

Chinese Calligraphy Lesson Plan

Elementary Grades 3-5

Objectives

- Describe line, value, and perspective as elements of art.
- Identify line, value, and perspective in Chinese calligraphic landscape paintings.
- Describe Chinese calligraphy using art and historical vocabulary.
- Compare landscape paintings from the Western tradition and Chinese tradition.
- Compare the written languages of English and Chinese.
- Create original artworks that emphasize line, value, and perspective
- Demonstrate Chinese ink painting through specific techniques in calligraphy.
- Demonstrate proper care and use of art materials
- Assess their own work
- Present their artwork

Vocabulary

- Calligraphy- Decorative handwriting
- Chinese Calligraphy- the expressive and meditative cultural art of character writing in China characterized by an efficient use of brush strokes
- Shūfǎ- the way the book is written
- Value- the degree of light or darkness of a color. One of the seven elements of art
- Line- A continuous mark. One of the seven elements of art
- Overlapping Perspective- the visual illusion of space created when objects in an image overlap each other to indicate one as being closer and the other further
- Vertical Placement Perspective- the visual illusion of space created as objects placed higher on the image plane appear further away
- Diminishing Perspective- the visual illusion of space created by lessening the size or detail of objects to indicate they are further away

- Atmospheric Perspective- the visual illusion of space created by lessening the value of objects to indicate they are further away

Materials

- Chart paper for practicing characters
- Tempera or watercolor paint or ink
- Art paper
- Calligraphy brushes
- Ramekins or wells for ink and water
- Pallets or plastic trays for mixing different values
- Aprons
- Chinese character handout
- Perspective scavenger hunt handout
- Venn diagram handout
- Thumbnail requirements handout
- Rubric handout
- Reflection handout
- Assessment handout
- 3 ring binder with sheet protectors
- Line and Chinese Calligraphy Presentation
- Value and Perspective Presentation

Art History

Chinese writing was first done vertically on sticks which were then bound together. When the Chinese began to use paper, they wrote on scrolls, continuing to use vertical columns. Chinese characters used to be read from top to bottom and right to left, rather than from left to right across the page as English is, though now it is read across the page. Many Chinese characters began as pictographs or representational pictures. Over time, they were stylized into symbols. Chinese writing is logosyllabic so that each symbol stands for a syllable (and therefore often a morpheme or a complete word) instead of representing sounds like in the modern English alphabet. Calligraphy has been used to promote inner spiritual growth and personal character so there is a meditative quality of these art forms. The technique of Chinese calligraphy is also used to create landscape paintings. Chinese calligraphy and painting are characterized by efficient uses of painting strokes. The artists also use the transparency of the ink to create form and depth to their paintings.

Lesson 1- Chinese Calligraphy, Line, and Intro to Painting

Motivation- Introduce lessons by asking students questions about calligraphy and language used in art they see in their lives. Use examples like logos, decorative menus, and the constitution. Ask students questions such as: How would you describe the lettering in each example? How do they compare to one another? How does the visual quality of the lettering communicate to us about the words being written? Introduce the culture and history of Chinese calligraphy using a digital presentation including the element of line and the five styles of Chinese calligraphy. Ask students questions such as: How would you describe the lines in each character? What differences do they see in the styles? and What do you think this style would be used for? Before presenting the styles names and uses. Lead group discussion and fill out Venn Diagram about the similarities and differences of written Chinese language and written English language. Go through an online gallery of Chinese calligraphic artwork and select a piece to meditate on. Play traditional Chinese meditative music while students observe the piece for a few minutes. After, ask students questions such as: How would you describe the work? What feeling does the art work give you? Why? How do you think the artist used line to help give that feeling? Do you think it fits with the rhythm of the music? What would you title this artwork? As a class, generate a list of titles before revealing the real title. Ask students questions such as: What do you think of that title? Does it affect your feelings or interpretation of the work? Play the Introduction to Chinese Calligraphy Video. Ask students questions such as: How would you describe his technique, speed, and the quality of the lines? Distribute materials and play Chinese meditative music.

Procedure- Students will watch the teacher demonstration of proper material care and brush technique. Students will have time to play with the new materials, then will practice drawing different characters on the chart paper. Once students feel comfortable with the brush, they can move to art paper to apply controlled brush techniques and create character artworks before properly cleaning and storing their materials.

Lesson 2- Value and Perspective

Motivation- Introduce the art element of value to students by presenting a grayscale artwork like the landscapes of Li Xiongcai. Ask students questions such as: What do you see? What is the difference between this hill and that hill. Explain the concept of value using a digital presentation including western landscapes in their original presentation and then altered to grey scale. Use both examples to demonstrate the concept and methods of indicating space through perspective covering atmospheric, vertical placement, overlapping, diminishing size, and diminishing detail. Have students volunteer for an activity to demonstrate these ideas. Place one object in front of another on the desk. Ask the volunteers: Which one is closer? How can you tell visually? Have one student stand at the edge of the room and another close to the volunteer. Ask the volunteer: Who is closer? How can you tell? Have one volunteer stand very close to a wall and ask them how much of the wall they can see without moving their head. Then having them turn around, have the student describe how much of the wall on the opposite side of the room they can see. Still looking at the opposite wall, ask the student: Which objects on the wall are close and which are farther? How can they tell? Finally have the volunteer try and describe the detail on an intricate piece of art from far away and then describe it again once it has been brought closer to them. Play Chinese meditative music while students work. Distribute Rubric for students to be thinking about as they design their bamboo and landscape paintings and introduce thumbnail requirements.

