

# Collins

English Readers

## Amazing Thinkers and Humanitarians

LEVEL 4

CEF B2



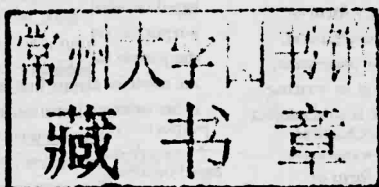
In association with **The Amazing People Club®**

Collins English Readers

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# Amazing Thinkers and Humanitarians

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Text by  
Katerina Mestheneou

Series edited by  
Fiona MacKenzie

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HarperCollins Publishers  
77–85 Fulham Palace Road  
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### The Arising People Club

The Arising People Club is an educational publishing house. It was founded in 2005 by educational professionals and management leaders in China's Ministry of Education. The club's mission is to provide books, e-books, audio books, videos and video content to help people learn and grow. The club's motto is "The Arising People Club" and its slogan is "The Arising People Club".

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## ♦ INTRODUCTION ♦

*Collins Amazing People Readers* are collections of short stories. Each book presents the life story of five or six people whose lives and achievements have made a difference to our world today. The stories are carefully graded to ensure that you, the reader, will both enjoy and benefit from your reading experience.

You can choose to enjoy the book from start to finish or to dip in to your favourite story straight away. Each story is entirely independent.

After every story a short timeline brings together the most important events in each person's life into one short report. The timeline is a useful tool for revision purposes.

Words which are above the required reading level are underlined the first time they appear in each story. All underlined words are defined in the glossary at the back of the book. Levels 1 and 2 take their definitions from the *Collins COBUILD Essential English Dictionary* and levels 3 and 4 from the *Collins COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary*.

To support both teachers and learners, additional materials are available online at [www.collinselt.com/readers](http://www.collinselt.com/readers).

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## ♦ THE GRADING SCHEME ♦

The Collins COBUILD Grading Scheme has been created using the most up-to-date language usage information available today. Each level is guided by a brand new comprehensive grammar and vocabulary framework, ensuring that the series will perfectly match readers' abilities.

		CEF band	Pages	Word count	Headwords
Level 1	elementary	A2	64	5,000–8,000	approx. 700
Level 2	pre- intermediate	A2–B1	80	8,000–11,000	approx. 900
Level 3	intermediate	B1	96	11,000–15,000	approx. 1,100
Level 4	upper intermediate	B2	112	15,000–18,000	approx. 1,700

For more information on the Collins COBUILD Grading Scheme, including a full list of the grammar structures found at each level, go to [www.collinselt.com/readers/gradingscheme](http://www.collinselt.com/readers/gradingscheme).

**Also available online:** Make sure that you are reading at the right level by checking your level on our website ([www.collinselt.com/readers/levelcheck](http://www.collinselt.com/readers/levelcheck)).



# Confucius



551 BCE–479 BCE

the great Chinese philosopher





**He who learns but does not think is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger. Real knowledge is understanding that we actually know very little.**



I was born a very long time ago – the story of my life was not written down until a long time after my death, so many of the facts are uncertain. But here I will tell you what was believed about my life and the events that shaped my thinking. I was born in China in the summer of 551 BCE – nobody can agree on the exact date and naturally I was too young to remember it myself. I was born in the village of Zou, in the state of Lu, near present-day Qufu in Shandong Province. My father was from an aristocratic family of warriors – brave, experienced fighters – and he died when I was three years old. This is not surprising when you know that he was about forty years older than my mother. Despite his family background, my

father left us little money – the family had lost their fortune some time before – and we were often hungry. In Shandong Province, the winters were extremely cold, and just staying alive was difficult at times. I managed to bring in some money by working as a shepherd – looking after sheep – and I also took care of a local farmer's cows, so we did not starve.

My mother did her best to educate me and she taught me many fine lessons about life. The hours I spent with the animals gave me the chance to think about life and what made it good. I asked myself about how we should live, what was fair and unfair and how people should live together. As I grew older and became a teenager, these questions became all the more important to me. When I was 19 years old, I met a girl called Qi Guan. Within a short time we had got married and by the time I was 20, we had started our family. After the birth of our son, King Li, we went on to have two more children but our marriage was not a happy one. When I was 23, my mother died which affected me deeply for the next three years.

After my mother's death, I started studying philosophy. Already, one of my 'life' questions had been answered – as a family we learnt to understand each other's emotional needs. However, as I had a wife and children and all the extra costs that came with a family, I had to make sure that our practical needs were met as well as our emotional ones. I needed to make some more money. Because I could read and write, and many people at that time could not, I found a job as a clerk – keeping records and doing the accounts – for the Duke of Lu, the ruler of the state.

Lu was a powerful man who spent every day making decisions about other people's lives. Some people thought he was fair while others felt that he was against them. According to the way each person had been treated, I saw happiness, sadness and anger in their faces. Understanding how much we are affected by the things that people say and do, I developed my Golden Rule – you should not do to others what you would not like them to do to you. Each day at work, watching how people made decisions, I formed my views. The solutions to the questions that I asked myself were tried and tested each day and people came to respect me. I enjoyed working hard and I tried to be reliable, both of which were noted, and I was promoted.



