

# Cricket®

## THEME

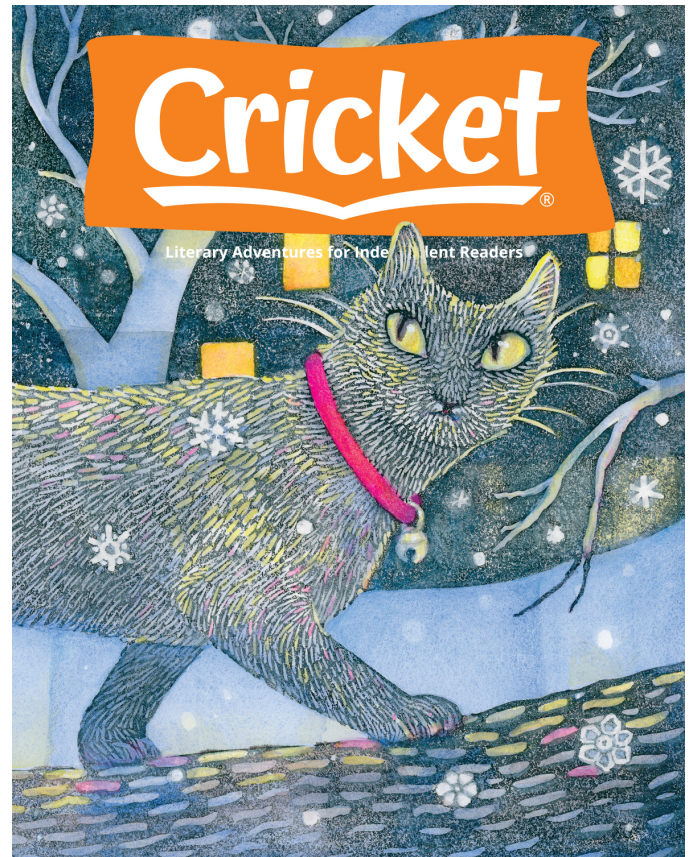
Making wishes is a familiar component of many tales and stories. Discuss wish-making with your students and the role it plays in the stories covered in this teacher guide.

## CONVERSATION QUESTION

Why do we make wishes?

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences and events.
- Students will determine themes.
- Students will analyze the effects of historical developments.
- Students will analyze cultural characteristics of places.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

## SELECTIONS

- **The Snow Woman's Daughter**  
Legend, ~905L
- **Wishing for Christmas**  
Autobiographical Fiction, ~705L
- **The Wishing Tree of the Blue Dragon**  
Folktale, ~705L

# Cricket® Teacher Guide: November/December 2020

# The Snow Woman's Daughter

**pp. 5–10, Legend**

Use this story about the legendary Japanese character—the Snow Woman—to help students analyze how characters' choices affect plot and build theme.



## RESOURCES

- **Characters and Plot Worksheet**

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences and events.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **feeble** (p. 6) very weak
- **betrothal** (p. 6) the act of promising to marry someone; engagement
- **vital** (p. 10) very important

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** Why do we make wishes?

Create a word web on the board with the word *wish* in the center. Ask students to explain in their own words what a wish is. Record responses in the web. Then discuss why people make wishes. Guide the discussion by asking students to talk about wishes made from happiness, wishes made from sadness, and wishes made for change. Then tell students to think about what the characters in this story wish for, or deeply want.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following context sentences and underline the vocabulary words. Have students work in pairs to infer the meaning of each vocabulary word based on the sentence context. Then reveal the definitions and have students check their inferences.

1. My brother and his girlfriend announced their betrothal at dinner.
2. Remember, keeping the surprise party a secret is vital.
3. Amy is still quite feeble after being sick for almost a month.

## READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. What promise did Sekka's father break?
2. Why did Father wait so long to tell Sekka her mother's name?
3. What did the Snow Woman give up to marry the woodcutter?
4. Why does Sekka choose to marry instead of going with her mother?  
How does she feel about her choice?
5. How does Sekka feel about her mother?
6. How would you describe Sekka's mother?

## SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Characters and Plot

**INSTRUCT:** Explain that the decisions made by story characters affect the plot of the story. Use familiar stories or movies to give examples of character decisions affecting plot. Remind students that each of the characters in "The Snow Woman's Daughter" makes important decisions that move the plot forward. Work with students to identify the decisions made by the characters. List these on the board. Then tell students they are going to discuss how decisions in "The Snow Woman's Daughter" shape the story. Distribute the *Characters and Plot Worksheet* to all students and review the directions and questions.

**ASSESS:** Have students work in small groups to discuss the questions thoroughly. Circulate to assess discussions and help as necessary. Then bring the class together to discuss the story's themes.

## EXTEND

**Writing** Have students turn all or part of "The Snow Woman's Daughter" into a comic strip or graphic story. Students should story board the images they will put in the comic strip frames, think about the words that they will use with each frame, and then write and draw their strips. Encourage students to share comic strips with the class.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Characters and Plot

Choose two decisions from the story. Use the questions below to discuss each decision with your group. Take notes to help you remember your ideas. Finally, work together to identify story themes.

