



THE PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA

PALEY EDUCATION @Home
presented by **citi**

What We're Watching





Greetings from The Paley Center for Media's Education Department!

Welcome to the latest installment of "What We're Watching." Twice a month the education department reaches out to the community with tips and ideas for consuming media with kids by highlighting different themes that connect to two selected programs, one for younger viewers and one for older viewers, each with related activities and resources.

Watching media alongside your kids is a perfect jumping-off point to making media literacy a part of your everyday lives. Familiarizing yourself with the basics is a great first step. You can [view our first newsletter about media literacy best practices archived here](#). We also recommend the [National Association for Media Literacy Education's Parents Guide](#)—it's a terrific introduction!

What We're Watching: There Be Wood Dragons

Happy Lunar New Year! 2024 is the Year of the Wood Dragon so it is no coincidence that our recommendations this week both include the word "dragon" in their titles. The dragon is the only mythical creature in the Chinese zodiac. This magical beast is symbolic of authority, honor, and dignity, and has represented imperial power in China since ancient times. It is also the luckiest and most auspicious of the twelve animals. In a dragon year, people are said to be able to harness the creature's intelligence, leadership, and abilities to pursue their dreams with creativity, passion, courage, and confidence. Dragon years are considered special, so let's hope that translates into positive energy, compassion for others, and thoughtful storytelling in the media that gets produced.

This Week's Recommendations for Younger Viewers

Wish Dragon (2021)

Recommended for Grades 2+

Available on Netflix

Din is a working-class college student who dreams to reunite with his childhood

friend Li Na, who moved years ago from his neighborhood with her father, Mr. Wang, and now lives a lavish life. One day, he is given a teapot by an elderly man; from it emerges a dragon named Long, whose job as a wish dragon is to grant three wishes to whoever holds the teapot. Long reveals that every wish dragon must serve ten masters to enter the Spirit world, and that Din is his tenth master. You'll have to watch this heartfelt fable to find out what Din wishes is for and to see if Long makes it to the afterworld.

Viewing Questions

- What was childhood like for Din and Li Na?
- What causes Li Na and her father to move away from Din? How does this affect their lives going forward?
- How does Din meet Long?
- If you have seen or read Aladdin, what are the similarities and differences between the stories?
- What does Din wish for more than anything?
- What does Long believe about humans and money?
- What does Din do for Li Na and how do their lives change as a result?
- What lesson did Long learn about wealth and riches by the end of the story?

Extension Activities

[Chinese Dragon Craft](#)

[Citrus Fruit Paper Craft](#)

Additional Resources

Read

Dragons Love Tacos by Adam Rubin

The Great Race: The Story of the Chinese Zodiac by Christopher Corr

The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch

Wings of Fire series by Tui T. Sutherland

The Year of the Dragon: Tales from the Chinese Zodiac by Oliver Chin

Watch

The Neverending Story (1984)

How to Train Your Dragon (2010)

Raya and the Last Dragon (2021)



This Week's Recommendations for Older Viewers

American Dragon: Jake Long “Old School Training” S1E1 (2005)

Recommended for Grades 2+

Available on Disney+

In *American Dragon* the world is filled with mythical beasts who try to live normal lives among humans who are unaware of their existence. Each part of the world is protected by a dragon who is tasked with protecting these creatures and maintaining their secrecy. Jake Long, a skateboarding teenager, is a dragon in training with New York City as his domain. His grandfather, the previous American Dragon, is getting too old to do the job, and is training Jake to take over for him. In this episode, Jake is fed up when Grandpa leads him through a series of disgusting and seemingly pointless workout drills, causing him to avoid his training. When Grandpa is caught alone by Huntsman and Huntsgirl, Jake must use his new skills to fight Huntsman and save the day.

Viewing Questions

- What mythological creatures live in NYC according to Grandpa?
- What is Grandpa training Jake to do in the first episode?
- How does his first attempt against the Huntsman go in Central Park?
- What does Grandpa say he needs to do after his failed fight?
- Why does Jake skip training with Grandpa after a few days of showing up for practice?
- What happens to Grandpa as a result?
- How does Jake defeat the Huntsman and Huntsgirl on the roof to save the day?

Additional Resources

Read

Eragon by Christopher Paolini

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire by JK Rowling

[Shaolin Dragon Dancing](#)

Watch

Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story (1993)

The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013)

The Tiger's Apprentice (2024)

As always, if you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out to us at eduny@paleycenter.org.

Happy viewing,

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Photos—*Wish Dragon*: Netflix; *American Dragon: Jake Long*: Disney