

 *Ling & Ting*   
SHARE A BIRTHDAY



curriculum  
connections

- ❖ Siblings
- ❖ Individuality
- ❖ Birthdays

Ages 6 to 9

BY GRACE LIN

## BUILDING BACKGROUND

### Picture Stroll

A picture walk is usually a guided discussion of the pictures in a book, focusing on using the illustrations to help students understand important vocabulary or concepts. It is often a fairly quick process, and it is usually teacher-directed. The idea is to give students enough background knowledge and exposure to the topic in order for them to successfully read the book. A picture stroll is intended to be more leisurely. It requires careful examination of the pictures or illustrations; students set the pace.

Give students a purpose for their picture stroll, by asking them to ask Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How for the first story in *Ling & Ting Share a Birthday*. Ask them to carefully examine each picture, and using only the pictures, try to answer each of the question words: Who are the main characters? What is the problem in the story? Where does the story take place? When does the story take place? Why is there a problem? How do they solve the problem? Students might want to come up with their own questions for each of the words, but providing the guiding questions gives the stroll some additional structure. Remind students to only use the pictures. Depending on the students, it might make sense to cover the text in order to ensure the picture stroll is most effective.

After students have an answer for each question, or as many as they can answer from the pictures alone, have students try to predict what the story will be about. After reading, discuss as a class how accurate (or inaccurate) their predictions were. How did the picture stroll help prepare them for reading?



## COMPREHENSION CONNECTION

### Ling and Ting Solve Their Problems

Ling and Ting work together to solve small problems throughout *Ling & Ting Share a Birthday*. Ask students to

identify one of the problems, and then use details from the text to explain how the twins solved the problem. If this is students' first exposure to identifying problem and solution, choose the problem from the first story to use as a model. Then, after guiding students, let them pick a problem from one of the other stories to work on independently.

### Prove-it Relay

As students are introduced to more complex reading material, the ability to answer text-based questions is a skill they need to develop. They can practice this by answering literal

questions with this simple movement game. Begin by writing questions that could be answered directly from the text (some examples are below). Write the questions on sticky notes and stick these to the wall. For a more festive atmosphere, write them on balloons (or place the sticky notes on balloons) and put them in the front of the room. Students take turns running up and choosing a question. They should read their question aloud and try to answer

it from memory. Then, ask them to run back to their seat and try to prove their answer by reading one or two sentences from the book. As soon as the question is read aloud, other students can try to search for the answer too. When they think they have the answer, they can put their thumbs up or write the page number where they found the answer on a personal white board. This keeps all students engaged during the "relay." As soon as the first student proves the answer, then another student can run up and read a question. The following questions are examples that could be used:

- What is the birthday gift Ling and Ting receive?
- What does Ling buy for Ting?
- How do Ling and Ting get home from their shopping trip?
- What ingredients does Ling put in her cake?
- What color does Ling's cake become?

### *More Like Ling or More Like Ting*

Connecting to characters allows students to discover deeper meaning in the books they read. Help students connect to Ling and Ting by asking them to consider which twin they are more like. To begin, work as a class to generate a list of words that describe Ling, then list words that describe Ting. Before writing the word on the list, challenge students to “prove it” by giving evidence from the text that supports their idea. Some students may be familiar with Ling and Ting from their other book *Ling & Ting: Not Exactly the Same*. This will add more depth to the discussion, but they should still be encouraged to provide evidence from that text to support their thinking. After there is a list of ideas that describe Ling and a list to describe Ting, have students choose the one they are most like. Then, have them use details from their own life to support their idea. For example, if someone chooses Ling because she likes books, then the student should state that he or she also likes books. As a class discuss which students identified more with Ling and which ones identified more with Ting. Were the reasons the same?

## WORKING WITH WORDS

### *Consonant Clusters*

Throughout the book, there are many words that begin with consonant clusters. Begin by reviewing that consonant clusters are when two or more consonants are blended together to make a sound. Learning the sounds consonant clusters make can help readers grow because once the cluster sound is known, then figuring out unknown words is much faster. Students can learn more by going on a cluster hunt, looking through their book and recording example words that have beginning consonant clusters. They should be able to find bl, dr, sh, th, gr, kn, cr, pl, fl, gl, br, pr, ch and wh. After they have found all of the beginning consonant clusters, challenge students to go back through to find consonant clusters that occur in the middle or at the end of words. Next, help students apply their learning by asking them to find or think of a few more words for each consonant cluster they identified. Encourage them to use print

around the room or other books to assist them if needed. Share ideas as a class, and create a common list of words for each of the consonant clusters.

### *Take Time for Rhymes*

Ling and Ting have names that rhyme. The ability to hear if words rhyme and to play with beginning sounds to make new rhyming words is a foundational reading skill. Help students practice this with an interactive rhyming game. Start with Ling and Ting. When they pretend to be a different set of twins they change the beginning letters of their names; they become Ming and Sing. Explain to students that they can do this with other words too. They can make cake become bake by changing the beginning of the word. Have students work with a partner and choose a base word, such as cake, look, or wish. Then, have them work together to list words that rhyme with their base word.

