

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet Ohio author Andrea Cheng and Maine illustrator Abigail Halpin.

Select from a range of discussion questions and extension activities to deepen the experience of reading *The Year of the Book*.

Discover informational websites, projects, and videos to explore topics and themes in depth.

The Year of the Book

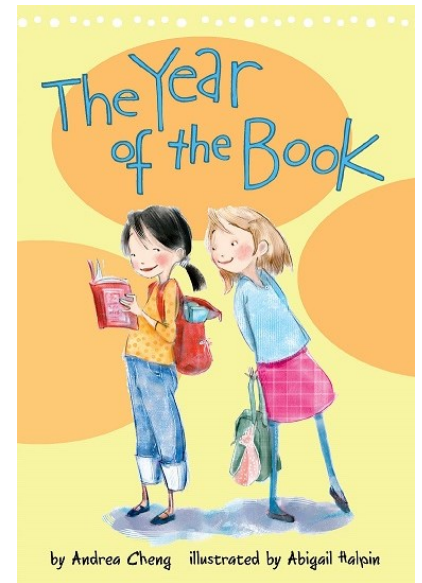
By Andrea Cheng
Illustrated by Abigail Halpin



About the Book

In Chinese, *peng you* means friend. But in any language, all Anna knows for certain is that friendship is complicated. When Anna needs company, she turns to her books. Whether traveling through *A Wrinkle in Time*, or peering over *My Side of the Mountain*, books provide what real life cannot—constant companionship and insight into her changing world. Books, however, can't tell Anna how to find a true friend. She'll have to discover that on her own.

In the tradition of classics like Maud Hart Lovelace's Betsy-Tacy books and Eleanor Estes' *One Hundred Dresses*, this novel subtly explores what it takes to make friends and what it means to be one.



by Andrea Cheng illustrated by Abigail Halpin

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Book Details

The Year of the Book by Andrea Cheng.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. ISBN 9780547684635.
Ages 6-12. 146 pages.
Leveled Reading: AR Points 3.0. ATOS Book Level 3.6. 590 Lexile.
hnhco.com/shop/books/The-Year-of-the-Book/9780547684635

Available as an ebook through the Ohio Digital Library: ohiodigitallibrary.com

Available as a downloadable talking book through the State Library of Ohio Talking Book Program: klas.com/talkingbooks/ohio

More Anna Wang books:

The Year of the Baby (2014), where Anna learns how to be a good sister
hnhco.com/shop/books/The-Year-of-the-Baby/9780544225251

The Year of the Fortune Cookie (2015), where Anna makes a trip to China
hnhco.com/shop/books/The-Year-of-the-Fortune-Cookie/9780544455924

The Year of the Three Sisters (2016), where Anna discovers the power of sisterhood
hnhco.com/shop/books/The-Year-of-the-Three-Sisters/9780544668492

The Year of the Garden (est. April 2017), where a young Anna learns about growing
hnhco.com/shop/books/The-Year-of-the-Garden/9780544664449



Author photo and biographical information courtesy Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; used with permission.

About the Author

Andrea Cheng wrote stories and poems starting in the third grade. Like Anna, she escaped into books as a child.

The author of picture books and middle grade and young adult novels, Andrea was an ardent believer in the power of books to show people that they are not alone, and that the relationships can be both complex and rewarding.

When she wasn't writing, Andrea taught ESL and children's literature, and enjoyed daily walks near her Ohio home. Though she passed away in 2015, her books will continue to inspire.

Author Resources

Andrea Cheng's Official Website

andreacheng.com

Andrea Cheng's page on *The Year of the Book*

andreacheng.com/book/year-book

Interview on All Sides with Ann Fisher (video, Andrea comes into focus at 5:50)
ohiochannel.org/video/all-sides-with-ann-fisher-1100-am-ohioana-book-festival-postpartum-depression

Publisher's Weekly obituary for Andrea Cheng

publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/69065-obituary-andrea-cheng.html

Camille looks at me and waves.

Her face looks friendly, but I don't know her so I'm afraid to go over to the group.

Instead I open my book and read standing up.

Talk About It!

*Topics to share when discussing **The Year of the Book** with young readers.*

Spoiler warning! Some discussion questions refer to key elements in the book. Do not read if you do not want to find out what happens.

- What does it mean to be a friend? Are Anna and Laura friends? What about Anna and Ray?
- Anna reads many books. How many books have you read? What's your favorite book? Have you ever read a book more than once? Have you ever read a book you didn't like?
- Anna goes to Chinese school to learn traditional Chinese writing and customs. Do you know how to write any "non-Western" characters (letters and words that are not in the 26-letter English alphabet)?
- Does cereal taste different when it comes from mini cereal boxes?
- What is the most difficult thing that you know how to do?

Talk About It! continues on page 4...

