

Especially for kids and their families



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By BETTY DEBNAM

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Incredible Inventors Ancient China From A to Z

Ancient China was an amazing civilization. Many of their inventions were way ahead of the rest of the world. Some include:

• **Paper**, invented around 100 A.D. The first pulp paper was made out of a mixture of hemp, the inner bark of trees, old rags and fishnets.



• **Printing**, which was done by carving characters into wooden blocks, inking them and pressing them onto paper.

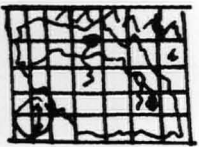
• **The wheelbarrow**, or "wooden ox," was invented about 1,700 years ago, 1,300 years before the European version.



• **A kind of seismograph**, or earthquake detector, that told the direction of earthquakes. When an earthquake hit, a carved dragon dropped a ball into a frog's mouth.



• **Acupuncture**, a way of healing by touching nerves with needles.



• **Maps made on a grid.**

• **Rudders**, invented more than 1,000 years before Europeans used them.

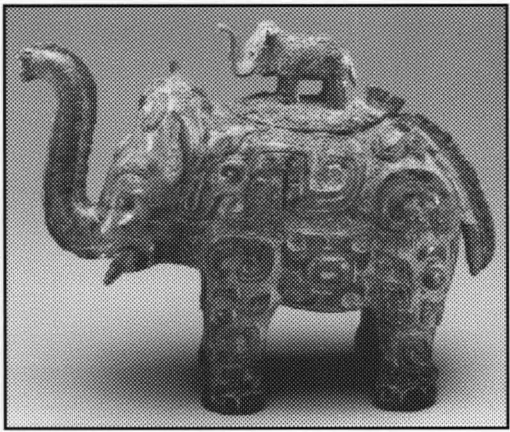
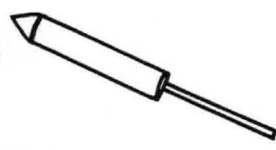


• **Suspended bridges hung over canyons.**

• **Compasses**, often made of a wooden fish holding a magnet and floating in a bowl of water.



- **Harnesses** that didn't cut off horses' breath.
- **Gunpowder.**
- **Umbrellas.**
- **The crossbow**, far more powerful than the ordinary bow.



This bronze wine server was made about 1200-1100 B.C.

Bronze was used for containers, weapons and musical instruments. The Chinese were among the first to mix tin and copper to make bronze.

Buddhism came to China from India and became a major influence. In China, Buddhists worshipped many gods, praying to them for things like good luck and long life.



Confucius was a great teacher who stressed respect for traditions. He believed that people were good and that leaders should set a good example for the people.



Dragons were believed to bring good luck. They were often in pictured in art.



Dynasties are a line of rulers all coming from the same family. The Shang (about 1750 B.C. to 1040 B.C.) was the first dynasty that left written records.



Emperors ruled China for more than a thousand years. The emperor was responsible for the prosperity of his people and lived in a palace surrounded by beautiful objects. Many emperors had collections of the finest art.



Families made up of grandparents, aunts and uncles, parents and children all lived together in one household.



Men and boys were valued, but girls and women were not. A woman had to obey her husband and his family. Girls were often sold to rich people. Only boys were allowed to go to school.

Older people were greatly respected, even grandmothers.

The Mini Page thanks the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., for help with the article "China From A to Z."

