Guided Practice

Model and Apply

- Review for students the **biographical approach**. Tell them that Bradbury's views about technology are reflected in the way he has the emperor react to the news that his servant has seen a man flying. Instead of being excited, the emperor seems skeptical and concerned as he asks his servant to sit and drink some tea with him.
- Have students find another example of the emperor's reaction to the flying man that seems to reflect Bradbury's feelings toward technology. ***Possible response:*** *When the emperor sees the flying man, he quietly gazes at the Great Wall instead of reacting excitedly.*

SHORT STORY

The Flying Machine

by **Ray Bradbury**

Preparing to Read for this selection is on page 427.

Build Background

Ray Bradbury says he tells tales to warn people about dangers in the world around them. You are about to read a fairy-tale-like story that takes place in the distant past. As you read, think about how this story connects to our world today.

In the year A.D. 400, the Emperor Yuan held his throne by the Great Wall of China, and the land was green with rain, readying itself toward the harvest, at peace, the people in his dominion[1] neither too happy nor too sad.

Early on the morning of the first day of the first week of the second month of the new year, the Emperor Yuan was sipping tea and fanning himself against a warm breeze when a servant ran across the scarlet and blue garden tiles, calling, "Oh, Emperor, Emperor, a miracle!"

"Yes," said the Emperor, "the air *is* sweet this morning."

"No, no, a miracle!" said the servant, bowing quickly.

"And this tea is good in my mouth, surely that is a miracle."

"No, no, Your Excellency."

"Let me guess then—the sun has risen and a new day is upon us. Or the sea is blue. *That* now is the finest of all miracles."

"Excellency, a man is flying!"

"What?" The Emperor stopped his fan.

"I saw him in the air, a man flying with wings. I heard a voice call out of the sky, and when I looked up, there he was, a dragon in the heavens with a man in its mouth, a dragon of paper and bamboo, colored like the sun and the grass."

"It is early," said the Emperor, "and you have just wakened from a dream."

"It is early, but I have seen what I have seen! Come, and you will see it too."

"Sit down with me here," said the Emperor. "Drink some tea. It must be a strange thing, if it is true, to see a man fly. You must have time to think of it, even as I must have time to prepare myself for the sight."

They drank tea.

"Please," said the servant at last, "or he will be gone."

1. **dominion:** country; territory.

Selection Readability	
Easily Accessible **Accessible** Challenging	simple sentence structure; dialogue; familiar genre
Lexile	**850**

Selection Summary

In ancient China, an emperor rules a peaceful kingdom. He discovers that a man has invented a flying machine. The emperor fears this invention will destroy his perfect kingdom, so he has the man killed.

The Emperor rose thoughtfully. "Now you may show me what you have seen." A

They walked into a garden, across a meadow of grass, over a small bridge, through a grove of trees, and up a tiny hill.

"There!" said the servant.

The Emperor looked into the sky.

And in the sky, laughing so high that you could hardly hear him laugh, was a man; and the man was clothed in bright papers and reeds to make wings and a beautiful yellow tail, and he was soaring all about like the largest bird in a universe of birds, like a new dragon in a land of ancient dragons.

The man called down to them from high in the cool winds of morning. "I fly, I fly!"

The servant waved to him. "Yes, *yes!*"

The Emperor Yuan did not move. Instead he looked at the Great Wall of China now taking shape out of the farthest mist in the green hills, that splendid snake of stones which writhed with majesty across the entire land. That wonderful wall which had protected them for a timeless time from enemy hordes[2] and preserved peace for years without number. He saw the town, nestled to itself by a river and a road and a hill, beginning to waken.

"Tell me," he said to his servant, "has anyone else seen this flying man?"

"I am the only one, Excellency," said the servant, smiling at the sky, waving.

2. **hordes:** moving crowds.

A **Read and Discuss** What is the author suggesting about this emperor and his people?

Vocabulary **writhed** (rythd) *v.*: twisted and turned.



Analyzing Visuals **Viewing and Interpreting**

What qualities of this Chinese nobleman are similar to those of the emperor in the story?

Ancestor Portrait (late 17th or early 18th century) Chinese School. Ink and color on silk.

