



**TEACHER READING GUIDE**

***Yo-Yo and Yeou-Cheng Ma:  
Finding Their Way***

written by Ai-Ling Louie  
illustrated by Cathy Peng

This book is from  
the **Amazing Asian  
Americans** series.



**Essential Question:** How does identifying how characters respond to challenging situations help the reader explain the theme and better understand the text?

**BOOK SNAPSHOT**

Selected from the New Worlds  
Reading Initiative Booklist



**Text Type:** Literary

**Genre:** Narrative Nonfiction,  
Biography

**Themes/Topics:** Music,  
Independence, Family

**Lexile:** 650L

**SKILLS ALIGNED WITH FLORIDA'S ELA  
B.E.S.T. STANDARDS**

**Word Work**

**ELA.4.F.1.3 (a)**

Decode and encode words  
with the final stable syllable  
-tion.

**Vocabulary**

**ELA.4.V.1.1**

Use grade-level academic  
vocabulary. (Tier 2)

**Comprehension**

**ELA.4.R.1.2**

Explain an implied theme  
and how it develops.

**BUILDING BACKGROUND**

Use the following prompts to build excitement for  
reading *Yo-Yo and Yeou-Cheng Ma: Finding  
Their Way*:

- Yo-Yo Ma is a famous cello player.
    - Display the illustration on p. 21.
  - He was considered to be a child **prodigy**.
    - A child **prodigy** describes someone who has a great natural ability for something.
  - Provide students the opportunity to share other prodigies they may know.
    - For example: Simone Biles, LeBron James
- As you read, look for reasons why people considered Yo-Yo Ma to be a child prodigy.



**STUDENT LEARNING TARGETS**

**Today I am:**  
identifying how  
characters respond to  
situations.

**So that I can:**  
explain how the  
implied theme develops  
and better understand  
the text.

## WORD WORK – DECODE AND ENCODE WORDS WITH THE FINAL STABLE SYLLABLE *-tion*

Students will identify the **final stable syllable** *-tion* to decode and encode unknown words. **Final stable syllables** are syllables usually found at the end of words and can be taught as recognizable units due to their consistent pronunciations across different words.

- Write *-tion* on the board. Say:
  - “This syllable is pronounced /shən/. Repeat after me: /shən/.”
  - “When *-tion* is added to a word, it means the *act or result of*. Education, for example, is the *act or result of educating*.”

Suggested words from the book to guide your lesson:

|                              |                                  |                             |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>education</b> (p. 6)      | <b>competition</b> (p. 8, p. 10) | <b>portion</b> (p. 24)      |
| <b>revolutionary</b> (p. 28) | <b>congratulations</b> (p. 32)   | <b>inauguration</b> (p. 40) |

### Decode

- Review syllable types.
- Write *education* on the board or chart paper. Say:
  - “This word is *education*. How many syllables are in *education*?”
  - “There are four syllables. *Ed - u - ca - tion*.” Write *ed - u - ca - tion* on the board with a hyphen separating each syllable.
  - Apply knowledge of syllable types to determine the pronunciation of the first three syllables.
    - Example: The syllable *ed* ends with a consonant, *d*, which makes it a closed syllable. In a closed syllable, the vowel *e* makes the short vowel sound /ĕ/. The syllable is pronounced /ĕd/.
  - “The first three syllables are pronounced /ĕd/-/ŭ/-/kā/. How do we pronounce this syllable again?” Point to *-tion*.
  - “Yes, it is /shən/. Now blend the word parts together: *education*.” Run your finger under the word as you blend.
- Repeat with other words from the list.

### Encode

- Model encoding a word from the list using syllable types and letter-sound correspondences. Circle *-tion* in the word to reinforce students’ understanding of the syllable as a unit.
- Read a word from the list to students while concealing it from their view.
- Students will use knowledge of syllable types and letter-sound correspondences to encode *-tion* words from the book on paper or whiteboards. Ask students to circle *-tion* in each word.

