Procedures in Detail

1 **Before class, review the intent of this activity.** This activity is designed to help students understand the importance of Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism in the politics of ancient China. By participating in lessons that reflect the beliefs and practices of each philosophy, students will better understand how they affected political rule in ancient China. This lesson has three phases: (1) Learning About Confucianism, (2) Learning About Daoism, and (3) Learning About Legalism.

2 **Prepare seating chart.** Before class, prepare a seating chart on an overhead transparency that shows students where to sit and how to arrange their desks.

Idea for Student Response To preview this activity, have students write a paragraph, on the left side of their notebooks, in response to this prompt: *Which of the following approaches do you think would be the most effective in dealing with gang disrespect and violence in the United States? (1) Assign all gang members a big brother or sister to teach them about the importance of respect; (2) Allow gang members to do whatever they want, hoping that eventually they will learn from their own mistakes; or (3) Give the police extra powers to arrest gang members for even the slightest crimes.* Have three or four students share their responses. Afterward, tell students that in this activity they will learn about three different approaches the Chinese took in attempting to resolve societal problems during ancient times.

3 **Project Slide 2.2A and introduce students to the Zhou dynasty.** Project Slide 2.2A, which shows an artist’s rendition of Zhou dynasty soldiers destroying peasants’ crops. Encourage students to discover information from the image by asking these questions, which spiral from the basic to the critical-thinking level: *What do you see here? Who are the people holding sticks? What are they doing? Why would a military leader order his men to destroy crops? How do you think the peasants on the left feel about what is happening? What can the peasants do to prevent their crops from being destroyed again? What does this image tell you about life during this time period?* Next, use the following information to introduce students to the Zhou dynasty:
Around 1100 B.C.E., a group of people called the Zhou (pronounced JOE), living in northwest China, overthrew the Shang dynasty. The Zhou were tired of paying tribute to the Shang rulers, and they justified their actions by claiming they had been given the “Mandate of Heaven,” or divine right, to rule China. The Zhou dynasty lasted for over 800 years, until 256 B.C.E.—longer than any other dynasty in Chinese history. However, the true rulers of China during much of this period were feudal lords. These were the leaders of the strongest states within the Zhou kingdom, including Lu, Chu, and Qin (pronounced CHIN). Originally, the feudal lords were members of the imperial family and trusted military leaders who had been appointed by the Zhou king. Over time, however, the allegiance of the feudal lords to the Zhou kings grew weaker. More and more, the lords engaged in bitter disputes for wealth and territory among themselves and with neighboring peoples outside the Zhou kingdom. As a result, the feudal lords became powerful regional leaders and the Zhou kings became little more than figureheads.

During this time of political instability, Chinese rulers searched for systems that would allow them to expand their political power. Ambitious rulers gathered large groups of advisors, scholars, and military strategists to advise them. As various masters came into favor, books recording their teachings were compiled and circulated. This development fostered the appearance of many schools of thought. So many teachers wrote and debated ideas about political rule during the period that the Chinese later named it the “Hundred Schools of Thought.” Among the most important schools of thought, or philosophies, of this period were Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism.

4 Pass out Student Handout 2.2A and give students an overview of the activity. Once students have been introduced to the Zhou dynasty, pass out Student Handout 2.2A: Background Information on Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism to each student. Tell students that in this activity they will learn about Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism by participating in three lessons, each of which reflects the beliefs and practices of one philosophy. Explain that for each lesson, students will rearrange their desks, study background information about one philosophy, and follow standards of behavior that reflect the beliefs and practices of that philosophy.

Phase 1: Learning About Confucianism

Note: In choosing the elders, select students who you feel would most confidently guide other students. You may want to give these students a copy of Student Handout 2.2A and have them read the section on Confucianism the night before the lesson.

