

Lesson Plan

Lion Singer

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Introduction

Lion Singer is the story of Dog Cry, a medium-sized boy and a member of the Chukchansi tribe living in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Dog Cry is supposed to look after his little sister, but all he wants to do is run and adventure in the mountains with his cousins. The thrill of freedom quickly turns to fear, however, when he realizes that his sister has followed him and is in grave danger. Finding courage and skills he didn't know he had, Dog Cry comes to his sister's aid and earns the new name Lion Singer.

This lesson plan is based on California fourth grade content standards. The Main Reading Activity of the unit focuses on a major reading comprehension skill (English-Language Arts Content Standards 2.1-2.7). Additional reading activities supplement this skill, involving vocabulary development, literary response and analysis, writing applications, written English language conventions, and listening and speaking strategies. Cross-curricular activities round out the unit, with content standards in history/social science and art. The unit can be completed within one week.

This unit on *Lion Singer* is designed to explore themes including relationships between siblings, California Native American culture, and California geography. As the story progresses, students will focus on making inferences and predictions on the evolving situation concerning Dog Cry and his little sister. In addition, students will be asked to compare and contrast different cultures and then adapt the name-changing storyline to their own new narratives. Finally, students will develop their map skills, moving between the text and a map to first locate the story and then relate this location to California's historical development.

California Fourth Grade Content Standards

- I. Reading 2.2
Make and confirm predictions about text using prior knowledge and ideas presented in the text itself, including illustrations, topic sentences, important words, and foreshadowing clues.
- II. Reading 3.4
Compare and contrast tales from different cultures by tracing the exploits of one character type and develop theories to account for similar tales in diverse cultures.
- III. Writing 2.1
Write narratives: (a) Relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience;

- (b) Provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience;
- (c) Use concrete sensory details; (d) Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.

- IV. History–Social Science 4.1
Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.
- V. History–Social Science 4.2
Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.

Main Reading Activity

Before Reading (30 minutes)

Divide the class roughly in half—those students with older siblings and those with younger ones. (Students with both will have to decide which group they’ll participate in and students with no siblings can use younger/older cousins or friends to decide.) Then subdivide those halves into groups of five or six and give each group a sheet of butcher paper and a marker. Have students brainstorm and record answers to some of the following questions: What are some things you do with your older/younger sibling *apart from your parents*? How do you get along? Do you have any responsibilities for your younger siblings? Does your older sibling boss you around? etc. Bring the groups back together and allow them to share their responses. Then tell them, “*Lion Singer* is going to be a story about an older brother and his younger sister. If you are an older brother or sister, you probably feel or act a certain way toward your younger siblings. If you are younger, you might feel differently about being the little one. Try to keep in mind that there are two main perspectives in this story (the brother and the sister) and they may be *very* different.”

While Reading (1–2 days)

Fourth Grade Objective/Standard 2.2

Make and confirm predictions about text using prior knowledge and ideas presented in the text itself, including illustrations, topic sentences, important words, and foreshadowing clues.

This activity is designed as a guided reading activity, perhaps by doing the first one or two examples together on an overhead. Students should then be comfortable completing the activity themselves or with a partner.

Each student should have a piece of paper divided the long way with a line down the middle. As you and the students read *Lion Singer*, you will stop periodically, giving the students an opportunity to predict what will happen next. Students will make predictions *and give a reason for their predictions* on one side, then write down what actually happened on

the other. You can stop as often as you would like, but be explicit about when you want students to make predictions. Suggested stopping points are listed below, along with a figure showing what their papers will look like.

Stopping points

1. At the beginning of book: “I have already told you that the story will be about a boy and his sister. Looking at the cover of *Lion Singer*, you can see that the boy is running down the hill. Knowing these two things, do you have any ideas about what is going to happen in the story?”
2. Page 5, before the first full paragraph: “Using the picture on page 4 and what you’ve read about Dog Cry and his cousins, what do you think is happening with his little sister, Breaks Shells? What is Dog Cry going to do?”
3. Page 9, before the break: “Dog Cry is still with his cousins but he has finally spotted his sister, Breaks Shells. What do you think he’s going to do now?”
4. Page 11, after the last full paragraph: “Dog Cry has just seen the mountain lion threatening Breaks Shells. What do you think he will do?”
5. Page 14, after the last full paragraph: “Dog Cry has just confronted the lion. What will he do now and what do you think is going to happen?”
6. Page 18, after the break: “Dog Cry has rescued Breaks Shells, and the people of the villages have arrived. What do you think will happen?”
7. Page 20, at the end of the third full paragraph: “No one believes the boys. How are they going to prove that Dog Cry is a hero?” (Hint: picture on page 19)

