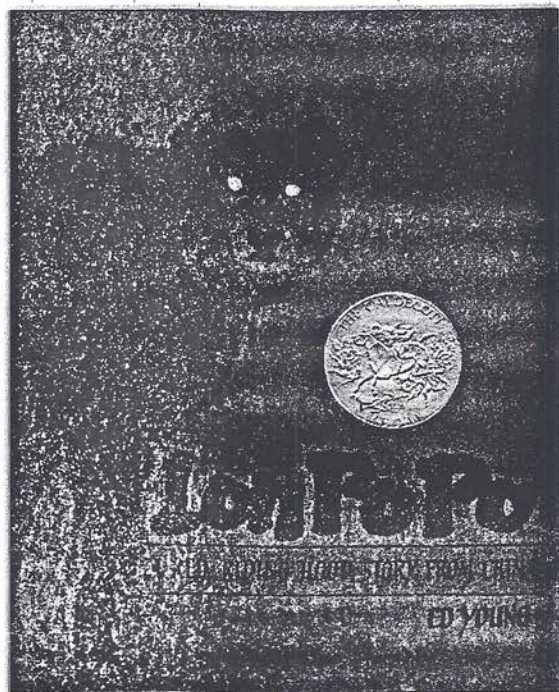


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# Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story From China

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY ED YOUNG  
(PHILOMEL, 1989)



In this Chinese version of “Little Red Riding Hood,” three children are tricked into believing that a hungry wolf is their Po Po (grandmother), but together they outsmart him.

## An Inside Look

Ed Young’s wolf seems to leap off the pages in *Lon Po Po*. How did he bring such life to the illustrations? After researching the story, Young says, “I drew a whole

*Once, long ago, there was a woman who lived alone in the country with her three children, Shang, Tao, and Pao-tze.*

*On the day of their grandmother’s birthday, the good mother set off to see her, leaving the three children at home.*

*Before she left, she said, “Be good while I am away, my heart-loving children; I will not return tonight. Remember to close the door tight at sunset and latch it well.”*

—FROM *Lon Po Po*

series on how wolves communicate with each other, using their ears, their tails, and the way they hold themselves. That had to be right because the wolf talks to the children in the story, so he has to be alive to them.” (From *Meet the Authors and Illustrators, Volume One*)

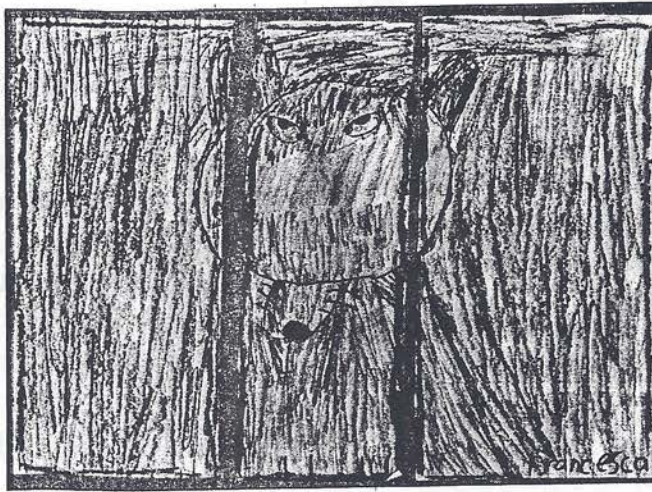
# An Art Lesson

## Materials

- \* pastels, colored pencils
- \* watercolors and paintbrushes
- \* drawing paper
- \* scissors
- \* construction paper (larger than the drawing paper)
- \* paste

Before starting on this art project, let students suggest words that describe Ed Young's dramatic illustrations. *Soft, shadowy, and mysterious* are some of the words they might use. Next, invite students to notice the way the illustrations are divided into sections, or panels, on the page. (The illustrator used techniques from Chinese panel art to create this look.) Let children use a simplified version of the illustrator's technique to make their own panel art following these steps.

**1** Invite children to use the pastels and watercolors to create scenes from a story on drawing paper. Encourage them to fill the page.



**2** Have children cut the illustrations into several strips.

**3** Show children how to paste the panels to construction paper, leaving a little space around the top, bottom, and sides of each strip.

## LANGUAGE ARTS LINKS

### Book Talk

How does *Lon Po Po* compare to other versions of the Red Riding Hood story? (See *Building on Books*, page 89.) Guide a discussion with questions about character, setting, problem, and solution.

- \* How is the wolf in *Lon Po Po* like the wolf in the Red Riding Hood story you know? How are they different?
- \* How are the other characters in the story alike or different?
- \* Where does the wolf go in *Lon Po Po*? In the other version?
- \* What does the wolf want to do in each story?
- \* How do the characters solve the problem in each story?

