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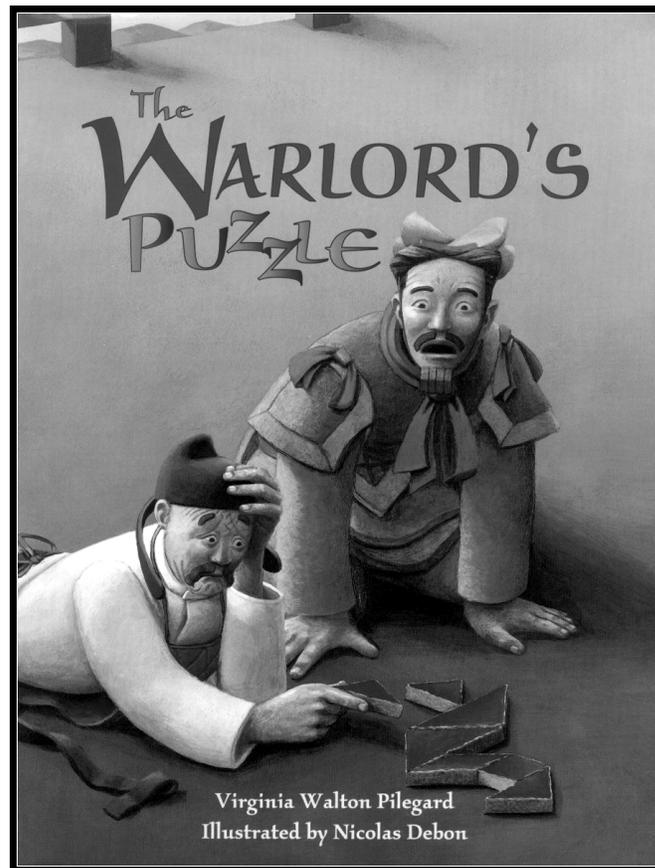
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Study Guide for:

The Warlord's Puzzle

Written by Virginia Walton Pilegard

Illustrated by Nicolas Debon



Quick and Easy-to-Present Lessons Using Material at Hand

Featuring...

**Informal Geometry,
Comprehension and critical thinking exercises, and
Related art and literature projects**

Study guide created by
Virginia Walton Pilegard

COMPREHENSION AND CRITICAL THINKING

(Before reading the story)

1. What is the first thing you notice about the cover?
2. Can you guess from the title what the story is about?
3. What can you tell from the way the two men are dressed?



(As the story is read)

The reader may wish to stop at page 9 and ask, “What do you think will happen next?” Page 22 is another good place to stop and allow listeners to guess.

(After reading the story)

1. What went wrong when the artist brought his gift to the warlord?
2. What happened when the artist couldn't mend the tile?
3. Quick thinking saved the artist's life. What does he suggest to the warlord?
4. Which people did the artist think would solve the puzzle?
5. Throughout history, the Chinese culture has been known for exquisitely civilized manners. Which characters in the story were most polite?
6. The little peasant boy was polite when he asked to go to the warlord's palace. What are some polite ways you can ask to go someplace special?
7. Why do you suppose the artist wants the peasant fisherman and his little boy to join the line?
8. What things in the palace intimidated or frightened the people waiting in the line?
9. What did the scholar do instead of solving the puzzle? What do you do when you don't know the answer to a hard question? What did the monk do instead of solving the puzzle?
(Hint: Zen Buddhism, a religion popular in medieval China and still practiced today, suggests meditating on riddles without solutions such as, “What is the sound of one hand clapping?”)
10. The little boy imagined the broken pieces of tile looked like hats and fish, a box and a net. When you use your imagination, what do the pieces look like to you?

Provide copies of tangram puzzle pieces (back of the workbook) for listeners to cut out and reassemble as clues on pages 28 and 29 are read again.

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WRITING NATURE POEMS

Materials needed: lined paper, pencils, and a sense of wonder

Poems are one way to share feelings. Often poems from China tell of the beauty of nature because many Chinese poets feel their country is very beautiful. One kind of poem is a cinquain, (pronounced sing-kan') a five-line stanza that is usually unrhymed. Cinquains are often constructed with 2 syllables in the first line, 4 in the second, 6 in the third, 8 in the fourth and 2 in the fifth.