Think About/Talk About

Read with a Purpose Have students read the Read with a Purpose statement on p. 429. What new technology might the man in the story invent? ***Possible response:*** *a flying machine*

Comprehension

A Read and Discuss

Possible response: *Emperor Yuan rules land near the Great Wall of China and is content with the way things are going. The people are "neither too happy nor too sad."*

? Extend the Discussion

Motivation Why might the emperor be reluctant to see the flying man? ***Possible response:*** *The emperor may fear that the man has a machine that will change his peaceful country.*

Finding Details To what does the servant compare the flying man? ***Possible response:*** *He compares the flying man to "a dragon in the heavens with a man in its mouth."*

Analyzing Visuals

Viewing and Interpreting: *He appears wealthy and serene, similar to the emperor. There is nothing to indicate that this nobleman is interested in technology.*

Differentiating Instruction

English-Language Learners

Students may struggle with Bradbury's topics and use of metaphors. Students will benefit from participating in an oral reading of the selections. Pause often during reading to assist students as they paraphrase the reading. You may wish to play the **Holt Audio Library** of this selection before the activity instead.

See **Differentiating Instruction** for lesson plans and strategies for teaching English-language learners.

Readers Gaining Proficiency

To help students read the selections, model the reading skill of drawing conclusions. Tell students that the reader might wonder why the emperor drinks tea instead of running outside to see the flying man, because most people are excited about discoveries. From the emperor's reaction, the reader can conclude that he fears change.

See **Differentiating Instruction** for lesson plans and strategies for teaching readers gaining proficiency.

Guided Practice

Model and Apply

- Remind students that the **biographical approach** can be used to make predictions about an author's views based on his or her writing.
- Point out to students that, when asked if the flying machine is beautiful, the emperor responds, "Yes, too beautiful." Tell students that this response seems to imply an attitude that too much beauty is something to be concerned about. Ask students what they can conclude about Bradbury based on this analysis. ***Possible response:*** *Bradbury is skeptical of things that are too beautiful, or too technical. He thinks that although some things might seem to be good for people, people are really better off without them. Perhaps Bradbury worries that people become too enamored of new technology before they grasp the consequences of using the technology.*

The Emperor watched the heavens another minute and then said, "Call him down to me."

"Ho, come down, come down! The Emperor wishes to see you!" called the servant, hands cupped to his shouting mouth.

The Emperor glanced in all directions while the flying man soared down the morning wind. He saw a farmer, early in his fields, watching the sky, and he noted where the farmer stood.

The flying man alit with a rustle of paper and a creak of bamboo reeds. He came proudly to the Emperor, clumsy in his rig, at last bowing before the old man.

"What have you done?" demanded the Emperor.

"I have flown in the sky, Your Excellency," replied the man.

"What *have* you done?" said the Emperor again.

"I have just told you!" cried the flier.

"You have told me nothing at all." The Emperor reached out a thin hand to touch the pretty paper and the birdlike keel of the apparatus. It smelled cool, of the wind.

"Is it not beautiful, Excellency?"

"Yes, too beautiful."

"It is the only one in the world!" smiled the man. "And I am the inventor."

"The *only* one in the world?"

"I swear it!"

"Who else knows of this?"

"No one. Not even my wife, who would think me mad with the sun. She thought I was making a kite. I rose in the night and walked to the cliffs far away. And when the morning breezes blew and the sun rose, I gathered my courage, Excellency, and leaped from the cliff. I flew! But my wife does not know of it."

"Well for her, then," said the Emperor. "Come along." B

They walked back to the great house. The sun was full in the sky now, and the smell of the grass was refreshing. The Emperor, the servant, and the flier paused within the huge garden.

The Emperor clapped his hands. "Ho, guards!"

The guards came running.

"Hold this man."

The guards seized the flier.

"Call the executioner," said the Emperor.

"What's this!" cried the flier, bewildered. "What have I done?" He began to weep, so that the beautiful paper apparatus rustled.

"Here is the man who has made a certain machine," said the Emperor, "and yet asks us what he has created. He does not know himself. It is only necessary that he create, without knowing why he has done so, or what this thing will do."

The executioner came running with a sharp silver ax. He stood with his naked, large-muscled arms ready, his face covered with a serene white mask.

"One moment," said the Emperor. He turned to a nearby table upon which sat a machine that he himself had created. The Emperor took a tiny golden key from his own neck. He fitted his key to the tiny, delicate machine and wound it up. Then he set the machine going.

B **Read and Discuss** What does the conversation between the emperor and the flying man tell us about the emperor's thoughts?

Vocabulary **serene** (suh REEN) *adj.:* calm; undisturbed.

