

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

The Empty Pot

*A Chinese Folktale
retold Demi*

- 1 A long time ago in China there was a boy named Ping who loved flowers. Anything he planted burst into bloom. Up came flowers, bushes, and even big fruit trees, as if by magic!
- 2 Everyone in the kingdom loved flowers too. They planted them everywhere, and the air smelled like perfume.



- 3 The Emperor loved birds and animals, but flowers most of all, and he tended his own garden every day. But the Emperor was very old. He needed to choose a **successor** to the throne. Who would his successor be? And how would the Emperor choose? Because the Emperor loved flowers so much, he decided to let the flowers choose.
- 4 The next day a **proclamation** was issued: All the children in the land were to come to the palace. There they would be given special flower seeds by the Emperor. “Whoever can show me their best in a year’s time,” he said, “will succeed me to the throne.”
- 5 This news created great excitement throughout the land! Children from all over the country swarmed to the palace to get their flower seeds. All the parents wanted their children to be chosen Emperor, and all the children hoped they would be chosen too!

6 When Ping received his seed from the Emperor, he was the happiest child of all. He was sure he could grow the most beautiful flower.

7 Ping filled a flowerpot with rich soil. He planted the seed in it very carefully. He watered it every day. He couldn't wait to see it sprout, grow, and blossom into a beautiful flower!

8 Day after day passed, but nothing grew in his pot. Ping was very worried. He put new soil into a bigger pot. Then he **transferred** the seed into the rich black soil. Another two months he waited. Still nothing happened.

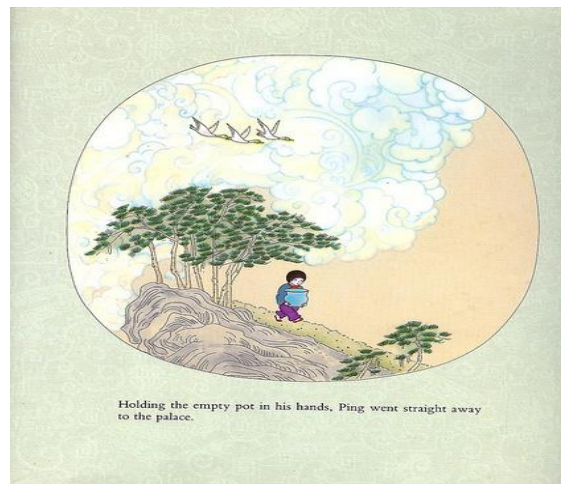
9 By and by the whole year passed. Spring came, and all the children put on their best clothes to greet the Emperor. They rushed to the palace with their beautiful flowers, eagerly hoping to be chosen. Ping was ashamed of his empty pot. He thought the other children would laugh at him because for once he couldn't get a flower to grow.

10 His clever friend ran by, holding a great big plant. "Ping!" he said. "You're not really going to the Emperor with an empty pot, are you? Couldn't you grow a great big flower like mine?"

11 "I've grown lots of flowers better than yours," Ping said. "It's just this seed that won't grow."

12 Ping's father overheard this and said, "You did your best, and your best is good enough to present to the Emperor."

13 Holding the empty pot in his hands, Ping went straight away to the palace.



14 The Emperor was looking at the flowers slowly, one by one. How beautiful all the flowers were! But the Emperor was frowning and did not say a word.

