

## THE DRAGON COMPANION

An Encyclopedia

By **Carole Wilkinson**

Illustrated by Dean Jones

'Come with me on another dragonish adventure. Enter my world of dragons!' Carole Wilkinson

### Rationale

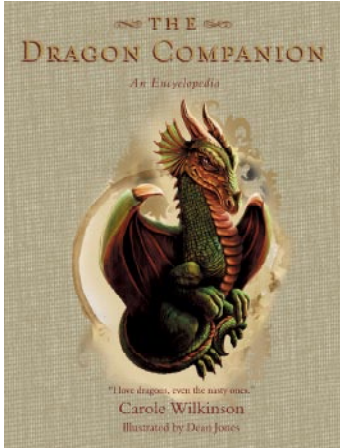
Students should use the text and other sources to complete the tasks in these teacher notes. The activities are designed to engage students and provide a creative learning experience.

### How to use

Learning activities suggested in one discipline may also be applicable to another discipline.

### About the book

The Dragon Companion is a rich and detailed reference text. It charts the history of Eastern and Western dragon stories from 2000 BCE to the current day. Clear maps and timelines allow readers to locate where and when the stories originated. The myths and legends provide enormous scope for student work. They fire the imagination. They give an insight into past societies. Entries about contemporary dragon stories highlight the continuing fascination with these creatures. With its detailed catalogue of dragons in art, architecture, books and film, The Dragon Companion is an excellent resource for students. It provides an opportunity for them to practice the skill of reference use and the skill of imagination.



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## Contents

### A history of Dragon Stories

Maps  
World  
Europe  
Great Britain  
Middle East  
Asia

### Introduction

### A-Z

Ancient Greek Dragon  
British Dragon  
Chinese Dragon  
European Dragon  
Iranian Dragon  
Ketos  
Russian Dragon  
Scandinavian Dragon

### Glossary

### Dragon in Other Languages

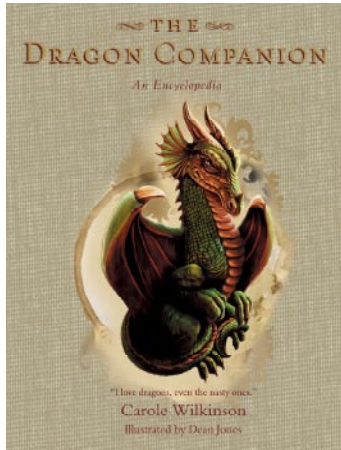
### Modern Dragon Books

### Dragon Movies

### Dragon-slayers

### Acknowledgements

### References



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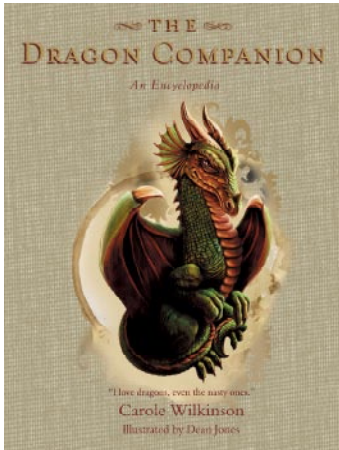
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### Story themes

Courage  
Death  
Destiny  
Fear  
Friendship  
Greed  
Hate  
Honour  
Love  
Loyalty

### Some topics for study

Ancient civilizations  
Britain  
Contemporary myths, legends and fairytales  
Cultural heritage  
China  
Dragons  
European history  
Fables and folklore  
Gender  
Iran  
Japan  
Knights of the Round Table  
Oral storytelling  
Politics and government  
Multiculturalism  
Mythology  
Religion, rituals and worship  
Russia  
Scandinavia  
Scotland  
The Middle Ages  
Theatre (contemporary and historical)



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## Activities

### Dragon hunters start here...

Complete the activities in these notes and become a dragon hunter like Carole Wilkinson. Record your findings in a Dragon Journal. As you search through The Dragon Companion remember Carole's warning: '...many of these dragons bite!'

