



# Teaching Notes & Resources

Key Stage 2 - 3

Themes: Fantasy & Adventure | Chinese Mythology |  
World Building | Descriptive Writing

Purchase



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# Introduction

## About the Book

Twelve-year-old Zhi Ging has always been an outcast. Until she receives an invitation to Hok Woh, an underwater school that offers her the chance to become immortal, and to finally belong.

There, she battles in hair-raising dragon boat races, meets ageshifting tutors and competes in thrilling trials.

But there are rumours of a growing dark force . . . and students who fail the trials are disappearing. Can Zhi Ging uncover the truth before it's too late?

## About the Author

Siobhan McDermott was born in Hong Kong and grew up on a steady stream of stories filled with Chinese legends and Irish folklore. She now lives in the UK and continues to order dim sum in Cantonese tinged with a distinctly Dublin lilt.

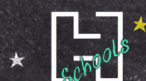
She worked in publishing for six years, during which she took part in every event imaginable: from a 'yoga with your dog' session in a bookshop to running around Isle of Man in a full unicorn onesie. She is now the PR Lead at BBC Maestro.

*Paper Dragons* is her debut novel and was inspired by moments across her life: from childhood ferry trips between Lantau Island and Hong Kong, to travelling around Taiwan, Italy and Spain.



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# Contents

## Theme 1 - The World of Hok Woh

Objectives: Retrieve information from the text about the fantasy world the author has created, create a class display, create a mind-map of Hok Woh

## Theme 2 - Finding Your Place in the World

Objectives: Infer information about characters and their feelings from details stated and implied in the text, explore the concept of belonging and write a letter to make Zhi Ging feel welcome, create your own hero

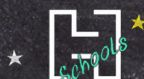
## Theme 3 - Chinese Myths & Legends

Objectives: Learn about the author's real world inspirations, research Chinese myths and legends and present your findings to the class, create a paper dragon



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# Theme 1 - The World of Hok Woh

Read the below extract from Chapter 10, in which Zhi Ging and the other Silhouettes have just arrived at Hok Woh.

The doors swung open to reveal a vast, circular hall made entirely from glass. Wild, twisting shards soared up from the floor and wove together across the walls.

'You might recognise some of this.' Reishi nodded at Zhi Ging and Iridill. 'Everything in here was custom-created for us by generations of Glassmiths. The last Lead Glassmith . . .' His voice washed over Zhi Ging as she spun around, willing herself not to blink. It was like they had stepped into a crystal nest.

Glowing white jellyfish floated between the walls and pulsed beneath the glass floor. Zhi Ging watched as a few drifted up towards the domed ceiling. The curved glass was decorated with a stained-glass pattern of cranes caught in flight. When the jellyfish sailed past, the birds' broad wings shimmered, and flashes of colour glinted down on the Cyo B'Ahon hurrying across the hall. Zhi Ging gazed at the colours dancing across her arms and the Silhouettes around her tapped the floor, mesmerised by the jellyfish darting beneath their feet.

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## Discussion Questions

- Does the hall remind you of anywhere you have been or anything you have seen before?
- Why does Reishi think Zhi Ging and Iridill might recognise some of the items in the hall?
- How do you think Zhi Ging feels as she looks around her? Use evidence in the text to support your answer.
- What does the word 'mesmerised' mean? Can you give some synonyms? When have you felt 'mesmerised'?
- Can you identify four verbs the author uses to describe how the jellyfish move?

