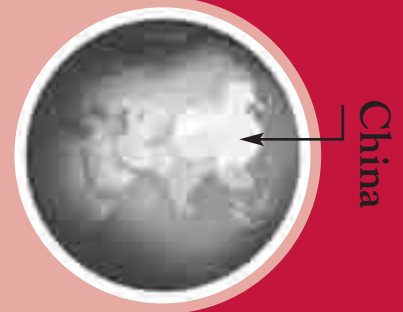




Synopsis

The Chance to Dance features the determination of a young dancer in China. Through a series of conscious decisions and moments of good fortune, he eventually realizes his dreams.



At a Glance

- ◆ **Genre:** biography
- ◆ **Theme:** determination—being the best you can be
- ◆ **Developing Comprehension:** recognizing cause and effect
- ◆ **Developing Vocabulary and Language:** words that indicate the degree of action.
Highlighted words: *adapt, ancient, apologize, compulsory, confidence, determination, extended family, official, pirouette, principal, respect*
- ◆ **Developing Fluency:** challenging vocabulary
- ◆ **Developing Writing:** writing a “What If?” story

Learning Outcomes

Students will

1. read text and interpret illustrations to make assumptions and answer questions **(LO 1)**
2. discuss the role of determination in Li Cunxin’s success. **(LO 2)**
3. display an understanding of how significant events often shape future behavior **(LO 3)**
4. write an imaginary story about what could have happened to Li Cunxin if he hadn’t been chosen for the ballet **(LO 4)**

Visual Elements

- ◆ timeline
- ◆ map
- ◆ captioned photographs
- ◆ illustrations

Focus on Fluency

Introducing Challenging Vocabulary

Although it is important to encourage students to use contextual cues to help them become rapid decoders of new words, this is only effective when these words are already in the students’ oral lexicon.

In order to foster fluent reading, some words may need to be introduced, discussed, and practiced prior to reading. In *The Chance to Dance*, point out and read the following words to students: *Li Cunxin, Qingdao, Beijing, communism, and Academy* on pages 4 and 5. Discuss these words and encourage students to practice reading them aloud. Then read pages 4 and 5 together, enabling students to read these words in context. Repeat the process for any other words in the text that might be unfamiliar.

To help with assessment of students’ understanding of vocabulary in the text, you may use the Vocabulary Assessment form on page 5 of these notes.

Before Reading



Read the summary on the back cover with students. Explore students’ understanding of the meaning of *determination*. Ask, *What does it mean when someone says he or she is determined to do something?* Discuss students’ responses.

Introduce or review some of the text features of biographies in this series. Discuss the map on the back cover and help students locate China. Read the entries on the contents page and invite students to think about what each section might contain. Help them understand that the text on odd and even pages is written in different voices. Point out the circled quotations and the use of dates throughout the text.

Other Books in the China Set



Photo Essay



Fiction

During Reading



This lesson guide provides suggestions for teaching the various sections of the book. It suggests using a variety of teaching approaches based on text complexity, vocabulary, and students' background knowledge. Teachers should feel free to alter the approach based on the needs and competencies of their students.

Section	Read & Discuss	Focus on Visual & Text Features	Observe & Assess
pp. 4–5	Read these pages with students. Discuss the conditions in which Li Cunxin grew up. Ask, <i>Why do you think he was successful?</i>	Discuss the timeline and give students the opportunity to practice using it. Ask, <i>What happened in 1981? When was Li Cunxin born?</i>	Were students able to use the timeline effectively to answer the questions? (LO 1)
pp. 6–7	Say, <i>Read pages 6 and 7 and find out what life was like for Li when he was a child.</i> Then have students discuss Li's early life and the general living conditions in China.	Explore the highlighted term <i>extended family</i> . Discuss related words and terms (<i>extension ladder, extending yourself, etc.</i>).	Did students understand that, through no fault of their own, life for Li, his family, and most other rural Chinese people was very hard? (LO 1)
pp. 8–9	Say, <i>Read pages 8 and 9 and discover an important lesson learned by Li.</i> When students have finished, ask, <i>Do you think Li ever stole again? Why/why not?</i>	Discuss the highlighted words <i>apologize</i> and <i>respect</i> . Talk about the circled quotation and how it helps the reader understand something about Li Cunxin's character.	Were students able to reflect on the lesson learned by Li and to form and justify an opinion about its long-term impact?
pp. 10–11	Have students read these pages independently. Discuss the meaning of Li's father's story. Ask, <i>What message do you think Li's father was trying to share with him?</i>	Have students view the illustrations set in China. Talk about how these illustrations help the reader get a better understanding of life in this country.	Did students understand that Li's father was really telling him that he should be content with his life and not waste time dreaming of a life outside the village? (LO 1)
pp. 12–15	Say, <i>Read to the end of page 15, and find out how Li was chosen as a dancer.</i> When students have finished, discuss the fortuitous nature of Li's selection.	Demonstrate how the word <i>official</i> can be used as a noun or an adjective. Talk about the meaning of <i>compulsory</i> . Have students suggest an antonym. [<i>voluntary, optional</i>]	Did students understand that, although he went on to become a famous dancer, it was sheer luck that Li was chosen in the first place? (LO 1)
pp. 16–21	Have students read these pages independently. Then discuss Li's special relationship with his teacher and his determination to be as good as Baryshnikov.	Discuss the meaning of the word <i>confidence</i> . Challenge students to suggest synonyms. [<i>self-belief, faith</i>] Ask, <i>What would we call a person who has confidence?</i> [<i>confident</i>]	Did students understand that Li accomplished his dream through determination and self-confidence?
pp. 22–23	Have students read page 22. Talk about how the author has used this page to summarize the text.	Read page 23 with students. Talk about why this information is presented in a separate section.	Did students understand the importance of summarizing the main points?
p. 24	See Extending the Learning Experience		



Developing Comprehension

With students, explore some examples of cause and effect in well-known stories or traditional tales, for example, *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*.