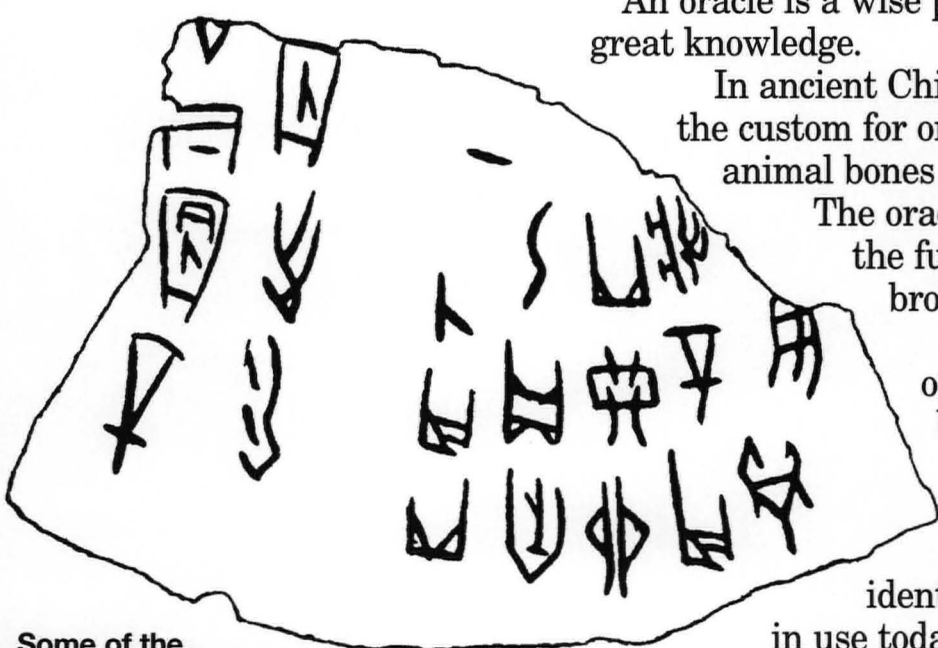
Chinese characters

Chinese people today do not usually write with an alphabet. They have been using characters in their writing system for thousands of years.

Characters are symbols for words. For everyday living, the Chinese must learn about 3,000 of them. If they plan to read the newspaper, they must learn about 7,000.

Young children must learn 10 or more characters every day. They practice by writing them over and over again.

Oracle bones



Some of the characters as they appear on an oracle bone.

An oracle is a wise person who speaks with a great knowledge.

In ancient China 4,000 years ago, it was the custom for oracles to write questions on animal bones or tortoise shells.

The oracles claimed they could tell the future by how the bones broke when heated.

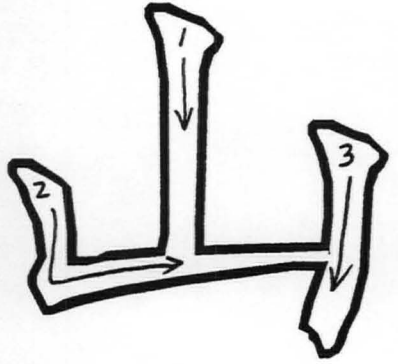
The questions they wrote on what we call "oracle bones" are the first examples of Chinese writings. While the 2,500 characters that have been identified do not look like those in use today, experts have deciphered the meaning of 600 of them.

art courtesy the Republic of China in Taiwan

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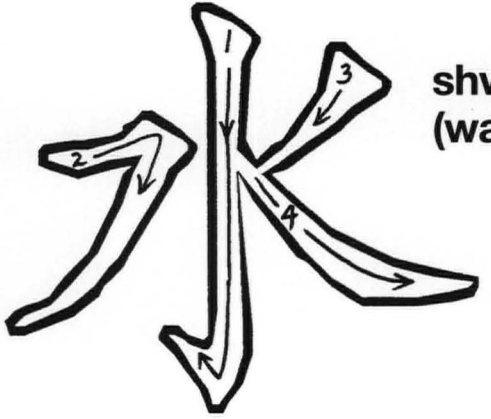
Chinese characters

There are strict rules about the order in which the strokes of each character are to be written. Here are three characters for you to practice writing.



shān
(mountain)

The numbers show the order of the strokes. First trace over them three times, then copy them.



shuǐ
(water)



mǎ
(horse)

Trace:

山	山	山
---	---	---

Copy:

--	--	--	--	--	--

Trace:

水	水	水
---	---	---

Copy:

--	--	--	--	--	--

Trace:

馬	馬	馬
---	---	---

Copy:

--	--	--	--	--	--

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Mini Spy ...