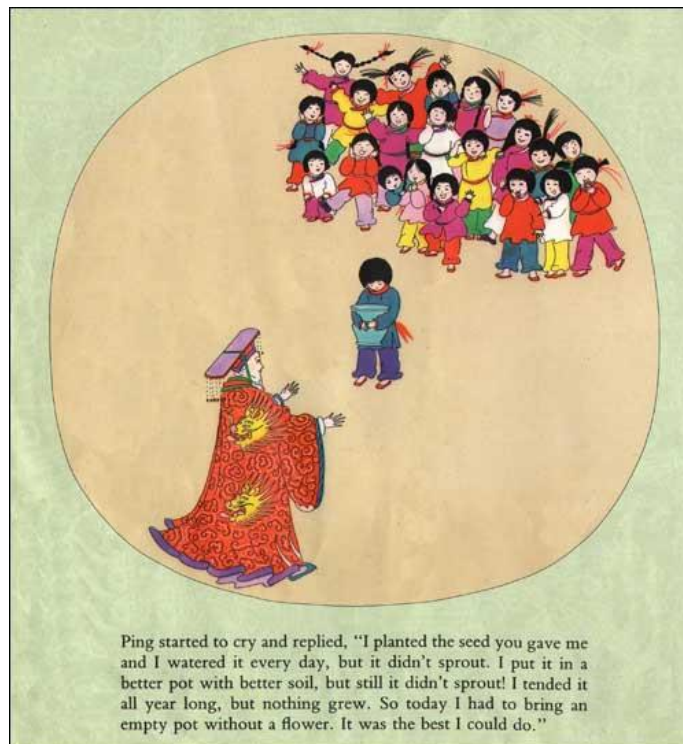
15 Finally, he came to Ping. Ping hung his head in shame, expecting to be punished. The Emperor asked, "Why did you bring an empty pot?"

16 Ping started to cry and replied, "I planted the seed you gave me and I watered it every day, but it didn't sprout. I put it in a better pot with better soil, but still it didn't sprout! I tended it all year long, but nothing grew. So today I had to bring an empty pot without a flower. It was the best I could do."

17 When the Emperor heard these words, a smile slowly spread over his face, and he put his arm around Ping. Then he exclaimed to one and all, "I have found him! I have found the one person worthy of being Emperor!"

18 "Where you got your seeds from, I do not know. For the seeds I gave you had all been cooked. So it was impossible for any of them to grow."

19 "I admire Ping's great courage to appear before me with the empty truth, and now I reward him with the entire kingdom and make him Emperor of all the land!"



Use **“The Empty Pot”** to answer questions 1 – 8. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

1. This Chinese Folktale was written to:

- A. Convince the reader to be clever
- B. Describe the origins of a Chinese custom
- C. Persuade the reader to do their best
- D. Justify the morality of growing flowers

2. The Emperor tricked the children because:

- A. He wanted to see who was the most clever
- B. He wanted to see who would devise the best excuse
- C. He wanted to see who would grow the best flower
- D. He wanted to see who would do their best

3. Which statement is not a characteristic of Ping?

- A. He loves to grow flowers.
- B. He loves birds and animals.
- C. He listens to the advice of elders.
- D. He values honesty over friendship.

4. Why does the Emperor cook the seeds, and then tell all the children - “Whoever can show me their best in a year’s time will succeed me to the throne.”

- A. The Emperor wants to find his most loyal subject.
- B. The Emperor wants to find his most industrious subjects.
- C. The Emperor wants to find his cleverest subject.
- D. The Emperor wants to find his most honest subject.

5. What does the word “successor” mean in paragraph 3?
- A. a person who wins a competition
 - B. a person that follows another
 - C. a person that finds what they are searching for
 - D. a person that is very accomplished
6. Which word is not a synonym for the word “proclamation” in paragraph 4?
- A. request
 - B. decree
 - C. pronouncement
 - D. announcement
7. What does the word “transferred” mean in paragraph 8?
- A. (v) to move from one person or place to another
 - B. (v) to change from one vehicle or method of transportation to another
 - C. (n) printed ticket that permits you to change from one vehicle to another without pay
 - D. (n) small picture or design that can be stuck to another surface by rubbing or ironing
8. Which of the following idioms best describes the theme of this folktale?
- A. It is always best to face the music.
 - B. Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.
 - C. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
 - D. That’s just how the cookie crumbles.

9. The following quote from paragraph 3 is an example of which figurative language?

Because the Emperor loved flowers so much, he decided to let the flowers choose.

- A. hyperbole
- B. personification
- C. simile
- D. metaphor

10. Which sequence of events best retells the story?

- A. Emperor loves flowers, uses seeds as test, only one tells truth, successor chosen
- B. Emperor tricks successor, bakes seeds, all lie but one, successor chosen
- C. Emperor needs successor, devises test, all fail but one, successor chosen
- D. Emperor disappointed in choices, devises test, all fail but one, successor chosen

11. Why does the author include the word “clever” in paragraph 10?

His clever friend ran by, holding a great big plant. “Ping!” he said. “You’re not really going to the Emperor with an empty pot, are you? Couldn’t you grow a great big flower like mine?”

