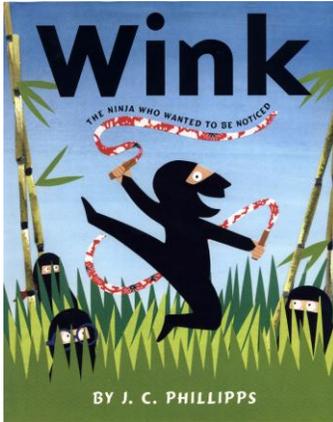


A Teacher's Guide to
WINK
THE NINJA WHO WANTED TO BE NOTICED
Written and Illustrated by J.C. Phillipps



WINK THE NINJA WHO WANTED TO BE NOTICED
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Once upon a Halloween, Ms. Phillipps and her husband took their son trick-or-treating. A neighborhood boy dressed as a ninja hid across the street, clearly visible in his red ninja outfit. Ms. Phillipps and her family pretended not to see him. Soon the red ninja grew tired of being stealthy and began to jump up and down, waving his arms. Ms. Phillipps' husband commented: "Now there's a ninja who wants to be noticed!" And the spark for Wink was born. Ms. Phillipps studied theater and art in college and graduate school, but it wasn't until her son was born that she started to turn her artistic talents into creating picture books. Learn more about Ms. Phillipps and her art at <http://www.jcphillipps.com> and <http://ninjawoman.blogspot.com>.

RUDOS FOR *WINK THE NINJA WHO WANTED TO BE NOTICED*

"Use the offbeat ninja angle as a hook to instill in children the lesson to embrace your own best qualities and not to be dogged down by those who stifle self-expression." ~*ALA Booklist*

"Phillipps shows off her true calling...Entertaining and accessible." ~*Kirkus Reviews*

"[A] charming story...invigorated with originality and humor. This flashy picture book is sure to appeal to a wide audience." ~*School Library Journal, starred review*

STORY SUMMARY

What fun is being a world-class ninja if no one notices you? No fun at all, as Wink discovers. But thanks to the Lucky Dragon Circus, he finally finds his true calling.

PRE-READING

Background Knowledge:

Ask the following questions:

1. What is a ninja?
2. Have you ever taken a martial arts class (such as Tae Kwan Do) or know someone who has?
3. How do teachers help you learn?
4. How do you get others to notice you? When is a time you like being noticed?
5. What do you do when you don't want to be noticed? When is a time you'd rather not be noticed?

- *Activate prior knowledge to aid comprehension of fiction*

Take a Book Walk:

Show the front cover of *Wink The Ninja Who Wanted to be Noticed*, pointing out the title and author/illustrator. Ask the following:

1. Why are the children dressed all in black?
2. Does Wink look like a ninja? Why or why not?
3. How is he different from the other ninjas in the grass?
4. How is he the same?

Now open the book and show the front and back covers together. Ask students:

1. Who do you think the man is?
2. What (or who) is he looking at?
3. How does he feel?
4. Why do you think he feels this way?

Turn the pages without reading the words, and see if children can guess Wink's problem and/or what is happening in the story. Stop at the page that shows Master Zutsu and Wink's grandmother opening their envelopes (without telling the class that the circus tickets are inside). Ask students to predict how Wink's problem might be solved. Then turn back to the first page and read the story.

- Use pre-reading strategies, such as predicting, picture walks, and questioning to set context for reading and to aid comprehension.
- Make and confirm predictions about text by looking at the title, cover and author.
- Describe the conflict faced by a character in a story.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Master Zutsu keep sending Wink home? (*knowledge*)
2. Look at the page where Wink is playing with the panda at the zoo. How do his classmates feel about this? How does Master Zutsu feel? How can you tell? (*comprehension*)
3. Choose your favorite ninja pose from the story. Can you copy Wink's stance? Can you make up your own move and give it a name? (*application*)
4. How do Master Zutsu's feelings about Wink change from the beginning to the end of the story? (*analysis*)
5. Wink was able to use his nimble ninja skills to become a circus performer. What other kinds of jobs would he do well? (*synthesis*)
6. Do you think Wink will return to the Summer Moon School for Young Ninjas? Why or why not? If he returns, will anything be different? (*evaluation*)