## HUMANITIES

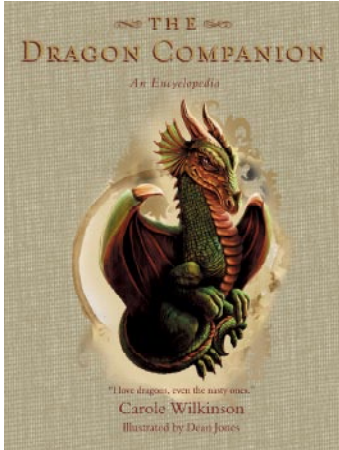
### Geography/History

#### Dragon Timeline

1. Begin your search for dragons on pages vi and vii of The Dragon Companion. Use the information on the timeline and in the text to answer the questions below.

- Locate 500 BCE on the Europe timeline. Who were dragons slain by in the Greek myths?
- Whenever you see the symbol of the pointing dragon talon it will direct you to related entries. Under the entry about Greek myths you will find this symbol. Follow it. Where did Greek dragons live?
- Use the index of this book to find a list of dragon slayers. Name one slayer and the dragon that they fought.
- When did the German composer Richard Wagner write an opera with a dragon villain?
- Follow the dragon talon under the entry about Wagner. What did Siegfried have a bath in and why?
- Locate 1000 BCE on the Middle East timeline. What does Old Testament Prophet Daniel do to a dragon?
- Locate 1500 CE on the Asia timeline. What ingredients can be found in a Chinese medical book?
- Follow the symbol of the pointing dragon talon under the Chinese medical book entry. Why were bits of a dragon's body added to potions and ointments?
- What was the Greek remedy for nightmares?
- Sometimes in the text you will see a word highlighted in gold. That means there is an entry with that name that you can look up for more information. In the entry on remedies the word bones is highlighted in gold. Look up this word. If a person is farting a lot, how could they stop?

2. Draw a dragon timeline in your Dragon Journal. Use the same format as the timeline in The Dragon Companion. Fill it with your favourite pieces of information



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from the text. After you have finished show a classmate so that they can follow your timeline to the facts that you think are the most interesting.

### Dragon Map

3. You will visit many places on your search for dragons. Locate the Maps section of the text to see an overview of where your adventures will take you.

- On what page of the text will you find a larger map of Asia?
- On what page of the text will you find a larger map of the Middle East?
- On what page of the text will you find a larger map of Europe?

4. Draw a map of the world in your journal.

- You will add to this map on your search for dragons, so make sure it is at least A3 size. (You may need to draw this on a separate sheet of paper if your journal is not big enough.)
- Include a border, title, north point, legend and scale.
- Mark on your map the places and regions shown on pages x, xi, xii, xiii of the text.
- Mark on your map present-day capitals.

5. In *The Dragon Companion* we learn that dragons from different countries live in different habitats. Complete the table below.

Dragon	Example	Habitat	Example
Western Dragon			
Chinese Dragon			
Sea Dragon			
Iranian Dragon	Turan Dragon	Desert and Wilderness	Iranian Desert

6. Mark on your map any deserts, mountains, oceans or rivers listed in your table.

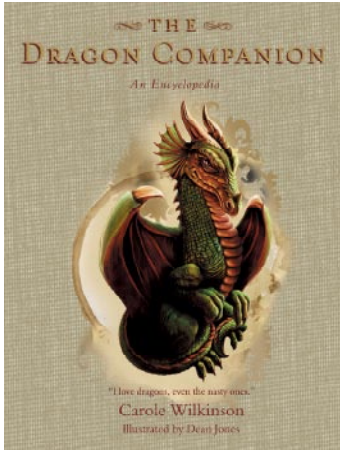
7. Draw a picture of each dragon next to its habitat.

### Extended research

#### China

8. Many of the stories in *The Dragon Companion* are from China. In pairs research one of the following time periods. Present your information as a power point.

Time Period	Date of Period
Shang Kingdom	c1500-c1050
Western Zhou Kingdom	1050 - 771BCE



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Time Period	Date of Period
Eastern Zhou Kingdom	771 - 221BCE
Qin Dynasty	221 - 206BCE
Han Dynasty	206BCE - 220CE
Disunity Dynasty	220 - 589CE
Sui Dynasty	589 - 618CE
Tang Dynasty	618 - 907CE
Song Dynasty	960 - 1279CE
Yuan Dynasty	1279 - 1368CE
Ming Dynasty	1368 - 1644CE
Qing Dynasty	1644 - 1912CE

Source: The Department of Education March 2007

Include information under the headings listed below.