Mini Spy and Basset Brown are learning ancient Chinese calligraphy. See if you can find:



- word MINI
- swan
- kite
- ruler
- letter T
- elephant's head
- bell
- fish
- letter E
- key
- frog
- question mark
- butterfly

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THE NEWS HOUND'S ANCIENT CHINA TRY 'N FIND

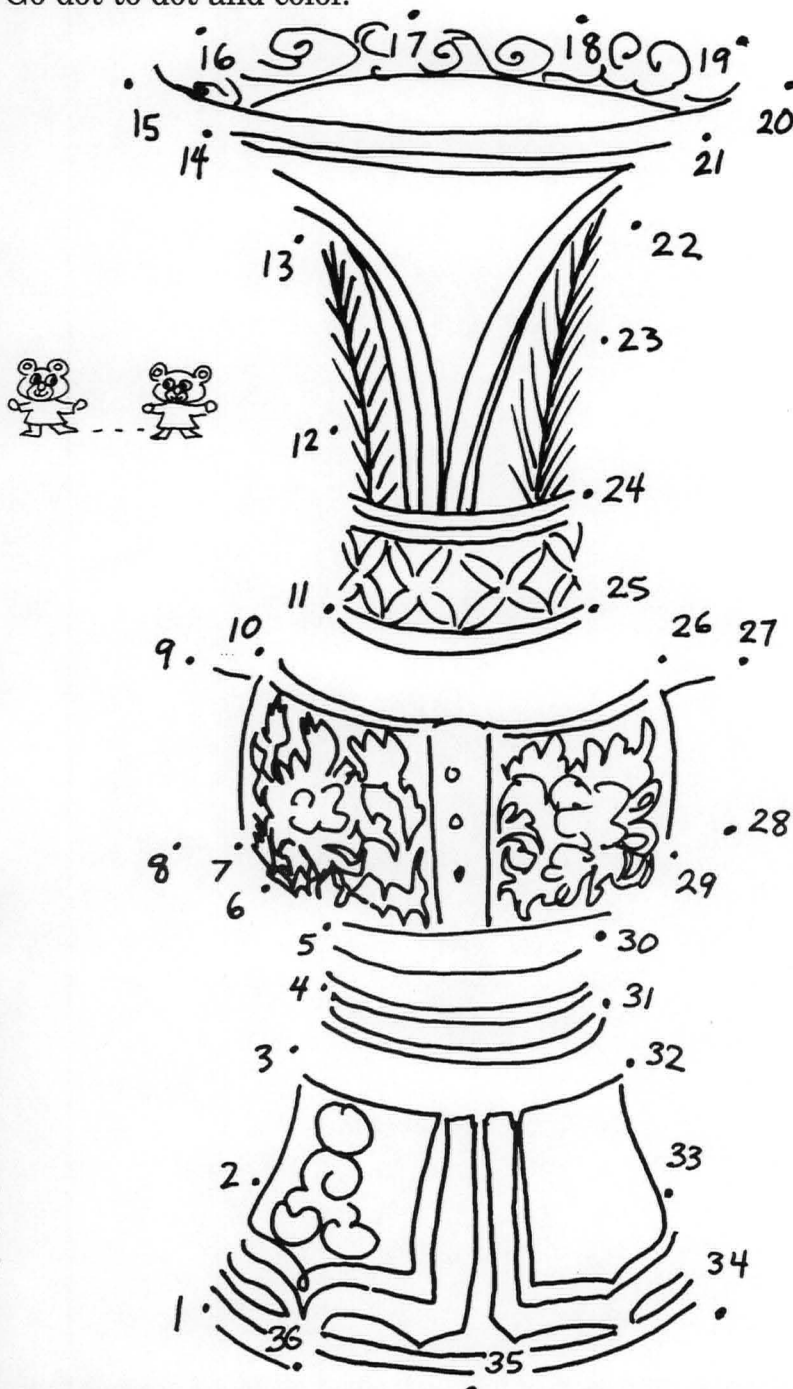
Words about ancient China are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally. See if you can find: CHINA, BUDDHA, INVENTIONS, OLDEST, CONFUCIUS, DRAGON, DYNASTY, EMPEROR, WALL, JADE, KITES, LACQUER, KINGDOM, ORACLE, SILK, RICE, PAPER.



