids!, features information on the history, culture, geography, people and art of ancient China.
- [www.timeforkids.com/TFK/specials/goplaces/0,12405,405621,00.html](http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/specials/goplaces/0,12405,405621,00.html)  
Discover China and what it is like to live there! This web site by Time Inc. presents information about China’s famous sites, history and language. Also includes a quiz.

(Continued)

(Continued)

- [www.katw.org/pages/sitepage.cfm?id=125&pname=Home&purl=index.cfm](http://www.katw.org/pages/sitepage.cfm?id=125&pname=Home&purl=index.cfm)

This site introduces students to the lives, customs, and cultures of children in China. Includes lesson plans.

- [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)

The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on China and many other countries. Topics include geography, people, government, economy, transportation and communication. On the main page of the CIA site, click on the “World Factbook” link.

## Suggested Print Resources

- Crane, Carol. *D is for Dancing Dragon: A China Alphabet*. Thomson Gale, Farmington Hills, MI; 2006.
- Mann, Elizabeth. *The Great Wall*. Mikaya Press, New York, NY; 2006.
- Minnis, Ivan. *You Are in Ancient China*. Raintree, Oxford, Great Britain; 2004.
- Sherman, Josepha. *Your Travel Guide to Ancient China*. Lerner Publications, Minneapolis, MN; 2003.
- Simonds, Nina, Leslie Swartz and Children’s Museum of Boston Staff. *Moonbeams, Dumplings & Dragon Boats: A Treasury of Chinese Holiday Tales, Activities & Recipes*. Harcourt Children’s Books, Orlando, FL; 2002.
- Walker, Kathryn. *Shanghai*. Gareth Stevens Publishing, Milwaukee, WI; 2005.

Teacher’s Guide written by Brian Wales, Curriculum Specialist, Schlessinger Media

Teacher’s Guides for titles in this series are available at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- |                  |             |                   |                  |
|------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|
| • Algeria        | • Estonia   | • Jordan          | • Portugal       |
| • Argentina      | • Finland   | • Kenya           | • Romania        |
| • Australia      | • France    | • Lebanon         | • Russia         |
| • Austria        | • Germany   | • Madagascar      | • Rwanda         |
| • Belgium        | • Greece    | • Mali            | • South Africa   |
| • Bolivia        | • Guatemala | • Malta           | • Spain          |
| • Brazil         | • Iceland   | • Mexico          | • Sweden         |
| • Cambodia       | • India     | • Mongolia        | • Switzerland    |
| • Canada         | • Indonesia | • Morocco         | • Turkey         |
| • Chile          | • Ireland   | • Myanmar (Burma) | • United Kingdom |
| • China          | • Israel    | • Netherlands     | • United States  |
| • Czech Republic | • Italy     | • Norway          | • Venezuela      |
| • Denmark        | • Japan     | • Peru            | • Vietnam        |



Teacher’s Guide Copyright 2007 by Schlessinger Media, a division of Library Video Company

P.O. Box 580, Wynnewood, PA 19096 • 800-843-3620

Program © Marathon and Pixcom Productions - MMIV All Rights Reserved