Procedures- Students will volunteer to help demonstrate the different ways of indicating space before the class breaks into groups of three or more to ensure everyone gets a chance to experience the visual illusion by completing a prospective scavenger hunt. Once back in their seats, they can work with their group to complete the Venn diagram response activity comparing and contrasting the Chinese landscape to the Western landscape. Students will watch the teacher demonstration on mixing values, painting techniques for bamboo and leaves, and designing a landscape painting. Students will complete a ten step value scale to demonstrate an understanding of value and the mixing of value before applying that knowledge and skill to creating their bamboo paintings. Students will properly clean and store their materials. Students will be expected to bring in 5 thumbnail sketch ideas of landscape compositions for the next class.

Lesson 3- Assessing Progress

Motivations- Ask students questions about what they remember about line, value, perspective, and the history and culture of Chinese Calligraphy. Play Chinese meditative music while students work. Check student thumbnail sketches and ask them to identify the two methods of creating perspective they are using and how they plan to fulfill the rubric criteria. Ask students questions such as: Are you finding the painting process meditative? Are you being efficient with your brush marks? Would planning out your composition help you be more efficient with the ink? What marks and techniques are you liking? What are you finding most challenging?

Procedures- Students will watch another demonstration on landscape painting. Students will continue working on their bamboo paintings and begin landscape paintings. Because the landscapes take so long to dry, they will be encouraged to be working multiple at a time, painting on one while the others dry. Students will assess their progress by evaluating what is successful, what they are trying to improve, how their paintings are developing from their thumbnails, and if they are fulfilling the rubric criteria. Students will properly clean and store their materials.

Lesson 4- Reflect and Present

Motivations- Play Chinese meditative music while students work and assist them in finishing up their paintings. Distribute reflections. Facilitate group discussion as students present their favorite work to the class encouraging use of art language including quality of lines, values, and perspective as well as the history of Chinese calligraphy. Distribute a short assessment on line, value, perspective, Chinese calligraphy art, history. Collect binders with stored finished art, handouts and assessments in binder for grading

Procedures- Students will finish their landscape paintings. They will analyze their work and evaluate to select their favorite painting from the characters, the bamboo, and the landscapes. They will complete the rubric and reflection based on this piece and create a title for the work. Then they will present their favorite piece to the class explaining their title, justifying why it is their favorite, what they learned from their experience painting in this style, and what they will do

differently next time. Next, they will complete a short assessment to demonstrate their ability to describe and identify line, value, and perspective as elements of art and specifically in Chinese calligraphic art as well as what they have learned about the history and cultural significance of Chinese calligraphy. Lastly, the students will store artwork, handouts, and assessments in their binders to submit for grading as well as to reference for future projects and study for the final exam.

Evaluation- Could students:

- Describe line, value, and perspective as elements of art?
- Identify line, value, and perspective in Chinese calligraphic landscape paintings?
- Describe Chinese calligraphy using art and historical vocabulary?
- Compare landscape paintings from the Western tradition and Chinese tradition?
- Create original artworks that emphasize line, value, and perspective?
- Demonstrate Chinese ink painting through specific techniques in calligraphy?
- Demonstrate proper care and use of art materials?
- Assess their own work?
- Present their artwork?

Mississippi Arts Learning Standards for Visual Arts

All four Artistic Processes were addressed in this lesson including Creating (CR), Presenting (PR), Responding (RE), and Connecting (CN). Within those processes the following ten Anchor Standards were met. Students:

1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. (CR)
2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. (CR)
3. Refine and complete artistic work. (CR)
4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation (PR)
5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation (PR)
6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. (PR)
7. Perceive and analyze artistic work. (RE)
9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. (RE)
10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. (CN)

11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding. (CN)

Resources

Original Slideshow:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1URXkf7btbtjnx_ze0jYhcDRAD2UxyvshzT7vllxmKxs/edit?usp=sharing

Lesson plan inspiration:

<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/lessons-and-activities/lessons/3-5/chinese-calligraphy--ink-painting/>

Chinese Character Tutorial :

<https://www.learnchineseez.com/characters/learn-to-write-chinese/>

Chinese Characters:

<https://www.learnchineseez.com/characters/page4.php>

<https://www.learnchineseez.com/characters/page3.php>

<https://www.learnchineseez.com/characters/>

An Introduction to Chinese Calligraphy Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTLQuoFy6Y0>

The Art of Calligraphy in China galleries:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/chinese-calligraphy>

<https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/object-package/art-calligraphy-asia/104193>

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1R60dHVv8NJEduO4-lsWKHHFZgJRwmRfUZaEu9m0Xh0/edit?usp=sharing>

Bamboo Demonstration Videos to have playing while students work:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcA7vsYQcPk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v527vJObd64>

More rubric criteria ideas:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kUP8xXSQEqAIL1onJnjSP5exYcudGJggktL4zdVsIbA/edit?usp=sharing>

Name _____

Chinese Calligraphy Project Rubric

Title _____

	Not this time	I tried	I did a good job	I did my best yet
I created an original landscape composition in the Chinese calligraphy painting style	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
I used controlled calligraphic lines in my painting.	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
I used at least 5 values in my design.	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
I demonstrated at least 2 kinds of perspective.	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
I was very neat when I painted.	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
I cleaned up my area and took care of my materials.	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10

I completed my work on time and put my name on the back.	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
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Name _____

Chinese Calligraphy Project Reflection

Title _____

This piece was my favorite because:

I gave my work this title because:

While painting, I learned:

What will I do differently next time?