Read the poem "Daybreak" by Virginia Walton Pilegard.

DAYBREAK

*Rain clouds
Pink with morning
Promise to the dark earth
Sips of life and rainbows arching,
Today.*

1. Invite children to discover the pattern of syllables in the five lines.
2. What picture language does the author use? Can you tell how she feels about rain?
3. Can you remember a description in beginning of *THE WARLORD'S PUZZLE* that hints how the author feels about the look of a rainy sky?
4. What is the difference between the look of the sky she describes in the book and the one in the poem?

Write your own cinquain about nature:

1. Pre-writing

Brainstorm about the beauties of nature and list wonderful words to describe them.

2. Getting Started

Help the students work together (or individually depending on skill level) to compose a 5 line poem. A statement like, "we like blue birds because . . ." may help if children are stumped for a beginning.

3. Revising

Have we explained one important idea? Do we need to add anything?

Does the poem draw pictures in our minds?

What would be a good title?

4. Proofreading

Read the poem aloud as children follow along. Are periods or other marks needed so that the lines make sense?

5. Publication

A book of class poetry may be donated to the school library. Encourage children to save their poems. They may become writers when they are older and be glad they saved all their work!

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INFORMAL GEOMETRY TANGRAM STYLE

Materials needed designated in bold print

The square is the best known tangram puzzle, but these seven pieces can be used to make many other puzzles. British writer Lewis Carroll, who loved the tangram, owned a Chinese book made of tissue paper which had 323 tangram designs in it. Nicolas Debon uses the seven pieces to picture a rooster, a rabbit, a duck, a humble peasant, and several geometric figures in his illustrations for *THE WARLORD'S PUZZLE*.

Activity 1. Copy and reproduce the tangram from the back of the workbook. Encourage children to find and duplicate the puzzles in the book and to discover their own animal, letter and geometric shape puzzles using tangram pieces.

Activity 2. Provide children with square pieces of paper, Rulers, and scissors to design their own tangram-like puzzles. After initialing each piece, they may cut and give to a friend to solve. *Make sure each child's tangram pieces are initialed for easy identification.*

Hint: Quilt blocks are a delightful source of geometric puzzles!

Activity 3. Provide a "feelie" bag with cardboard or plastic geometric shapes. Children can reach in and try to describe and name the shape they feel.

Activity 4. Cut large geometric, climb-through shapes from the sides of cardboard appliance boxes. Using the "Mother May I?" game format, give directions such as, "climb through the square, over the parallelogram, and around the triangle."



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ART WITH A CHINESE FLAVOR

Paintings of Almond Trees in Bloom:

Materials needed: drinking straws, pale green or blue construction paper, brown tempera paint, white tissue wrapping paper.

Chinese artists often use nature as the inspiration for their delicate paintings.

For these light, feathery pictures of almond trees in bloom, teacher places a dollop of brown paint at the bottom of each page of pale green (or pale blue) construction paper. Each child uses a drinking straw to blow the paint across the page to form tree trunk and branches. When the paint is dry, small, “scrunched” circles of white tissue wrapping paper are glued to the branches to form almond blossoms.

Hint: Remind children to stop for breath so they don't become light-headed.

Designing a Tangram Quilt Top:

Materials needed: 5 x 5 inch squares of white construction paper, copies of the tangram found in the back of the workbook, crayons, paste, scissors, one large piece of butcher paper.

1. Provide each student with one construction-paper square and one tangram.
2. After discussing repeating patterns found in fabrics, instruct children to turn over and decorate the back with a repeated pattern. (An alternative would be to trace tangrams on floral wrapping paper, wallpaper, actual fabric.)
3. Children cut apart tangrams, now backed with repeated patterns.
4. Gather all the squares, parallelograms, and small triangles. Shuffle and return a square, a parallelogram, and two small triangles to each child making sure to receive four different patterns from the one he or she designed. (see diagram)
5. Tangrams are pasted on white squares, pattern-side up—parallelogram on the right side.
6. Using butcher paper as a backing, paste tangram squares together to form a delightful “quilt.”

