

# A Chain Tale from India

• Keep 'em Reading •

by | Kelly Lamm

## Lessons for Emerging Readers

Through the use of multicultural education, teachers and librarians can introduce children to a new country and culture. Using literature and discussion, myths can be dispelled and questions answered regarding people from other places. These lessons use nonfiction and a traditional folktale to introduce students to India and the reading skill of sequencing. Chain tales are a fun way to teach children the importance of sequencing events.

### Lesson 1: A Family in India

**Time Required: 60–90 minutes**

#### Objectives

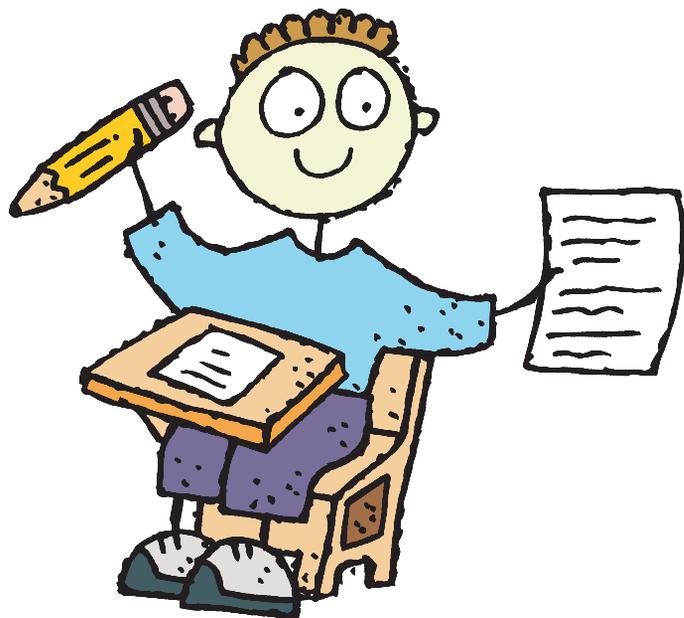
- After listening to *A Family in India* the students will discuss the similarities and differences between families that live in the United States and families that live in India.
- The students will write a journal entry in response to the reading.

#### Materials

- *A Family in India* by Tony Tigwell
- markers
- chart paper
- journal paper
- pencils
- folk music from India (suggestions)  
*Traditional Music of India* by Ali Akbar Khan  
*Essence of Rhythm* by Ustad Zakir Hussain
- CD player

#### Directions

1. Introduce the lesson by asking the children about their families and writing down their responses on the sheet paper.



Questions:

1. Where do we live?
  2. What types of clothes do we wear?
  3. What language(s) do we speak?
  4. What is the weather like where we live?
  5. What types of foods do we eat?
  6. What do our houses look like?
  7. What jobs do your parent(s) do?
  8. What types of chores do you do at home?
2. Show the children the book *A Family in India*. Explain how this is a story about a family that lives in a different country. Give the students a purpose question to think about while you are reading the book.  
Purpose Question: While I am reading the story listen for where Sakina lives, what she eats, her chores, and how her family is different and similar to your own family.
  3. After reading, discuss the book and record the students' responses on the chart paper.  
Questions:
    1. Where does Sakina live?
    2. What types of clothes does she wear?

3. What language does she speak?
  4. What do you think the weather is like in India?
  5. What kind of food does Sakina's family eat?
  6. How was Sakina's house made?
  7. What do Sakina's parents do for a living?
  8. What are some of Sakina's chores?
4. Reread the list with the class. Compare the responses.

### Activity: Journal Response

Give each child a sheet of paper to write and/or a draw a response regarding their thoughts about the book *A Family in India*. Play Indian folk music in the background while the students work on their responses. After the students are finished, ask for volunteers to share responses.

Suggested prompt questions:

1. What do you think it would be like to live in India?
2. How is India different from our state?
3. Would you like to live in India?

**Assessment:** Students will produce a journal entry and share it with the class.

## Lesson II: Sequencing and Chain Tales

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**Time Required: 60–90 minutes**

### Objectives

- Students will discuss the events in the story, "A Drum."
- Given materials, students will create a paper chain of the events in the story written and/or drawn on each strip. The chain will be put together in the proper sequence.

