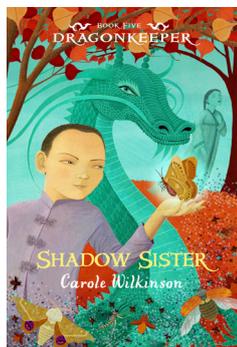


# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Dragonkeeper Book 5: Shadow Sister

Carole Wilkinson  
ISBN: 9781922179579  
ARRP: \$24.95  
NZRRP: \$27.99  
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\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

Tao is learning to be a dragonkeeper. With no one to teach him it is not easy. He must keep Kai safe but there is danger at every turn – they are pursued by a gang of murderous nomads, tricked by unseen spirits, attacked by a giant seven-headed snake and disoriented in the realms of the dead. Most terrifying of all is the ghost who can turn blood into ice. Tao knows he must prove he is truly worthy of the name dragonkeeper. But the road west is never straight and nothing for Tao and Kai is what it seems.

## Author Information:

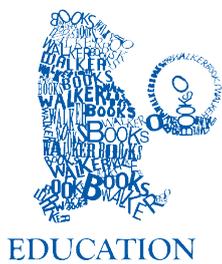
Carole Wilkinson is an award-winning and much loved author of books for children. She has a long-standing fascination with dragons and is interested in the history of everything. Though Carole has written over 30 books, she did not write her first book until she was nearly 40. Before that she had worked as a laboratory assistant and as a film and television writer and editor.

## How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

<p><b>These notes are for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary years 5-6</li> <li>• Secondary year 7</li> <li>• Ages 10+</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Learning Areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> <li>• History</li> </ul>	<p><b>Example of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novel</li> <li>• Historical fiction</li> <li>• Fantasy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Themes/Ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destiny/fate</li> <li>• Friendship</li> <li>• Courage</li> <li>• Chinese history and culture</li> <li>• Buddhism</li> <li>• Quests/journeys</li> </ul>
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National Curriculum Focus:*				
Content descriptions include:				
<b>English</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>History</b>	*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.
Year 5			<b>Year 7 Depth Study: China</b>	
ACELA1500	ACELA1523	ACELT1619	ACOKFH002	
ACELA1512	ACELA1524	ACELT1620	ACHHS207	
ACELT1608	ACELA1525	ACELT1621	ACOKFH003	
ACELT1609	ACELT1613	ACELT1622	ACHHS208	
ACELT1610	ACELT1614	ACELT1625	ACHHS209	
ACELT1612	ACELT1616	ACELT1805	ACHHS210	
ACELT1798	ACELT1618	ACELY1720	ACHHS211	
ACELY1698	ACELY1709	ACELY1722	ACDSEH042	
ACELY1699	ACELY1710	ACELY1725	ACDSEH043	
ACELY1796	ACELY1712		ACHHS205	
ACELY1700	ACELY1801		ACHHS206	
ACELY1701				



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Carole Wilkinson on *Shadow Sister*

After I wrote *Blood Brothers*, I was very keen to continue the story of Tao and Kai's time together. I wanted to know myself, "what happens next?" How would Tao manage out in the world, and what did the world have in store for him?

*Shadow Sister* is not a stand-alone novel, but part of a series. I had to create new stories, new characters, but keep it all within the "world" that I had already established. I wanted to weave in some of the ideas and concepts from the four previous books such as *qi*, Buddhist precepts, the other dragons from Kai's "cluster" and the characteristics of a dragonkeeper. That was part of the challenge, and the fun, of writing this book. I also needed fresh ideas.

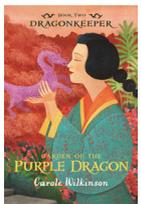
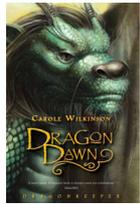
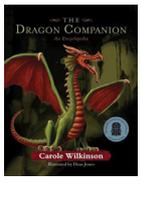
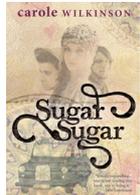
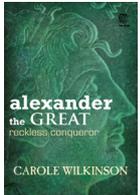
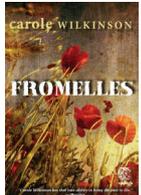


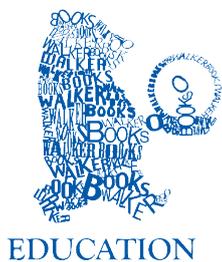
From my research into dragons and dragon stories, I know that dragon stories are told all over the world. I thought it would be interesting for Kai to encounter a different species of dragon. India is a neighbouring country (and the place where Tao's religion, Buddhism, began), so an encounter with an Indian *naga* seemed most likely. The trouble was, though nagas are depicted as dragons in other countries where Buddhism has spread to, images from rock carvings in ancient India show dragons as limbless serpents. I decided that I would work that discrepancy into my story.

