



Inquire to Learn!

There are many ways in which *Raven and the Star Fruit Tree/Voyage to Vietnam* can be used as a base for Inquiry Learning. This is just one suggestion.

Session 1

Using the Big Book, share-read *Raven and the Star Fruit Tree*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of promises/honesty, inheritance, birds/magical creatures, sewing, treasure, jealousy, greed and justice.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion

Promises/Honesty: *Why is it important to keep a promise? Why is it important to be honest?* Discuss promises and honesty and the particular importance of keeping promises and being honest and fair.

Inheritance: Discuss the concept of inheritance as the passing down of land, money, and possessions from one generation to another. Ask, *Should everyone in a family get the same share of an inheritance or should some people get more than others? Why/why not?*

Birds/Magical Creatures: Hold up the cover of *Raven and the Star Fruit Tree*. Ask, *What do you notice about this bird?* (It is very big.) Discuss how birds and other animals in folk tales can often talk and sometimes have magical powers.

Jealousy: *What does it mean to be jealous?* Discuss that jealousy is a feeling of unhappiness caused by wanting what someone else has.

Greed and Justice: *What is greed? In folk tales and other stories, do characters usually get what they deserve? Why/why not?*

Text and Illustration Based Inquiry Questions

Cover and title page: Look at the cover of *Raven and the Star Fruit Tree*. Ask, *What is the fruit growing on the tree?* Look at the title page and notice the slice of star fruit. Ask, *How did this fruit get its name?* Point out that star fruit is native to Vietnam and other countries in Southeast Asia.

P. 2: Discuss the word *peasant* and explain that a peasant is a person in Asia or Europe who lives by farming and is uneducated and of low social rank. Help the students understand that although the man is "rich" he is still a peasant because that is the class he belongs to in his society. If appropriate, explore the concept of class or layers within society. Explore the concept that different class or social structures have existed at different times and in different cultures.

P. 4: *Why did Hieu lie to his brother?* Discuss that Hieu is a dishonest character who is motivated by greed. Refer back to P. 2 and discuss whether Hieu meant to lie to his dying father or whether he decided later to break his promise. Ask, *Does it make a difference? Why/why not?*

Raven and the Star Fruit Tree/Voyage to Vietnam

Teacher's Notes continued

PP. 6–7: Ask, *What can we understand about De's character from the text and illustration?* (He is respectful of his family's wishes, positive, and resourceful.)

PP. 8–9: *How would De be feeling at this point?* (desperate, worried)

PP. 10–11: Revisit the text: *"I will return in the morning to keep my promise."* Ask, *How do we know that De trusts and believes that the raven will keep his promise?* (He follows the raven's instructions and sews a bag.)

PP. 12–13: Remind the students that De is able to ride on the raven because the raven is *giant* (P. 8) and a magical creature.

PP. 14–15: Note that the raven has kept the promise he made on P. 10: *I will pay you back with treasure.* Contrast this with the promise Hieu made on P. 2 to his father. Look at the illustration. Ask, *How would De be feeling?*

PP. 16–17: *Does Hieu have any right to be jealous of De? Why/why not? Does he have any right to the star fruit tree?* Look at the illustration and note Hieu's threatening behaviour. Using the illustration as evidence, discuss how De is feeling. (scared, threatened, fearful) Discuss that violence and threatening behaviour are never an option.

PP. 18–19: Ask, *How does the illustrator show that Hieu is lying?* (Hieu's expression indicates that, despite his tears, he is up to no good.)

P. 21: *Why does Hieu want to be twice as rich as his brother?* (Because he is greedy and competitive.)

PP. 22–23: *Hieu is so greedy he risks his own safety. Does he get what he deserves? Why/why not?*

P. 24: *Did De get what he deserved? Why/why not?* Discuss the lesson contained in **Raven and the Star Fruit Tree**. (Honest people who work hard are rewarded.)

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

Research star fruit and other fruits not commonly eaten in New Zealand. Challenge the students to create an alphabet of fruits, including some fruits that are new to them e.g. A = alligator apple, B = blood orange, C = calamansi.

