

Teaching
Activity Guide

Cao Chong
Weighs an
Elephant

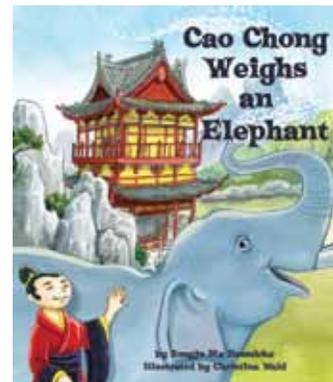


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Arbordale Publishing
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464



by Songju Ma Daemicke
illustrated by Christina Wald

How to Use This Activity Guide (General)

There are a wide variety of activities that teach or supplement all curricular areas. The activities are easily adapted up or down depending on the age and abilities of the children involved. And, it is easy to pick and choose what is appropriate for your setting and the time involved. Most activities can be done with an individual child or a group of children.

For teachers in the classroom: We understand that time is at a premium and that, especially in the early grades, much time is spent teaching language arts. All Arbordale titles are specifically selected and developed to get children excited about learning other subjects (science, geography, social studies, math, etc.) while reading (or being read to). These activities are designed to be as comprehensive and cross-curricular as possible. If you are teaching sentence structure in writing, why not use sentences that teach science or social studies? We also know and understand that you must account for all activities done in the classroom. While each title is aligned to all of the state standards (both the text and the For Creative Minds), it would be nearly impossible to align all of these activities to each state's standards at each grade level. However, we do include some of the general wording of the CORE language arts and math standards, as well as some of the very general science or social studies standards. You'll find them listed as "objectives" in italics. You should be able to match these objectives with your state standards fairly easily.

For homeschooling parents and teachers in private schools: Use as above. Aren't you glad you don't have to worry about state standards?

For parents/caregivers: Two of the most important gifts you can give your child are the love of reading and the desire to learn. Those passions are instilled in your child long before he or she steps into a classroom. Many adults enjoy reading historical fiction novels . . . fun to read but also to learn (or remember) about historical events. Not only does Arbordale publish stories that are fun to read and that can be used as bedtime books or quiet "lap" reading books, but each story has non-fiction facts woven through the story or has some underlying educational component to sneak in "learning." Use the "For Creative Minds" section in the book itself and these activities to expand on your child's interest or curiosity in the subject. They are designed to introduce a subject so you don't need to be an expert (but you will probably look like one to your child!). Pick and choose the activities to help make learning fun!

For librarians and bookstore employees; after-school program leaders; and zoo, aquarium, nature center, park & museum educators: Whether reading a book for story time or using the book to supplement an educational program, feel free to use the activities in your programs. We have done the "hard part" for you.

What Do Children Already Know?

Young children are naturally inquisitive and are sponges for information. The whole purpose of this activity is to help children verify the information they know (or think they know) and to get them thinking “beyond the box” about a particular subject.

Before reading the book, ask the children what they know about the subject. A list of suggested questions is below. The children should write down their “answers” (or adults for them if the children are not yet writing) on the chart found in Appendix A, index cards, or post-it notes.

Their answers should be placed on a “before reading” panel. If doing this as a group, you could use a bulletin board or even a blackboard. If doing this with individual children, you can use a plain manila folder with the front cover the “before reading” panel. Either way, you will need two more panels or sections—one called “correct answer” and the other “look for correct answer.”

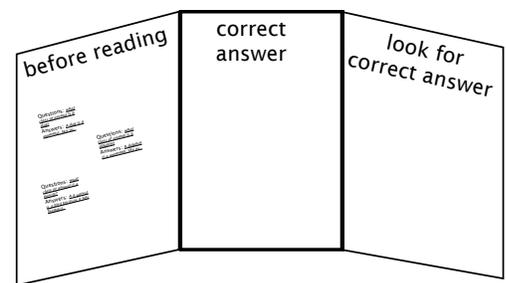
Do the children have any more questions about the subject? If so, write them down to see if they are answered in the book.

After reading the book, go back to the questions and answers and determine whether the children’s answers were correct or not.