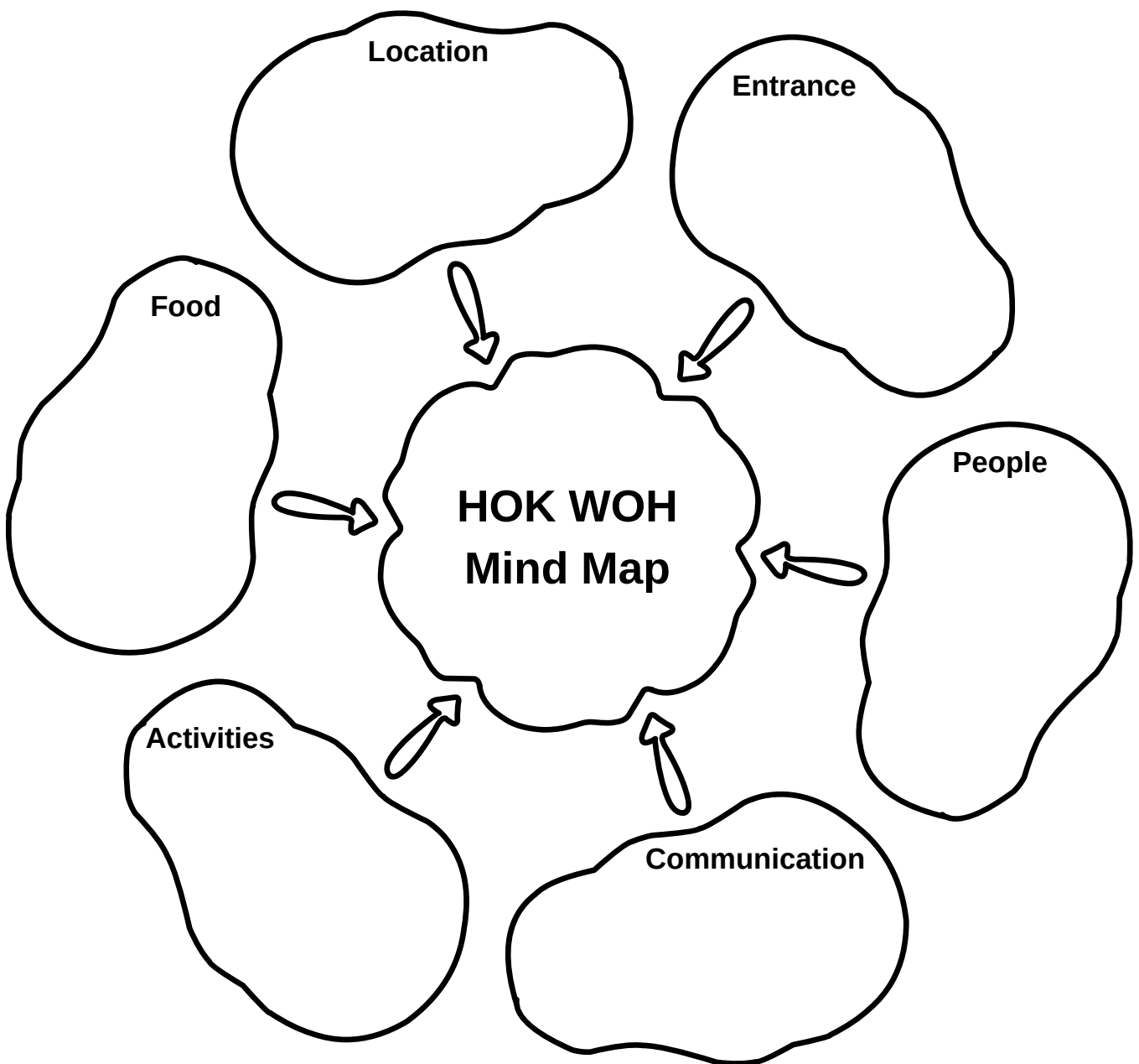


# Theme 1 - The World of Hok Woh

## Activity 1: Create a Hok Woh Mind Map

What have you learnt about the world of Hok Woh from the story so far? You can either discuss this as a class or work in groups or pairs.

Fill in the below mind map with the information you have learned. Continue adding details to this mind map as you read the rest of the story, to help you understand the incredible fantasy world the author has created.



# Theme 1 - The World of Hok Woh

## Activity 2: Create a class display inspired by Hok Woh!

Work together as a class to create a display in your classroom inspired by Hok Woh. See if you can create a sense of the beautiful, otherworldly scene described in the extract from Chapter 10.

Ideas to get you started:

- Use blue card to create an underwater theme
- Make jellyfish out of paper cups with crepe paper tentacles
- Draw pictures of jellyfish using pen, chalk or even experimenting with glow-in-the-dark paint
- Create paper dragons using the activity in Theme 3



# Theme 2 - Finding Your Place in the World

Read the below extract from Chapter 13, in which Zhi Ging and her classmates attend their first lesson.

'Well, Miss Yeung, why don't you come down to the front and share what you think the connection is.'

The agheshifted Cyo B'Ahon murmured excitedly among themselves and stared at her with obvious interest. A few aged back up for a better look, snippets of conversation floating up between them.

'That's her, the Second Silhouette! Look, you can tell by the white Pan Chang Knot.'

'Do you really think Sintou will let her stay?'

'I thought she'd look more . . . well, special.'

Zhi Ging felt a prickling heat rising up the back of her neck and tried to ignore the hushed conversations spiralling around her. She glanced back helplessly at her friends before inching out along the row. Mynah and Pinderent held their thumbs up and mouthed *good luck*, but she could tell they weren't too confident in her chances either.

Tutor Wun handed her the chalk and ushered her closer to the stalactite.

'Go on. What do you see?'

