

Historian tip # 10: Historians interpret dialogue from the past to understand the speakers' ideas.

Today's investigation: **Confucian sayings**

Outcome of the investigation: Our historians will be able to

1. explain the conditions under which the philosophy of Confucianism arose.
2. interpret each of five Confucian sayings, restating the sayings in their own words
3. make connections between each of the sayings and their own lives.

Vocabulary: Confucius
philosopher
analects
moral

Materials: Five sayings from the Analects of Confucius (a classical Confucian text)
triple entry journal sheet ("What the Master said," "What I think the Master meant," "Something I could do to show I understand the Master's advice.")

Mini lesson: About 2500 years ago, China was not united as one country. If we look at our time line, we can see that this was called the Period of Warring States, because many different groups were fighting for control. Many people were getting fed up with all of the chaos, and were searching for ways to restore order. Each of them had their own idea, or philosophy, on how to solve the problems. That is why the time is also called the Period of a Hundred Philosophers. One of these philosophers we call Confucius.

Confucius, whose real name was K'ung Ch'iu (people in other parts of the world changed it to make it easier to pronounce), believed that everyone should try to become as good a person as possible. If everybody had a moral character, order would naturally come to society.

Out of all the different philosophies, Confucianism had one of the greatest impacts, and still influences China today. Let's look at some of the words of Confucius (who is also called "The Master"), and see if by looking at his words we can figure out some of what he thought a "moral character" should have. (Complete the first line of the triple entry journal with the class as a model).

Activities: Students should individually complete a triple entry journal. In the first column will be the words of the master. In the second column the students should write, **IN THEIR OWN WORDS**, what they feel the master was saying. In the third column, students should give an example of what a person could do to exemplify the characteristic. They may use examples from their own lives for this column.

Partner share: Students should discuss with a partner their interpretations and

connections.

Connection between past and present: Speak to at least 5-6 people tonight. Ask each of them the best advice they ever received, and/or some of their favorite sayings. In your historian's notebook tonight, record their responses.