

# An Educator's Guide for How to Catch a Dragon



**Written by Adam Wallace and Illustrated by Andy Elkerton**

A Common Core State Standards Aligned Activity Guide for Grades Kindergarten, 1 and 2

*Note: The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for Grades Kindergarten, 1 and 2, but standards for other grades may also apply.*

Prepared by We Love Children's Books

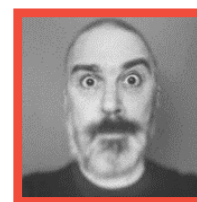
## About the Book

The How to Catch kids are off again, this time trying to catch a dragon as they chase him through Chinese New Year celebrations! Set in China during the Spring Festival, otherwise known as Chinese New Year, the wily dragon will have to avoid trap after trap as the kids run through paper lanterns, red envelopes, fireworks, and more! Bonus Mandarin words featured throughout the story, and full translation included in the back!

## About the Author and Illustrator

**Adam Wallace** is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the "How to Catch a..." series. He says that he loves writing stories that make children laugh and get excited about reading and drawing and writing. Visit him at: <https://www.adam-wallace-books.com/>

**Andy Elkerton** is *New York Times* bestselling illustrator of the "How to Catch a..." series. He is based in the village of Taynuilt, on the West coast of Scotland. He worked in the field of computer games, but now is finally doing what he always wanted to do...draw children's books! Visit him at: <https://www.facebook.com/Andy-Elkerton-Childrens-Illustrator-187820837936476/>



## Pre-Reading Questions and Activities

In this story, a boy chases a dragon living in his neighborhood through New Year's celebrations. Have students ever thought they had a magical creature living in their neighborhood, such as a leprechaun or a monster or a dragon? What made them think so?

Why might someone want to catch a dragon?

Do students know any other books, shows, movies, or songs that feature dragons? What are the dragons like in these stories?

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## Vocabulary

This story is set in China, and uses some words and phrases in specific ways that might be unfamiliar. For example, the “Dragon Dance” is a specific performance, not just dancing like a dragon. While reading the book aloud to the class, have students identify unfamiliar words and phrases to create a vocabulary list for the book. Define them as a class using an array of strategies, including context, accompanying illustrations in the story, and the dictionary if needed. Have students make real-life connections by using these new words in a sentence. Can students think of other words that could be used that have similar meanings?

RL K.4

L K.4, K.5, 1.4, 1.5, 2.4, 2.5

## Post-Reading Questions and Activities

### It's a trap!

Break students into small groups and assign each group one of the traps from the book for closer study. Work with students to explore the following questions: How was the trap supposed to work? What happened instead? Why did the trap fail? What do the words on the page tell us? How do the illustrations show readers what is happening? Have each group present their findings to the class. After all the traps have been discussed, review them as a class. How are they similar? Which ones are different? Are any of them similar to traps from other books in this series that students have read?

RL K.1, K.3, K.6, K.7, 1.1, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.7

SL K.1, K.2, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

### Make Your Own Luck

Come together as a class and review the beginning of the book. What does the boy's mother say about dragons? Why does the boy want to trap the dragon? Does he succeed? How do his mother and grandmother react at the end of the story? How does the dragon feel? What big idea or theme does this story illustrate?

RL K.1, K.3, K.7, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.7

SL K.1, K.2, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

## Expressive Type

In picture books, the words and the illustrations combine to tell the story. But in this book, some words become illustrations themselves! Review the book as a class to find the fancy, illustrated words. How does the appearance of the word relate to its meaning and help to tell the story? Have each student select a different word from the book and draw that word in a stylized way that highlights its meaning. Have volunteers share their word with the class and pronounce it in an expressive manner befitting the style and meaning of the word.

RL K.1, K.7, 1.1, 1.7, 2.1, 2.7

SL K.5, 1.5, 2.5

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## New Dragon Traps for the New Year

In this story, the boy tries to catch the dragon using traps that he builds with his friends. After they have studied the traps in the book, have each student invent an original trap to try to catch the dragon! What does their trap do? How would the dragon escape? Have students create an illustration of their trap, and how the dragon eludes capture. Working with an adult if necessary, have students write rhyming text just like in the book to describe what is happening. Have volunteers present their creations to the class, and use the pages to create a gallery of "New Dragon Traps for the New Year."

RL K.1, K.3, K.7, 1.1, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.7

W K.3, 1.3, 2.3

SL K.1, K.4, K.5, 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.4, 2.5

## Compare and Contrast

One of the fun things about the How to Catch... series is that each book is a little different. The kids have different reasons for wanting to catch each creature and each creature escapes in different ways. Take one of the other books and compare it to *How to Catch a Dragon*. For example, in *How to Catch a Leprechaun*, the children want to get the leprechaun's pot of gold and good luck. As a class, discuss the details of these stories and themes of the books. Why are the children trying to catch the creatures? How do they escape? What is the theme or lesson of each book? What are other similarities and differences between the two books?

RL K.1, K.2, K.3, K.7, K.9, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.7, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.7

SL K.1, K.2, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

## Chinese New Year

Have students take part in a shared research project exploring Chinese New Year and the traditions associated with it. After the reading the book, ask students to come up with questions they would like answered about this holiday. With guidance and support from adults, gather information from provided materials. After students have increased their knowledge about these traditions, once again review the book as a class. Are there things in the illustrations and text that make more sense to students now that they know more about Chinese New Year?