Zhi Ging peered at the sketches, willing the clouds to reveal their secret. They began to blur and merge in front of her as she stared, unblinking, up at them.

'Awkward,' someone coughed from the group to scattered

laughter. Zhi Ging didn't need to turn round to know it was Iridill.

'I, uh . . .' She paused, watching the clouds fuse before her. *What did this remind her of?*

A memory of watching the cloud sea with Aapau flashed across her mind. They had spent a whole afternoon following clouds shifting between shapes. Zhi Ging turned back towards Tutor Wun, her heart beating.

'What they have in common is *everything*. It's all the same cloud! You've just drawn it at different stages of its floating cycle.' She raced the chalk across the glass board, a thin ribbon of white lassoing the clouds together to show how they flowed into one another.

'Excellent!' Tutor Wun gestured for Zhi Ging to stay beside the board and Iridill glowered from her seat, her arms crossed in frustration. 'Miss Yeung is correct. Every cloud has almost unlimited shape potential, remember that. This,' he gestured, tapping one of the illustrations, 'is the ideal shape for a cloud to carry rain, but the others . . .' He swung his chalk in a perfect circle around them. 'Well, that's what we're going to focus on. I want you to work out what each of the other cloud shapes is best suited for carrying. Don't limit yourself to unoriginal options like lightning or hail, I want to see teams think inventively. To think like Cyo B'Ahon.'

## Discussion Questions

- Why are Zhi Ging's classmates so interested in her?
- How do you think Zhi Ging feels as she goes to stand at the front of the class?
- Why do you think Iridill feels 'frustrated'?





# Theme 2 - Finding Your Place in the World

As the story progresses, it transpires that Zhi Ging is the only one who can uncover the truth about the strange goings on, and therefore protect Hok Woh and the surrounding realms.

What does it mean to be a **hero**? Discuss this as a class.

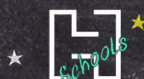
**Activity 2:** Create your own hero!

Start by thinking of a problem that needs solving. This could be at your school, in the local community or in the world! Then design a hero who could solve this problem. Draw your hero in the space below. You can write notes or labels around your hero if you would like to.

Once you have finished creating your hero, reflect on whether there is anything you could do to be like your hero. Maybe you are already more like them than you think!



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# Theme 3 - Chinese Myths & Legends

*Paper Dragons* is inspired by Chinese legend, stories the author heard growing up, and some real places in the world!

Watch Siobhan share some of the inspirations behind the book:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Z1vCiwNdjQ>

## Discussion Questions

- Which places in the real world was the author inspired by?
- What is special about these places to the author?
- Can you work out which parts of the book these places influenced?