If the answer was correct, move that card to the “correct answer” panel. If the answer was incorrect, go back to the book to find the correct information.

If the children have more questions that were not answered, they should look them up.

When an answer has been found and corrected, the card can be moved to the “correct answer” panel.



Pre-Reading Questions

1. Did scales exist 2000 years ago?
2. How did ancient people weigh things?
3. How could you weigh something if you didn't have a scale?
4. How can a boat be used to weigh something?
5. What is buoyancy?
6. What determines if something will sink or float?
7. How much does an elephant weigh?

Comprehension Questions & Writing Prompts

Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, (paired fiction & For Creative Minds non-fiction)

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

1. How did Chong weigh the elephant?
2. Why did Chong subtract his own weight after adding together the weights of all the rocks?
3. What questions do you have for Chong about how he weighed the elephant?
4. From reading this story, what do you know about scales? about buoyancy?
5. From reading the *For Creative Minds*, what do you know about scales? about buoyancy?
6. How does the information in the *For Creative Minds* help you understand the story?
7. Who was Cao Chong's father? What role did he play in government?
8. What was life like in China two thousand years ago? How can you find out more about daily life in ancient China?

Observation Skills: Art Scavenger Hunt

Objective Core Language Arts Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

1. How would you describe the setting of this story?
2. What clothes does Cao Chong wear? What colors are his clothes?
3. Is there any color Chong wears that nobody else in the story is wearing?
Can you think of anything this color might mean? How would you find this information?
4. How does Chong wear his hair? Is this different from how the adults wear their hair?
5. How does the elephant react when one of the people in the crowd suggests cutting the elephant into small pieces to weigh? What do you think the elephant is thinking or feeling? What can you point to in the text or in the illustrations that helps you figure this out?
6. The servants weigh the rocks using a scale. What does the scale look like?

Cross-Curricular Vocabulary Activities

Objective Core Language Arts:

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content.

Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., duck is a bird & the verb to duck).

Use words & phrases acquired through conversations, reading/being read to, and responding to texts.

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade-level topic or subject area.

Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.

Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Use frequently occurring adjectives.

Vocabulary Game: This activity is a very general idea and is designed to get children thinking of vocabulary words that will then be used as the beginning vocabulary list for a science lesson.

Select an illustration from the book and give the children a specific length of time (five minutes?) to write down all the words they can think of about the particular subject. It is helpful to project an illustration on a whiteboard. Use eBook or book preview found at www.ArbordalePublishing.com.

The children's word list should include anything and everything that comes to mind, including nouns, verbs, and adjectives. At the end of the time, have each child take turns reading a word from his/her list. If anyone else has the word, the reader does nothing. However, if the reader is the only one with the word, he/she should circle it. While reading the list, one person should write the word on a flashcard or large index card and post it on a bulletin board or wall.

At the end, the child with the most words circled "wins." And you have a start to your science vocabulary list. Note: if a child uses an incorrect word, this is a good time to explain the proper word or the proper usage.

Glossary/Vocabulary Words: Word cards may be used (see Appendix) or have children write on index cards, a poster board, or on a chalkboard for a "word wall." If writing on poster board or chalkboard, you might want to sort words into nouns, verbs, etc. right away to save a step later if using for Silly Sentences (on the next page). Leaving the words posted (even on a refrigerator at home) allows the children to see and think about them frequently.

Using the Words: The following activities may be done all at once or over a period of several days.

- Sort vocabulary words into nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. and write what they are on the backs of the cards. When the cards are turned over, all you will see is "noun," etc. (these can then be used for the "silly sentences" on the next page).
- After the cards have been sorted, go over the categories to ensure that all cards have been placed correctly. (Mistakes are a great opportunity to teach!)
- Choose two words from each category and write a sentence for each word.
- Write a story that uses at least ten vocabulary words from the word sort.
- Have children create sentences using their vocabulary words. Each sentence could be written on a separate slip of paper. Have children (individually or in small groups) sort and put sentences into informative paragraphs or a story. Edit and re-write paragraphs into one informative paper or a story.