O	L	D	E	S	T	C	S	C	P	W	E	C	I	R
Y	T	S	A	N	Y	D	O	I	E	A	A	P	X	B
D	F	Q	A	N	I	H	C	N	L	Z	P	L	G	U
R	I	E	M	P	E	R	O	R	F	K	R	E	L	D
A	L	A	C	Q	U	E	R	J	H	U	S	C	R	D
G	K	M	O	D	G	N	I	K	J	T	C	B	M	H
O	L	S	E	T	I	K	U	C	K	M	N	I	O	A
N	M	V	O	R	A	C	L	E	J	A	D	E	U	S
S	S	N	O	I	T	N	E	V	N	I	W	F	L	S

The Mini Page Book of States is packed with helpful information on every state: capitals, birds, flowers, trees, industry and crops, geographical and historical facts, and more. To order, send check or money order for \$4.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling per copy, payable to Andrews McMeel Publishing, P.O. Box 419242, Kansas City, Mo. 64141.

Go dot to dot and color.



Eating in ancient China

The poor and wealthy people of ancient China ate very differently.

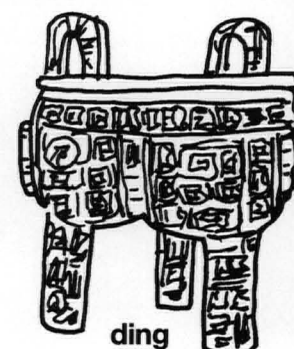
Meals for the poor were mostly rice, a type of grain called millet, vegetables and beans. Sometimes they ate chicken and fish.

The wealthy ate a wide variety of food. They ate pork, lamb, venison, duck, goose, pigeon, snakes, dogs and snails. One delicacy was bear paws!

Cooks used a lot of spices such as ginger, cinnamon, soy sauce and honey.

Tea and rice wine were drunk. Water was drunk only if it had been boiled.

Most food in ancient China was cooked in large pots called dings. They were divided into different sections so that several foods could be cooked at one time.



Art and entertainment in ancient China

Art was important in ancient China.

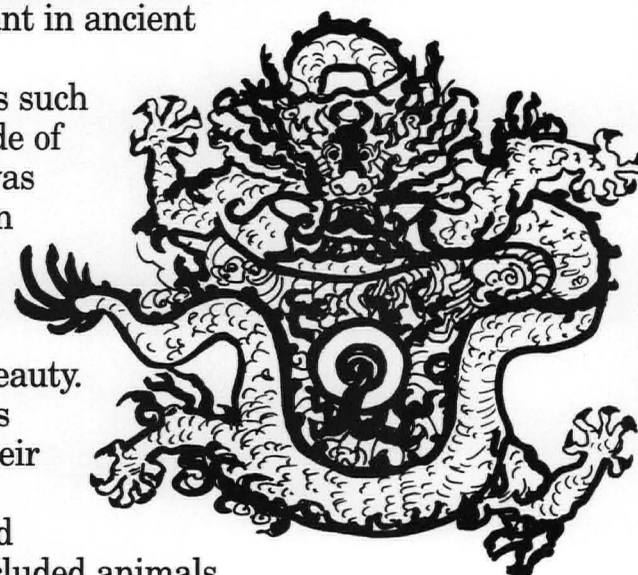
Everyday objects such as bowls were made of clay, jade (which was more precious than gold) and metal. They were made with great care and attention to beauty.

Chinese painters were known for their delicate pictures painted on silk and paper. Subjects included animals and people, and landscape scenes such as mountains and rivers.

Calligraphy, or beautiful writing created by using a brush, was created by the Chinese.

The ancient Chinese loved music. It was played everywhere, from city streets to the emperor's palace.

Poetry and drama were also important.



Athletics in ancient China

The ancient Chinese had some interesting types of athletics.