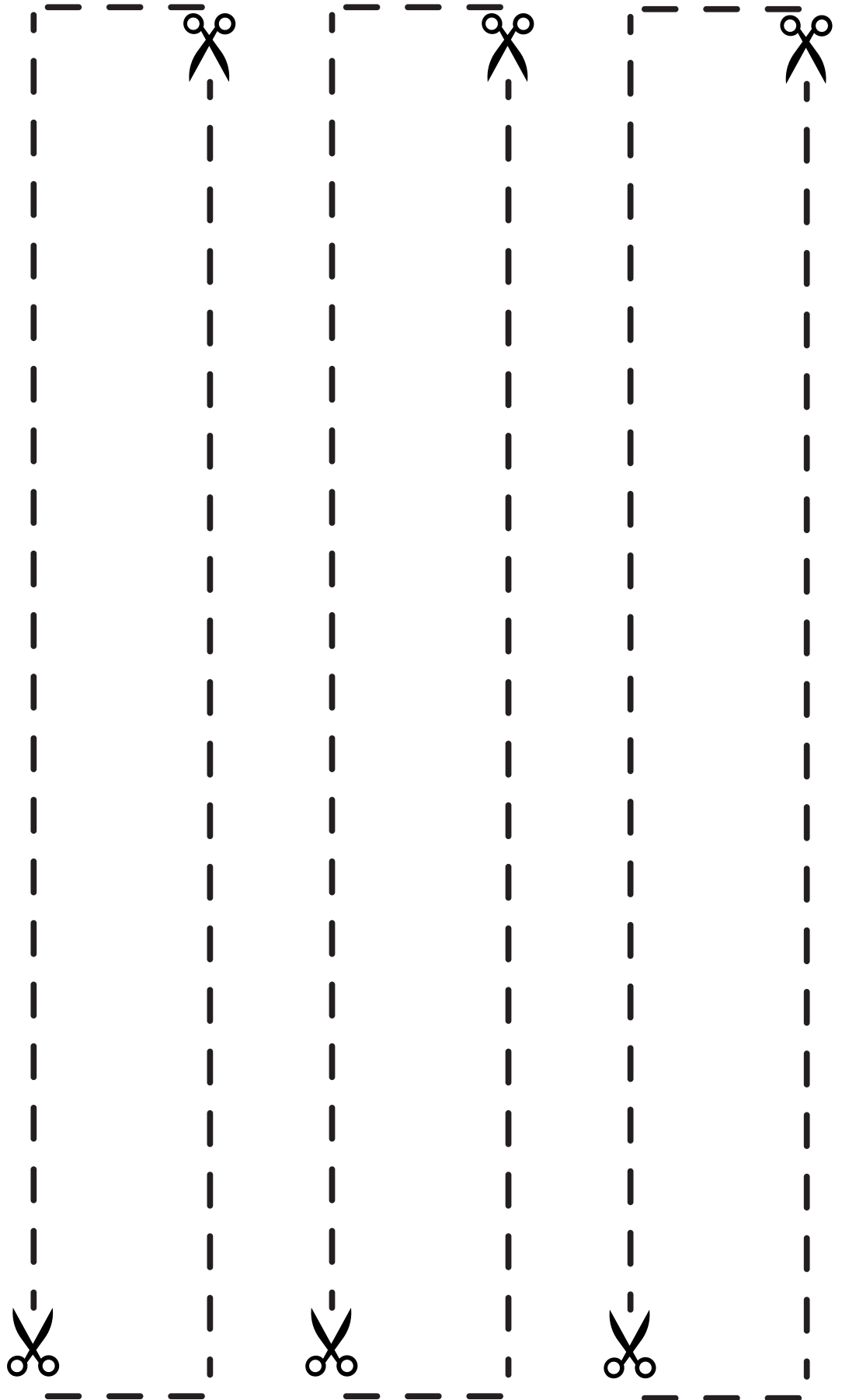
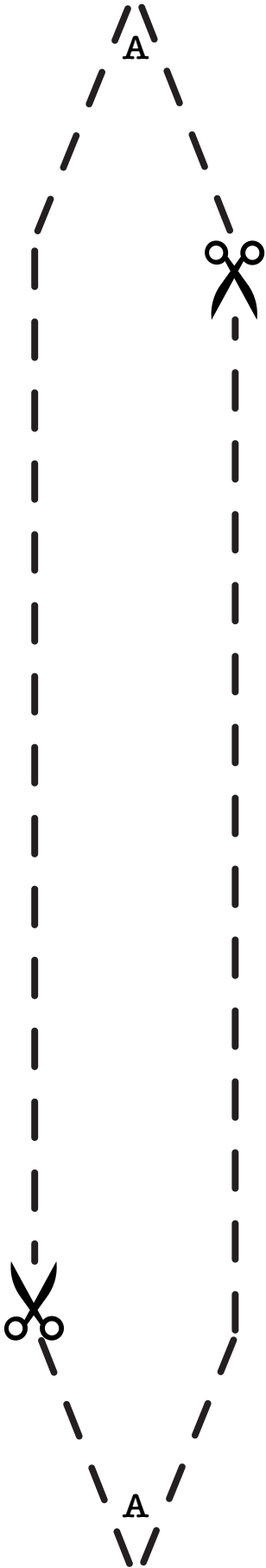
# Theme 3 - Chinese Myths & Legends

## Activity 2:

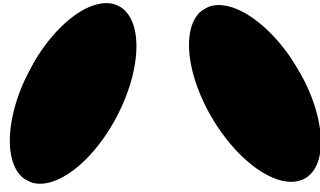
In Chapter 21, Zhi Ging creates a paper cutting of a dragon. Create your very own paper dragon using the steps below!

1. Cut out all of the pieces on the following two pages, using the dotted lines as cutting guides. Don't cut into any solid lines
2. Colour in the dragon's head and the rectangular strips on both sides with your brightest colouring pencils or pens
3. Pick up the strip with the pointed ends and glue the matching letter A's together to form your dragon's tail
4. Loop the next strip through the tail and seal both ends together, so they are connected. Continue until all 4 strips are connected in a chain. If you want to make an even bigger dragon, cut a few more strips out of any paper and simply add them into your chain
5. Fold along the solid lines on the dragon head cut-out
6. Place glue on the sections marked GLUE and then stick them to the underside of the dragon eye panels
7. Finally, loop the dragon head strips marked B around your existing chain to seal the dragon head to the dragon's body. Congratulations, you've made your very own paper dragon!





GLUE



GLUE



B

B



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