

WorldScapes™

from ETA/Cuisenaire



Here's some exciting news: there's a new real-world based literacy series, *WorldScapes*, which explores 25 countries and a few general areas such as "Arctic," "Pacific Islands" and so on. The series provides examples of nonfiction, fiction and biography for each country. This unique 84 book leveled series for grades three through six from ETA/Cuisenaire is sure to be a winner.

At each grade level students will learn about seven different countries. There are three books based on each country: a nonfiction photo essay, (Social Studies), a book of fictional stories (Language Arts) and a book of biographies of people important to that particular country (History).

We saw the books on China. The book of nonfiction photo essays really provides a "slice-of-life" view of present day China. *Fishing with the Birds* is a short story about traditional fishing methods. Also included in the book is general information about various topics such as the most popular mode of transportation in China, giant pandas, feasts and festivals, manufacturing and so on. New vocabulary words are highlighted in the text and explained on the bottom of the pages. Several of the chosen words have to do with universal, or core, virtues. There are discussion starters at the back of the 24-page paperbound book.

The second part of the China experience is the traditional fictional

story, *The Golden Fish*, somewhat reminiscent of the Cinderella tale. Here, too, some vocabulary words are highlighted in the text and defined at the bottom of the page.

The third book of the China series is *The Chance to Dance*, the story of Li Cunxin, a boy from a small northern Chinese village who became principal dancer with the Houston Ballet.



Okay. These three books are for the kids, but

ETA/Cuisenaire hasn't forgotten you. There are really neat teachers' guides for each of these books. The guides are six-page foldouts that cover the high points of the particular title: At a Glance, Learning Outcomes and Visual Elements. There's a short "Focus on Fluency." In the case of *Fishing with the Birds*, the focus is on chunking phrases. The inside of the folder goes into specific detail with charts headed "During Reading" and "After Reading."

In the "During Reading" section, there are page-by-page notes that cover reading and discussion of the literature selection, focusing on

visual and text features and observation and assessment. "After Reading" deals with ideas for developing comprehension, vocabulary, writing and extending the learning experience. Also included is a blackline master for synonym and antonym work. The reverse of the master explores one of the vocabulary words, in this case, "Respect." Essay is the format for that activity.

The teacher's guide for the other two China books follows the same general format described above, with different literacy activities. There is a Spanish version of *WorldScapes* available, and math and science strands will be available this fall.

We can't file this review without noting the art and color in the series, from world-class photos to outstanding artwork.

The whole series can be bought on a mix and match basis, so we wouldn't begin to list prices. And, surprisingly, the pieces are not that expensive. We recommend that you beat the drum for this terrific series.

One of the best things about the series, as far as we're concerned, is it's global reality: it's the true face of our classrooms and the face of our country. If you'd like to talk with someone about this program, call 800-445-5985 or see the website address below.

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