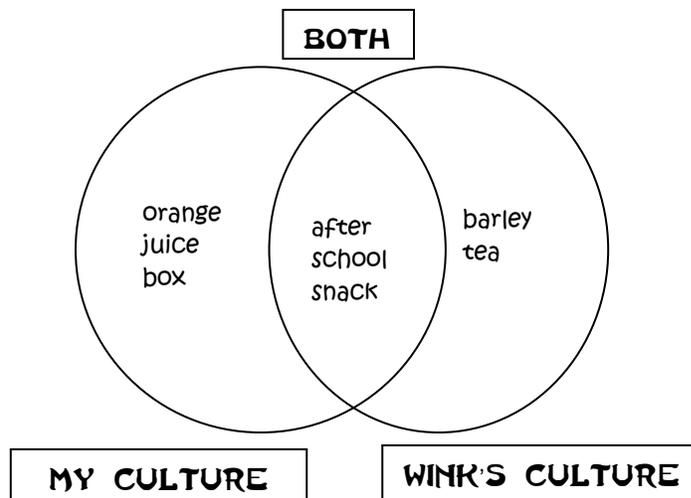
- Answer literal and inferential questions about texts read aloud.
- Make inferences to construct meaning.

WELCOME TO JAPAN!

Ask students where they think the story takes place. What clues do the illustrations and text give? Make a class chart (like the one on the following page) where students may write or illustrate clues to the story's setting:

Illustration clues to the setting:	Text clues to the setting:
posters on the wall outside of Wink's school (Sumo wrestling, Kabuki Theater, bowl with chopsticks)	Wink's grandmother calls him Wink-chan.
pagoda-style building and Japanese <i>torii</i> (gate) on the first page	Wink's after-school snack is barley tea.
Master Zutsu's kimonos	The proverb-like quality of the dialogue, such as: "Time spent laughing is time well spent." (Wink's grandmother)
Japanese brush paintings and Japanese writing on the walls	
Wink and his Grandmother kneel on the floor to eat at a low table	
woven grass <i>tatami</i> mat floors in Wink's house	
rice paper windows and lantern outside the circus performers' house	
Grandmother's traditional <i>geta</i> shoes and <i>tabi</i> socks	
hairstyle of the circus ringmaster, his kimono, <i>geta</i> shoes and <i>tabi</i> socks	

Help students locate Japan on a map or globe. After reviewing the above clues, ask them to compare and contrast their own cultures with the Japanese culture. Draw a large Venn diagram (or let older students work with individual Venn diagrams as shown on page 7 of this guide). Let students illustrate or write things that are the same and different about Wink's culture and theirs. One example:



- Examine family life and cultures of different peoples.
- Use maps, globes as appropriate.
- Identify the setting in a story.

- *Make connections to text representing different perspectives family, friendship, culture and tradition, generating personal and text-based responses.*
- *Discuss the culture and/or traditions described in a piece of literature and explain how they are similar or different from those of the reader.*

METAPHORS

There are several metaphors throughout the story. Try these activities to help students see past the literal meanings.

“The loudest cricket is the first to be caught.”

Ask children if they know what kinds of sounds crickets make (click [here](#) and [here](#) for two samples of cricket noises or go to www.nationalgeographic.com and search for the article titled *Cricket, Katydid Songs Are Best Clues to Species' Identities*). After children hear the samples, let them practice their own cricket imitations.

Have children stand in a circle with one child in the middle of the circle wearing a blindfold. On your cue, the children in the circle should make very quiet cricket sounds. Designate one child to be the loudest cricket. Ask the child wearing the blindfold to try and “catch” the loudest cricket. When the loudest cricket has been found, ask the child who “caught” the loudest cricket to explain why it was so much easier to catch this cricket.

