

FOCUS READING – CONFUCIUS: CHINA'S GREAT TEACHER

DIRECTIONS While reading this information on Confucius, **BULLDOG** the text. **Box** the main idea of each paragraph. **Underline** key phrases and important details that tell about or support the main idea. **Locate** and circle any words you don't know. **Lift** out key words and phrases by writing them in the side column. **DO** Give a summary statement at the end; your summary should include the main idea from each paragraph. Paste these pages on left pages of your ISN. On the right, write your summary.

INTRODUCTION The Chinese teacher and sage, Confucius (con-few-shus), was born in 551 BCE.
Many of the ideas Confucius taught still remain central to Chinese life.

divine: Like the birth of so many sages, Confucius' birth also was preceded by a **divine** vision.
 holy/religious

elderly: Legend has it that his mother saw five **elderly** men leading a unicorn toward her. The
 old magical animal knelt and spit out a piece of jade which was inscribed (written on) with the promise that her baby would be a "king without a crown." When his mother retreated to a cave to give birth, the dwelling was protected by dragons.

disarray: But Confucius was born in a difficult time. China, once unified, was now in **disarray**,
 a mess divided by warring provinces. The Emperor, who once held the country together with a strong central government, was powerless. Then when he was only three year old, his father died. When he got older, he went to work as a tax collector, but was
disillusioned: **disillusioned** by the ways of the corrupt government.
 disappointed

revolutionary: At the age of 22, he left his government job and became a teacher. In many ways, he
 ground-breaking new ideas was a **revolutionary**. Besides learning skills like writing, music, and mathematics, her

virtuous: felt his students should learn to be **virtuous**, to achieve **moral character**, and to live
 good; honorable a life of harmony. He was also equally concerned with how to learn as much as what to

moral character: learn. Education, he felt, was much more than memorizing facts and learning skills; it
 honest and good personality was **flowering** of intelligence and sensitivity. Because of this, Confucius accepted all as his students, regardless of their social positions, as long as they were serious about

flowering: learning. He only turned away lazy students. Soon he had thousands of followers.

On the right, write a summary statement using the main idea from each paragraph. Also, answer the following questions:

1. *What did it mean that Confucius would be a "king without a crown"?*
2. *Why could Confucius be called a Revolutionary teacher?*

FOCUS READING – CONFUCIUS: CHINA'S GREAT TEACHER part 2

uncertainty: doubt
civil violence: public fighting
harmony: agreement and order

In a time of political **uncertainty** and **civil violence**, Confucius looked to China's past for guidance. He felt that some rulers of the past maintained **harmony** because their own lives were in order. Thus, he taught that a peaceful society begins in the family. If there is goodness and respect in relationships, then the community will benefit. His writings taught proper behavior within relationships with parents, your husband or wife, siblings, friends, and boss/teacher. The most important, he felt, was the relationship between parents and children. He said that it is the child's duty to have respect for the parent and for the parent to love the child.

proclaimed: announced, said

Confucius believed most of all in moral conduct and good education. These would lead to wisdom. Therefore, he **proclaimed** that China's rulers should be highly educated and should study classical Chinese writing to learn poetry, history, and rules of behavior.

Unfortunately, Confucius died in 479 BCE, long before his ideas would become part of China's government. He died at the age of seventy-two.

On the right, write a summary statement using the main idea from each paragraph. Also, answer the following questions:

- 1. What did it mean that China was "in a time of uncertainty and civil violence"?*
- 2. Do you think a peaceful society begins with the family? Why or why not and give three examples to explain your reasoning?*
- 3. How did Confucius' ideas of moral conduct and good education become part of Chinese government? What examples do you have?*