**ELA.4.F.1.3: Use knowledge of grade-level phonics and word-analysis skills to decode words.**

- a. Apply knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology to read and write unfamiliar single-syllable and multisyllabic words in and out of context.**

### Did You Know?

Identifying **syllable types** is an effective strategy for decoding multisyllabic words. There are six basic syllable patterns: closed, open, vowel team, *r*-controlled, vowel-consonant *e*, and final stable. Syllable patterns encourage students to notice similar chunks of print when they are developing automatic word recognition skills.

## TALK ABOUT NEW AND INTERESTING WORDS

Tier 2 vocabulary words, paired with student-friendly definitions, can be used for explicit vocabulary instruction. It is important to provide background information and learning opportunities to help students make connections to the words. Examples of Tier 2 vocabulary words for this text are:



**thunderous** (p. 25): If a noise is described as **thunderous**, it is very loud and deep. The auditorium fills with **thunderous** applause after six-year-old Yo-Yo plays the entire piece.



**revolutionary** (p. 28): **Revolutionary** describes something or someone that causes great change or impact on the way something is done. Dr. Ma’s method of teaching music piece by piece to children is **revolutionary** because it allows for young children to learn long pieces of music.



**obedient** (p. 35): When something or someone is **obedient**, they do what they are told. Young Yo-Yo explains to his father that if he were always **obedient**, he would never be able to find himself.



**universal** (p. 38): If something is **universal**, it relates to everyone in the world. Yo-Yo speaks Chinese, French, and English but believes music to be the **universal** language.

**ELA.4.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.**

### Vocabulary Extension Activity

Use target vocabulary to teach word relationships and aid students in making connections between familiar words and their synonyms. Refer to p. 205 of Florida’s ELA B.E.S.T. Standards for additional information on word relationships.

- Example Synonyms:
  - **thunderous**: loud, roaring
  - **obedient**: attentive, compliant, loyal

## READ FOR MEANING – THEME

ELA.4.R.1.2: Explain a stated or implied theme and how it develops, using details, in a literary text.



### Before:

Introduce the story and the purpose.

- *Yo-Yo and Yeou-Cheng Ma: Finding Their Way* is a biography. A **biography** is a person's life story written by someone else.
  - This biography is unique because it tells about the life stories of both Yo-Yo and Yeou-Cheng.
- Students will explain an implied **theme** and how it develops, using details from the text.
  - The **theme** of a story is the underlying message, or big idea, that the author wants the reader to take away or learn from reading a story.
  - When a **theme** is not explicitly stated in the text, it is an *implied theme*.



### During:

Recreate the table below on the board or chart paper. As you read, record text evidence depicting challenges the characters face and how they respond to the challenges.

| Page(s)    | What challenge does the character face? | How does the character respond to the challenge?                            |
|------------|---|---|
| p. 12 – 20 | Yo-Yo hates the violin.                 | Yo-Yo chooses to play a different instrument than the one his sister plays. |
| p. 24 – 25 |   |   |
| p. 31      |   |   |
| p. 34 – 36 |   |   |

**Model (I do):** Think aloud about a challenge a character faces, and explain how the character responds to the challenge.

- For example, read p. 12 – 20. Say:
  - “Yo-Yo faces the challenge of not wanting to play the violin. He hates playing the same instrument as his sister.”
  - “At first, he responds by refusing to play and breaking his violin. Then, he makes a choice independently to play a different instrument than what his sister plays.”

**Guided Practice (We do):** Use p. 24 – 31 to guide students in identifying a challenge each character faces and how they respond to the challenge.

- Discuss whether students would respond the same way or differently than the characters in the story.

**Independent Practice (You do):** Students will independently read p. 34 – 36, identify a character's challenge, and explain how the character responds to the challenge.



### After:

- Review the table to identify the **theme**. (*Identified themes may vary based on class discussions but may include: It is important to be independent, making independent choices leads to self-discovery, etc.*)
  - Guiding questions:
    - How are the challenges the characters face similar?
    - How do the characters respond?
      - What similarities do you see in the characters' responses?
    - How would the story be different if the characters responded differently?
  - **Writing prompt:** Identify the central theme of the story. Using details from the story, write one paragraph explaining how the theme develops.

### Try This!

Play audio/video of Yo-Yo Ma playing the cello and Yeou-Cheng Ma playing the violin to engage students and deepen background knowledge.