Silly Sentence Structure Activity: This "game" develops both an understanding of sentence structure and the science subject. Use words from the "word wall" to fill in the blanks. After completing silly sentences for fun, have children try to fill in the proper words by looking for the correct information in the book.

Word Bank

Build a word bank using words found in the story or For Creative Minds.

Adjective	Noun	Verb
ancient	advisors	announced
better	animal	asking
bold	applause	burst
bronze	arms	called
cruel	bell	called
curious	boat	embraced
curved	boy	has
excited	cheers	led
gigantic	China	met
good	Chong	scoffed
huge	crowd	scolded
impressed	elephant	see
long	line	seemed
loud	loved	slice
serious	mass	slice
silly	method	suggested
wisest	nose	was
wonderful	pan	whispered
	pride	
	satisfaction	
	scales	
	son	
	surface	
	thinking	
	water	
	you	

Language Arts: Sequence Sentence Strips

Cut into sentence strips, laminate if desired, and place in a “center.” Have children put the events in order. Children may work alone or in small groups. Cards are in order but should be mixed up when cut apart.

Objective Core Language Arts:

Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.

Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

In the great courtyard outside the palace, the ambassador of the Wu Kingdom guided a huge, grey beast toward the anxiously waiting Cao Cao, his advisors, and hundreds of guests.

One spectator remarked, “This elephant is magnificent! It must weigh five thousand jin!”

An amused Cao Cao turned to the Wu ambassador. “Do you know exactly how much this elephant weighs?”

“Father,” Chong then called out. “I have a way!”

Chong led the elephant onto the boat.



Chong directed the servants to use their knives to carve a line on the outside of the boat marking the water line.

Chong then guided the elephant off the boat and back to the land.

Chong then ordered that rocks be loaded into the boat.

“Stop! Now bring a scale and weigh all the rocks on this boat!”

Cao Cao embraced Chong into his arms. “Good thinking, my son!”

Science Journal (Vocabulary)

buoyancy

my definition

my drawing

gravity

my definition

my drawing

mass

my definition

my drawing

dense

my definition

my drawing

China

my definition

my drawing

emperor

my definition

my drawing

scale

my definition

my drawing

boat

my definition

my drawing

Tools and Technology

Objective: Explain why people use science and technology and how scientists and engineers work. Explain how various technologies are used in the community technology, tools, community. Identify tools people have invented for everyday life and for scientific investigations.

1. What is a tool that can be used to weigh things?
2. What simple machine is part of a scale?
3. Why could Chong not use a scale to weigh the elephant?
4. Describe the method Chong used to weigh the elephant.
5. What tool do you use to weigh something?
6. When do you think scales were first invented? How could you find out?
7. Research ancient measuring scales. What did they look like? How did they work?
8. Have you ever used a scale? Do you know how it works? Research to find out.
9. What do modern scales have in common with scales used 2,000 or even 4,000 years ago? How are they different?

1. Look at the chart you made on the previous page. Put the animals in order from lightest to heaviest:
2. Look at the chart you made and put the animals in order from tallest to shortest:
3. Which weighs more: your favorite animal or an Asian elephant? By how much?
4. Do all animals of one type (species) weigh the same amount?
5. Look up the weight of common household items. How many refrigerators would it take to weigh the same as an elephant? How many cars?
6. How tall are you? How many times would you have to stack people your height in order to be as tall as an elephant?
7. What are some animals that are bigger than an elephant—either taller or heavier. Or maybe both!



Map Activity

Objective: reading maps, geography

Using this map as a reference, color modern China on the map in the appendix.

Research some of China's major cities. Mark them on your map.

Color in the country where you live. Where is your state? Your city?

What other countries or states can you identify on your map?