Differentiating Instruction

Advanced Learners

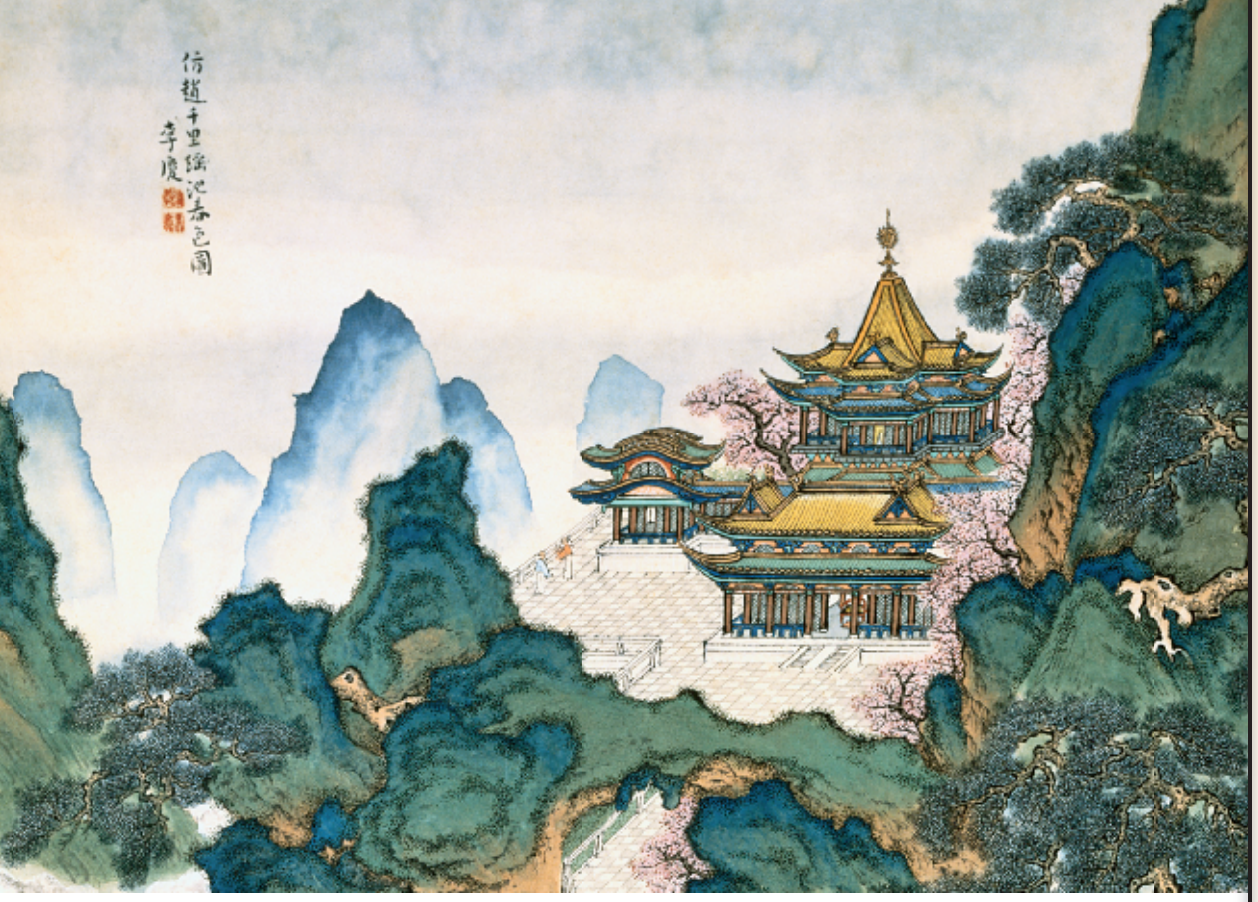
Acceleration Tell students to consider the validity of the emperor's argument. Should technological advancements be controlled? Do the benefits of technology outweigh the risks? Tell students to think of recent advances in technology. Have students develop a question for debate, such as, "Should technology be regulated?" Have students prepare pro or con arguments. Then, hold a classroom debate.

See **Resources for Advanced Students** for lesson plans and strategies for teaching advanced learners.

Learners with Diverse Needs

Reread the two descriptions of the machines, both the flying machine and the emperor's creation. Have students draw a chart on the board to compare and contrast them.

See **Differentiating Instruction** for lesson plans and strategies for teaching learners with diverse needs.



Blue and Green Landscapes by Li Qing.