RL K.1, K.7, 1.1, 1.7, 2.1, 2.7

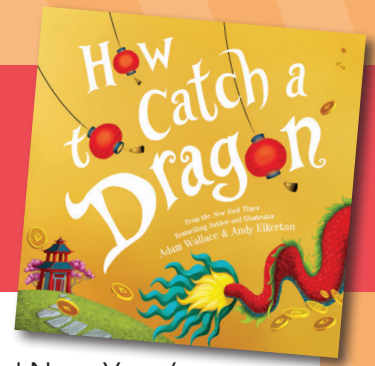
W K.7, K.8, 1.7, 1.8, 2.7, 2.8

## Chinese Characters

Many of the illustrations in this book have Mandarin Chinese characters in them. Locate someone in your community who understands and can read Mandarin Chinese. Invite this resource to visit the class, discuss what the characters in the illustrations mean, and how they are used. In addition, the back of this book has the text in English, in phonetic Mandarin, and in Chinese characters. Have this expert read the story aloud in English and Mandarin—maybe get a few student volunteers to help. In addition, have them explain to the class how Chinese characters are used, what they mean and their origin. Make



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Chinese New Year extra special by learning how to say and write traditional New Year's greetings!

RL K.1, K.7, 1.1, 1.7, 2.1, 2.7

SL 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3

Visit the Common Core State Standards website to read about the individual standards listed in this guide: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>

## For Reference

Common Core State Standards Used

### Reading Standards for Literature KINDERGARTEN (RL)

#### Key Ideas and Details

- K.1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- K.3. With prompting and support, identify characters, settings and major events in a story.

#### Craft and Structure

- K.4. Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.
- K.6. With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- K.7. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).
- K.9. With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories

### Writing Standards KINDERGARTEN (W)

#### Text Types and Purposes

- K.3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- K.7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).
- K.8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.





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## Speaking and Listening Standards KINDERGARTEN (SL)

### Comprehension and Collaboration

- K.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
  - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).
  - b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges
- K.2. Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- K.4. Describe familiar people, places, things and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.
- K.5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.

## Language Standards KINDERGARTEN (L)

### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- K.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content.
  - a. Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., knowing duck is a bird and learning the verb *to duck*).
  - b. Use the most frequently occurring inflections and affixes (e.g., -ed, -s, re-, un-, pre-, -ful, -less) as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word.
- K.5. With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
  - a. Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.
  - b. Demonstrate understanding of frequently occurring verbs and adjectives by relating them to their opposites (antonyms).
  - c. Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at school that are colorful).
  - d. Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs describing the same general action (e.g., walk, march, strut, prance) by acting out the meanings

## Reading Standards for Literature Grade 1 (RL)

### Key Ideas and Details

- 1.1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- 1.2. Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
- 1.3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.



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## Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 1.7. Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
- 1.9. Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

## Writing Standards Grade 1 (W)

### Text Types and Purposes

- 1.3. Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

## Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- 1.7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).
- 1.8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

## Speaking and Listening Standards Grade 1 (SL)

### Comprehension and Collaboration

- 1.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
  - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
  - b. Build on others’ talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
  - c. Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.
- 1.2. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- 1.3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

## Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- 1.4. Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.
- 1.5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

## Language Standards Grade 1 (L)

### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- 1.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 1 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
  - a. Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  - b. Use frequently occurring affixes as a clue to the meaning of a word.
  - c. Identify frequently occurring root words (e.g., look) and their inflectional forms (e.g., looks, looked, looking).

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- 1.5. With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
  - a. Sort words into categories (e.g., colors, clothing) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.
  - b. Define words by category and by one or more key attributes (e.g., a duck is a bird that swims; a tiger is a large cat with stripes).
  - c. Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at home that are cozy).
  - d. Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs differing in manner (e.g., look, peek, glance, stare, glare, scowl) and adjectives differing in intensity (e.g., large, gigantic) by defining or choosing them or by acting out the meanings.

## Reading Standards for Literature Grade 2 (RL)

### Key Ideas and Details

- 2.1. Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- 2.2. Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
- 2.3. Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

### Craft and Structure

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

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 2.7. Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

## Writing Standards Grade 2 (W)

### Text Types and Purposes

- 2.3. Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events; include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings; use temporal words to signal event order; and provide a sense of closure.

### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- 2.7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).
- 2.8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.



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## Speaking and Listening Standards Grade 2 (SL)

### Comprehension and Collaboration

- 2.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
  - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
  - b. Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.
  - c. Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
- 2.2. Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media
- 2.3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- 2.4. Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.
- 2.5. Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

## Language Standards Grade 2 (L)

### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- 2.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
  - a. Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  - b. Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word (e.g., happy/unhappy, tell/retell).
  - c. Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., addition, additional).
  - d. Use knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict the meaning of compound words (e.g., birdhouse, lighthouse, housefly; bookshelf, notebook, bookmark).
  - e. Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.
- 2.5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
  - a. Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe foods that are spicy or juicy).
  - b. Distinguish shades of meaning among closely related verbs (e.g., toss, throw, hurl) and closely related adjectives (e.g., thin, slender, skinny, scrawny).







# How to Catch Club



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