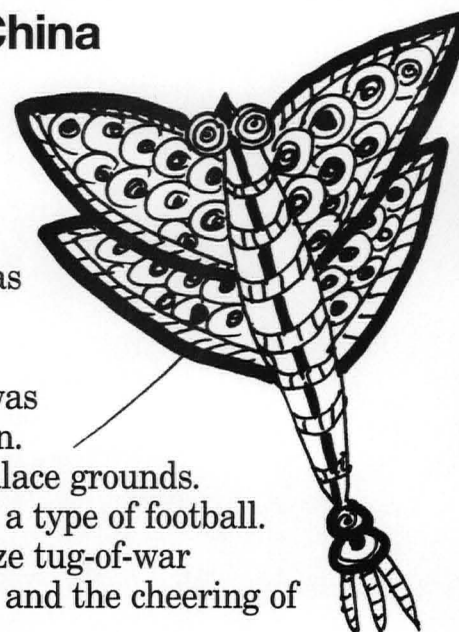
Kite-flying was used in battles to scare enemies, to send messages to heaven and as a type of entertainment for families.

Polo, a game on horseback, was played by both men and women. Some matches were held on palace grounds.

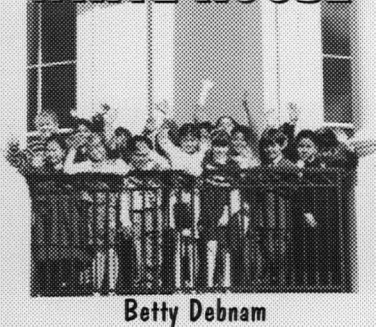
Men and women also played a type of football.

One emperor liked to organize tug-of-war contests. The beating of drums and the cheering of the crowds could be quite loud.

People also took part in martial arts and acrobatics.



A KID'S GUIDE TO THE WHITE HOUSE



Betty Debnam

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China From A to Z

Here are some more facts about China.

The **Great Wall** took hundreds of years to build (from about 770 B.C. to 221 B.C.) and is still the largest human-made structure on Earth.



photo courtesy Bureau for Cultural Relations, People's Republic of China

The Great Wall was completed when an emperor ordered shorter walls to be linked into one 4,000-mile, 23-foot-high wall.

Horses were very important in China. About 2,000 years ago, horses from Central Asia were brought into China. Because they were so strong and fast, the Chinese called them Heavenly Horses.

Irrigation ditches and canals supplied water to fields. Peasants stood on machines and worked pedals to bring water to the crops.



Jade is a green gemstone that the Chinese believed brought protection. It is a very hard stone that cannot be carved but must be worked using grinding stones and other tools.



Kites were used as tools and toys and were probably the first invented flying objects. Some Chinese flew them to scare their enemies.



Lacquer, a varnish or protective coating, was first made from the sap of the lacquer tree. The Chinese created beautiful lacquer artwork.

The **Middle Kingdom** was the name the Chinese gave their land. They believed their country was the center of the world.



Next week The Mini Page explores the ancient peoples of the Americas.

Look through your newspaper for stories about China.



Names are given with the family name first and the individual's name second. For example, Zhang Qian.

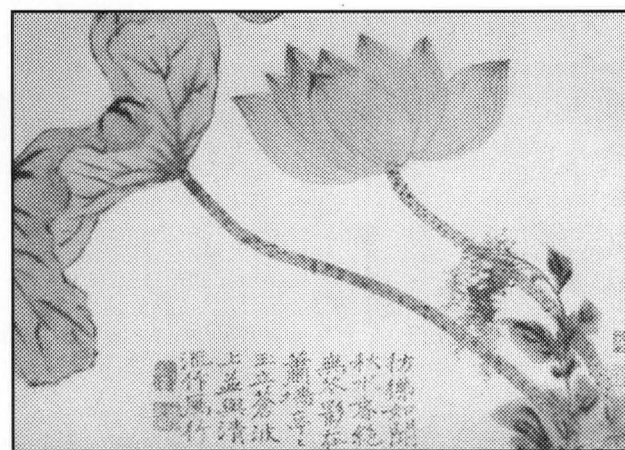


Oracle Bones were animal bones or tortoise shells that fortune tellers "read." Fortune tellers carved questions on the bones. They heated the bones until they cracked and then tried to "read" the answers in the cracks. These bones are covered with the oldest



surviving Chinese writing, dating from about 4,000 years ago.

Painting scenes of nature has been a special Chinese art form for almost 2,000 years.



art courtesy Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

This painting is done with ink on paper. The Chinese also painted on silk.