1 Introduce the lesson on Confucianism. After you have given students an overview of the activity, tell them that the first Chinese philosophy they will learn about is Confucianism. Explain that in accordance with Confucian tradition, which honors age and scholarly achievement, you have identified four students to act as elders and lead the lesson. Select four students to act as elders. Have them come to the front of the classroom and stand next to the overhead projector.
2 Project Overhead Transparency 2.2B and teach the lesson on Confucianism. Once the elders are at the front of the classroom, project Overhead Transparency 2.2B: Guidelines for Experiencing Chinese Philosophies, and cover it so only Step 1 under "Confucianism" is showing. This transparency outlines the four steps in the lesson on Confucianism. Tell the class that as you reveal each step, they must read the directions and respond appropriately. Follow these guidelines to ensure that students experience a lesson that reflects the characteristics of Confucianism:

During Step 1, before students move their desks, divide them into four groups. After students have created the new seating arrangement, have the four elders sit on their desks to represent their position of respect among the other students in their groups. Tell students that the elders are "models of virtue" and are responsible for showing the rest of the class how to behave in a dignified and honorable manner.

During Step 2, remind students that you expect them to interact respectfully with the elders throughout the lesson. Explain that the formal greeting they are practicing is designed to remind them of their obligation to be attentive and obedient. (Option: You and the elders may want to model the appropriate way of performing the greeting for the rest of the class.)

During Step 3, have all students silently read the information on Confucianism on Student Handout 2.2A. After students finish reading, explain that you will award bonus points to groups who can demonstrate their understanding of Confucianism by correctly answering the corresponding "Stop and Discuss" questions from memory. Have students work with their elders to memorize answers to the "Stop and Discuss" questions.

During Step 4, have all students place Student Handout 2.2A face down on their desks. Then, randomly select one student to stand and answer aloud one of the "Stop and Discuss" questions on Confucianism. If the student's answer is satisfactory, award that group bonus points (or candy) and compliment the group's elder for instructing the student properly. Continue this process until you have asked all of the "Stop and Discuss" questions on Confucianism.

3 Debrief the lesson on Confucianism. After students have completed the lesson on Confucianism, hold a class discussion centering on these questions:

- How did it feel to learn about Confucianism in this way?
- What did you think of the role of the elders?
- What are the advantages of learning from elders? The disadvantages?
- Why do you think many people in ancient China wanted to create a society based on Confucian beliefs and practices?
- In what ways do you think Confucianism could have helped end the political instability of the Zhou dynasty?
4 Make connections between the lesson and the basic characteristics of Confucianism. Once students have shared their feelings about the lesson on Confucianism, have them connect their experience with the history the lesson was intended to represent. Use details from the T-chart below to help students understand how their experience connects to Confucianism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-class Experience</th>
<th>Characteristics of Confucianism in Ancient China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “elder” students allowed to sit on desks and lead small-group discussions</td>
<td>• Confucianism encouraged respect for age and tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• students addressed elders with formal greeting</td>
<td>• Confucius said stable societies were built on <em>li</em> (proper behavior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• students learned about Confucianism and answered questions from memory</td>
<td>• Government officials had to prove they understood Confucian principles by passing exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 2: Learning About Daoism

1 Introduce the lesson on Daoism. Begin this lesson by telling students they will now learn about Daoism, another Chinese philosophy that developed during the Zhou dynasty. Explain to the class that, in accordance with Daoist tradition, which encourages self-reflection and naturalness, you will allow them to study the section subtitled, “Background Information on Daoism” on Student Handout 2.2A in the manner that best suits their learning style.

2 Project Overhead Transparency 2.2B and teach the lesson on Daoism. Once you have introduced the lesson on Daoism, project Overhead Transparency 2.2B and cover it so only Step 1 under “Daoism” is showing. Tell students that as you reveal each step, they must read the directions and respond appropriately. Follow these guidelines to ensure that students experience a lesson that reflects the characteristics of Daoism:

During Step 1, expect students to be excited and distracted at the prospect of creating their own seating arrangement. To reduce confusion, tell students they will have only 2 minutes to find their new seats. Remind them they must move quietly to their new seats.

