

Beautiful River

This story was written by a girl who becomes friends with a new student, Jiang Li. The author tells about a day she spends with her new friend.

1 Last week a new girl came to our school. Her name is Jiang Li. The teacher had trouble saying her name. Jiang Li told us to call her Li. She said that her name means "beautiful river" in Chinese.

2 Li told the class that she lives on a houseboat. She said that a houseboat is just like other houses, except that it floats. I thought about the boat ride my family took last summer. The boat had rocked and bounced. The ride had made me so dizzy that I couldn't eat my lunch. But a houseboat sounded very different. Li said that living on a houseboat is soothing. Most of the time the boat rocks gently. She said that at night it feels as if the river is rocking her to sleep.

3 Li invited me to visit her houseboat. I could hardly wait to see it! That Saturday Dad and I went to spend the day with Li's family. The houseboat was docked in a shady spot on the river. There were curtains hanging in the windows. There were pretty white flowers in a pot near the door.

4 Li and her parents were waiting for us. Li didn't say hello. She said, "Ahoy, mates," just like a real sailor!

5 Li pointed to some marks painted on the outside of the boat. She explained that these were Chinese letters. They spelled Jiang Li. Li said that her mother thought "beautiful river" was a good name for both Li and the boat.

6 Li and her parents took us to the back part of the boat. Li picked up a fishing pole and hopped onto a chair. She said that she was catching our lunch! Li's father invited Dad and me to fish, too. Soon we had caught all the fish we needed.

7 Then we went down several steps into the living room. There was a kitchen off to one side. The inside of Li's houseboat looked just like a regular house. Li said that they have lights, a telephone, and even a television. But then I noticed something strange. All the furniture was fastened to the floor! Li's mother explained that sometimes the water is rough. During storms the boat can rock pretty hard.

8 Li showed me her room. It had a bed with drawers underneath it. She had a desk that looked just like mine, but hers was neat. Li laughed when I told her this. She said that if you have a small room, you have to keep things in order. Her mother said that Li must put things where they belong.

9 There was a large gray cat curled up on Li's bed. The cat's name was Misho. Li said Misho's job is to keep the water rats away. I told her about my grandmother's cat that keeps mice out of the barn.

10 Li's mother made us a delicious lunch of fish and noodles. Li and her parents ate with chopsticks. It looked easy. Li showed me how to hold the chopsticks and use them as a utensil. I tried, but I kept dropping my food on my plate. Finally I just laughed and used a fork instead.

11 After lunch Li's father asked us whether we wanted to go for a ride. We all jumped up with excitement. Li untied the rope that held the boat to the dock. Dad helped Li's father pull up the anchor. Then Li's mother started the motor. We went for the smoothest ride ever! It seemed as if the land was moving, not us. Li's mother even let me steer the boat.

12 Later Li and I went up on the top deck. The sunlight sparkled on the water. When other boats cruised by, the people waved to us. We spent the rest of the afternoon talking and watching the boats disappear one by one down the long beautiful river.

1 What happens after the characters in the story go fishing?

- A. Li points to some Chinese letters painted on the boat.
- B. Li's mother makes fish and noodles for lunch.
- C. Li picks up a fishing pole and hops onto a chair.
- D. Li tells the class about her houseboat.

2 How does Li feel about living on the houseboat?

- A. She wishes she lived in a house on land.
- B. She enjoys living on a houseboat.
- C. She wants to live on a different river.
- D. She thinks living on a houseboat is dangerous.

3 Look at the list below. It shows some events that happen in the story. Which event belongs in line 1?

- 1. _____
- 2. Li tells her class about her home.
- 3. The author visits Li at her home.

- A. Li's mother fixes lunch for everyone.
- B. Li shows the author her bedroom.
- C. Li's father gives them a ride on the houseboat.
- D. Li comes to her new classroom.