Porcelain, a special pottery, was so wonderful that even today we call fine porcelain "china."



The **Qin** (pronounced "Chin") Dynasty ruled from 221 to 206 B.C. Westerners called the country China because of the Qin emperors. These emperors united many peoples under one government.



Rice has been an important food crop for more than 7,000 years.



Silk was a valuable trade item for thousands of years. The Silk Road was a 2,500-mile trade route between the Chinese and Roman empires.



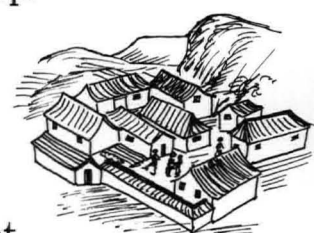
Tea has been farmed in China for more than 1,500 years. Today many Chinese go to teahouses to drink tea and talk with their friends.



Their **Understanding** of the sciences, especially astronomy, mathematics and medicine, was very advanced. The Chinese created the world's first star map.



Villages were surrounded by farmland, and farmers and villagers lived together but all went to their own plots to farm.



Warrior models made of clay were discovered in the tomb of the first Qin emperor. There are thousands of these figures, no two alike. The emperor believed these



soldiers would protect him in the afterlife.

Extraordinarily long-lasting, China is the only ancient civilization that still exists. China's advanced way of life has lasted more than 5,000 years, longer than any other civilization on Earth.

Yin and Yang is the belief that everything in the world has an opposite. These opposites must both be present in order for the world to run smoothly. Examples would be female and male, cold and hot, wet and dry.



Zhong (jong) is an ancient Chinese bell. It does not have a clapper inside but instead makes a beautiful sound when hit on the outside with a special stick.



Discover Ancient China



Especially for kids and their families
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by Betty Debnam

Appearing in your
 newspaper on _____.

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Teacher's Guide

For use by teachers and parents at home and at school.
 For use with issue: Ancient China From A to Z

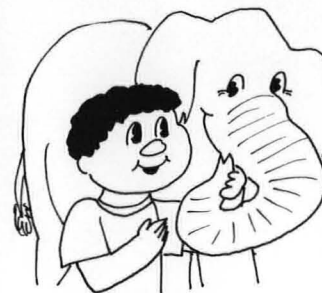
Main idea: This issue is about ancient China. The following is a list of activities to be used with this issue. They are listed in order of difficulty, with the easier pre-reader assignments listed first. Most of the activities are for younger readers. Ask the children to do the following:

1. Draw a picture of something you might have seen if you had lived in ancient China.
2. Find the following pictures in this issue: a dragon, a kite, a map, a bowl, a compass, a bowl of rice, a wheelbarrow, a horse, a crossbow, a bridge.
3. The ancient Chinese thought dragons brought good luck. Draw a picture of a dragon.
4. Discuss the following: What was the most interesting thing you learned from this issue? What do you think it would have been like to live in ancient China? Do you ever hear about China in the news? Which of the things listed in this issue have you ever seen or used before? (For example, a suspended bridge.)
5. Find China on a map. What are its boundaries? How does it compare in size to the United States?
6. Find the following words in this issue: harnesses, structure, ancient, silk, dynasties, astronomy, valued, magnet, varnish. Define and make up a new sentence for each one.
7. Look through your newspaper for articles on China.

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Mini Jokes



HOW CAN YOU TELL
 IF AN ELEPHANT HAS
 BEEN IN THE
 REFRIGERATOR?

THERE'S A
 FOOTPRINT IN THE
 BUTTER!

(sent in by Megan Reichart)

Sean: Knock, knock!

Sarah: Who's there?

Sean: Radio.

Sarah: Radio who?

Sean: Radio not, here I come!
 (sent in by Frances Mefa)

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THAT'S
 MIGHTY FUNNY!



(Note to Editor: Above is camera-ready, one column-by-4 1/4-inch ad promoting Issue 19.)

(Note to Editor: Above is the Teacher's Guide for Issue 19.)

(Note to Editor: Above is copy block for Page 3, Issue 19, to be used in place of ad if desired.)

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