



## Flying a Kite

### Extending the Student Reading by Writing & Discussing

**1.** Ask each student in the class to write a sentence about an experience with the wind; collect the sentences. Choose several sentences to read to the class and ask those students to tell the rest of their stories to her/his classmates. Encourage students to include these details: When and where did the experience happen? How light or heavy was the wind? How did the student guess or measure the force of the wind? Does the sentiment in Milne's poem mesh with any of their experiences?

**2.** Note the synonyms that students use for "wind." Primary-level students can be introduced to the common meaning of "breeze" as a light or gentle wind (sailors and kite fliers use "breeze," with a modifier, to categorize five speeds of wind, from 4 to 31 miles per hour). Also introduce the word "gust," a sudden burst of wind. Do any students come from countries or traditions where local or regional winds are given special names?

**3.** Charles Schulz's Charlie Brown has brought the "kite-eating tree" into at least somewhat common parlance—and, is the case with so many catchy phrases, there is now a rock band of the same name. Provide Peanuts books for research about Charlie's confrontations with the kite-eating tree (for example, once he bit the tree in frustration, and was pursued by the Environmental Protection Agency in retaliation) and his general struggles to keep his kite aloft. Has familiarity with Charlie's kite woes colored the kite expectations of any students?

Survey the school playground for any kite-eating trees or other potentially entangling objects. Charlie has, humorously, entangled his line on many objects, including a picket fence and other peoples' noses. Ask each student to write two or three sentences about the most outrageous object that might snag her/his line and how s/he would disentangle the kite.

**4.** Discuss the saying or proverb, "Practice makes perfect." Is it good advice? Does one have to achieve "perfection" to benefit from practice? Ask students to write their own versions of this proverb. Discuss the idea that practice improves a skill, that combining practice with talent may lead to perfection—or an approximation.



Kite-eating tree painted on an Edo kite

*Photo by Ali Fujino*