### Materials

- visual aids: Make these in advance to help the children retell the events in the story. You can use construction paper and make each visual aid or bring in actual objects. You will need the following: wood, chapatti, pot, coat, horse, drum

- *Tale's Alive* retold by Susan Milord. A little boy dreams of owning his own drum. One day his mother gives him a piece of wood and as the little boy travels through the village, he discovers how kindness can change lives.
- markers
- chart paper

### Directions

1. Introduce the story by giving a brief background on the meaning of a chain tale. A chain tale is a story told through a string of events. Every event causes another event to take place.
2. Read the story, "A Drum," from the book *Tales Alive*. Use visual aids or props to help explain the story. Ask the students to listen for the chain of events in the story. Answer and ask questions throughout the reading to ensure comprehension.

Suggested prompt questions:

1. What do you think the boy will do with the piece of wood?
2. What do you think the woman will give the boy in exchange for the wood?
3. What will happen next?
4. After reading the story, ask the children some of the following questions and write their responses on chart paper. Include any other comments the children many have regarding the events in the story.



Suggested prompt questions:

1. What happened in the story?
2. What did the little boy have to go through in order to receive his drum?
3. What would have happened if he had not followed through with the entire chain of events?
4. Using the visual aids, have the students recall the events in the story in proper sequence. Write these events on another sheet of paper and place the visual aids beside the written events.

Events:

1. The boy's mother gave him a piece of wood.
2. The boy gave the wood to an old woman, and she gave him a chapatti.
3. The boy gave the chapatti to the potter's baby, and the potter gave him a pot.
4. The boy gave the pot to the washerman, and he gave him a coat.
5. The boy gave the coat to the naked man, who gave him a horse.
6. The boy gave the horse to the bridegroom, and he gave him a drum.

### Activity 1: Drama Exercise

#### Materials

- *Tales Alive* by Susan Milord
- visual aids or props

#### Directions

1. Have students choose characters in the story they would like to portray. Depending on the number of students, you can use the characters and then divide the rest into narrators.

Characters:

- Little boy
- Mother
- Old woman
- Wife of Village Potter
- Baby
- Washerwoman
- Washerman
- Man with Horse
- Bridegroom
- Musicians (as many as necessary)
- Wedding Party (as many as necessary)

2. Students will retell the story through dramatic play. While the teacher rereads the story the children will act out the events.

**Assessment:** Observe the students as they act out the play.

### Activity 2: Making a Written Chain

#### Materials

- strips of colored paper
- pencils
- crayons
- glue

#### Directions

1. Have students write or draw each event in the story on a separate strip of paper in their own words. Give each child six strips to represent the major events in the story (see above).
2. After writing the events on the strips, have the students form a paper chain with the events in order. Be sure to check on the students' progress during this activity and provide them with corrective feedback.

**Assessment:** The students are expected to have written down all the important events in the story and should place the chain in the correct sequence.

### Lesson 3: Making a Drum

**Time Required: 45–60 minutes**

#### Objectives

- Students will create a drum using the materials provided.

#### Materials

- canisters and lids (coffee cans or oatmeal containers)
- construction paper
- crayons
- glue
- beads
- scissors
- music from India
- CD player

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### Directions

1. Briefly review the story “A Drum” and discuss the significance of the drum in Indian music.
2. Listen to a CD of music from India and have children respond to what they hear.

### Activity: Making a Drum

1. Explain to students how to make the drum and show them an example. (Decorate a canister with beads, construction paper, and drawings prior to the lesson to use as an example.)
2. Pass out the materials and have the students decorate their canisters while listening to Indian music.
3. Observe and help the students create their instruments. Encourage students to write words they learned from India on their drums, such as Hindi, India, chapattis, rupees, saris, etc.
4. Allow students time to play on their drums with the music and share their drums with the class.

### Extensions:

- Bring in foods from India for the students to taste.



- Use “I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly” as another chaining story.
- Create a map of India.
- Create a math activity using rupees.
- Discuss vibrations and the science of sound.



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