Predictions and Reasons	What Actually Happened

Additional Activities

READING (up to 1 day if students need to read/research in class):

If you have studied other stories from different cultures, briefly compare and contrast the stories, asking students to make a Venn diagram showing the similarities and differences. Or have students compare and contrast Chukchansi culture with their own. This could also involve some of the responses from the introductory activity (asking students how they interact with their siblings). Another option is to have students read a new tale from another culture (from the Internet or the library) and do the same thing. This activity could be done in class or as homework. [Meets California Fourth Grade Reading Standard 3.4]

WRITING (up to 1 week depending on desired writing process):

Have students write their own naming or name-changing story. Be sure to review with students the elements of an effective narrative (see California Writing Standard 2.1), as well as the use of names and name changing in some Native American cultures. [Meets California Fourth Grade Writing Standard 2.1]

SOCIAL STUDIES/GEOGRAPHY (3 days; more if the final extension activity is added on):

1. Assuming your students have some background in California geography, give them a **Blank Map** of the state and have them locate the Chukchansi, Ohlone, Miwok, and other Yokuts tribes on the map as follows. First, review the major physical features of California and locate/place those on the map (e.g., the Central Valley, the Coast Range, the Pacific Ocean, and the Sierra Nevada). Then have the students reread pages 1 and 2 of *Lion Singer* and work in partners or groups to place the tribes on the map. Review the students' work on an overhead transparency (**Map #1**) and discuss. Then show students **Map #2**. Ask the students to look at the map and answer the following questions: "Can you think of reasons why the Indian tribes of Central California were isolated? Why might these people not have buffalo? Why might white people have been so late to come into Yokuts territory?"

Next, have students read the Tribal History from pages 29 through 31 and describe the exact location of the Chukchansi. Questions to consider are: (1) What was the land/environment around the Chukchansi like? What was the climate like? Describe it as exactly as possible. Extend this line of questioning with the following: "Take a look at **Map #2** again. You'll see that the Chukchansi were hill people. Other Yokuts were valley people. What might the tribes have done differently?" (2) What kinds of things in the environment did the Chukchansi use and how did they use them? Did this change the environment? (3) What did white settlers find of use in the environment? Did this change the environment? [Meets California Fourth Grade Social Studies/Geography Standards 4.1 and 4.2]

2. Another related activity would be to compare and contrast the lives of the Chukchansi and their Yokuts neighbors before and after the mid-1700s and large-scale contact with white

settlers and their governments. Students should read the Tribal History on pages 29 through 31 to complete this activity. [Meets California Fourth Grade Social Studies/Geography Standards 4.1 and 4.2]

3. One final extension (especially for those outside of California) would be to compare and contrast how the Chukchansi/Yokuts were treated by settlers with parallel experiences of other Native American tribes. Or students could also take on the research and discussion themselves.

ART (1 day):