4 In paragraph 10, which words help the reader know what utensil means?

- A. kept dropping
- B. looked easy
- C. used a fork
- D. showed me how

5 Why is the furniture on Li's houseboat fastened down?

- A. So the furniture will not move when the houseboat rocks
- B. So Li will not move the furniture around
- C. So it will be easier to find things
- D. So that people will not trip over the furniture

6 What is Misho's job on the houseboat?

- A. To keep water rats away
- B. To welcome visitors
- C. To help catch fish to eat
- D. To watch for storms

- 7** What is the main idea of paragraph 2?
- A. It is easy for Li to fall asleep at night.
 - B. The author tries to eat lunch on a boat.
 - C. Li tells what it's like to live on a houseboat.
 - D. Li thinks boat rides are too bumpy.
- 8** What does Jiang Li mean in Chinese?
- A. Good friend
 - B. White flower
 - C. Beautiful river
 - D. Floating house
- 9** The author discovers that using chopsticks is —
- A. the best way to eat
 - B. an important skill
 - C. not a polite thing to do
 - D. harder than it looks

10 Read the first sentence of the summary below to answer the next question. Which sentences complete the summary?

Summary
The author visits her friend's houseboat

- A. She catches fish for lunch. She learns how to use chopsticks.
 - B. Her friend gives her a tour. She learns what life on a houseboat is like.
 - C. She finds out what her friend's name means. The houseboat has the same name.
 - D. She gets to ride on the houseboat. The houseboat rocks gently.
- 11** The reader can tell that Li and her parents —
- A. have visitors every day
 - B. want to move to a house on land
 - C. worry a lot about storms on the river
 - D. are comfortable living on their houseboat
- 12** The events in this story take place on a houseboat. Why is this important?
- A. The author is able to see a different way of living.
 - B. Li's family moves to a different town each year.
 - C. Misho does not like riding up and down the river.
 - D. The author used to live on a houseboat.

Reading Open Response.

Write your answer to the open-response in the lined space provided below. Use a rubric for scoring.

After reading the selection, describe four ways the houseboat is just like a regular house.
Use important details from the selection in your answer.

1.

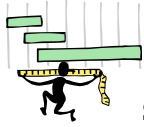
2.

3.

4.

Create your own scoring rubric for excellence.

Performance Levels	Detailed criteria for each level of performance
4 Advanced	
3 Proficient	
2 Needs Improvement	
1 Failing	



Six Point Rubric

Score	<i>Characteristics of student work at each level of competence.</i>
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	
0	

Using the Rubric Templates in the Classroom

Six Steps to Rubric Development

1. What do you intend students to know, understand, or be able to do?
2. Identify skills that must be demonstrated in order to complete the task.
3. Identify the judging criteria or essential elements that ensure that the outcome will be high in quality. These will become the rows in your rubric.
4. In the cells of the rubric, develop clear descriptions of performance at each achievement level for each essential element of quality.
5. Decide on a rating scheme that fits in with your grading philosophy and build it into the rubric. Be prepared to translate scores received into your scheme.
6. Keep track of all your assessment data in a binder with a section for each student.

You can place the template face down in a copy machine and copy the template onto a transparency so you can develop rubrics with student input.

Project the transparency onto a white board and fill in the squares with the performance assessment measures and criteria you and your students create together.

Some teachers use colored paper 3 x 5 squares for performance levels; yellow for 0 points, blue for 6 points etc. Students write the performance assessment criteria you develop in class on the paper squares. When assessing their own work, they can select the squares that best represent the quality of their work. Their goal is to move up to all blue squares.

Learning to create rubrics is like learning anything valuable. It takes an initial time investment. Once the task becomes second nature, it actually saves time while creating a higher quality student product.

Why should students create their own rubrics? Reading or listening to a teacher's expectations is very different for a student than creating and accomplishing his or her own goals. The purpose of inviting students to develop their own evaluation structure is to improve their motivation, interest and performance in the project. As students' overall participation in school increases, they are invested in the process.