I lived during what became known as the Spring and Autumn Period in Chinese history. The country consisted of many small states that were constantly fighting for power. Chinese society was going through many changes as traditional values were challenged. There was tension and stress all around me and I wanted to find a way in which we could live in harmony – a state of peaceful cooperation. I had very clear views on how people should behave towards each other. Everyone had a specific place in society and according to where they fitted in, they had different roles to play and had different duties that they were responsible for.

Taking this a step further, I believed that there were five different types of relationships in the world. The first was between ruler and subject – the person living under the authority of the ruler. The second was that between father

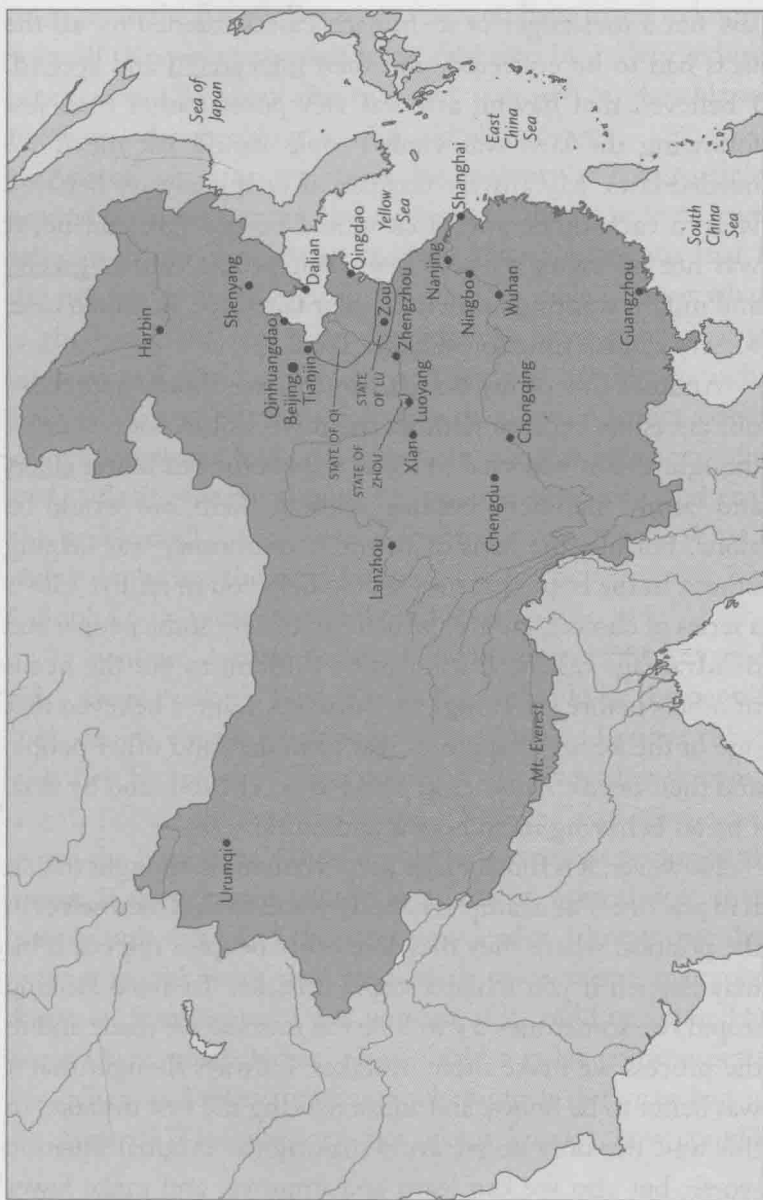
and son. The third was between elder brother and younger brother. The fourth was between husband and wife, and the last was between friend and friend. Apart from the last type, all the others involved one person having authority over another. The person who was not in the superior position of authority had to obey and respect the person who was, and the one with all the power had a duty to be responsible for and kind to the other. In my language, I called this duty to be a loving person *ren*.



In 518 BCE, I left my job and spent my time reading and teaching. My aim was to encourage and motivate my students, not just to tell them what was right and wrong. It didn't matter to me who my students were or what social class they belonged to, I just loved teaching. This was unusual because at that time, education was something only the rich had access to. My approach seemed to be popular because it wasn't long before I had a large number of followers – people who supported me and believed in what I was saying. I decided to travel to the imperial capital of China, Lo-yang, so that I could learn about the customs and traditions of the empire. Then, in 517 BCE, when I had come back, the state of Lu was involved in war and I left again, along with the Duke of Lu, and went to a neighbouring state called Qi. Here I learnt about music. The next period of my life was spent with my followers and I was also a teacher.

At the age of 51 in 500 BCE, I became the Justice Minister of the state. This was a job that required balance between the law and politics and I saw myself not as an inventor of the





China at the time of Confucius