Ask what Master Zutsu meant when he said to Wink: “The loudest cricket is the first to be caught.”

- *Identify and explain the author's use of metaphor.*

“The blossom that flaunts its color is soon plucked!”

Make at least 6 grey paper flowers out of tissue paper and Chenille stems (pipe cleaners), and one brightly colored flower. Stack four 5” x 7” squares of tissue paper and then fold them accordion-style, like a fan. Wrap one end of the Chenille stem twice around the center of the folded paper, and carefully separate the layers to give the flower volume. Assemble your bouquet and ask students which flower they would choose. Show the results of your poll with a bar graph. Ask students why most (or all) students chose the brightly-colored flower instead of a grey one.

Variation: Before you show the bouquet to the class, ask older children what the probability would be that one flower would be chosen over the others in a bouquet of seven flowers. (They should say that any flower in a bouquet of seven flowers has a one in seven chance of being chosen, or 1:7). Now show the bouquet to the class and take the poll as described above. Why did the odds rise so dramatically in favor of the brightly-colored flower?

Ask what Master Zutsu meant when he said to Wink, "The blossom that flaunts its color is soon plucked!"

Extension: Point out the vase of iris blooms in Wink's grandmother's house. Explain that flower arranging is an art in Japan called *ikebana*. Instead of bunching the flowers together in a vase, as we do in the west, *ikebana* artists arrange only a few flowers, leaving space between each. Have the children each make three tissue paper flowers and arrange them in a vase (a tall paper cup with play dough in the bottom for securing the stems and weighting down the cup).

To learn more about *ikebana*, click [here](http://webjapan.org/kidsweb/index.html) or go to <http://webjapan.org/kidsweb/index.html>. Under *Play* click on *Virtual Culture*, then *Ikebana*.

- *Identify and explain the author's use of metaphor.*
- *Read simple graphs.*
- *Understand and apply basic concepts of probability.*
- *Examine cultures of different peoples.*
- *Recognize that works of visual art are produced by artisans and artists working in different cultures, times and places.*

"Your smile has come home."

Draw Wink's head and face (except for his mouth) the way it appears on the last page. Draw his smile on a separate sheet of paper and cut it out. Turn to the page where Master Zutsu sent Wink home when "he raised one arm and extended a long, bony finger." Ask students how Wink feels in this scene. Even though students can't see Wink's mouth in this illustration, ask them what it might look like if we could lift his mask.

Now show the last page where Wink is smiling, and ask what the grandmother meant when she said that Wink's smile had "come home." Where does a smile live? Why had Wink's smile disappeared? How did he get it back?

Extension: Give each child a rectangular-shaped piece of construction paper just the right size for Wink's mouth. Ask them to draw Wink's smile, cut it out and place a piece of tape on the back. Play "Send Wink's Smile Home" where each child closes his or her eyes and tries to stick Wink's smile in the proper place.

- *Identify and explain the author's use of metaphor.*
- *Analyze how characters deal with diversity and adversity.*

"Free-flowing water will always find its way."

Take a plastic pitcher of water and pour it into a basin. Ask the children where the water started (in the pitcher) and where it ended up (in the basin). Now take a

plastic cup and hold it upside down with one hand. With your other hand, pour water from the pitcher over the cup, letting the water wash over the cup and into the basin. Again, ask where the water began and where it ended up. Did the upside down cup stop the water from ending up in the basin? Now flip the cup right-side up and pour the water into the cup. Did the water end up in the basin? Why not? Lead children to the conclusion that when you “caught” the water in the cup, it wasn’t free to find its way into the basin.

Ask the students why Master Zutsu said “Free-flowing water will always find its way” when he saw Wink at the circus. With a marker, label the basin *Lucky Dragon Circus*, the cup *Summer Moon School for Young Ninjas* and tell the children that the water represents Wink. Repeat the above experiment in reverse, pouring the water first into the right-side up cup. Explain that when Wink was supposed to follow the strict rules of the ninja school, he could not follow his true path to the circus. Now turn the cup upside-down and pour the water again, showing how Wink can now get to the “circus.”