I had also read that long ago somewhere in India, a huge rainforest was completely destroyed so that a king could build a palace. That was where I got the idea that the *naga's* natural habitat had been destroyed. That fitted into the story well, as most of the characters had lost their homes, and Tao was about to make a final break from his. I can't remember where I got the idea for a ghost story. And Tao's connection with insects was just going to be one amusing incident. But, as I was writing, the ghost girl and the insects insisted on having larger roles and made themselves essential to the story.

In the end the ghost girl inspired the title of the book. Often there is a big debate about the title and the editors and publishers sometimes don't like the titles I come up with. With this one, there were no objections — everyone thought that *Shadow Sister* was the right name for the book.

## Other books by Carole Wilkinson

	<b>Dragonkeeper Book 1</b> PB 9781742032450 AU\$19.95/NZ\$21.99 <b>Classroom ideas available</b>		<b>Dragonkeeper Book 2 Garden of the Purple Dragon</b> PB 9781742032467 AU\$19.95/NZ\$21.99 <b>Classroom ideas available</b>		<b>Dragonkeeper Book 3 Dragon Moon</b> PB 9781742032474 AU\$19.95/NZ\$21.99 <b>Classroom ideas available</b>		<b>Dragonkeeper Book 4 Blood Brothers</b> HB 9781742031897 AU\$24.95/NZ\$27.99 PB 9781922179210 AU\$19.95/NZ\$21.99 <b>Classroom ideas available</b>
	<b>Dragon Dawn (prequel to <i>Dragonkeeper</i>)</b> PB 9781742030623 AU\$12.99/NZ\$15.99		<b>The Dragon Companion</b> Illustrated by Dean Jones PB 9781742031446 AU\$19.99/NZ\$21.99		<b>The Night We Made the Flag</b> Illustrated by Sebastian Ciffaglione HB 9781742030074 AU\$29.99/NZ\$34.99 PB 9781922179159 AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99 <b>Classroom ideas available</b>		<b>Stagefright</b> PB 9781922077585 AU\$18.95/NZ\$21.99
	<b>Sugar Sugar</b> PB 9781742031200 AU\$18.99/NZ\$21.99		<b>The Drum: Black Snake</b> PB 9781876372934 AU\$18.99/NZ\$21.99 <b>Classroom ideas available</b>		<b>The Drum: Alexander the Great</b> PB 9781876372330 AU\$18.99/NZ\$19.99		<b>The Drum: Fromelles</b> PB 9781742031767 AU\$18.99/NZ\$21.99 <b>Classroom ideas available</b>



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities

### English

Before reading, examine the cover of the book. What do you think will happen in this instalment of the series? Write your answers down and revisit them after you finish reading the book. Were your assumptions correct or incorrect?

After reading, examine the structure and features of the book. Identify the following:

- Chapter headings
- Title page
- Dedication
- Page numbers
- Paragraphs
- Illustrations
- Quotation marks

Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attention and give them some idea of what the book is about.

In small groups, identify the main themes and discuss how the novel deals with each theme. Take turns presenting your findings to the class. How did your group's findings compare to the other groups'?

In groups, discuss how the following values are demonstrated in the novel:

- courage
- compassion
- persistence
- selflessness
- resourcefulness/ingenuity
- loyalty.

Are there any other values you would add to this list?

Read the glossary at the back of the book. What is its purpose? Are there any other terms you would have included in it? What sort of words are usually found in a glossary? Choose a book of your own and create a glossary for it.

Keep a "vocab journal" while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you don't know and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.

Kai enjoys devising and reciting poems. Using Kai's poems as a model, write your own poem and perform it for the class.

