

# Tikki Tikki Tembo



**AUTHOR** Arlene Mosel  
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**LA BOOKSHELF** GA354  
**VOICETEXT** Yes  
**LEXILE LEVEL** 1070L  
**GRADE EQUIVALENT** 3.7

## OVERVIEW

Three decades and more than one million copies later children still love hearing about the boy with the long name who fell down the well. Arlene Mosel and Blair Lent’s classic re-creation of an ancient Chinese folktale has hooked legions of children, teachers, and parents, who return, generation after generation, to learn about the danger of having such an honorable name as Tikki tikki tembo-no sa rembo-chari bari ruchi-pip peri pembo. *Tikki Tikki Tembo* is the winner of the 1968 Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Picture Books.

## SUGGESTED GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

- Venn Diagram
- Independent Reading Worksheet
- Major Events Summary
- Vocabulary Four Square
- Character Comparisons

## AUTHOR INFORMATION

Arlene Tichy Mosel, born in 1921 in Cleveland Ohio, was a children’s librarian and associate professor of library science at Case Western Reserve University. She is known for writing two beloved children’s books *Tikki Tikki Tembo* and *The Funny Little Woman*, both illustrated by Blair Lent. Published in 1968, *Tikki Tikki Tembo*, was originally presented as a classic retelling of a traditional Chinese Folktale, though it has later been suggested that the story probably originated from the Japanese folktale Jugemu. *Tikki Tikki Tembo* was named an American Library Association Notable Book and winner of the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award. In 1997, *The New York Times* named *Tikki Tikki Tembo* one of the best 50 children’s books of the previous fifty years.

## BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- What is a folktale?
  - › A folktale is a story that is passed down from generation to generation, usually through word of mouth.
  - › Discussion of the Japanese folktale Jugemu
- Fiction vs. non-fiction  
*Tikki Tikki Tembo* is a fiction story made up by the author, not necessarily indicative of actual Chinese culture or traditions.

- Geography and society of China
  - › Where is it located?
  - › What are/were some of its real customs and traditions?

## WRITING PROMPTS

- What type of story is *Tikki Tikki Tembo*? How do you know? (fiction, folktale)
- In what ways are you like the character \_\_\_\_\_? In what ways are you different?
- Have you ever not listened to something a family member said? What was it and what happened?
- Summarize the story in one to two sentences. What was your favorite part of the story? What was your least favorite part? Why?

## VOCABULARY

- Stream (*noun*): a small or narrow river
- Custom (*noun*): a tradition or practice of a family, group, or people
- Honorable (*adj.*): deserving of the utmost respect or high regard.
- Chattering (*verb*): to talk rapidly, usually about unimportant things
- Troublesome (*adj.*): causing difficulty or annoyance
- Heir (*noun*): someone who will receive (inherit) a family’s wealth, name, etc.
- Reverence (*noun*): a feeling of deep respect and wonder
- Bewitched (*verb*): having some type of magical spell upon

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### COMMON CORE BIG IDEAS

- Analyze how and why individuals, events or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson or moral.

### WAYS TO HELP DIVERSE LEARNERS

- Read the story aloud to the class, stopping at specific places to discuss the story
- Ask questions ahead of time about the story to allow think-time
- Provide picture cues for new vocabulary words
- Do not call on students unless he or she volunteers answers
- Allow students to watch a video clip of the story
- Allow students to read using an audiobook or audio file
- Allow for multiple means of assessment including oral comprehension, tactile projects, artistic depictions (projects not entirely based on reading/writing)