Questions	Notes
1. Which two character decisions will you discuss? Discuss them one at a time.	
2. What factors did the character have to consider while making his or her decision?	
3. What were the consequences of the character's decision?	
4. Was the decision a good one? Explain.	
5. How did the decision affect story events?	
6. How would the story be different if a different decision had been made by the character?	

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## Wishing for Christmas

pp. 12–16, Autobiographical Fiction

Use this story set during the Great Depression and based on the experiences of the author's mother to teach students to analyze and write autobiographical fiction.



## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will write narratives to develop real and imagined experiences and events.
- Students will analyze the effects of historical developments.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **matter of fact (p. 13)** not showing emotion especially when talking about exciting or upsetting things
- **abruptly (p. 13)** done in a sudden or unexpected way
- **overwhelm (p. 14)** to affect someone very strongly
- **barren (p. 14)** bleak and lifeless

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** Why do we make wishes?

Point out that people make different kinds of wishes. Fantastic wishes are wishes that could never come true (I wish I had superpowers.). Realistic wishes are wishes that could come true (I wish I could make a new friend.) Invite students to make and share both types of wishes. Instruct them to decide what kinds of wishes are made in this story.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Next, have students work in groups of four to write sentences using these words, with each group member responsible for a different word. Have groups review the sentences and confirm that the words are used correctly. Invite students to share their sentences. Then tell students to look for these words as they read.

## READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Describe the setting of the story.
2. How do you think Shirley's father felt when he told the children they would not be celebrating Christmas?
3. How would you describe Shirley's mother and father?
4. What words and details help you understand how disappointed the girls were on Christmas morning?
5. Why do you think Shirley's parents and brother let the girls think that they would not be celebrating Christmas?

## SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Autobiographical Fiction

**INSTRUCT:** Explain that an autobiography (A) is the story of a person's life written by that person. Fiction (F) is a made-up story that may be based on real events or people. Note that "Wishing for Christmas" combines both of these genres (AF). Read aloud the author's note on p. 16. Then display this list of characteristics of AF: first-person narrator reflects on events in the past; story is based on real experiences; emphasizes emotions. Have students work in groups to reread the story and discuss how these characteristics help them appreciate and understand the story. Encourage them to share personal responses to the story.

**ASSESS:** Have students write an autobiographical sketch about a holiday that felt important to them or made an impression on them. Tell students to use dialogue, description, and vivid details to make their sketches interesting. Also tell them to include personal thoughts and reflections on events. Encourage students to share their work.

## EXTEND

**Social Studies** Have students conduct research to learn more about the effects of the Great Depression on American children. Have them present information in a form of their choosing, such as a poster, a dramatic scene, a written report, or an annotated drawing.



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## The Wishing Tree of the Blue Dragon Temple

pp. 18–20, Folktale

Use this tale about how a nobleman honors the bond between an old man and a water dragon to give students practice in identifying theme.



### OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will determine themes.
- Students will analyze cultural characteristics of places.

### KEY VOCABULARY

- **humble** (p. 18) not fancy, special, or expensive
- **seldom** (p. 18) not often
- **retinue** (p. 19) a group of helpers, supporters, or followers
- **honor** (p. 20) to show admiration for something in a public way

### ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** Why do we make wishes?

Share details about and photographs of artist Yoko Ono's Wish Tree project (available on the internet). Invite students to share similar traditions they know about or have participated in. This might include throwing a coin in a wishing well, wishing on a star, or wishing when blowing out the candles on a birthday cake. Tell students this story is about the legendary origins of the wishing tree tradition.

### INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then challenge small groups of students to write a very short story—serious or humorous—using all of the vocabulary words correctly. Give groups 5 minutes to write. Then have groups share their stories. Remind students to look for these words as they read the folktale.

### READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. How would you describe the old man?
2. How did the old man and the dragon come to be friends?
3. Why did the old man want to wait to cut down the tree?
4. Why is the old man sad about cutting down the tree? How does he think the dragon will react?
5. What happened to the old man and the dragon after the tree was cut down?
6. How did the yangban upset nature's balance?
7. What is your opinion of the yangban and his actions?

### SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Theme

**INSTRUCT:** Remind students that a theme is a message about life or human nature that an author wants to share. Explain that the theme of a folk tale is often a lesson about right or wrong. The theme might promote generosity, kindness, or humility and discourage greed, selfishness, or pride. Read aloud a short tale, such as a one of Aesop's fables. Discuss behaviors that are rewarded and punished and brainstorm themes for the fable.

**ASSESS:** Have students work in pairs to answer these questions about the tale: How do the characters behave in the folktale? What are the consequences of this behavior? What theme or themes can you identify? Invite pairs to share and explain their themes.

### EXTEND

**Social Studies** Have students conduct research to learn about wishing tree customs around the world and create a tri-fold visual to compare the customs. Students can use a variety of media to complete their project and should use illustrations to enhance their written information.