During Step 2, carefully review the standards for appropriate behavior for the lesson on Daoism. Tell students they must speak softly and move quietly and only when necessary. Explain that these standards are designed to help them...
create a natural and meditative atmosphere and avoid bringing attention to themselves, which are important Daoist values.

During Step 3, have students study the section on Daoism on Student Handout 2.2A. Encourage them to find answers to their own questions about Daoism. Allow them to work together if they are able to do so quietly and without disturbing others.

During Step 4, explain to students they may demonstrate their understanding of Daoism by writing, drawing, or performing in response to the questions on Overhead Transparency 2.2B. Tell them they may present their responses using their bodies, readily available materials such as scratch paper and pens, or the chalkboard. Allow them approximately 5 minutes to prepare their responses. Have several students share their responses with the rest of the class.

3 Debrief the lesson on Daoism. After students have completed the lesson on Daoism, hold a class discussion centering on these questions:

- How did it feel to learn about Daoism in this way?
- How was this lesson different than the lesson on Confucianism?
- Which lesson did you like better? Why?
- In which lesson do you feel you learned the most? Explain.
- Why do you think few political leaders in ancient China ruled according to Daoist principles?
- In what ways do you think Daoism could have helped end the political instability of the Zhou dynasty?

4 Make connections between the lesson and the basic characteristics of Daoism. Once students have shared their feelings about the lesson on Daoism, have them connect their experience with the history the lesson was intended to represent. Use details from the T-chart below to help students understand how their experience connects to Daoism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-class Experience</th>
<th>Characteristics of Daoism in Ancient China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teacher did not dictate seating arrangement</td>
<td>• Daoists were opposed to organized government and strong rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students worked quietly and unobtrusively</td>
<td>• Daoists encouraged meditation and self-reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher encouraged students to respond to the questions in unique ways</td>
<td>• Laozi encouraged people to find their own ways to live in harmony with nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase 3: Learning About Legalism

1 **Introduce the lesson on Legalism.** Begin this lesson by telling students they will now learn about Legalism, a third Chinese philosophy that developed during the Zhou dynasty. Explain to the class that, in accordance with Legalist tradition, which stresses the importance of strict rules and punishment, you will be leading the discussion on the section subtitled “Background Information on Legalism” on Student Handout 2.2A.

2 **Project Overhead Transparency 2.2B and teach the lesson on Legalism.** Once you have introduced the lesson on Legalism, project Overhead Transparency 2.2B and cover it so only Step 1 under “Legalism” is showing. Tell students that as you reveal each step, they must read the directions and respond appropriately. Follow these guidelines to make sure students experience a lesson that reflects the characteristics of Legalism:

   During Step 1, have students move their desks into six rows. Make sure their desks are not within arms’ length of each other. **(Note:** This is designed to make the classroom environment feel more ordered and less cooperative, and to emphasize the Legalists’ view that humans’ natural tendency is to negatively influence one another.)

   During Step 2, tell students they must adhere to the standards of appropriate behavior or you will remove them from the activity. **(Note:** To emphasize the strictness of these standards, you may wish to tell students that they will lose points if they are removed from the activity.) As much as possible, try to adopt a serious demeanor when reviewing the standards for appropriate behavior.

   During Step 3, have students study the section on Legalism on Student Handout 2.2A. Do not allow students to work together. Circulate through the room to make sure students are reading Student Handout 2.2A and obeying the standards for appropriate behavior. If necessary, have “disobedient” students move to the back of the classroom and stand silently.

