

China Today Confucius

Have you ever thought about the fate of the people on Earth? Have you ever wondered where your thoughts come from? These are big ideas that philosophers think about. A **philosopher**¹ is a very wise teacher who has ideas about life and how to live. One of China's most important philosophers was named Confucius.

Confucius lived in ancient China from about 551 to 479 B.C.E. However, his teachings are still important today. He taught about good behavior, learning, government, and family. In China today, people still follow Confucius' teachings and his way of life. His philosophy was the **official**² philosophy of China for over 2,000 years. It is still a major part of Chinese culture.

People in other countries such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam have long studied the teachings of Confucius. These countries are near China. Confucius' ideas spread from China to these other countries.

Confucius did not write down what he taught. Instead, he talked to his students. Later, after he died, his students wrote down his thoughts. One of the books is called *Lunyu*. The passage below is from this book. It is written in Chinese and then translated into English letters. Do you agree with what Confucius is saying?

子曰、弟子入則孝、出則弟、謹而信、汎愛眾、而
親仁、行有餘力、則以學文。

Confucius said:

"The young should be prudent and trustworthy. They should love all people and be close to the **benevolent**.³ Having so done, their remaining strength should be used to learn literature."

¹ **philosopher**- a thinker who seeks wisdom

² **official**- chosen by the government

³ **benevolent**- wanting to do good

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Who wrote down Confucius' teachings?
 - a. the Lunyu
 - b. followers in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam
 - c. Confucius himself
 - d. his students
2. Why does the author discuss Confucius having followers in foreign countries?
 - a. to explain why people in China stopped following Confucius
 - b. to describe Confucius' travels from country to country
 - c. to convey that Confucius' ideas have spread around the world
 - d. because Confucius' ideas spread to other countries
3. Which statement explains why Confucius' students wrote down his thoughts?
 - a. They wanted to take credit for Confucius' ideas.
 - b. They thought it would help them memorize the lessons.
 - c. Confucius was wise but was unable to write his own books.
 - d. They wanted his words to be remembered long after his death.
4. Read the following sentence: "It is written in Chinese and then translated into English letters."

The word **translated** means

- a. added on to
 - b. said out loud
 - c. rewritten in another language
 - d. printed by machine
5. What is the main idea of this passage?
 - a. Philosophy in China has key differences from philosophy in other countries.
 - b. Confucius never wrote down any of the lessons he taught his students.
 - c. Confucius is more popular in other countries than in China.
 - d. Confucius is an important Chinese philosopher who has been studied for a long time.

6. What topics did Confucius address in his teachings?

7. How is the quote from Confucius at the end of the passage a good example of what a philosopher would teach?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Confucius' students wrote down what he taught _____ he died.

- a. although
- b. so
- c. after
- d. but

9. Read the following sentence.

The teachings of Confucius have been studied by many people around the world long after he lived.

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

1. What? the teachings of Confucius

2. What have the teachings of Confucius been? _____

3. Where? _____

4. When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** philosopher: someone who thinks deeply and seriously about life and other basic things for their job.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 620

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: Confucius was one of China’s most important philosophers. Though he lived from 551-479 B.C.E., his teachings are still important today, in China and in nearby countries.

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 - a. the Lunyu
 - b. followers in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam
 - c. Confucius himself
 - d. his students**

2. Why does the author discuss Confucius having followers in foreign countries?
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3. Which statement explains why Confucius’ students wrote down his thoughts?
 - a. They wanted to take credit for Confucius’ ideas.
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 - c. Confucius was wise but was unable to write his own books.
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5. What is the main idea of this passage?
- a. Philosophy in China has key differences from philosophy in other countries.
 - b. Confucius never wrote down any of the lessons he taught his students.
 - c. Confucius is more popular in other countries than in China.
 - d. **Confucius is an important Chinese philosopher who has been studied for a long time.**

6. What topics did Confucius address in his teachings?

Suggested answer: Confucius taught about good behavior, learning, government, and family. Like philosophers in general, he taught ideas about life and how to live.

7. How is the quote from Confucius at the end of the passage a good example of what a philosopher would teach?

Suggested answer: Answers will vary but should reflect that the quote teaches a lesson about good behavior, how to live, or learning.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Confucius' students wrote down what he taught _____ he died.

- a. although
- b. so
- c. **after**
- d. but

9. Read the following sentence.

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Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

1. What? the teachings of Confucius
2. What have the teachings of Confucius been? **studied by many people**
3. Where? **around the world**
4. When? **long after he lived**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** philosopher: someone who thinks deeply and seriously about life and how to live

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.