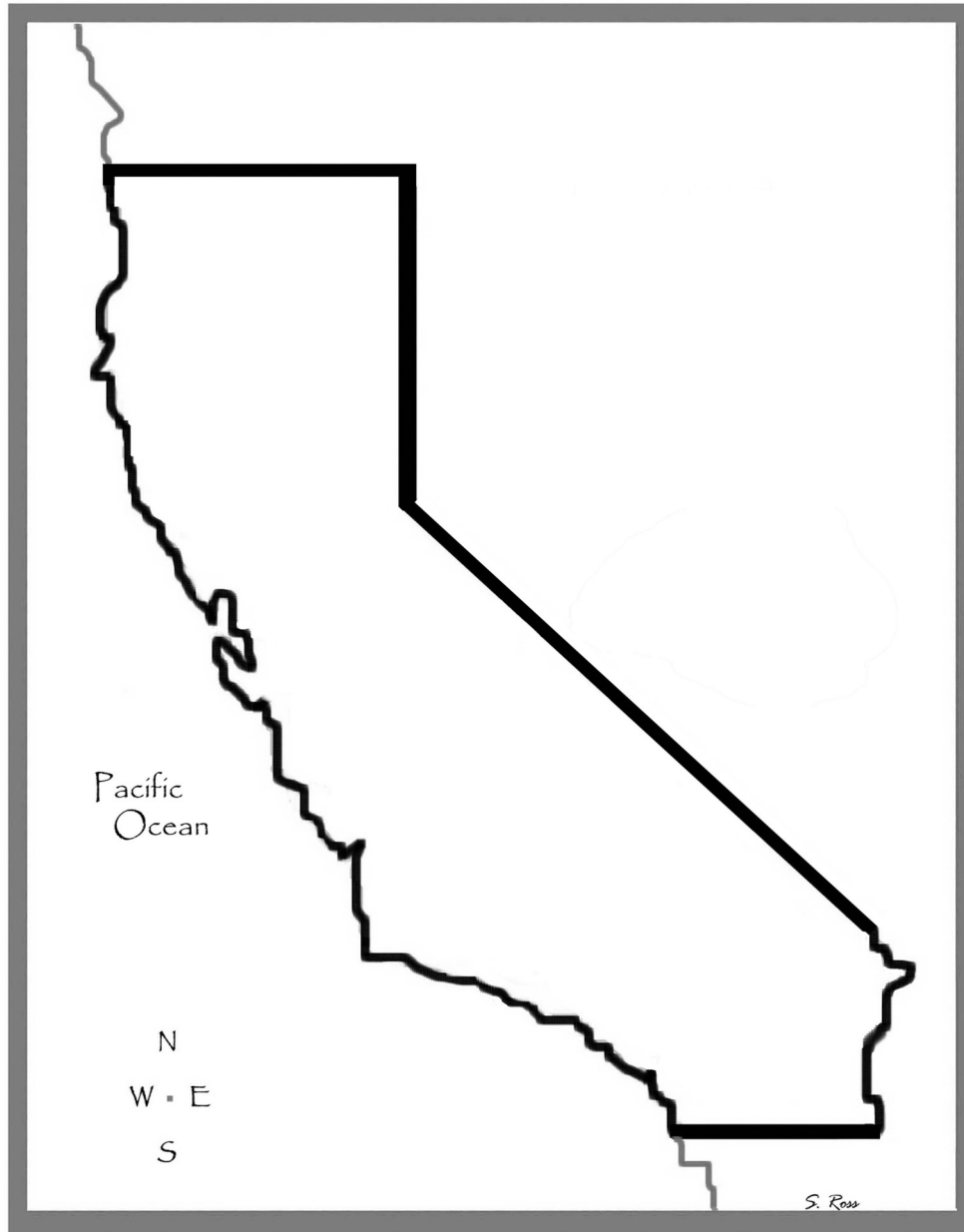
Have students bring in photographs of themselves and their siblings/cousins and make a collage of things they do together. Brief descriptions can accompany the images used.

Credits

Text by David Gugel for Heyday Kids, September 2005. Maps by Sylvia Ross, October 2005.

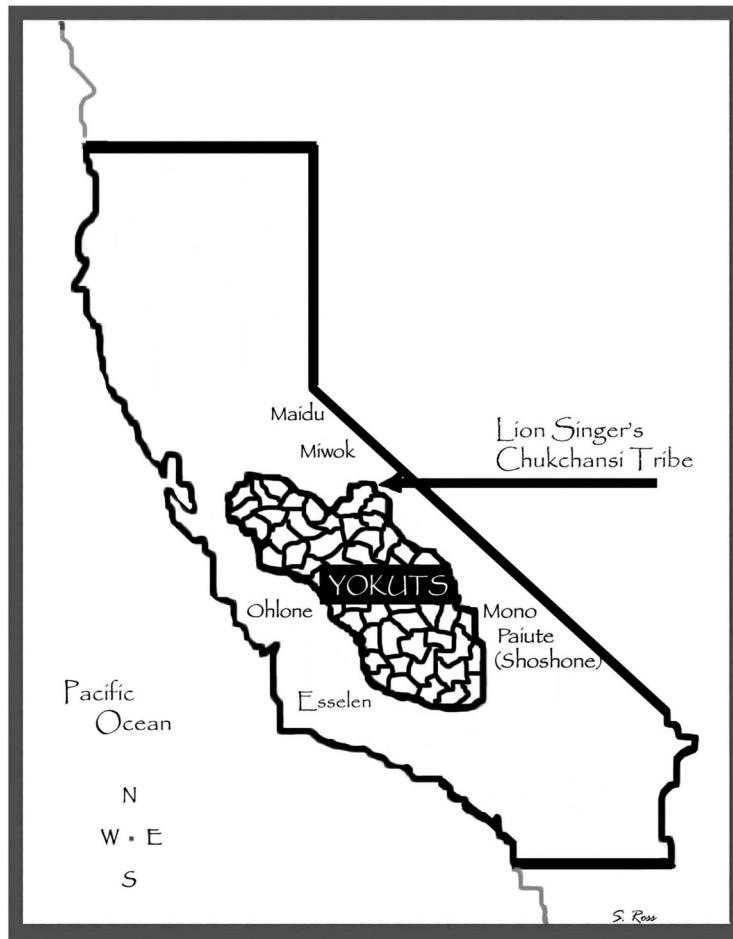
Both the lesson plan and maps may be printed and photocopied for classroom use.