   During Step 4, tell students you will test their understanding of Legalism by asking them a series of questions. Emphasize that they must not look you directly in the eyes when answering questions, as this is considered disrespectful and a challenge to the teacher’s authority in Legalist tradition. Explain that those who answer correctly will be rewarded, while those who answer incorrectly will be punished. Have students place Student Handout 2.2A face down on their desks. Then, read aloud one of the “Stop and Discuss” questions about Legalism on Student Handout 2.2A. Choose a student to stand and answer the question. If the student answers the question satisfactorily, reward him with candy or bonus points. If he answers incorrectly, have him move to the back of the classroom and stand silently. Continue this process until you have asked all of the “Stop and Discuss” questions about Legalism.

**Option:** Prior to Step 1, you may want to prepare a seating chart based on the diagram on Overhead Transparency 2.2B that shows students where to sit and how to arrange their desks.

**Note:** During Step 4 you will punish students who answer questions incorrectly to re-create the harshness of Legalist rule. It is critical that you have a cooperative learning environment in your classroom and a strong rapport with your students because they may feel vulnerable, uncertain, or upset by your actions.
3 Debrief the lesson on Legalism. After students have completed the lesson on Legalism, hold a class discussion centering on these questions:
- How did it feel to learn about Legalism in this way?
- How was this lesson different than those on Confucianism and Daoism? Which lesson did you like the best? Why?
- In which lesson do you feel you learned the most? Why do think that is so?
- What do you think life in a Legalist society would be like?
- Why do you think Legalist political leaders were unpopular in ancient China?
- In what ways do you think Legalism could have helped end the political instability of the Zhou dynasty?

4 Make connections between the lesson and the basic characteristics of Legalism. Once students have shared their feelings about the lesson on Legalism, have them connect their experience with the history the lesson was intended to represent. Use details from the T-chart below to help students understand how their experience connects to Legalism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-class Experience</th>
<th>Characteristics of Daoism in Ancient China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teacher made students sit in rows</td>
<td>• Legalists thought a strong government would deter violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher led discussion and did not let students talk to each other</td>
<td>• Legalists had a low opinion of human nature and felt strict rules were needed to maintain order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students with correct answers were rewarded; those with wrong answers were punished</td>
<td>• Legalists believed rewards and punishments should be used to promote social order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background Information on Confucianism

Confucianism is a system of beliefs based on the teachings of Kong Fuzi (called Confucius by Europeans), a man who lived in China from 551 to 479 B.C.E. Confucius was born into a family of low-ranking nobles. After completing his education, he worked as an accountant for the ruling Zhou (pronounced JOE) dynasty. As the Zhou empire weakened and various Chinese states began battling for power, Confucius became sad. He recalled the virtues of past rulers who had maintained a peaceful and stable society. Gradually he gathered followers and taught them what he believed was the proper way to live. After his death, Confucius’s followers compiled many of his sayings into a book called Analects, or “Selected Sayings,” which became the most important source of his teachings.

Stop Here & Discuss

- Who was Confucius?
- What conditions in ancient China made Confucius sad?

Confucianism is a philosophy that defines proper conduct for people and governments. According to Confucius, people are naturally good and should concentrate on improving their behavior and doing what they know is right. He called this proper behavior li (pronounced LEE). Confucius believed that if everyone followed li, society would be ordered and peaceful. He taught that a harmonious society had to be built upon Five Key Relationships: (1) ruler and subject, (2) parent and child, (3) husband and wife, (4) elder sibling (brother or sister) and younger sibling, and (5) friend and friend. The first four are hierarchical relationships in which one person is viewed as the superior and worthy of respect and obedience. In turn, this superior person is expected to be benevolent and to set a good example of moral behavior. The fifth relationship is the only one in which the persons are considered equal. In addition to each person behaving properly, Confucious believed that for society to be strong, rulers must be models of virtue.

Stop Here & Discuss

- What is li?
- What were the responsibilities of individuals in each of the five basic relationships?