- A. To show that Ping’s friend is trying to make Ping feel guilty about not having a flower.
- B. To show that Ping’s friend is trying to tempt Ping into buying a flower.
- C. To show that Ping’s friend is trying to humiliate Ping about the empty pot.
- D. To show that Ping’s friend is trying to feel less guilty about buying a flower.

Read the next two selections. Then choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

The Dishonest Merchant

*A Romanian Legend
retold David Roper*

- 1 Once upon a time, a prince known for his intolerance of dishonesty ruled in Romania. During his reign, a greedy merchant from another country traveled through the land.
- 2 During one journey, the merchant lost a bag containing one thousand Romanian coins called *lei*. Each time the merchant came to a crossroads, he told everyone that he would give one hundred lei to anyone who found the money.
- 3 Not long afterward, a peasant found the bag. He was an honest man, and he hastened to find the merchant.
- 4 “I found the bag behind the fish market at the crossroads near my home,” the peasant said to the merchant.
- 5 The merchant trusted no one, so he went aside to count the money. To his surprise, all one thousand coins were still in the bag. He was happy to have his money back, but he was also saddened by the thought of giving some of it away. He wondered how he could get out of his promise and still appear to be fair.
- 6 At last he went back to the peasant. “I thank you for returning my money,” he said, “I noticed that you have already taken your reward, for there were only nine hundred coins in the bag.”
- 7 The peasant protested. “But I did not even open the bag before I gave it to you!”
- 8 The merchant ignored the peasant’s words. “I hope you enjoy your reward,” he said. “Thank you again and good-bye.” He quickly departed.

9 The peasant was upset – not just because he had received no reward but because he had been accused of taking money without permission. He hurried to the palace and requested to see the prince. He told his sad story, and the prince promised that he would uncover the truth.

10 The prince sent word for the merchant and the peasant to appear before him on a certain day. He told the merchant to bring the bag of money.

11 When the day arrived, the merchant told his side of the story and the peasant told his. As the prince listened, it became obvious to him that the peasant was telling the truth.

12 When they had finished, the prince said to the merchant, “You lost a bag with one thousand coins. Is that correct?”

13 “Yes,” said the merchant.

14 The prince took the money bag, which now held only nine hundred lei. “And when you handed this bag, it contained only nine hundred coins?”

15 “That is true,” said the merchant, trying to look sincere.

16 “I am sure that you are telling the truth,” said the prince, “for nothing is punished so severely in this court as dishonesty. However, these facts present me with a problem.”

17 The prince held up the bag for all to see. It was an ordinary leather bag, like thousands of others. He asked the merchant, “If your bag contained one thousand coins and this bag has only nine hundred, then how do you know this is your bag?”

18 The merchant had trouble speaking. “I... I,” he stammered. Then he was silent.

19 The prince continued. “It is obvious that this is not your bag. My verdict therefore is that you should continue to inquire at crossroads until you find your bag with one thousand lei. I wish you well in your quest.”

20 The prince turned to the peasant. “And I decree that you take care of this bag of nine hundred coins until the rightful owner comes forth. If we do not find the owner within three months, then the money will be yours as a reward for your honesty.”

21 There was nothing more to say, since there could be no appeal regarding the prince’s verdict. The dishonest merchant and the honest peasant left the prince’s chamber, the first very sad and the second very happy.

22 Thus was dishonesty treated in the days of the prince.



Guilty

It's not fair.
My little sister glows –
She has a reputation that reaches out to others,
Shakes their hand,
5 And lets them know she can do no wrong.

I told them,
Mom and Dad both,
That she took it from the pan
When they noticed the void,
10 Like a pothole in the middle of the street –
One cookie gone from the cookie sheet.
My father shook his head at me.
My mother gave her a hug.

They sent her off to play
15 To enjoy the day.
My free time was taken away,
Sent to my room to stay.

I felt frustrated with their frowns.
“Why was she *always* blameless?”
20 I thought while Mom wiped my hands
With a wet paper towel,
Browning with each stroke
From chocolate on my fingertips.