- Dates of the period that you are researching
- Significant people of the time period
- Time period map
- Important events
- Daily life
- Clothing/houses
- Food
- Dragons that you have discovered
- Bibliography (with primary and secondary resources)

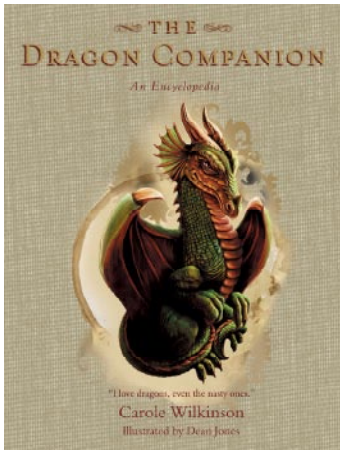
Teacher note: Before students begin they could develop an action plan to ensure that the task is completed on time. An example of a simple action plan can be found at <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/GreatwallLongWallL4.doc>.

Students could also create a K-W-L-H organiser where they note what they know about the subject, what they want to learn, what they have learnt (completed at the end of the task) and how they learnt the information. An example of an organiser chart can be found at <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/GreatwallLongWallL4.doc>.

**Ancient Greece**

Carole Wilkinson informs us about the many dragons that appear in the myths and legends of Ancient Greece. Use The Dragon Companion and the website 'Winged Sandals' at <http://www.abc.net.au/arts/wingedsandals/history/> to complete the following activities. Record all answers in your Dragon Journal.

(Teacher note: 'The British Museum' website at [http://www.ancientgreece.co.uk/geography/home\\_set.html](http://www.ancientgreece.co.uk/geography/home_set.html) has interactive maps of Ancient Greece.)



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### Athenian Politics and Government

- List two differences between democracy in Ancient Athens and democracy in contemporary Australia.
- List two differences between the jury system in Ancient Athens and the jury system in contemporary Australia.

### Religion, Ritual and Worship

The Ancient Greeks believed in many gods. You will find some examples in The Dragon Companion and some on the 'Winged Sandals' website.

- Make a list of three gods. Draw symbols to represent the aspect of the world that the Ancient Greeks believed they controlled.
- How did the Greeks honour their gods?
- What is an oracle? Ask the oracle a question on the 'Winged Sandals' website and see what your future holds!
- Myths and legends are full of gods that do not always act fairly. Why do you think this is the case?

### Philosophy: Ancient Greek Thinkers

- What is a philosopher?
- What sort of questions did the first Greek philosophers ask?
- One Greek philosopher, Socrates, said: 'People do wrong through lack of knowledge'. Do you agree?

### Fashion

- What did women wear in Ancient Greece?
- What did men wear in Ancient Greece?

### Education

- Compare and contrast education in Ancient Greece with education in contemporary Australia.

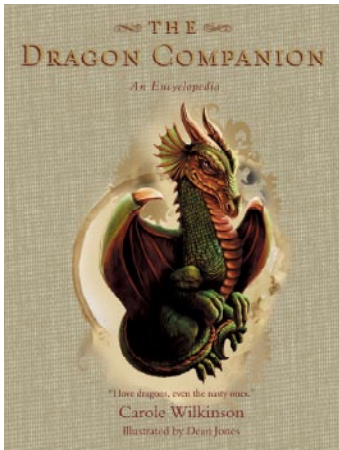
### Theatre

- Make a note of three interesting facts about Ancient Greek theatre.

### The Olympic Games

- Where did the ancient Olympics take place?
- Who did they honour?
- Make a note of five interesting facts about the Olympics.

## SCIENCE



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1. In The Dragon Companion we learn that eagles, elephants and panthers are the enemies of dragons. Research one of these animals noting their diet, habitat and breeding patterns. Record your findings in your Dragon Journal.

2. On page 131 we learn that the Iranian dragon likes dry and desolate regions. Research Middle Eastern deserts and take notes under the headings listed below.

