

The Changing Face of Kung Fu



Before You Read

A. Completion. Read the caption. Then complete the sentences below using the correct form of the words in **bold**.

1. A(n) _____ is a member of a male religious community.
2. _____ are skillful, athletic body movements such as jumping, spinning, rolling, etc.
3. A(n) _____ is a building for the practice of a religion.
4. If you are a(n) _____ of something, you know how to do it very, very well.
5. A(n) _____ is a formal style of hand-to-hand fighting, also often practiced as a sport.

B. Predict. The title of the reading is “The Changing Face of Kung Fu.” How do you think kung fu today is different from kung fu in the past? Read the passage to check your ideas.

^ The Shaolin Temple has stood in the mountains of China’s Henan Province for over 1,500 years. The **monks** who live there are **masters** of a **martial art** called kung fu. In movies, kung fu involves lots of **acrobatics**, which is not taught in more traditional styles of kung fu.

1 | The Birthplace of Kung Fu

According to legend, in the fifth century, an Indian master taught some monks at the Shaolin Temple a **series** of exercises, or forms, **inspired** by the movements of animals. These forms became the **basis** for the style of fighting known as kung fu. Over 16 centuries, the monks have used kung fu for **self-defense** and in war. With it, they have won many battles against their enemies.

In Dengfeng today, ten kilometers (six miles) from the Shaolin Temple, there are over 60 martial arts schools with more than 50,000 students. Students come to the schools for a variety of reasons. Some hope to become movie stars. Others come to learn skills that will **ensure** good jobs in the military or police force. A few are sent by their parents to learn self-control and hard work.

Master Hu Zhengsheng teaches at a small school in Dengfeng. Recently, he was offered an important role in a kung fu movie. It would have been good **publicity** for his school. However, he did not **accept**. He doesn't agree with how kung fu is often shown in movies. He feels they show too much **violence**.



^ A young kung fu student demonstrates the skill with which he can bend his body.



At the Shaolin Temple, students as young as three or four years old can begin lessons in kung fu. ^

Unlike many large schools, which teach acrobatics and kickboxing, Hu teaches his students traditional kung fu forms. He teaches them the way his master—a Shaolin legend—taught him. But attracting new students to this style of kung fu has become a problem. Hu is afraid his art will soon die out.

25 He has to **remind** his students that kung fu was designed for fighting, not to entertain.

“There are no high kicks or acrobatics [here],” he says. “It is hard to **convince** boys to spend many years learning something that won’t make them wealthy or famous.”

30 Hu’s students have little. They sleep in unheated rooms and train outside no matter what the temperature. They hit trees with their bare hands and take turns sitting on each other’s shoulders to build leg strength. Why such hardship? To master kung fu, they must learn respect, and how to “eat bitterness,” a Mandarin expression meaning “to endure suffering.” The life
35 of a Shaolin master, Hu teaches, is not easy or attractive.

Master Hu is in a difficult position. For old traditions to survive, the young must learn. Gradually, he has begun offering a few courses in kickboxing and the acrobatic kung fu forms, hoping to attract new students. Then, maybe, he’ll be able to convince them to learn Shaolin kung fu the traditional way.