We want to hear from you! Heyday Kids appreciates feedback on lesson plans and discussion guides, and *welcomes your own lesson plan ideas*. If you would like to get in touch with us, please contact Joanne Chan Taylor at joanne@heydaybooks.com or (510) 549-3564, ext. 308.



Lion Singer Worksheet
Blank Map of California (not to scale)

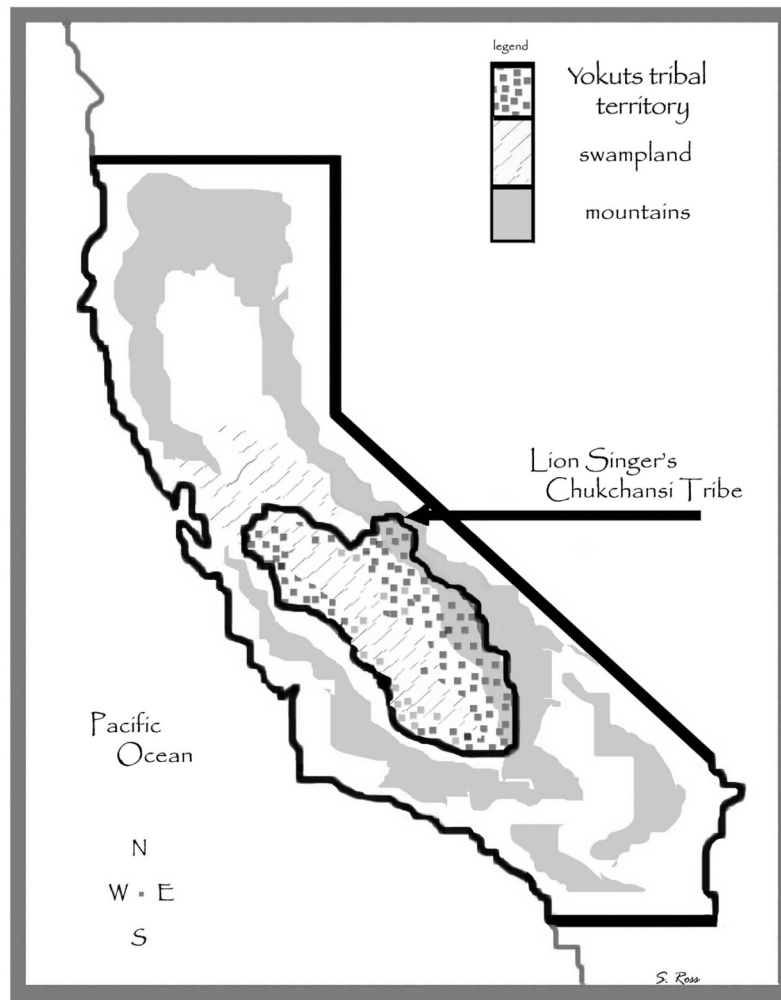
The Yokuts Nation was made of more than sixty tribes.



Lion Singer
 Map # 1 (not to scale)

- Tarkumne
- Bolbumne
- Hupumne
- Cholbumne
- Yachicumne
- Laquisumne
- Apelumne
- Yalesumne
- Hunezumne
- Chelumne
- Chucumne
- Cosumne
- Mokelumne
- Hoyumne
- Miumne
- Tache
- Kahwathwah
- Honoumne
- Tona Lanos
- Walakumne
- Suenumne
- Tuolumne
- Ausumne
- Chulumne
- Chauchela
- Heuche
- Chukchansi*
- Dumna
- Gashou
- Apiche
- Kechaye
- Tolteche
- Wimilche
- Nutunutu
- Techa
- Entimbits
- Chukimena
- Choinumne
- Michahi
- Wehchahi
- Wechikit
- Chopau
- Gawea
- Yokodo
- Wolase
- Choinok
- Bancalache
- Wowol
- Koyete
- Yaudanche
- Bokninuwad
- Kumanchese
- Paleumne
- Yowlumne
- Tuhoumne
- Halaumne
- Tulumne
- Dalinche
- Hoyumne
- Pitkache

The Yokuts were isolated by their geography.



Lion Singer
Map # 2 (not to scale)