- Describe the conflict faced by a character in a story.
- Identify and explain the author’s use of metaphor.

SIMPLIFYING SIMILES

Choose a few of the following similes and ask students what they mean:

“He moves like a gazelle—swift and graceful.”

“His spirit shines like the morning sun.”

“Wink burst into view, flying through the air like a glittering cannonball.”

“Knees bend like the breeze.”

“Hips become strong like rocks.”

Four out of the five similes describe movement. Make a list of students’ favorite animals and typical behavior characteristics of each (monkeys chatter, lions leap, sloths sleep, etc.). Ask children to illustrate themselves and an animal doing the same thing. At the bottom of the pages, have them write or dictate a simile that matches their illustration (such as: Maria leaps like a lion). Assemble the pages into a class book titled:

(Your name)’s Class Is Like A Zoo!
A Book of Silly Similes

- Use symbols or drawings to express thoughts, feelings and ideas.
- Identify elements of author’s craft, e.g., similes.

ITADAKIMASU!

Plan a snack Japanese-style. Have children kneel around the edge of a blanket spread on the floor. Distribute sets of chopsticks from a Chinese or Japanese restaurant, and show children how to hold them. (For instructions, click [here](#), or go to <http://wondertime.go.com/life-at-home/article/chopsticks-lessons.html>). Serve easy-to-grasp snacks such as tater tots, cubes of cheese, or marshmallows. Let

children taste iced or warm tea (barley, green, chamomile or fruit). Wish each other a good meal by saying “*Itadakimasu!*” (eat•ah• DOCK•ee•mas).

- *Examine cultures of different peoples.*

NIFTY NUNCHUCKS

On the front cover, Wink leaps through a field of crouching ninjas waving a ribbon-adorned version of nunchucks. Give students two popsicle sticks to decorate with colorful markers and glue a streamer to each stick. When the glue is dry, let children leap and spin with their streamers. Challenge them to write their names or spell other words in the air with their nifty nunchuks. Have children pair up and challenge their partners to guess which words they are spelling.

- *Spell high-frequency words correctly.*

THE ART OF STEALTH

How stealthy is your class of ninjas? Challenge them to move around the room like ninjas without a sound. Choose one child to stand in the middle of the room with eyes closed. Give the rest of the class the cue to begin moving. When the child whose eyes are closed hears a noise, he says “Freeze” and opens his eyes. With a stopwatch, time the class and see how long they can be stealthy ninjas before the student says “Freeze.” Challenge the class to be stealthy throughout the day as they transition from one activity to another.

- *Demonstrate eight basic locomotor movements (walk, run, hop, jump, leap, gallop, slide and skip), traveling forward, backward, sideward, diagonally and turning.*

LIVING LANDSCAPE

Turn to the page where Master Zutsu says a ninja must be able to disappear into any landscape. Ask students what he meant by that. What is a landscape? Take students outside (or look out the window) and ask them to choose one natural thing they see (a bush, tree, flower, grass, etc.). On your cue, have them pretend to be the object they chose. If they are outside, tell them to stand next to their object and try to imitate it's position and how it moves (is it swaying in the breeze?).

Extension: Point out the Japanese brush paintings on Master Zutsu's and Wink's grandmother's walls. Show students how to outline a landscape in black paint on white paper (Japanese brush painting artists usually paint black ink onto white rice paper with bamboo brushes). Have students sign their paintings in red. For fun, show them how to paint one letter on top of another so their signatures will look similar to Japanese writing. For a real look at *Kanji*, one form of Japanese writing, click [here](http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/language/quickkanji/index.html) or visit: <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/language/quickkanji/index.html>.

- *Examine cultures of different peoples.*
- *Recognize that works of visual art are produced by artisans and artists working in different cultures, times and places.*

How is your life different from Wink's? How is it the same?