Reading Comprehension

Multiple Choice. Choose the best answer for each question.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Gist | 1. Why does the passage mention Hu Zhengsheng?
a. He is a kung fu student learning kickboxing.
b. He is the man who introduced kung fu to China.
c. He is a kung fu master preserving old traditions.
d. He is a famous actor in an exciting kung fu movie. |
| Detail | 2. What is true about kung fu?
a. It's over 17 centuries old.
b. It was traditionally used for fighting.
c. It was introduced to China from Thailand.
d. It was originally designed to entertain people. |
| Detail | 3. Which is NOT given as a reason why people study kung fu?
a. to learn self-control
b. to think more clearly
c. to help get good jobs
d. to become movie stars |
| Purpose | 4. What is the purpose of the third paragraph?
a. to show why Hu teaches acrobatics and kickboxing
b. to convince people that they can be rich and famous
c. to explain the challenges traditional kung fu schools face
d. to show how Hu's ideas about kung fu are different from other kung fu teachers |
| Reference | 5. What does <i>here</i> refer to in line 27?
a. in kung fu movies b. in the Shaolin Temple
c. in Master Hu's school d. in the city of Dengfeng |
| Paraphrase | 6. Which of the following is closest in meaning to <i>no matter what the temperature</i> (line 31)?
a. even if they feel sick
b. even if it's very hot or cold
c. only when the temperature is hot
d. because it's warmer than in their rooms |
| Vocabulary | 7. In line 34, the words <i>endure suffering</i> mean _____.
a. stop the suffering b. make someone suffer
c. survive the suffering d. make the suffering worse |

Did You Know?

The term *kung fu* actually means "skill achieved through hard work" and can refer to a great skill in any area. Here, a Shaolin monk shows off his amazing soccer skills.





Reading Skill

Differentiating Between Main Ideas and Supporting Details

A paragraph has one main idea. This is the most important piece of information that the author wants to put forward. It can be found in the topic sentence, usually (but not always) at or near the beginning of a paragraph. To determine the main idea, ask yourself, "What is this paragraph mainly about?" or "What point is the author trying to make?"

A paragraph is developed around this main idea. Supporting sentences may present facts, give reasons, make comparisons or contrasts, and provide examples, definitions, or details.

A. Main Ideas vs. Details. Look back at the reading on pages 60–61. In each pair of sentences from the reading below, identify the main idea (**M**) of the paragraph and the supporting sentence (**S**).

Paragraph 1

- S** With it, they have won many battles against their enemies.
- M** These forms became the basis for the style of fighting known as kung fu.

Paragraph 2

- Students come to the schools for a variety of reasons.
- Some hope to become movie stars.

Paragraph 3

- He feels they (movies) show too much violence.
- He doesn't agree with how kung fu is often shown in movies.

Paragraph 4

- He has to remind his students that kung fu was designed for fighting, not to entertain.
- Unlike many large schools, which teach acrobatics and kickboxing, Hu teaches his students traditional kung fu forms.

Paragraph 6

- Hu's students have little.
- The life of a Shaolin master, Hu teaches, is not easy or attractive.

Critical Thinking Discuss with a partner. What are some traditional practices in your country that are changing? Are the changes for the better? Why or why not?



Vocabulary Practice

A. Completion. Complete the information below using the words in the box.

basis convinced ensure inspired series

Many kung fu forms have their 1. _____ in the movements of animals, like the snake, crane, or tiger. Some were even 2. _____ by the dragon, a mythical creature. These animals were admired for their fighting abilities. So the monks studied their habits—how they rested, hunted, and fought. The monks created a 3. _____ of animal-like fighting styles.

According to Shaolin legend, as some monks studied an animal, they became 4. _____ that they were like that animal. So the monks were not allowed to train in any one animal style for too long. Instead, they had to train in all the five styles so that each animal's strengths would be added to their own skills. To focus too much on one animal would 5. _____ that a student became weaker, not stronger.



Another animal style of kung fu is based on the movements of the praying mantis.

B. Words in Context. Complete each sentence with the correct answer.

- You **remind** yourself to do something, so you _____ to do it.
 - don't forget
 - can learn how
- One way to **accept** someone's offer to do something is to say, "_____."
 - Yes, please
 - No, thank you
- Violence** is behavior that is meant to _____.
 - calm and relax
 - hurt or kill
- Someone who wants **publicity** wants to _____ the public's attention.
 - attract
 - avoid
- A _____ is designed for **self-defense**.
 - martial art
 - mirror

Word Link

The prefix **en-** means "make or cause to" and can be added to some adjectives to make them verbs, e.g., *ensure*, *enlarge*, *enrich*, *enslave*.