## Writing

### *Imaginative Narrative*

When Ling and Ting blow out the candles they each get to make a wish. Have students imagine they have the chance to wish for something. Then, ask them to write about what it would be like if their wish came true. Remind students to narrowly focus their writing on that one topic, provid-



ing lots of details that show how they felt and tell about the experience. They should refer to other narrative writing they might have done or published

exemplars as a model for this assignment.

### *Twin Interview*

One way to get information is by conducting an interview. After reading about Ling and Ting, students may want to know more about the lives of real twins. Help them discover this by conducting twin interviews. Brainstorm a list of questions as a class or in small groups, then help students set up interviews. They may already know someone

who is a twin, or they may need to ask friends and family members to connect them to a twin. Interviews can be conducted with a twin of any age and either in person or by videoconference. The purpose of the interview is to learn more about twins and to practice speaking and listening skills.

### **Read All About It**

Within this beginning chapter book, there are opportunities for students to practice their research skills and informational writing. Begin by identifying some questions or research topics related to the story. Some ideas include: origin of the birthday song, fraternal vs. identical twins, birthday cakes around the world. Students can choose any topic of their own, as long as it can be connected back to the story. Then, have students learn information about their topic and write about it. They should have a main idea sentence and a few details to support it. The individual research pieces can be bound together to create a class book.

### **Opinion Writing**

Is it better to receive a book or a toy? Ling and Ting each have a different opinion on this. Ask students to choose either toy or book and give two or three reasons why the one they chose is the best gift to receive. They should have an opinion statement and at least two reasons that make sense and support their opinion.

### **Art**

#### ***Fifties Inspiration***

Grace Lin chose to make the drawings of Ling and Ting look like they were from a storybook from the 1950s. Show students illustrations from a 1950s reader (images can be found on the Internet if a local library does not have any examples), and ask them to study the pictures. What do they notice about the clothing and the colors used? Talk about how these images might have inspired Grace Lin. Then, have students draw a book cover or illustration inspired by the example they studied.



### **Social Studies**

#### ***Birthday Traditions***

In this Ling and Ting book, there are many references to birthday traditions such as receiving gifts, singing a birthday song, and making a birthday wish. These are a few traditions enjoyed by Ling and Ting, but around the world birthdays are celebrated in many different ways. Help students learn about the similarities and differences between how Ling and Ting celebrate

their birthday and how birthdays are celebrated in another country. Choose a read aloud or leveled text focusing on birthday celebrations in another country. Then, ask students to compare and contrast. The skill of identifying what is the same and what is different can be made even more concrete by writing the identified traditions on index cards. Then, have students sort them into piles according to which ones were found in the Ling and Ting book, which ones are celebrated in another country, and which ones are common to both. Make this a movement activity by placing three cake plates at the front of the room, and instead of sorting at a seat, divide the cards among students and have them run up and place it on a labeled cake plate: Ling and Ting Birthday, Other Country (insert name of the country studied), and Both. As an extension, have students share family traditions regarding birthdays and compare and contrast these with the ones from the Ling and Ting book and the other country.

#### ***Missing Piece Directions***

Ting does not follow her recipe carefully and as a result her cake does not turn out the way she wants. Following directions when baking or when trying something for the first time is very important. Help students see this for themselves with a quick experiment. Provide written directions for a craft project or geographic directions to reach a certain location, but leave out an important step or material. Instruct students to follow the directions exactly as written. When they reach the point where they cannot continue, stop and discuss why a missing step or missing

materials makes a difference. Then, provide the missing part and have students continue. Connect back to the book by discussing why Ling’s cake was edible, but Ting’s was not. Why is it important to follow directions?

## CHARACTER EDUCATION

### Sharing Journal

Ling and Ting share many things. Sometimes sharing is not too hard, but other times sharing is very difficult. In school, students have to take turns, share materials, or even share ideas. Begin by making a list of all the ways students share.

Then, after brainstorming as many ideas as possible, ask students to think about the type of sharing that is hardest for them. It might be a type of “school sharing” or it might be something at home. After students have thought about it, ask them to set a personal goal for sharing. Encourage them to focus on the area that is hardest for them. Ask students to keep a sharing journal during the week and record how they shared with others. At the end of the week, have students consider whether or not they reached their goal. As a class, discuss the challenges they faced and talk about how they worked through them.

## about the book



978-0-316-18405-2

Ling and Ting are twins. They share a birthday. They bake cakes, and they make birthday wishes. They tell stories and wrap gifts. They also share a birthday secret!

Have fun with Ling and Ting! They stick together and look alike. But they are not exactly the same.

## also by Grace Lin



978-0-316-02452-5 hc  
 978-0-316-02453-2 pb  
 AR 1.8

Ling and Ting are twins. They have the same brown eyes. They have the same pink cheeks. They have the same happy smiles.

Ling and Ting are two adorable identical twins, and they stick together, whether they are making dumplings, getting their hair cut, or practicing magic tricks. But looks are deceiving—people can be very different, even if they look exactly the same.

## about the author



Grace Lin is the award-winning and bestselling author and illustrator of *Starry River*

*of the Sky*, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, *The Year of the Dog*, *The Year of the Rat*, *Dumpling Days*, and *Ling & Ting*, as well as picture books such as *The Ugly Vegetables* and *Dim Sum for Everyone!* Grace is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and lives in Massachusetts. Her website is [GraceLin.com](http://GraceLin.com).