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Book Review: Juks Adventure in Phuket Thailand by Meng Lin Chen and Michael Kirjon

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Book Review

Meng, L. C., & Kirjon, M (2005). *Juk's Adventure in Phuket Thailand*. Phuket, Thailand : Asia Design Consultants. 24 pp. ISBN: 97449287622.

***Reviewed by*
Mariana Kuhl, M.A.**

When I opened the book *Juk's Adventure in Phuket Thailand*, I was captured by the beauty of all of the colors and languages encompassed within its pages. It is simply written and realistically captures different aspects of the culture in Phuket, Thailand. Each page contains one straightforward statement pertaining to daily life in Phuket like "This is my house, we leave our shoes outside." It then moves on to Juk's daily routine; for example, Juk begins his week by going to the beaches, on Tuesdays he goes to the jungle, Wednesdays to the cave, Thursdays to the market, Fridays he goes swimming, Saturdays he goes to visit his grandma, and Sundays he goes to milk the rubber trees. He ends the book with different activities that are important to the culture such as helping baby turtles walk to the beach. *Juk's Adventure* books are great for elementary level students, and especially for ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms.

The teacher can interact with the students as the book is being read and ask them questions like "do you leave your shoes outside every time you go in to your house?" They can explain to the students that different cultures have varying daily traditions and they can discuss some that are different or similar to Juk's. A variety of discussion opportunities are readily available throughout the book.

The authors have pictures that go along with each description plus a translation of the sentence in *nine* different languages including English, Thai, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, Swedish, German, French, and Italian. Therefore, this book would make a great addition to any ESL teacher's classroom and would benefit all of the students by exposing them to different cultures and languages. Reading the book could establish a new beginning for students to explore and appreciate different cultures. The visual exposure to the written form of foreign languages could potentially become an opportunity for group discussion as well.

The following section lists some ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms as well as things that parents could do at home with their children. I have found *Juk's adventure* books to be a positive addition to any children's library.

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Activities That Correspond to This Book:

1. At the end of the book are vocabulary words that classroom teachers can use to introduce to students before reading the book. One activity is to introduce the words, describe them, and have the students discuss them. When the teacher reads the book, the students can also look for the words in the book. Once they find the words, students and teachers can discuss their meanings together. After reading the book the children could make a dictionary of the vocabulary words that were discussed. Each entry might contain a picture, a definition, and a sentence describing the word. If the student is an ESL student, he or she could make a bilingual dictionary in their language and English.
2. Students can do a sequencing activity of what Juk did on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc. The students can do this by drawing pictures of what Juk did every day of the week. Another option is to make cards of the activities that Juk did, and/or the teacher can make puppets of Juk's activities on popsicle sticks. Afterwards, the students can describe the sequence of the activities as a whole group and then break up into small groups and repeat the sequence.
3. More advanced students could do research about Juk's activities and give more details about what Thai people do. The students can make a poster of each activity and describe it in groups or as individuals. Investigating stories can make them seem more real and makes teaching more interesting. The learning experience, in turn, may become more intriguing and lasting for students.
4. The students can pretend they are Juk and pick a day of the week they like the most and journal about their experience adding more details to their activity.
5. The students can reflect on cultural differences and describe whether or not they would like to do those activities.
6. For beginner students, this is a good book to review the days of the week. The teacher could introduce a daily or weekly routine.
7. The students can write a story with the vocabulary words provided at the back of the book. For example, they could be asked to use one vocabulary word per sentence followed by illustration activation for each sentence.
8. The students could *role play* Juk's weekly routine and expand on the sentences and/or add more details.
9. The students could record one thing they do each day of the week and illustrate it. For example, on Monday I read a book. On Tuesdays I go to the park, etc. (This can be done before or after reading the book.) Then they might compare and contrast it to Juk's routine.
10. The students could research other activities that people from Phuket, Thailand regularly participate in. They could present this to the class with visuals in groups, partners, or individually.

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11. An enrichment activity that students could participate in could be to make personal connections to the book. For instance, if they have had any experiences similar to Juk's, they might be encouraged to share it with the class and bring in pictures and realia, if possible.

12. If teachers find that they do not have enough time to incorporate a book like this in the classroom, they could have the student take it home, read it with their parents and do an activity about it for homework and return it a few days later. (Teachers may want to consider having students and their families sign a contract to pay for the book if it gets lost.)

There is a collection of Juk's adventures found at www.juksadventures.com and this book has been purchased in Bangkok, Thailand at a store called Asia Books. More of these books can be found at www.asiabooks.com. I highly recommend this book to elementary school teachers, especially those working with ESL students.

About the Reviewer

Mariana Rojas Kuhl has taught three years in the Texas public school system for Northside Independent School District (NISD). She received first year educator of the year award in 2005, presented at the NISD ESL Summer Institute in 2008, and taught English to high school students in Thailand in 2008 and 2010. Mariana received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Texas A&M University in 2002 and her Master's in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) from the University of Texas in San Antonio in 2009. She has a true passion for traveling and promoting education throughout the world.

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