- Climate
- Landscape
- Animals
- Plants
- Conservation

3. On page 16 we learn how people in Ancient times viewed the sky.

- Define 'constellation'.
- Name, draw and describe three constellations seen in the Southern Hemisphere.
- On page 37 we learn that people in the Middle Ages mistook comets in the sky for dragons. Find out five facts about comets and record these in your Dragon Journal.

## ENGLISH

### Reading and Writing

#### Ancient Greek Dragons

1. In The Dragon Companion you will read about many Ancient Greek dragons. Research one of these and present your findings in your Dragon Journal. Include information on the subjects listed below.

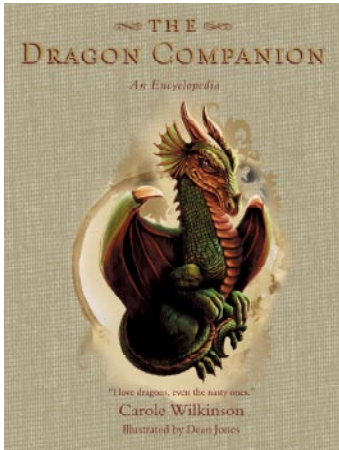
- Appearance
- Special powers
- Purpose (for example, The Dragon of Colchis' job was to guard the Golden Fleece)
- Myths and legends in which it appears

#### Jason Steals the Golden Fleece

2. Read the story 'Jason Steals the Golden Fleece' on page 134 of The Dragon Companion.

- On your world map, mark the journey of Jason from Iolcus to Colchis.
- Write this story as a newspaper article in 'The Greek Times'.





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### Perseus and Andromeda

3. Read the story 'Perseus and Andromeda' on page 179 of The Dragon Companion.

- Mark on your map where the ketos lived.
- Perseus was able to defeat the ketos with the help of his winged sandals, helmet of invisibility and indestructible sword. Draw Perseus with his magical weapons.
- Perseus had more magical weapons. View the story of 'Perseus and Medusa' on the 'Winged Sandals' website at [http://www.abc.net.au/arts/wingedsandals/story-time/perseus\\_medusa.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/arts/wingedsandals/story-time/perseus_medusa.htm) and add to your picture.
- Design another weapon that would be useful when fighting a battle with a dragon

### Hydra of Lerna

4. Read about the second labour of Heracles (Hercules) in The Dragon Companion.

- Draw the Hydra of Lerna.
- Mark Lerna on your world map.
- Sometimes the hero only kills the dragon with the help of an assistant. Read the Assistant Dragon-Slayer entry in the text. Write a monologue as Iolaus, explaining your role in the battle.

### The Girl Who Braved the Deep

5. Read 'The Girl Who Braved the Deep'.

- Mark on your world map where Yofune-nushi lived.
- The girl in this story is very courageous. Write about a person in your life who has inspired you with their courage.

### Ivan and the 12-Headed Dragon

6. Read 'Ivan and the 12-Headed Dragon'.

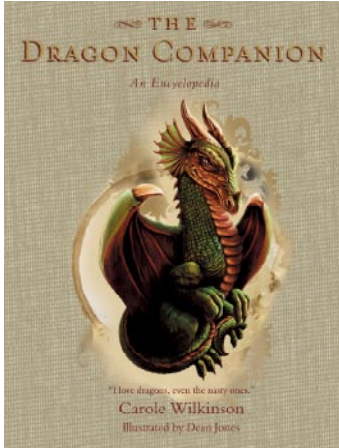
- Mark on your world map where Chudo Yudo lived.
- There are many dangerous dragons in this text. Create a guide for a hero who must fight a Western dragon. What safety tips can you provide?

### Chinese Dragons

7. Create a guide for someone who must care for a Chinese dragon. For example, what food do Chinese dragons like? What uses are there for dragon poo? Where would a Chinese dragon like to spend the winter?

### Sigurd

8. On page 29 we read that when Sigurd tasted dragon blood he could understand the language of birds. Write a journal entry where a bird tells you what they have seen in the world today.



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### Beowulf and the Fire-drake

9. Read 'Beowulf and the Fire-drake'.

- Retell this battle from the point-of-view of the dragon, moments before he dies.

