



Activities for *Ten Oni Drummers*

by Matthew Gollub © 2015-24 Ideal for grades K-2nd

"Ichi, ni, san, TUN-TUN!" Scary dreams are not much fun...

This simple rhyming tale of Japanese oni (OH-nee) works as a counting book, a reassuring bedtime story, and introduction to Japanese culture and writing.

Warm-up Discussion **BEFORE** Reading

Ask students if they can count to ten in any other language besides English. Ask students what they do at night when they have scary dreams. Could the ten colorful monsters on the book cover actually make nighttime a little *less* spooky?

Discussion **AFTER** Reading

In this story, the oni, despite their fierce looks, protect the child by chasing away scary dreams. They use their big voices and their thunderous drums to good ends. Such an ironic twist can help students appreciate differences. Have students brainstorm scary monsters, and jot down specific details they conjure: yellow fangs, purple skin, horns on the top of their heads, etc. Then ask how such monsters might use these attributes to do something good. For exa., a 3-eyed monster may see so well it can tidy up your room in the dark!

Creating **ONI** art

The book's nighttime illustrations, filled with goblins and Japanese drums, provide ample inspiration for a mural with your class. Different students can be responsible for creating different *oni*. (Note: each *oni* has a Japanese number on its jacket.) The mural can hang as a collage or as stand-alone cutouts. Using paints and colorful construction paper; students can make the *oni* as tall and unique as themselves!

Getting acquainted with **KANJI**

The numbers 1-10 are among the simplest *kanji*, or Chinese characters, which are also used in Japanese. Provide students with paintbrushes, paint and paper so they can imagine they are at school in east Asia! Stroke order and balance are important when writing a *kanji*. Look for the red demonstration arrows in the chart at the end of the book.