Action	Immediate Result	Long-Term Result
The boy cried wolf just for fun.	He enjoyed the joke.	No one believed him when it really mattered.

Discuss other examples. Highlight the fact that actions taken by people often have both short- and long-term effects and that these can be positive or negative. Hand out the **Cause and Effect** activity sheet. Read through and discuss the example. Then have students complete the activity and share and compare their responses.

Developing Writing

Writing a “What If?” Story (LO 4)

Read the “What If?” text on page 24 to students. Have students share any experiences they have had with reading “twist-a-plot” stories, in which the reader gets to choose what happens next.

Talk about the luck involved in Li Cunxin’s being chosen to join Madame Mao’s Dance Academy. Ask, *How do you think Li’s life would have been different had he not been chosen? Do you think his determination would have enabled him to succeed at something else?* Have students discuss their ideas; then invite them to write an alternative story path, beginning with Li’s not being chosen for the dance academy.

Developing Vocabulary

Degree of Action

Write the following sentence from page 6 on the board or on a chart (adding emphasis):

There was never enough food to go around, and Li was often hungry.

Talk about how the words *never* and *often* convey degree of action or state of being. Ask, *How could you change these two words to give the sentence its opposite meaning?* (There was *always* enough food to go around, and Li was *never* hungry.) Invite students to search the text for other similar words. These include *always* and *sometimes*. Have students use the Reading Rods® Sentence-Construction Kit to practice building sentences with *always*, *enough*, *never*, *often*, *sometimes*, and other words that show degree of action. Encourage students to use a variety of words that show degree of action in their personal writing.

Extending the Learning Experience

Determination (LO 2)

Read the question in the speech bubble on page 24 with students. Help them understand that *determination* is the quality of making firm decisions and sticking to them. Talk about how *perseverance* is often a component of determination. Have students search the text for examples that show that Li was determined to become a good ballet dancer.

Hand out the **I’m Determined to ...** activity sheet. Read through the sheet with students before having them complete the task. Plan to work together with any students who need further support. Have students share their completed sheets with the group.

Cause and Effect

Name _____

Date _____

Action	Immediate Result	Long-Term Result
Li's father tells him the story of the frog who could not escape from the well.	Li feels he is trapped, and his life is going nowhere. He starts dreaming of a way out.	Li becomes determined to "escape the well" and works hard to achieve his dream.
Li's mother marches him to his friend's house to apologize and return the toy car that he stole.		
Just as they are leaving the classroom, the officials decide to choose Li to join the ballet school.		
In his third year at the Beijing Dance Academy, Li becomes friends with Teacher Xiao.		
In 1979, Li receives a visit from an American ballet teacher.		

Vocabulary Assessment — The Chance to Dance

Name _____

Date _____

New Word	Assessment Task	Response
apologize	<p>Ask, <i>Can you use the word apologize in a sentence?</i></p> <p><i>Can you tell me the base word for apologize?</i></p> <p><i>How many syllables are there in the word apologize?</i></p> <p><i>Can you write the plural of the word apology?</i></p>	<p>Did the student's response indicate an understanding of <i>apologize</i>? (meaning)</p> <p>Did the student say <i>apology</i>? (base words)</p> <p>Did the student say there are four syllables? (syllabification)</p> <p>Did the student write <i>apologies</i>? (spelling rules)</p>
official	<p><i>When we talk about a person who is an official, what do we mean?</i></p> <p><i>In the phrase, "the official ceremony," what part of speech is the word official?</i></p>	<p>Did the student indicate an understanding of the word <i>official</i>? (meaning)</p> <p>Did the student say <i>adjective</i>? (parts of speech)</p>
compulsory	<p><i>Can you use the word compulsory in a sentence?</i></p> <p><i>Can you think of a word that means the opposite of compulsory?</i></p>	<p>Did the student's sentence indicate an understanding of <i>compulsory</i>? (meaning)</p> <p>Did the student say <i>optional, voluntary, or a similar word</i>? (antonyms)</p>
confidence	<p><i>How would you know if someone showed confidence?</i></p> <p><i>Can you think of another word that ends with -ence?</i></p>	<p>Did the student display an understanding of <i>confidence</i>? (meaning)</p> <p>Was the student able to offer another word with the <i>-ence</i> ending, such as <i>intelligence</i> or <i>magnificence</i>? (suffixes)</p>
principal	<p><i>What is the meaning of the word principal?</i></p> <p><i>Can you think of a word that sounds the same but has a different spelling and meaning?</i></p>	<p>Did the student display an understanding of <i>principle</i>? (meaning)</p> <p>Did the student say <i>principle</i>? (homophones)</p>

I'm Determined to ...

Determination

Name _____

Date _____

Have you ever heard a person say that he or she was determined to do something? It means that the person feels strongly about that thing and will do everything possible to achieve it.

Think of two things you are determined to do. They could be related to a future career, schoolwork, a special trip, a sport, or anything else you feel strongly about. Think about what you need to do, what problems might come up, and who could help you.

1. I'm determined to _____

This is what I need to do: _____

These are the possible problems and solutions: _____

2. I'm determined to _____

This is what I need to do: _____

These are the possible problems and solutions: _____