About the Illustrator

Abigail Halpin's artwork is as eclectic as Anna's reading list. Her illustrations grace the pages of several chapter books, and she is also a graphic designer. Should she wander from the drawing table, you may find her knitting a scarf, reading a comic book, or playing the fiddle.



Illustrator biographical information courtesy Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; used with permission.

Illustrator photo courtesy Abigail Halpin, used with permission.

Illustrator Resources

Abigail Halpin's official website

theodesign.com

Abigail on Facebook and Instagram

@Abigailhalpin

Abigail Halpin's blog

blog.theodesign.com

Email Abigail Halpin:

abigail@theodesign.com

"Bridget and the Books" interviews Abigail Halpin

bridgetandthebooks.wordpress.com/2016/09/18/the-illustrator-says

Go Further!

*Ideas for extending the experience of reading **The Year of the Book***

Educators: Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Other Learning Standards, such as Social Studies: Geography: Human Systems (Grades 3 and 6) also apply. Discussion questions and educational activities for **The Year of the Book** align with Learning Standards for Grades 3-6.

Librarians, parents, and others: These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. For more information, see the Ohio Department of Education website, education.ohio.gov. From the Topics dropdown menu, click on "Learning in Ohio."

- In **The Year of the Book**, Anna makes her own drawstring bags. Create your own drawstring bag by following the instructions in Scholastic's **The Year of the Book**-themed video tutorial: bcove.me/9511mor7.
- Anna and her friends enjoy playing with Tangrams. You can make your own Tangram set out of thick paper by following the instructions at: mathforum.org/trscavo/tangrams/construct.html
- Using online resources available to students through INFOhio (infohio.org) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (ohioweblibrary.org), research the history and culture of China. Individually or as a group, plan a short presentation on an aspect of Chinese history or culture that interests you. Use the general knowledge of China you gain through this project to create a travel brochure, highlighting basic facts such as land features, population, major resources, tourist sights, etc.
- Throughout **The Year of the Book**, Anna reads, and reads! Make a list of books Anna reads during the story. Have you ever read any of the books Anna reads? Make a list of the books you have read and compare it with the list of books Anna reads. Do the books Anna reads sound interesting to you, or do you like reading different books? Next, visit your local library, check out a book—and enjoy! For a list of Ohio public libraries, see Find A Library: oplin.org/fal.
- **The Year of the Book** is written a little like a journal, describing Anna's experiences during her fourth-grade year. Journals help keep memories of the past with us. The words are like drawstring bags holding experiences instead of acorns. Have you ever kept a journal? If you already have a journal, go back and read through it. See if you can find your favorite day, and reflect on a day that was difficult. If you've never kept a journal, write down a few sentences tonight about your day today, and store them in a safe place to read again.

Talk About It! (continued from page 2)

- Have you ever been frustrated? What can help you feel better? Is it okay to be frustrated sometimes? Why or why not?
 - What's your favorite season? What do you like most about it?
 - "Those are conclusions and Mr. Schmitz didn't say to conclude anything. *Observe* means to look closely, Mr. Schmitz says." (p. 36) Is it easy to *observe* without *concluding*? Why or why not?
 - What's the most fun you've ever had in school?
 - Do you prefer to give gifts, or to receive them?
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Explore More!

*Additional ideas and resources to use with **The Year of the Book**.*

Chinese Zodiac

travelchinaguide.com/intro/social_customs/zodiac

The Chinese zodiac matches a year (based on the Chinese calendar) with one of twelve animals. Tradition holds that people may share traits with the animal associated with their birth year. The cycle repeats every twelve years. What animal is associated with your birth year?

Crafts Online

pinterest.com, youtube.com or your favorite crafting website

Get creative! Imagine something you might like to make as a craft project, either based on a theme ("winter", "animal") or a material ("pencils", "yarn"). Add the word "craft" to your search to see if you can find instructions for how to make your craft project come to life. Take note of what materials you might need, and be sure to follow any safety tips. Then, craft away!

Ohio Digital Library

ohdbks.overdrive.com

There's more than one way to get free books! Many Ohioans enjoy the Ohio Digital Library, an ebook collection that allows readers to "check out" electronic books just like traditional books, lending digital copies to be read on compatible devices (tablets, smartphones, and e-readers of all kinds). The first four Anna Wang books currently in print are available through the Ohio Digital Library, with **The Year of the Garden** coming soon.

Texas Bluebonnet Award resources for **The Year of the Book**

texasbluebonnetaward2015.wordpress.com/year-of-the-book

The Year of the Book was a nominee for the Texas Bluebonnet Award in the 2014-2015 school year. As part of their process, the Texas Bluebonnet Award Program Committee created an excellent resource guide for **The Year of the Book** that includes more resources and ideas than could fit in this toolkit—check it out!

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors, illustrators, and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits:
library.ohio.gov/ctro

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