Using PP. 12–13 of **Raven and the Star Fruit Tree** as a starting point, challenge the students to write a story about a journey on the back of a magical bird. What kind of bird would they pick? What would it feel like to fly through the air? Where would they go? What would they do?

Provide the students with basic sewing materials (recycled cloth, needle, and thread) and challenge them to sew bags of various sizes e.g. as long as their foot, as long as their arm, as long as their leg.

Challenge the students to research ravens and present their findings as posters or PowerPoint presentations.

Share-read other folk tales from Vietnam e.g. *The 100-Knot Bamboo*, *The Story of the Rice Cake*.

Share-read other folk tales about siblings e.g. Grimm's *The Three Brothers*.

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Teacher's Notes continued

Session 2

Using the Big Book, share-read **Voyage to Vietnam**, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of Vietnam, markets, rice, ports, festivals, and lotus flowers.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion and Inquiry

Vietnamese Greeting: *People in Vietnam speak Vietnamese. Does anyone know how to say hello in Vietnamese? It is chào.*

Lotus Flowers: Look at the cover. Ask, *Does anyone know what the pink flowers are?* Explain that they are lotus flowers and there is more information on their significance to Vietnam inside the book.

Location of Vietnam/Geography: Look at the map on P. 1 of **Voyage to Vietnam** and note the location of Vietnam in Southeast Asia, and in relation to New Zealand. Compare the population of Vietnam (93 million) with the population of New Zealand (4.7 million) and note that Vietnam is not much bigger than New Zealand in terms of physical size. Discuss that the majority of the population in Vietnam lives in the countryside, whereas the majority of New Zealand's population lives in the cities. If any of the children come from Vietnam or have visited it, invite them to share their experiences.

Mekong Delta: *Does anyone know what a delta is?* Define the geographic term *delta* (an area of low, flat land, sometimes shaped like a triangle, where a river divides into several smaller rivers before flowing into the sea) and share images of deltas from the Internet.

Floating Markets: *How would a floating market be different to a market on land? How would it be the same? Has anyone ever been to a floating market? What was it like?*

Paddy Fields/Rice: *Does anyone know how a paddy field is different to a regular field or paddock? (A paddy field is a water-filled field.) Why is the Mekong Delta an ideal location for growing rice? (because rice grows in water, and the soil in the Mekong Delta is very fertile)*

Trading Port: Define a port as a place on a coast where ships can dock so that people and goods can be loaded or unloaded. Discuss how in the past a trading port was a centre for both trade and the transfer of ideas and information. *Do ports still fulfill this role? Why/why not?*

Festivals: Compare and contrast the festivals on PP. 6–7 of **Voyage to Vietnam** with festivals the children celebrate or are familiar with. Encourage the children to share festivals from their own cultures. *How are they the same? How are they different?*

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

Invite the children to make a model floating market using a water tray, deep oven tray, or baby bath and model or paper boats, Fruits, vegetables, and other goods could be made from modelling clay, play dough, or paper/cardboard.

Study how rice is grown and learn about it as the world's most important food crop.

Learn the basic facts of the Vietnam war, including New Zealand's involvement and protest around the war.

Research other World Heritage Sites in Vietnam and encourage the children to write reports or PowerPoint presentations on a chosen site.

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Teacher's Notes continued

Invite the children to select a national plant or flower for New Zealand (which has no official national flower), such as the silver fern, kōwhai, or pōhutakawa. Describe the characteristics of the flower/plant and how this represents the particular character of New Zealanders.

Learn about other festivals or special events that are celebrated in Vietnam e.g., Bai Dinh Pagoda Festival, Giong Festival, Elephant Racing Festival, Whale Festival.

Challenge the students to research Vietnamese foods, particularly those eaten at festivals. It may be possible to hold a Vietnamese feast day and, depending on the time of year, sample moon cakes, pickled vegetables, candied lotus seeds, and other Vietnamese foods.

Encourage the children to make decorative paper lanterns. (There are many guides on the Internet.)

In Spring, decorate the classroom with tree blossoms and other flowers or recreate spring blossoms using crepe paper. It may be possible to burn perfumed incense sticks.