Hint: Choosing coordinating colors for the class to use—a light, a dark, and a medium—adds to the beauty of the project.

Pantomime with Props:

Materials needed: *The Warlord's Puzzle*, Construction paper, scissors, paste, and that golden quality—silence.

Still used in modern Asian theater, pantomime is an ancient, Chinese art form well suited to dramatizing *The Warlord's Puzzle*. Using construction paper to create a variety of hats (see Nicolas Debon's illustrations) and other props, children will be able to bring individuality to each part. After an initial reading of the story, discuss the emotions of each character, including the people waiting in line. Such questions as, ‘is it possible to guess how someone feels without their telling you?’ and ‘how do facial expressions and body language show our emotions?’ prepare children to experience pantomime. Narration for a class drama may be provided by reading the book, or by a child's retelling of the story.

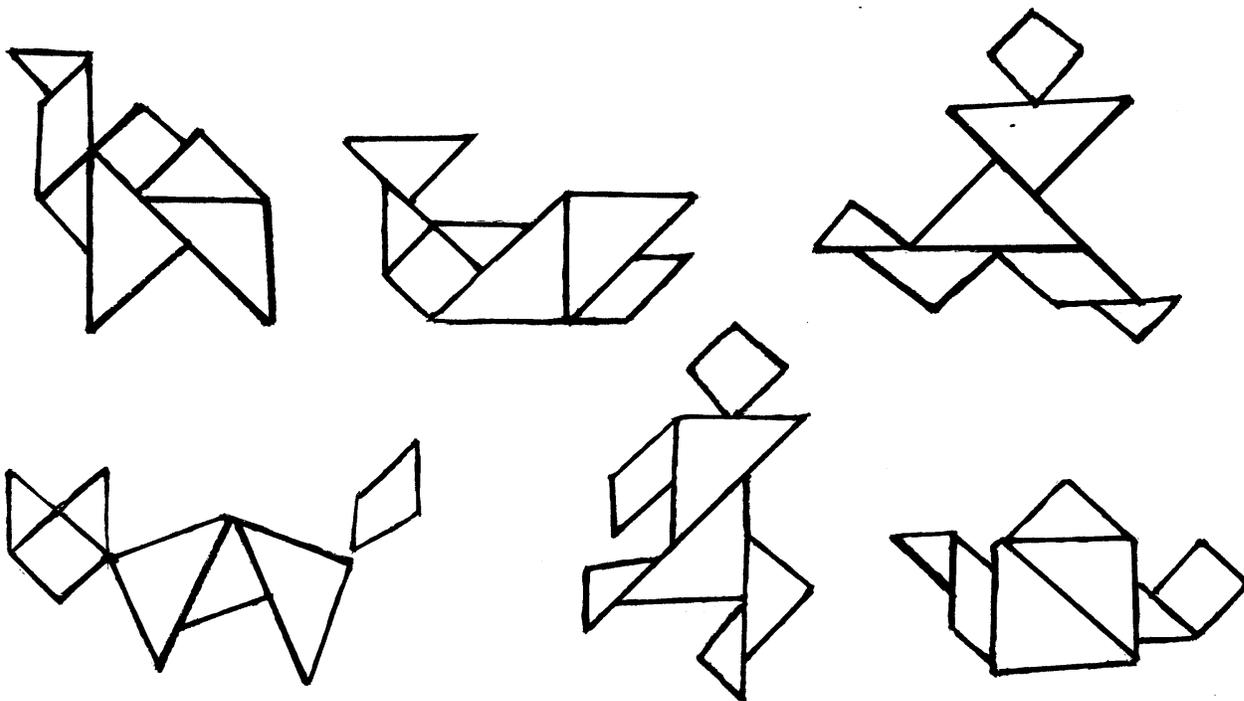


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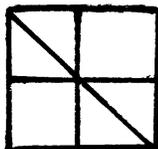
The square is the best known tangram puzzle, but these seven pieces can be used to make many other puzzles. British writer Lewis Carroll, who loved the tangram, owned a Chinese book made of tissue paper which had 323 tangram designs in it. Below are solutions to worksheets 2 and 3 as well as several more puzzles.



