

## Teacher Directions

### Three Philosophies in China: Liar's Club

#### OBJECTIVES:

Students will explain the major principles and beliefs of three major philosophies that influenced political rule during the Zhou dynasty.

#### MATERIALS:

- PowerPoint: China's Schools of Thought, Liar's Club
- Class Set of *Miniature Theater: Philosophies in Ancient China*
- **Note Sheet: Three Philosophies in China** (enough copies for all your students)
- **Statements #1-#5** (three copies each)

#### PROCEDURES:

##### Preview:

1. Have students answer the **Preview question** on Slides 1 and 2 of the PowerPoint. Make sure that they choose their answer and explain their choice.
2. Once all students have made a choice, designate one corner of your room for students who chose Answer A, one corner for Answer B, and finally one corner for Answer C. Have those students who chose each answer go stand in the respective corners with other students who made the same choice. Give students 1-2 minutes to discuss in those groups why they believe their answer is the best.
3. Call on volunteers from each of the corners to share their rationale for their choices. Encourage discussion among the groups, if possible. Allow anyone the opportunity at the end of the discussion to change to a different answer and corner if they'd like. See which answer garnered the most support.
4. Tell students that they will be learning about three very different philosophies in China during the Zhou dynasty. Like the answers to the Preview question, followers of these philosophies would have dealt with the boy in that question very differently.

##### Lesson:

1. Give each student a copy of **Note Sheet: Three Philosophies in China**.
2. Review Slides #3-5 with students which summarize some of the main principles and beliefs of each of the three philosophies. Have students fill in their note sheet as you discuss each.
3. Give each student a copy of **Miniature Theater: Philosophies in Ancient China**. Call on volunteers to read and act out the different parts.
4. Discuss the play afterward by asking: *How did Confucianists, Daoists and Legalists differ in their views about what a ruler should be? What was the point of the story the Legalist told?*

5. Explain that you are now going to do an activity called Liar's Club. The point of the activity will be to determine which of the three people in the front of the classroom is telling the truth.
6. Call on three volunteers. Assign one to be a Confucianist; one to be a Daoist; and the last to be a Legalist. Give them each a copy of **Statement #1**. Explain quickly that after you've read the general statement, they will each read their assigned part on the handout. They can embellish or add other information if they'd like, but the point is to try to convince the class that they are telling the truth.
7. Project Statement #1 on the overhead (Slide 7). Have each volunteer read their assigned parts from **Statement #1** to the class. Ask the class to vote who is telling the truth. Reveal the answer on Slide 8. Discuss why that person would likely have made that statement.
8. Repeat Steps 6 and 7 for **Statements #2 through #5** calling on new volunteers and projecting Slides 8 through 16.

## Note Sheet

### Three Philosophies in China

#### LEGALISM:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**What a Legalist Might Say About Government:** "A ruler should establish \_\_\_\_\_ and enforce them with \_\_\_\_\_."

#### CONFUCIANISM:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**What a Confucianist Might Say About Government:** "A ruler is like a \_\_\_\_\_ and should be someone who will counsel and lead with \_\_\_\_\_."

#### DAOISM/TAOISM:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**What a Daoist Might Say About Government:** "Rulers should be \_\_\_\_\_ and let things \_\_\_\_\_."

## Miniature Theater: Philosophies in Ancient China

<b>Characters:</b>	Narrator	Daoist	Confucianist	Legalist
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**Narrator:** Many years ago, during the Zhou dynasty in ancient China, people disagreed about the best way to achieve peace and stability for China. One day, in about 250 B.C.E., three people met at the dusty intersection of two roads to debate.

*(Enter Confucianist, Daoist, and Legalist)*

**Confucianist:** *(excitedly)* Confucius says that intelligent, wise rulers should lead their followers by example.

**Legalist:** *(angrily, pounding one fist into his palm)* Intelligence has nothing to do with what makes a good ruler, my foolish friend. What's most important is that a ruler be strong, strict, and harsh. People are naturally evil. They cannot be counted on to be good influences on each other. Rulers must be all-powerful to keep people in line. People who criticize the government should be banished to the farthest northern borders!

**Confucianist:** *(thoughtfully)* I disagree, friend. I believe that if leaders are to be respected, they should rule with honesty and wisdom, not strictness and power.