Few rulers during Confucius’s time accepted his ideas. However, long after his death, his teachings spread throughout China. Beginning with the Han dynasty, which ruled from 206 B.C.E to 220 C.E., Confucianism became the official state belief system. Because of their emphasis on loyalty, Confucian teachings allowed the Han government to have a more stable leadership. Under Han emperors and later rulers, government officials were chosen based on their education in Confucian teachings and performance on examinations intended to reveal who were “worthy Confucian” individuals. Successful candidates served as officials all across China.

Stop Here & Discuss

- During which dynasty did Confucian ideas become widely accepted in China?
- What did candidates have to show they knew to be chosen as government officials?
Background Information on Daoism

Daoism is a belief system based largely on the writings of a Chinese wise person, or **sage**, named Laozi (pronounced LAU-ZUH). Scholars know so little about Laozi’s life that some people believe he is only a legendary figure. However, many scholars believe that Laozi was born in the late sixth century B.C.E., and kept records in the court of the Zhou (pronounced JOE) empire. Laozi believed that striving for power and wealth was harmful because it was unnatural. He wrote down his ideas, which people later collected in a book called *Daodejing*, or “The Way and Its Power.”

- **Who was Laozi?**
- **According to Laozi, why should people not strive for power and wealth?**

Daoism is a philosophy that teaches that people can gain peace and happiness by becoming one with the Dao, or the Way. The Dao is a universal force connected to nature that creates order for all things. Daoism teaches that people should see themselves as part of nature, and lead a balanced life in harmony with it. Laozi believed that for people to discover how to behave, they should notice how nothing in nature strives for fame, power, or knowledge. Instead, nature accepts what comes its way, like a piece of grass that bends when the breeze blows. True harmony comes from balancing the opposite forces of nature, called yin and yang. Laozi taught that it is impossible to have good without bad, beauty without ugliness, or pleasure without pain. Because Daoists see good and bad as connected, they try to accept both.

Laozi taught rulers to make fewer laws. He called the way of ruling *wuwei* (pronounced WOO-WAY), or “action through nonaction.” Rather than attempting to take control and guide the people, a ruler should take very little action and only support the people in achieving what they naturally desire. Just as a farmer cannot force a plant to grow, Laozi thought that a ruler cannot force the people to prosper.

- **What is the Dao?**
- **According to Daoists, how can people gain peace and happiness?**
- **Why do Daoists try to accept all things that occur?**
- **How did Laozi believe rulers should govern?**

During the Han dynasty, from 206 B.C.E. to 220 C.E., Confucianism became the official state belief system. However, Han rulers also adopted some Daoist principles. For example, they made fewer laws and fought fewer wars, believing that laws and wars do not naturally strengthen society. One emperor followed Daoist advice and eliminated a heavy land tax on poor farmers. For a time, this policy helped ease the hunger of poor people.

- **In what ways did Han laws reflect Daoism?**
Background Information on Legalism

Legalism is a philosophy based on the ideas of Han Fei (pronounced HAHN-FAY), a Chinese man who lived during the Zhou (pronounced JOE) dynasty around 280 to 233 B.C.E. Han Fei was born a prince of the royal family of the state of Han. As a young man he received an excellent education under the most important Confucian scholars of his day. Surrounded by Chinese states battling for power under the weak Zhou empire, Han Fei questioned whether following Confucian principles could solve society’s problems. He did not agree with Confucian teachings that claimed proper behavior alone could create a stable and peaceful society. In a book called *Han Feizi* (pronounced HAN-FAY-ZUH), or “Basic Writings,” Han Fei instructed rulers to strengthen their state by enforcing strict laws, including severe punishments. He hoped the rulers who followed this philosophy, known as Legalism, would one day make China united and powerful again.

- Who was Han Fei?
- Why did Han Fei write *Basic Writings*?

Han Fei believed that most people were naturally evil and selfish. According to Han Fei, the only way to achieve a strong society was to create laws with clear punishments and rewards. For example, people caught criticizing the government could immediately be punished by being sent to live in China’s far northern frontier. Legalists taught that rulers should create detailed laws to train people to accept the rulers’ authority automatically. Legalists also believed that to be most effective, rulers must never demonstrate or give in to feelings of affection or charity. Above all, Han Fei said, rulers should trust no one, including their own families, because “he who trusts others will be controlled by others.”