Activity 1. **Photocopy worksheets 1, 2, and 3** for students' use. Encourage children to discover their own animal, letter and geometric shape puzzles using tangram pieces.

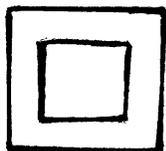
Activity 2. Provide children with **square pieces of paper, rulers and scissors** to design their own tangram-like puzzles. Cut and give to a friend to solve.

Hint: Quilt blocks are a delightful source of geometric puzzles!



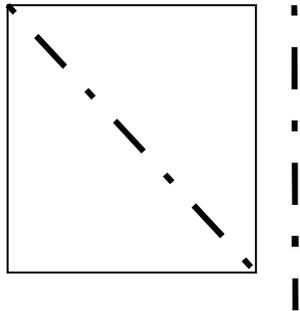
Activity 3. Provide a **“feelie” bag with cardboard or plastic geometric shapes**. Children can reach in and try to describe and name the shape they feel.

Activity 4. Cut **large geometric, climb-through shapes from the sides of cardboard appliance boxes**. Using the “Mother May I?” game format, give directions such as, “climb through the square, over the parallelogram, and around the triangle.”

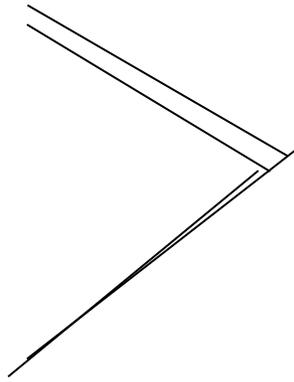


Instructions for folding and cutting a Tangram

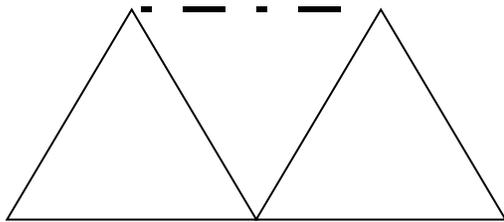
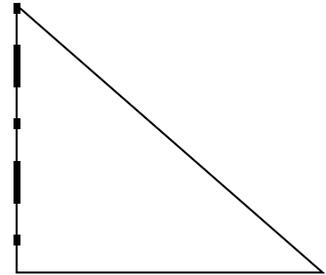
Materials needed: construction paper squares, scissors, and patience for both students and teacher!



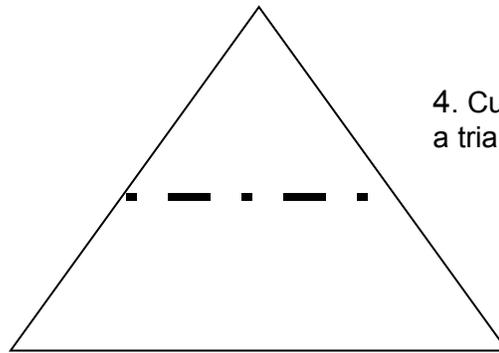
1. Fold square in half along dotted line – making two triangles.



2. Fold one triangle in half and cut along dotted line.

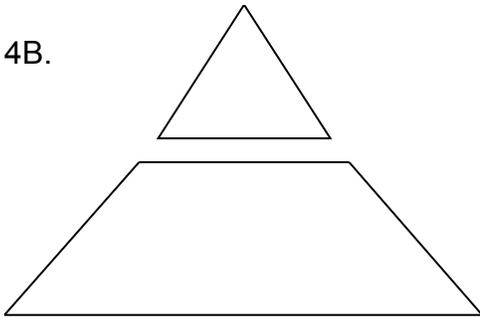


3. Fold the point of the second triangle down to meet the middle of the bottom edge of the triangle.

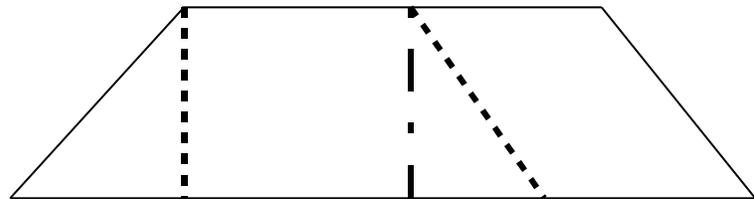


4. Cut along the fold to make a triangle and a trapezoid.

4B.