I stomped to my room,
25 My feet crashing like thunder.
It's not fair.

Use “**The Dishonest Merchant**” to answer questions 12 - 15. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

12. Why does the peasant want to meet with the prince?

- A. to help the merchant find his bag of money
- B. because the merchant implies that the peasant is a thief
- C. to convince the prince to let him keep all the merchant’s money
- D. because the prince calls for the peasant to appear before him

13. Which sentence from the story hints that the merchant plans to trick the peasant?

- A. *Each time the merchant came to a crossroads, he told everyone that he would give one hundred lei to anyone who found the money.*
- B. *The merchant trusted no one, so he went aside to count the money.*
- C. *To his surprise, all one thousand coins were still in the bag.*
- D. *He wondered how he could get out of his promise and still appear to be fair.*

14. Which word or words from paragraph 8 help the reader understand the meaning of the word **departed**?

- A. *hope you enjoy your reward*
- B. *ignore the peasant’s words*
- C. *Thank you again*
- D. *good-bye*

15. What is the best summary of the story?

A. A peasant finds a bag of money behind a fish market that returns it to a merchant for a reward. The merchant refuses to pay the reward. The peasant goes to the prince and tells his story. The merchant also tells his story. The bag is supposed to have 1,000 coins but has only 900. The prince listens to both the peasant and the merchant.

B. After losing a bag of money, a merchant promises a reward of 100 coins for its return. When the bag is returned by a peasant, the merchant tries to avoid paying the reward by saying the peasant took some money. They both go before the Romanian prince. The prince uses the merchant's statements against him to reward the peasant.

C. One day a Romanian prince asks a peasant and merchant to appear in his chambers to talk about a bag of money. The merchant says the peasant took some money out of the bag. The prince can tell that the merchant is greedy. He holds up the money bag. It is made of leather just like other money bags. The prince says that bag does not belong to the merchant.

D. A merchant travels to Romania, where he loses a bag of money. He says that he will give 100 coins to the person who finds it. A peasant finds the bag and returns it to the merchant. The merchant tells the peasant that the bag is missing the reward money. The peasant says that he did not take any money out of the bag. The prince gives the bag of money to the peasant.

Use **“Guilty”** to answer questions 16 – 18. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

16. Based on the poem, what can the reader conclude about the speaker’s past behavior?

- A.** The speaker usually acts in a way that pleases the parents.
- B.** The speaker has tried a similar approach to get out of trouble before.
- C.** The speaker defends the little sister even when she is wrong.
- D.** The speaker has difficulty remembering the family rules.

17. Why does the poem begin and end with the same line?

- A.** To emphasize the speaker’s feelings about the situation
- B.** To foreshadow a problem the speaker has
- C.** To show the frustration of the speaker’s family members
- D.** To highlight a change in the way the speaker feels about the little sister

18. Read these lines from the poem.

My father shook his head at me.
My mother gave her a hug.

These two lines reveal that the speaker’s parents –

- A.** Can be easily tricked by their children
- B.** Believe they know the truth about what happened
- C.** Are surprised that a cookie is missing
- D.** Are glad to see their children

Use “The Dishonest Merchant” and “Guilty” to answer questions 19 – 22. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

19. How are the merchant in “The Dishonest Merchant” and the speaker in “Guilty” similar?

- A. Both of them are disappointed in themselves for what they did.
- B. Both of them are confused about why they have been punished.
- C. Both of them try to blame others in order to get what they want.
- D. Both of them are forced to keep their promises.

20. The actions of the prince in the story and the parents in the poem are based on –

- A. fairness
- B. courage
- C. loyalty
- D. kindness

21. How is the point of view in the poem different from that of the story?

- A. Only the poem focuses on the thoughts of just one character.
- B. Only the poem describes the motivation of a main character.
- C. Only the poem shows the actions of just one character.
- D. Only the poem explains how each character becomes involved in the situation.

22. How are the prince in the story and the speaker’s parents in the poem alike?

- A. They know the people they speak with.
- B. They realize who is at fault.
- C. They find a clever way to solve a problem.
- D. They are asked to help other people.