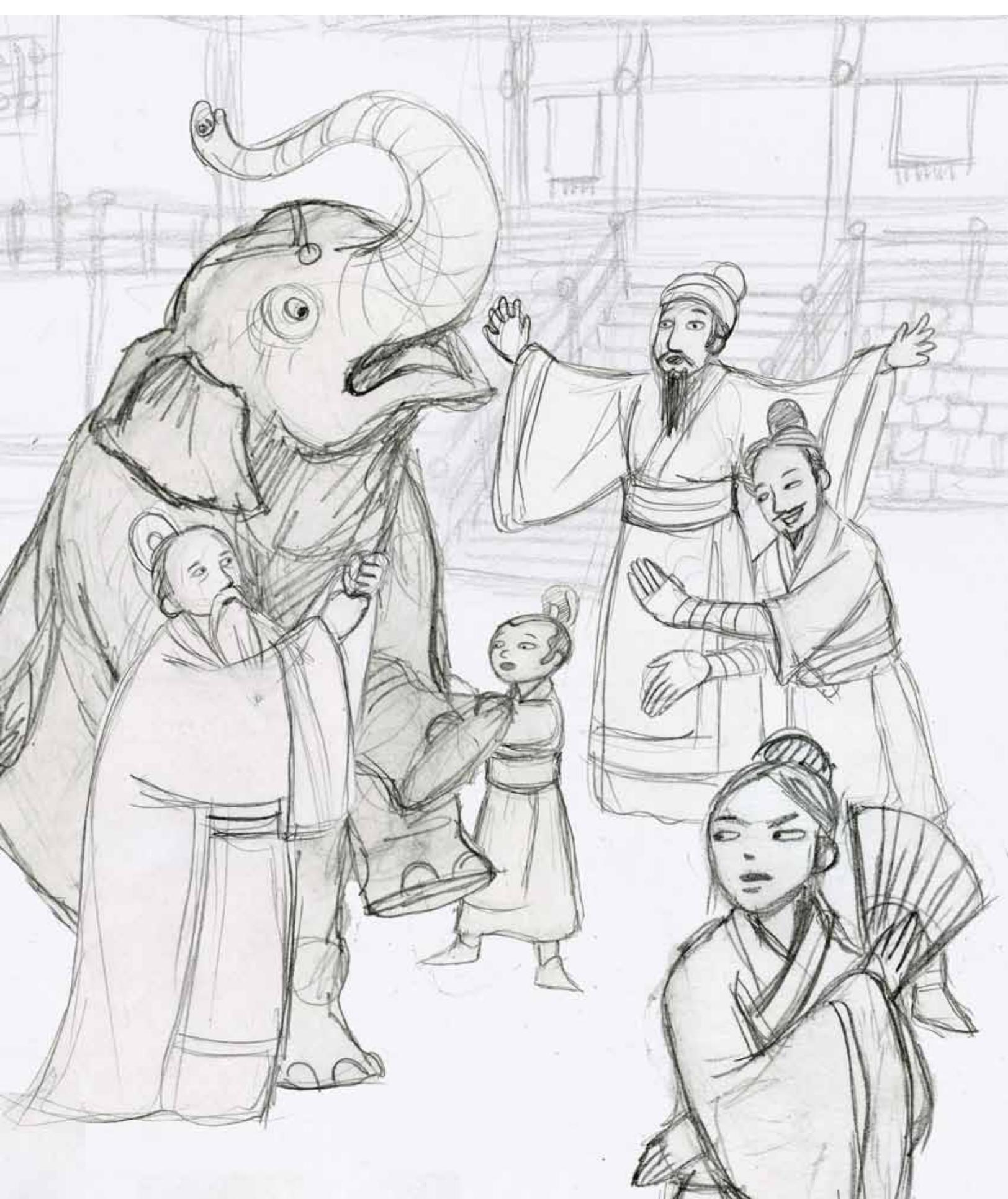


This is Han in 200 AD. Below are the Three Kingdoms in 220 AD. How did the political boundaries change between 200 and 220?