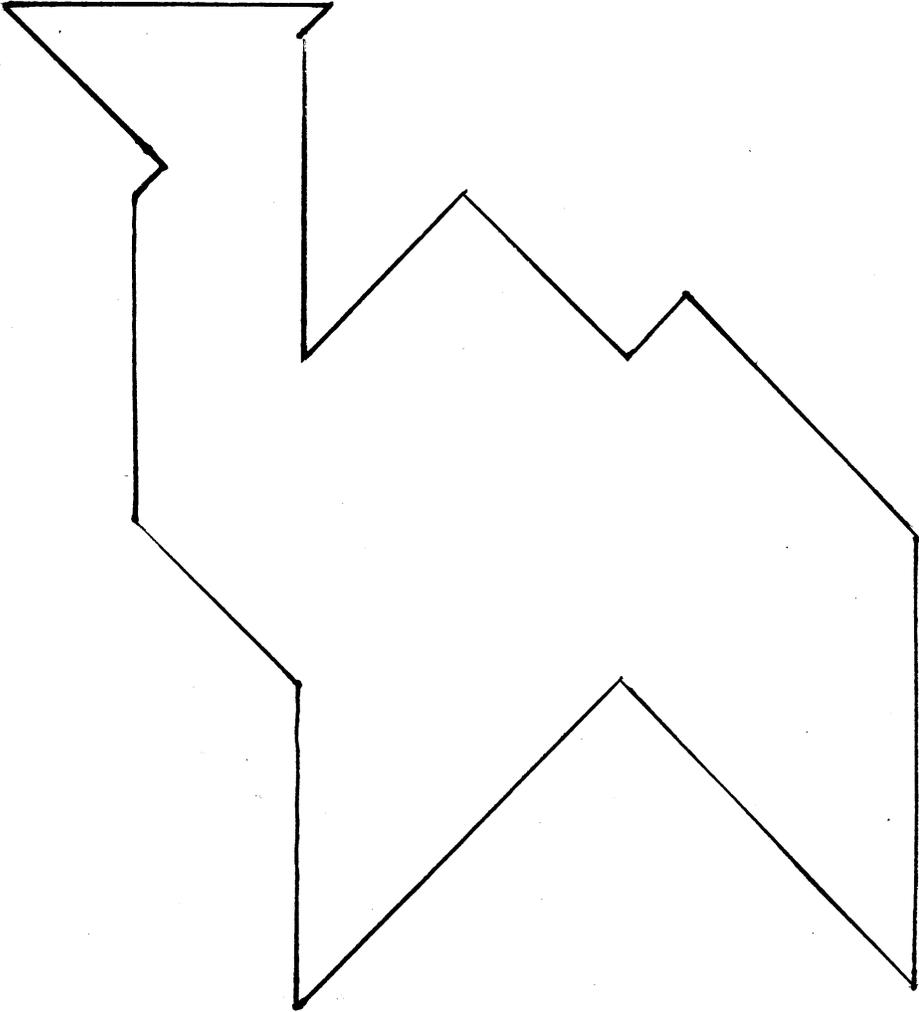
5. Fold trapezoid in half and then cut on dotted line.