## Word Watch: Meaningful Substitutions

heart-loving  
ginkgo  
hei yo

Read the passage quoted on page 87. Check students' understanding of unusual language by asking: "What word could you substitute here for *heart-loving*?" Reread the story, stopping to discuss other unusual language, including:

- \* **Ginkgo:** The children in this story trick the wolf by offering him the fruit of the ginkgo. "One taste and you will live forever," the eldest child tells him. Ask: "If this story took place where you live, what tree would you use?"
- \* **Hei yo:** Ask: "If you were one of the children in the story, what would you say or sing instead of *hei yo* as you were using all your strength to pull the basket holding the wolf up into the tree?"

### Building on Books

Take a look at other versions of the Red Riding Hood story. A sampling of titles follows.

*Little Red Riding Hood* by Trina Schart Hyman (Holiday, 1982). Magnificent illustrations help tell the story of the cunning wolf, Little Red Riding Hood, and her grandmother. (For another look at the illustrator's award-winning style, see *Saint George and the Dragon*, page 74.)

*Red Riding Hood* by James Marshall (Dial, 1987). In this playful version of the tale, a hunter is on hand to save the day.

## Perform a Play

Because many children will be familiar with the story of Red Riding Hood, they will have information to draw on as they write and rehearse a play version. (*Lon Po Po* has a lot of dialogue too, making it easy for children to decide what each character in their play will say.) Begin by sharing *Onstage & Backstage at the Night Owl Theater*, a behind-the-scenes look at a production of Cinderella; see page 10. Next, let children work in teams to handle each part of their production (actors, set designers, playbill producers, and so on). Invite parents and other classes to a performance! (See Act It Out, page 10, for tips on producing plays with children.)

## Writer's Corner: Favorite Fairy Tales

In addition to writing and illustrating *Lon Po Po*, Ed Young illustrated *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story From China*, written by Ai-Ling Louie (Philomel, 1982). Unlike the European version children may be familiar with, this story features a magic fish. Use these stories to inspire children's own retellings of favorite fairy tales. Questions to guide their writing follow.

- \* If you're retelling Red Riding Hood, what might Red Riding Hood wear instead of a hood? Where will the wolf go to look for the child (or children)? Might you substitute another creature for the wolf?
- \* If you're retelling Cinderella, who will take the place of the magic fish or the fairy godmother? How will your Cinderella dress? Will she wear glass slippers or stylish sneakers? What if, instead of three sisters, your story had three brothers?

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## STORY EXTENSIONS

### Social Studies: Around the World With Granny

In this story, the children call their granny *Po Po*. (*Lon Po Po* means Granny Wolf in Chinese.) Invite children to share the names they have for their grandmothers. Learn other words for Grandma too—for example *Oma* (German), *Babcia* (Polish), *Abuela* (Mexican). Locate the origins of these names on a map. Ask: "Why do you think that some of you have different names for your grandmas?"

### Art/Math: Near and Far

Perspective plays a big part in the illustrations in *Lon Po Po* and in the mood they create. Reread the story, asking students to pay careful attention to the wolf. In pictures where the wolf looks especially scary, ask: "Is the wolf close up or far away?" Look at the picture of the wolf on the ground with the girls looking down from the tree. Ask: "Does the wolf seem so scary now?"

Continue to explore the concept of perspective with this activity. While one child stands still, have another child move far enough away so that he or she can see the whole person. Ask a volunteer to help you measure this distance. Have the observer move closer and closer to the student standing still. At what distance can the child see only part of the other student? The face? Discuss the concept of near and far and how distance changes the way we see things. Then let children create sets of drawings to show how something or someone looks from far away, then from close up.

### Science: Senses at Work

How do wolves hunt? Help children understand the difference between wolves they meet in folktales and those in the wild with an activity that explores how wolves use their senses to find food.

- \* Have students form groups of three or four. In each group, have one child be a wolf and another be a mouse. Other students will observe, then take a turn as one of the animals when you repeat the activity.
- \* Find an area where students can spread out (the

cafeteria, gym, or playground) and have groups put a little distance between themselves.

- \* Begin the hunt by blindfolding wolves and asking mice to move away from their groups (about 20 feet).
- \* As wolves cup their hands around their ears (real wolves perk up their ears for this purpose), have the mice squeak. Have wolves listen for the squeak, turning slowly to try to “catch” the sound in their cupped ears. When wolves are ready, have them point in the direction of the squeaks.
- \* Repeat the activity to give everyone a turn as wolf and prey. Follow up by discussing students’ observations. Ask: What senses do wolves use to find food? (Hearing, also smell—but that’s another experiment!) Why do you think wolves have become endangered?



Learn more about wolves—and the importance of using natural resources wisely—through the eyes of an Indian boy in *The Land of Gray Wolf* by Thomas Locker (Dial, 1991). The boy, Running Deer, tells of white settlers moving in and clearing the forests. Years later, when they’ve used up the soil, they move on. Trees again begin to cover the land, giving hope that the howl of wolves may one day be heard again. Before sharing the story, record children’s impressions of wolves. Do the same after reading, noting any changes to children’s impressions. Go further by looking at ways children use resources wisely, such as using recycled paper to conserve trees.