The machine was a garden of metal and jewels. Set in motion, the birds sang in tiny metal trees, wolves walked through miniature forests, and tiny people ran in and out of sun and shadow, fanning themselves with miniature fans, listening to tiny emerald birds, and standing by impossibly small but tinkling fountains.

"Is *it* not beautiful?" said the Emperor. "If you asked me what I have done here, I could answer you well. I have made birds sing, I have made forests murmur, I have set people to walking in this woodland, enjoying the leaves and shadows and songs. That is what I have done."

"But, oh, Emperor!" pleaded the flier, on his knees, the tears pouring down his face. "I have done a similar thing! I have found beauty. I have flown on the morning wind. I have looked down on all the sleeping houses and gardens. I have smelled the sea and even *seen* it, beyond the hills, from my high place. And I have soared like a bird; oh, I cannot say how beautiful it is up there, in the sky, with the wind about me, the wind blowing me here like a feather, there like a

Think About/Talk About

Comprehension

B Read and Discuss

Possible response: *He doesn't seem to be impressed with the idea that the man made a machine that enabled him to fly. In fact, he questions the man to make sure no one else knows of his invention.*

? Extend the Discussion

Interpreting Why does the emperor order the executioner to kill the man? ***Possible response:*** *The emperor orders the execution to prevent the man from using his machine again. The emperor doesn't want anyone to have a flying machine.*

Finding Details What does the emperor do once the executioner arrives? ***Possible response:*** *He tells the executioner to wait a moment and he winds up his machine.*

Analyzing Visuals

Activity Tell students that this view of the landscape is from the same perspective the flier would have had—from above. Ask students if having this perspective could change the emperor's view of the flying machine. ***Possible responses:*** *Yes; because he could see the beauty of the land more completely and want others to experience the same sight. No; it might make him protect the land with more determination.*

Developing Oral Fluency

With the assistance of fluent readers, model reading the dialogue on the first page of "The Flying Machine" in a Readers' Theater style (reading only the words in quotations). Each person should read the speech of one character. Have the rest of the class follow along as you read aloud. Call attention to the author's use of italics to indicate emphasis.

Paired Activity Have students work in mixed-ability groups to continue the Readers' Theater. Students should read the remaining dialogue while emphasizing words.

fan, the way the sky smells in the morning! And how free one feels! *That* is beautiful, Emperor, that is beautiful too!"

"Yes," said the Emperor sadly, "I know it must be true. For I felt my heart move with you in the air and I wondered: What is it like? How does it feel? How do the distant pools look from so high? And how my houses and servants? Like ants? And how the distant towns not yet awake?"

"Then spare me!"

"But there are times," said the Emperor, more sadly still, "when one must lose a little beauty if one is to keep what little beauty one already has. I do not fear you, yourself, but I fear another man."

"What man?"

"Some other man who, seeing you, will build a thing of bright papers and bamboo like this. But the other man will have an evil face and an evil heart, and the beauty will be gone. It is this man I fear."

"Why? Why?"

"Who is to say that someday just such a man, in just such an apparatus of paper and reed, might not fly in the sky and drop huge stones upon the Great Wall of China?" said the Emperor. C

No one moved or said a word.

"Off with his head," said the Emperor.

The executioner whirled his silver ax.

"Burn the kite and the inventor's body and bury their ashes together," said the Emperor.

The servants retreated to obey.

The Emperor turned to his hand-servant, who had seen the man flying. "Hold your tongue. It was all a dream, a most sorrowful and beautiful dream. And that farmer in the distant field who also saw, tell him it would pay him to consider it only a vision. If ever the word passes around, you and the farmer die within the hour."

"You are merciful, Emperor."

"No, not merciful," said the old man. Beyond the garden wall he saw the guards burning the beautiful machine of paper and reeds that smelled of the morning wind. He saw the dark smoke climb into the sky. "No, only very much bewildered and afraid." He saw the guards digging a tiny pit wherein to bury the ashes. "What is the life of one man against those of a million others? I must take solace from that thought." D

He took the key from its chain about his neck and once more wound up the beautiful miniature garden. He stood looking out across the land at the Great Wall, the peaceful town, the green fields, the rivers and streams. He sighed. The tiny garden whirred its hidden and delicate machinery and set itself in motion; tiny people walked in forests, tiny faces loped through sun-speckled glades in beautiful shining pelts, and among the tiny trees flew little bits of high song and bright blue and yellow color, flying, flying, flying in that small sky.

