

The Mighty Ji: Unraveling the Secrets of an Ancient Chinese Weapon

Introduction (5-10 mins):

- Begin with an engaging question: "Imagine you are a soldier defending the Great Wall of China thousands of years ago. What kind of weapon would you want? Today, we're going to learn about a very special and clever weapon called the Ji!"
- Show pictures or safe online video clips of the Ji (search terms: "Chinese Ji weapon," "ancient Chinese halberd ji"). Ask the student: What parts do you notice? Does it remind you of any other weapons combined?

What is a Ji? (10-15 mins):

- Explain that the Ji is a unique polearm, like a combination tool for a warrior! It typically has a spear point at the top for thrusting and a special side blade, shaped like a dagger or axe (called a 'ge'), used for hooking or slashing.
- Point out these distinct parts on the visuals. Emphasize its multi-purpose design.
- Briefly discuss the materials: The head was often made of bronze in earlier times, and later iron or steel, attached to a long shaft usually made of wood or sturdy bamboo.

History Hunt (10-15 mins):

- Talk about the time period: The Ji was very popular during China's Bronze Age and early imperial periods, especially the Shang, Zhou, Qin, and Han dynasties (roughly 1600 BC to 220 AD).
- Activity: Let's be history detectives! Use safe internet search (with supervision if needed) or provided resources to find out: Which dynasty is famous for the Terracotta Army (many soldiers carried Ji)? Who might have used the Ji – foot soldiers, guards, warriors on chariots? Discuss the findings.

How Was It Used? (10 mins):

- Discuss the Ji's versatility in battle:
- Thrusting forward like a spear.
- Using the side blade ('ge') to hook onto an enemy's shield or weapon, or even pull a rider off their horse!
- Slashing sideways or downward with the side blade.
- Optional Movement Break: Find a safe, open space. Using only imagination or a very safe soft prop (like a rolled-up newspaper – NO real sticks or sharp objects), carefully mime some Ji actions: a forward thrust, a downward hooking motion, a gentle sideways slash. Emphasize slow, controlled movements and safety – this is just for understanding, not actual practice!

Create Your Own Ji (15-20 mins):

- Activity Option 1 (Drawing): Draw a picture of a Ji. Make sure to clearly show the long shaft, the spear point at the top, and the dagger-axe blade on the side. Label these parts.
- Activity Option 2 (Craft): Using a cardboard tube (like from paper towels), some cardboard scraps, scissors, and tape or glue, construct a simple model of a Ji. Focus on attaching the spear point shape and the side blade shape securely to the tube 'shaft'.

Wrap-up & Review (5 mins):

- Share the drawing or craft creation!

- Review Questions: What were the two main weapon parts combined in the Ji's head? Can you name one ancient Chinese dynasty when the Ji was used? What was one way a soldier might use the Ji in battle? What did you find most interesting about the Ji today?