

## Tofu Ling Story Discussion Questions & Answers

### Discussing the Story:

The discussion ideas are meant to encourage the child/student to use higher order thinking skills to compare, contrast, explain, describe, identify, summarize, discuss, relate how, analyze, draw conclusions, evaluate, and interpret. They are not designed to have a child respond with only one answer or response. It is important to stimulate as much creativity with responses as possible. The depth and breadth to which a child will respond will depend on their individual abilities and experiences. It is the author's intent to teach this skill not only to the child, but also the teacher or parent. Long gone is the idea that there is only one response possible. As long as the child can justify their response with thoughtful or logical reasoning, the answer should be accepted. We need to teach our children how to think and not just what to think. Foundations need to be established and nurtured. Please note: Possible discussion responses are provided in parentheses after the discussion idea. If needed, use them as springboards to guide the discussion; however, do not use them as the only possible response.

### Discussion Leads and Possible Responses:

*Describe Tofu's character in the beginning of the story.* (He was up early in the morning before his family. He was a daydreamer and a thinker. He enjoyed the beauty of nature. He was mindful of his family and duty. He enjoyed each new day and the prospects for which it offered.)

*Identify the culture of Tofu's family.* (Possible identifiers of a Japanese culture are stated that they were "from Japan, family surname, heirlooms present in the home".)

*Explain what draws Tofu away from his duties to the artist's shop.* (Tofu was drawn away from his duties by the beauty of the music and the magic of the transformation from shapeless paper to a representation of real life in the origami figures.)

*Relate how Tofu's mother and sister felt about Tofu not helping the family, and how Tofu reacted to their comments.* (His mother was frustrated and his sister was angry. Tofu felt bad about disappointing his family and hurt from his sister's harshness and lack of understanding.)

*Describe how Tofu uses his talents to help his family.* (Tofu uses the same technique of taking shapeless paper and transforming it into representations of real life objects to redirect his family's thoughts of despair.)

Go to the page where Tofu is learning how to make the origami shapes in the artist's studio. The sentence on the two pages begins with, "He cast his eyes back onto the paper figures in the room." *Identify the clues in the illustrations and text on these two pages that suggests that Tofu had to work hard to learn how to make the origami shapes.* (In the windows, we see the passing of time from the moon to the morning sun. There is crumpled up paper around him. Some of the shapes are not exactly perfect and yet after all his hard work he is successful as illustrated in some of the shapes. In the text, it states that he practiced all night long; he was determined, and he felt awkward and clumsy with lack of skills.)

*Compare and contrast how Tofu's family felt about him after he shared his talent. (Repeatedly, his family is able to witness the paper transformations and gain an understanding of the gift that Tofu brings to his family.)*

*Name ways in which you can harvest your imagination. (A great opportunity to learn about your child/student's gifts and talents, as well as, dreams and aspirations.)*