**Daoist:** *(quietly and calmly)* Dear friends, leaders should rule as little as possible. People should follow the ways of nature by living a life of meditation. Too many laws interfere with people's abilities to find a balance between good and evil.

**Confucianist:** *(pointing)* That's ridiculous! People need good role models. They need rulers who act like fathers to guide them and instruct them.

**Legalist:** *(almost yelling)* Stop all of this nonsense! Strict laws are the key! Not fatherly rulers! Let me tell you a story. Once there was a man who was a farmer. He plowed his field around a tree stump that was in the middle of it. One day a rabbit ran out from the woods, straight into that tree stump. It broke its neck and died. The farmer decided to leave his plow to watch the stump to prevent other rabbits from dying. His field became covered with weeds and he was soon poor and could not feed his family. Here is my message: those who rule as this man did, abandoning laws to protect their people in a fatherly fashion, are foolish!

**Confucianist:** *(shaking his head)* You are wrong. The farmer was putting others before himself. Exactly what a ruler should do.

**Legalist:** *(rolling his eyes)* Rubbish! Men need laws!

**Confucianist:** People need guidance.

**Daoist:** *(quietly)* People need to find the peace within.

**Narrator:** Their debate raged on . . . as it did all throughout the empire, as followers of different philosophies sought to determine what was best for China.

**STATEMENT #1**

*I believe that the best government is the one who governs least.*

**Confucianist:** Less government is beneficial because it is actually the job of rulers to simply guide their subjects toward goodness. It's not necessary to have a large government to oversee things.

**Daoist:** Government is quite unnecessary! We all need to rely on natural forces to guide us. Look to the laws of nature; not to the laws of men for guidance.

**Legalist:** Government needn't be large, as long as it creates strict laws and firm punishments for its citizens. Rulers should trust no one, even their family members, so a smaller government is preferable.

**STATEMENT #2**

*All people are born naturally selfish.*

**Confucianist:** People are selfish, no doubt. That is why rulers must act as fathers, kind and understanding, and help their subjects discover what is right and what is wrong.

**Daoist:** People are naturally selfish, for sure. Look at how animals behave in their natural settings. They kill each other for food and battle for territory. Our natural instinct is to survive, which requires us all to be selfish.

**Legalist:** People are born selfish! That's why we must have strict laws and harsh punishments when those laws aren't obeyed. We've got to keep citizens in line or else they could revolt and take over.

**STATEMENT #3**

*Family is most important; children should obey their parents and learn from them.*

**Confucianist:** Family is terribly important. Without a family, we have no basis for relationships. It is through the family that we learn to respect each other, and that children learn to respect their elders.

**Daoist:** Family is extremely important. Think of how creatures behave in nature. Babies learn everything from their parents. Families are important in nature and they should be important to humans.

**Legalist:** Parents must help their children learn that they are naturally tempted to do evil. Fathers should punish their children and set strict rules for them. Only then can children overcome selfish desires. That is why family is important.

**STATEMENT #4**

*We should strive for peace by forming as many relationships as we can. These relationships should be based on respect.*

**Confucianist:** Peace can be attained if we examine our relationships. You know I believe in five basic relationships. People should obey and respect their elders, and those elders, in turn, should set a good example.

**Daoist:** Peace can be achieved through relationships, as long as they are based on what comes naturally. The trees, the animals, the rain, and the wind—find a place in your lives for them and peace will come.

**Legalist:** Peace can only come about if the relationship between a ruler over his subjects is strong and strict. Leaders must take charge! Control citizens! Those are the relationships that are important and then peace will be achieved.



**STATEMENT #5**

*Humans learn how to behave by living in harmony with the forces of nature.*

**Confucianist:** Humans should live in harmony with the forces of nature, sure. It's important to treat everything with respect. Mostly your elders, but nature, too.

**Daoist:** People should avoid interfering with nature and instead let things flow in a natural way. The universe is a balance of opposites—when these forces are in harmony, we can find peace.

**Legalist:** Forces of nature can teach humans how to behave, only if there is a strong ruler who is guiding them as well. Harmony will be achieved under strict laws and leadership. Nothing else.