

# Cricket

## THEME

This issue of Cricket Magazine provides short stories and activities that make you think about how people's decisions shape the future.

## CONVERSATION QUESTION

How can people's decisions change their future?

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will summarize key events that drive the plot.
- Students will explain how characters' actions change the outcome of the story.
- Students will analyze how characters respond and react to one another.
- Students will analyze how characters' decisions affect what happens when they face problems.
- Students will determine the meaning of dialect in a story.
- Students will read and analyze historical fantasy.
- Students will explain the benefits and challenges of telling the truth when it's difficult.
- Students will analyze real-world lessons in fantasy stories.



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.

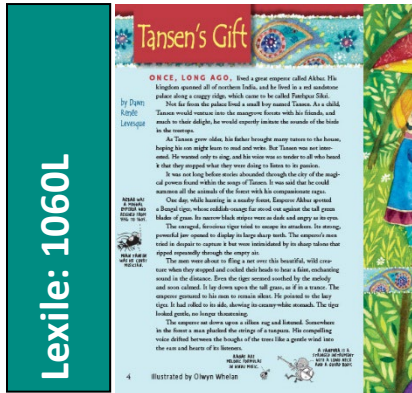
## SELECTIONS

- **Tansen's Gift**  
Folktale, 1060L
- **Noah Count and the Arkansas Ark**  
Fiction, 830L
- **The Last Kirin, part 2**  
Historical Fantasy, 740L

## Tansen's Gift

pp. 4–6, Folktale

This folktale describes how a clever boy survives a dangerous musical challenge thanks to his quick thinking.



## RESOURCES

Clever Solution

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will summarize key events that drive the plot.
- Students will explain how characters' actions change the outcome of the story.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **ragas (p. 4)** melodic formulas in Hindu music
- **tanpura (p. 4)** a stringed instrument with a long neck and a gourd body
- **Deepak Raga (p. 6)** a song associated with bringing fire

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** How can people's decisions change their future?

Think about a decision you made or an action you took that led to a big change. Maybe you talked to a new kid in class and later became best friends. Maybe you decided to learn how to play an instrument and then got to perform in a big concert. Ask the class to share their example of when this occurred and explain how their choices led to those events. Now, tell students that the story "Tansen's Gift" is about a musician whose choices end up saving his life.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary along with definitions. Ask students to fill in the blanks with the correct terms.

1. The beautiful \_\_\_ echoed through the concert hall.
2. Ashwin played the \_\_\_ at his friend's birthday party.
3. The \_\_\_ is a beautiful piece of classical Indian music associated with fire.

## READ & DISCUSS

Read the story independently and then discuss the questions as a class.

1. How do people react when they hear Tansen sing?
2. Why does the emperor stop his hunt in the forest?
3. What do the other Jewels of the Crown plan to do to Tansen?
4. Why is playing "Deepak Raga" dangerous?

## SKILL FOCUS: Character Action

**INSTRUCT:** Remind the students that this story is about a skilled musician who had to come up with a clever plan to save his own life. Ask them if they ever needed to think of a creative solution to solve a big problem. If so, why did the solution work? While they are thinking about your question, distribute the *Clever Solution* organizer to fill in. They may review the story for key details.