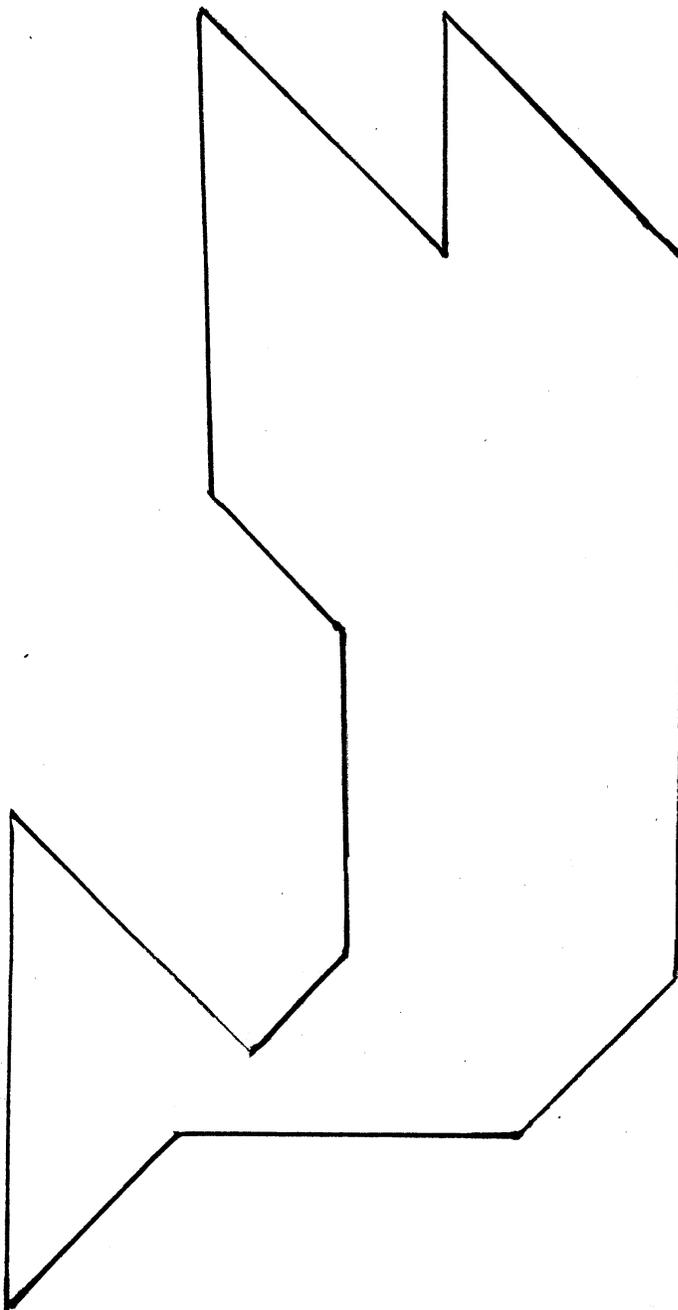
6. Cut trapezoid in half along dotted line. Fold and cut one side into a square and a triangle. Fold and cut one side into a triangle and a trapezoid.

You can make your own tangram puzzle. Just trace these shapes onto cardboard and cut out, or cut out the shapes from this page.

WORKSHEET #2



You can make your own tangram puzzle. Just trace these shapes onto cardboard and cut out, or cut out the shapes from this page.



THE WARLORD'S PUZZLE

By Virginia Walton Pilegard

Illustrated by Nicolas Debon

32 pp. 8 1/2 x 11 31 color illustrations

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In China, a beautiful ceramic tile lies shattered on the ground and the artist who dropped it is sentenced to the land's worst punishment. The fierce warlord will execute the artist unless some wise person can put the seven pieces back together. That person will then be invited to live in the castle. Both locals and strangers from far away wait their turns for a chance to solve the warlord's puzzle.

After learning why these people are waiting to enter the castle, a peasant boy convinces his poor but wise father to join the line. This little boy starts them off on the first step to solving the puzzle—entering the contest.

Virginia Walton Pilegard wrote *The Warlord's Puzzle* as part of a teaching unit that uses informal geometry to strengthen students' visual learning skills. Mrs. Pilegard studied elementary mathematics and completed both a B.A. and M.A. in Education. She went on to teach elementary grades and in juvenile correction schools.

Nicolas Debon, is a French citizen living in Canada. Debon has worked for the visual department in the French Ministry of Culture and for the cultural service of the Consulate General of France in Toronto.

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