In small groups, create a character map for a person from the book. Each group should look at a different character – make sure you include Tao, Kai, Pema, Sunila, Fo Tu Deng, Jilong and Baoyu (the ghost girl). Draw a picture of the character in the centre of a large sheet of butcher's paper and then around it include:

- adjectives that describe their personality
- information about their skills, fears, ambitions, etc.
- their actions in the novel
- how/if they change throughout the novel
- their relationships with other characters
- three quotes from the book which give insight into their character (make sure you use quotation marks).

Re-form into new groups made up of one member from each of the original groups. Each group member should present their character while the other members of the group take notes. At the end, students should have notes on all of the characters in the book.

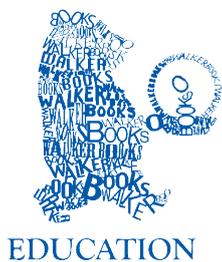
Find a Chinese penfriend on the "Students of the World" website: [www.studentsoftheworld.info](http://www.studentsoftheworld.info) Write them an email telling them about your life and asking about their life in China. You may also like to share things you have learnt about Chinese history and culture from *Shadow Sister*.

Has anyone in your class ever lived in or visited China? If so, have them share their experiences with the class. Discuss the way China today is different from the period Wilkinson describes in the novel.

Identify what you believe are the 10 most important events in the novel. Arrange these chronologically in your workbook. Compare your list with a classmate's. Have they identified the same events as you? Discuss any differences and similarities.

In *Blood Brothers*, Tao was a devoted novice monk who strictly abided by the Five Precepts. Now that Tao has left the monastery, how has he reconciled his religion with his new responsibilities?

Visit your school library and find other books about dragons. Compare how the authors and illustrators portray dragons with how they are presented in the *Dragonkeeper* series. Which portrayal is your favourite? Why?



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Tao occasionally has visions of the future. How does this help him? How does it get him into trouble? Imagine you could have visions of the future like Tao. Write a list of the positives and negatives about having this ability. If you could choose to have visions, would you? Why or why not?

Tao struggles with not knowing what his *qi* power will be. How do you think he feels about his power to influence insects? How do you think he would have felt if his power was violent? What would your *qi* power be if you were a Dragonkeeper?

How does Tao deal with the revelation he has at the end of Chapter 24? How does this change his sense of purpose?

Discuss the language Carole Wilkinson uses to create tension and atmosphere when Tao and Kai are in the dark cave in Chapter 5. How does this add to the reader's experience? Think of a scary situation and write a short story about it, using similar language techniques to Wilkinson to create a scary atmosphere.

What lesson does Pema learn about revenge? How has her fixation of avenging her family's deaths affected her life?

What do you think will happen next in the Dragonkeeper series? Write your own short story about what Tao and Kai do next.

Rewrite a key scene in the novel from the perspective of another character. Would they view the situation differently to Tao? How?

Write a book review about *Dragonkeeper 5: Shadow Sister*. Write what you liked or disliked about the book. Also mention what other books *Shadow Sister* is similar to and who you think would like to read this book.

At the beginning of the novel Tao is performing an experiment on Kai. Write down the details of Tao's experiment including his hypothesis, investigation methods, methods of observing results and the actual results. Consider the variables that could have affected Tao's experiment.

## History

*Dragonkeeper 5: Shadow Sister* is set during an actual period in Chinese history and some of the characters are based on real people. How are novels useful as tools to research history? What are their limitations? How are novels different to non-fiction texts such as encyclopaedias or reference books? Which would be more reliable to use when doing research? Why?

The *naga* is found in the history of several cultures. Research the different variations of *naga* that is found in history. List the different beliefs each culture have about the *naga*. Which version do you think Carole Wilkinson was inspired by?

## Arts

Analyse the visual techniques the designer has used on the cover of the book. For example, colour, font, images, symbolism, composition (where things have been placed). Design an alternative cover for the book featuring your new title. Present it to the class, explaining how you have used visual techniques to emphasise the themes, subject or mood of the book.

Transform a section of the novel into a comic strip or graphic novel.

Design your ideal dragon. What special skills would it have? What colour and size would it be? Would it have wings? Would there be anything else unique about its appearance? Draw and label a diagram of your dragon.

Draw symbols to represent each of the main characters in the book. Present these to the class, explaining how each symbol reflects your understanding of the characters.

Recreate the maps of Luoyang Region and China in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period in your workbook and track Tao and Kai's journey on your maps. Use an online map (such as Google Maps) to find modern-day Luoyang.