### Symbolism

10. In *The Dragon Companion* we learn that in legends dragons often have a symbolic meaning. Use the text to make a list of the things that dragons symbolise.

### Speaking and listening

1. Script a talk show interview where the host interviews a dragon slayer and a dragon. Perform this for the class.
2. Perform one of the Greek myths as a play.
3. As a class read examples of classical Chinese poetry.
  - Discuss the recurring themes.
  - Choose your favourite image of nature and explain why you like it.

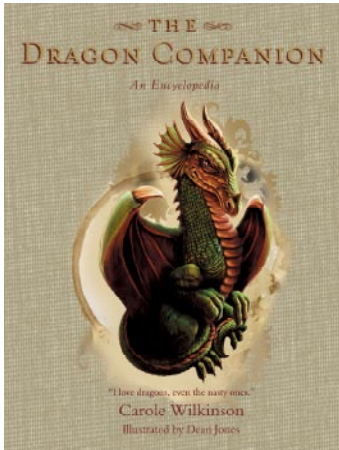
## CREATIVE ARTS

1. Create a power point presentation to show examples of Chinese, Japanese and Western dragons in art.
2. Design your own dragon. Present it in the same format as those in the text. Use break out boxes to highlight key pieces of information such as type, appearance, habitat, attributes and disposition.
3. On page 117 we learn that medieval knights painted symbols on their shields so that they could be identified in battle. Design your own coat of arms. Include on it symbols to represent things that are important to you.

## BOOK FEATURES AND FORMAT

The *Dragon Companion* has many features that are important in encyclopedias and historical texts:

- Table of contents
- Timelines
- Maps (note the key, northing and scale)
- Illustrations



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- Break out boxes (information inside a box)
  - Headings and subheadings
  - Symbols directing readers to related entries
  - Margin summaries
  - Page numbers
  - Further reading lists (modern dragon books, dragon movies)
  - Index (dragon slayers)
  - References (note the division between primary and secondary sources)
  - Quote citations
1. Locate each of the above features in the book.
  2. In what ways does this text follow the format of traditional encyclopedias?
  3. In what ways does this text differ in format to traditional encyclopedias?
  4. On page xvi of the text we read that Carole Wilkinson searches for dragons in primary and secondary sources.
    - What is a primary source? Give three examples.
    - What is a secondary source? Give three examples.
  5. What sort of information is included in the break-out boxes?
  6. Why use boxes to highlight this information?
  7. In what ways are the information summaries in the margin helpful?
  8. List some features of this book's glossary that make it clear and well organised.

## VISUAL LITERACY

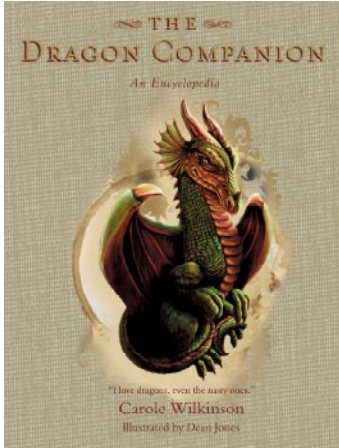
1. Discuss how The Dragon Companion's layout suits the topic of dragons. Look at font (style, size, colour), illustrations and page colours
2. There are many large dragons pictured throughout the text. There are some smaller ones, too. Find as many dragon pictures as you can in the text!



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# Teacher Notes



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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Carole Wilkinson is an award-winning author of books for children. She has a long-standing fascination with dragons and is interested in the history of everything. Carole is a meticulous researcher who finds it difficult to stop researching and begin writing. She once searched for weeks to find out whether there were daffodils in Han Dynasty China. Carole is married, has a daughter, and lives in inner-city Melbourne.

### **ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR**

Dean Jones has a background in psychology, music and IT – but what he really loves to do is draw. He started his career in illustration by winning the student category of the inaugural Australian and New Zealand Illustration Awards in 2004. Since then Dean has been steadily busy with commercial illustration assignments. He recently joined the black dog family with two books – both collaborations with Carole Wilkinson – the most recent of which was *The Dragon Companion*. Dean lives in inner city Melbourne.



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