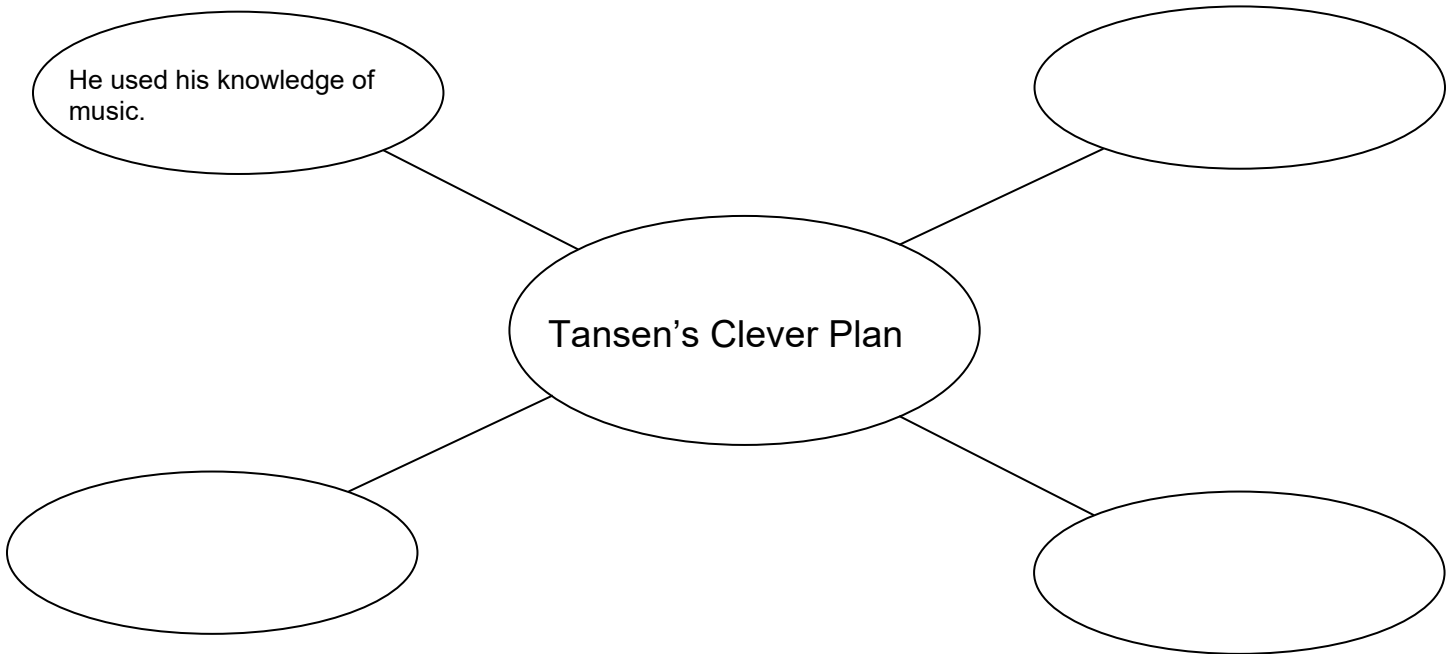
**ASSESS:** Discuss responses as a class and review the factors that made Tansen's solution clever. Have students consider this to help them with the extend activity.

## EXTEND

**Writing:** While students review and discuss the *Clever Solution* organizer, ask them to come up with different endings of the story. What would happen if the emperor ignored the other Jewels of the Crown, or if Tansen had played "Deepak Raga" badly? Ask students to write their narratives and share them when finished.

## Clever Solution

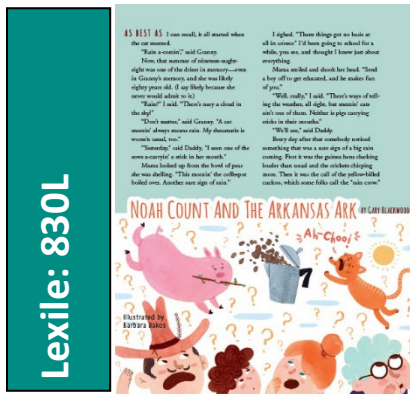
**Character Action:** Think about Tansen's solution to his problem. To save his life, he needed a clever plan. Fill in the web with story details that explain why his plan was clever. An example has been filled out for you.



## Noah Count and the Arkansas Ark

pp. 9–12, Historical Fiction

This story is about a boy whose father risks embarrassment to prepare for a storm that no one else believes will come. This story demonstrates how people's choices to prepare help them for the future.



### OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how characters respond and react to one another.
- Students will analyze how characters' decisions affect what happens when they face problems.
- Students will determine the meaning of dialect in a story.

### KEY VOCABULARY

- **levee** (p. 10) a long wall of soil built along a river to prevent flooding
- **joshing** (p. 10) talking to someone in a friendly, teasing way
- **bedraggled** (p. 12) wet or dirty from being in rain or mud
- **grappling hook** (p. 8) a tool made of iron hooks for grabbing on to something

### ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** How can people's decisions change their future?

Tell students that the title of this story is “Noah Count and the Arkansas Ark” and the main character is a boy who doubts his father’s plan to prepare for a storm. Then, play a game where students draw or write down things that could help them stay safe in a flood. Give students two minutes to write or draw their ideas. Once the game is finished, let them know that the main character’s father built a raft to keep the family safe.

### INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary and definitions. Discuss as a class. Then, ask students to create their own sentences using the terms. When finished, have them switch with their neighbors to see if the terms were used accurately.

### READ & DISCUSS

Read the story independently and then discuss the questions as a class.

1. Who is Noah?
2. Why does the main character’s family think a storm is coming?
3. How do the other people in town react to the raft?
4. What happens to the family when it starts raining?
5. What does the main character realize at the end of the story?

### SKILL FOCUS: Dialect

**INSTRUCT:** Ask students if they have ever spoken to someone from a different region. What did they notice about the words this person used or the way the person pronounced words? Tell students that the characters in this story speak in a dialect—a form of a language that is spoken in a particular area and that uses some of its own words and pronunciations. Have students skim the story and find dialect words. Then, have them write or draw what they think these words mean.

**ASSESS:** Discuss responses as a class and review drawings or written responses.

### EXTEND

**Art:** Have students draw a picture of what they would put in their own flood rafts. When complete, have students share their drawings with their classmates. If time permits, ask for volunteers to share their drawings with the class.

## The Last Kirin, part 2

pp. 22–29, Historical Fantasy

Teach students how to read and analyze a historical fantasy narrative using this story about a girl who makes a difficult decision to help a legendary creature.



## RESOURCES

Fantasy Themes

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze historical fantasy.
- Students will explain the benefits and challenges of telling the truth when it's difficult.
- Students will analyze real-world lessons in fantasy stories.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **flippantly** (p. 23) lacking respect or not treating something seriously
- **incredulously** (p. 25) unbelievably and showing shock
- **sheepish** (p. 25) meek or embarrassed
- **impertinence** (p. 25) bold rudeness
- **subdued** (p. 27) quiet and thoughtful

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** How can people's decisions change their future?

Discuss with students how it can sometimes be difficult to tell the truth, but that doing so can be the best solution to a problem. Ask students to describe benefits and drawbacks of telling difficult truths. Then, tell them to think about this as they read about Kiyō's difficult decision.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Acknowledge the correct meanings and then read the definitions aloud. Next, have students work in pairs to look for relationships between the words and then categorize them. Invite pairs to share and explain their word groups.

## READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the text, use the questions below to prompt discussion:

1. What ideas does Kiyō suggest to free the kirin?
2. What happens when Kiyō tells Takeshi about the kirin?
3. Why is Kiyō afraid to ask her father to release the kirin?
4. Why does Kiyō decide to tell her father that she's seen the kirin?
5. How does Kiyō's father react when Kiyō tells him the truth?

## SKILL FOCUS: Determine Themes

**INSTRUCT:** Remind students that a fantasy story uses magic and other made-up elements to intrigue readers, but they still have strong themes. While reading fantasy, readers can answer the question, "What truth about life is this story telling?" Work with students to find details that reveal the story's themes. Distribute the *Fantasy Themes* organizer. Recreate the organizer on the board and ask volunteers to name two or three details that support the first theme. Record these details on the board.

**ASSESS:** Have students complete the rest of the organizer while working in pairs. Have them discuss how the story's themes apply to real life. Finally, invite pairs to share their responses.

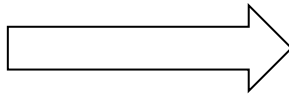
## EXTEND

**Social Studies:** Have students conduct research to learn about the kirin folklore. Encourage students to use words and visuals to present information to the class.

### Fantasy Themes

**Determine Themes:** Use this chart to identify key details that support a theme in the story. One theme has been filled out for you. Then, answer the question.

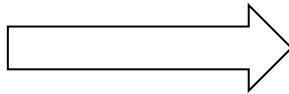
Detail #1



Theme #1

Telling the truth is the easiest way to solve a problem.

Detail #2



Theme #2

How do these themes apply to real life?

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