- According to Han Fei, what was the best way to create a strong society?
- How did Han Fei believe a ruler should govern?

Legalist philosophy was applied by rulers during the Qin (pronounced CHIN) empire, which rose after the Zhou dynasty and lasted from 221 to 206 B.C.E. Above all else, Qin rulers wanted to build a strong central government and a well-organized society. They sought to break up family loyalty so that people were most loyal to the government. The strictest way in which Qin rulers practiced Legalism was by forbidding, or prohibiting, people from criticizing the Qin government. Any person caught doing so was severely punished. Government critics might be burned alive, boiled to death in pots, or have their hands cut off. Qin punishments became so harsh that they actually caused some people to rebel against the government. Legalism eventually failed in China because it was too strict.

- In what ways were legalist ideas applied by Qin rulers?
Guidelines for Experiencing Chinese Philosophies

Confucianism

Step 1: Create a new seating arrangement.

- All students, move desks into the seating arrangement shown in the diagram.
- Elders, sit on your desks to show that you are respected “models of virtue.”

Step 2: Review the standards for appropriate behavior.

- Elders, remind members of your group that they must be attentive and respectful throughout the lesson on Confucianism.
- Elders, teach members of your group how to stand, bow, and say the following greeting in unison: “We are honored to learn from such a wise and noble teacher.”

Step 3: Learn about Confucianism.

- Elders, pick different students to read aloud from Student Handout 2.2A until your group has read the entire section on Confucianism.
- Elders, make sure that everyone in your group can answer from memory all of the “Stop and Discuss” questions on Student Handout 2.2A.

Step 4: Demonstrate understanding of Confucianism.

- All students, respond to questions from your teacher by standing and speaking in a clear voice.
- When accepting rewards for answering questions correctly, be sure to thank your elder for skillfully teaching the group about Confucianism.
Daoism

Step 1: Create a new seating arrangement.
- There will be no formal seating arrangement for this lesson.
- You may sit on the floor or move your desk to a new location.
- You may sit next to whomever you like, as long as the arrangement encourages a harmonious and peaceful atmosphere.

Step 2: Review the standards for appropriate behavior.
- Speak softly and move quietly.
- Sit still, and move and speak only when necessary.
- Avoid bringing attention to yourself.

Step 3: Learn about Daoism.
- Either alone or with others, study the section in Student Handout 2.2A on Daoism.
- If you have questions about the reading on Daoism, try to answer them yourself instead of asking for help from others.

Step 4: Demonstrate understanding of Daoism.
- Find a creative way to quickly demonstrate that you can answer the following questions about Daoism:
  1. Who was Laozi?
  2. According to Daoists, how should people discover how to behave?
  3. What are yin and yang?
  4. How did Daoists believe rulers should rule?
- Your answer may be expressed in a verbal statement, as a series of visuals, in the form of a pantomime, or in some other creative manner you think effectively answers the four questions.
Legalism

Step 1: Create a new seating arrangement.
- Move desks into six rows as shown in the diagram.
- Your desk must not be within arms’ length of another student’s desk.

![Seating Arrangement Diagram]

Step 2: Review the standards for appropriate behavior.
- Speak only when given permission by the teacher.
- Sit with your back straight—no slouching.
- Keep your hands folded and on top of your desk.

Step 3: Learn about Legalism.
- Silently study the section on Legalism on Student Handout 2.2A.
- Make sure you can answer the “Stop and Discuss” questions.

Step 4: Demonstrate understanding of Legalism.
- Respond to questions from your teacher by standing and by speaking in a clear voice—never look the teacher in the eyes.
- Gracefully accept awards from the teacher, and do not dispute any punishment you are given.