Coloring Pages







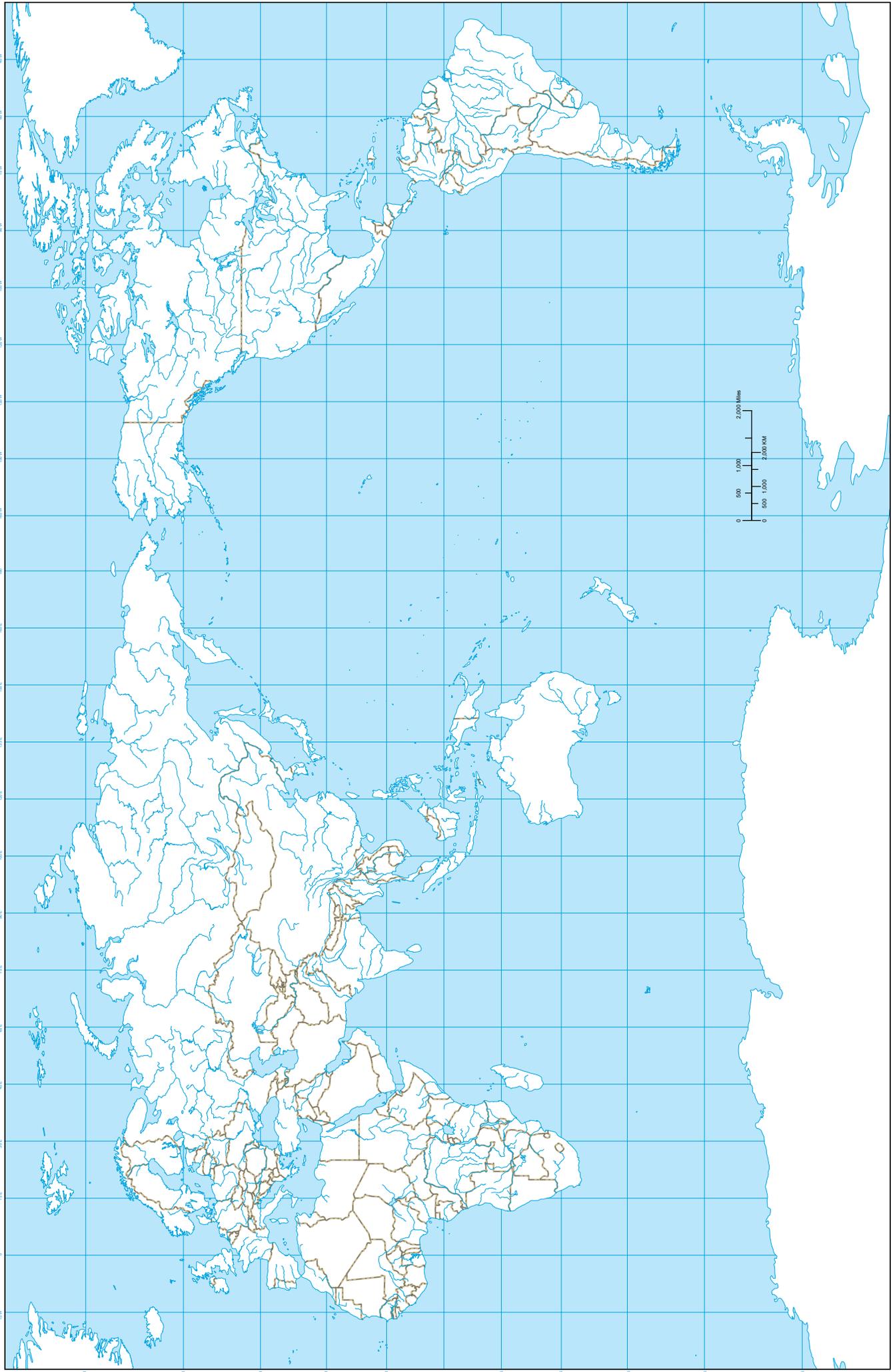
Answers

Silly Sentences

1. In ancient China, there was a boy named Cao Chong who was curious and loved asking questions.
2. One day, Chong was very excited because he was going to see a gigantic animal called an elephant.
3. “What a wonderful nose it has!” Chong said excitedly
4. “You, my small boy, have a better method than all my wisest advisors?”
5. When the long, curved line on the boat again met the water surface, Chong hopped back on the boat.
6. Loud applause and cheers burst out from the impressed crowd.
7. Beaming with pride and satisfaction, Cao Cao embraced Chong into his arms. “Good thinking, my son!

Appendix B—Asia Map





Appendix C—World Map