"Oh," said the Emperor, closing his eyes, "look at the birds, look at the birds!"

C **Literary Focus** **Biographical Approach** Which of Bradbury's concerns do you see reflected in the emperor's words?

D **Read and Discuss** What does the emperor mean by "What is the life of one man against those of a million others?"

Vocabulary **solace** (SAHL ihs) *n.*: comfort.

Think About/Talk About

Comprehension

D Read and Discuss

Possible response: *He means it is acceptable for one man to die if it will allow many others to live.*

Analysis

C Literary Focus

Possible response: *Bradbury's concern about the dehumanizing aspect of technology is evident in the emperor's words. Bradbury may be thinking of military technology.*

Check for Understanding

Monitor Students' Progress Guide the class in answering these comprehension questions.

1. What does the emperor fear? [*The emperor fears that some people may use the flying machine to attack the peaceful country.*]
2. What does the emperor do with the inventor and his kite? [*He executes the inventor, burns his body with the kite, and buries the ashes together.*]
3. How does the emperor respond when his servant calls him merciful? [*He says that he is not merciful, but "bewildered and afraid."*]

SKILLS FOCUS p. 437

Literary Skills
- Analyze a story using a biographical approach to literary criticism.

Reading Skills
- Draw conclusions.

Vocabulary Skills
- Demonstrate knowledge of literal meanings of words and their usage.

Writing Skills
- Use figurative language.

Applying Your Skills

from Ray Bradbury Is on Fire! / The Flying Machine

Respond and Think Critically

Reading Focus

Quick Check

1. According to the interview, what does Bradbury believe is necessary for civilization?
2. What does the emperor in "The Flying Machine" say are miracles? What does the servant say is a miracle?

Read with a Purpose

3. Based on these selections, are you surprised at Bradbury's attitudes toward technology?

Reading Skills: Drawing Conclusions

4. You have read a biography, an interview, and one of Bradbury's short stories. Now fill in the third column of your chart. What conclusions can you draw about Bradbury's writing?

Biographical Information	Details from Selection	Conclusions
distrusts new technology	emperor destroys flying machine	

Vocabulary Check

Match the Vocabulary words with their definitions.

5. **serene**	**a.** opposing
6. **writhed**	**b.** comfort
7. **contradictory**	**c.** peaceful
8. **solace**	**d.** twisted

Literary Focus

Literary Analysis

9. **Explain** In "Ray Bradbury Is on Fire!" what does the interviewer find ironic about calling Bradbury a science fiction writer?
10. **Interpret** Discuss the two inventions in "The Flying Machine." Why does the emperor see beauty only in his own invention?
11. **Analyze** Which of the following messages do you think is more important in the story? Explain your answer.
    - The beauty of nature is a precious resource.
    - New technology can inspire fear.
12. **Extend** Discuss Bradbury's belief that distracting entertainment can interfere with active thinking. What examples from our current society might Bradbury have in mind?

Literary Skills: Biographical Approach

13. **Analyze** Based on the biography and interview, explain which of Bradbury's beliefs and attitudes are reflected in "The Flying Machine."

Writing Focus

Think as a Reader/Writer

Use It in Your Writing Refer to your list of figures of speech that Bradbury uses in this story. Then, write four or five sentences of your own using figurative language to describe an event or an unusual setting.

Writing Focus

Alternative Prompt for Writers Gaining Proficiency Students may have trouble writing several sentences. Tell students to write one sentence using figurative language.

Review

Independent Practice

Reading Focus

Possible responses:

1. *He believes that reading and writing are necessary to civilization.*
2. *The Emperor says things in nature are miracles. The servant says a man flying is the miracle.*
3. *No; he is skeptical of technology and this attitude comes through in his writing.*
4. *His writing warns people of the problems that can result from technological advancements.*

Vocabulary Check

5. *c*
6. *d*
7. *a*
8. *b*

Literary Focus

Possible Responses:

9. *Instead of glorifying technological advances like other science fiction writers, he writes about how technology harms human relationships.*
10. *The Emperor's invention recreates nature on a small scale. The man's invention is a flying machine. The Emperor fears the flying machine and its implications.*
11. *Although the emperor valued nature, he acted out of fear in order to protect his dominion.*
12. *One example of a distracting activity is watching television; it is a passive activity that does not require active thinking.*
13. *Bradbury writes about the dangers of technology.*