



ART OF THE ORIENT:  
CHINESE SCROLL PAINTING

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## **PROGRAM OUTLINE**

### **Major Goals and Overview**

This is an interdisciplinary program using the social studies curriculum as an impetus to the fine arts lesson. Students study the cultural background of the Orient during their social studies periods, while working on a Chinese scroll painting in their art class. During class discussions, students share ideas about important cultural contributions that the Chinese have made to our society. Through readings and Web research, they discover that it is the Chinese who are credited with the invention of the kite and compass, and how meditation and religion greatly influence their art.

Students begin with an in-class reading comprehension assignment that introduces them to the art of scroll painting. They learn that a scroll is a long roll of illustrated parchment that is meant to be hung, or read like a book. Through the use of technology as a research tool, students are now able to view the collection of Chinese art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City at the click of a button. I highly recommend that you visit this site to gain greater insight into the art of scroll painting: ([http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html\\_pages/elegant3.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html_pages/elegant3.htm))

Using the Chinese themes of landscape, flowers, bamboo, dragons, and birds, students begin sketching ideas for their own scroll. They begin to study pictographs and practice the art of Chinese calligraphy. Using the art mediums of watercolor, and pen and ink, students creatively design an original oriental scroll painting illustrating a theme based on nature. Completed painted scrolls are attached to dowels and string to be hung in a classroom gallery.

This lesson lends itself easily to many subject areas. Students are given the opportunity to explore Web sites and visit actual museum collections. Through reading and responding to new information, and through analysis and interpretation, students are able to create their own works of art in the authentic Chinese style. They have valuable discussions and gain insight into the art of the Orient. This lesson touches upon all the New York City Learning Standards for the Arts: Creating and Participating in the Arts, Knowing and Using Art Materials and Resources, Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art, and Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts.

### **Target Students**

This lesson targets sixth-grade major art talent classes. The students meet in the art room four times per week for forty-five minute periods. This program can be easily adapted to all grade levels. The focus is on reading, doing research, creating artwork, and developing written and oral communication skills. This lends itself to creative thinkers and problem solvers. The hands-on approach offers opportunities for kinesthetic and visual learners as well.

## Timelines

Allowing one month of instruction and execution of this project, I have broken it down into daily objectives.

- Day 1: Students will recognize the important cultural contributions of the Chinese culture in art.

Students are asked to silently read a teacher-made historical passage and answer reading comprehension questions (see attached worksheet). This leads to class discussion and interpretation of the art of the Orient.

- Day 2: Students will review and discuss the importance of Chinese art and culture.

Original and student sample scrolls are shown for students to review, analyze, and discuss their interpretations of the Oriental art. Students are asked to sketch sample scrolls found in their books or on display in the classroom to get a feel for the composition and technique of scroll painting.

- Day 3: Students will familiarize themselves with proper ways to utilize search engines.

Using school library visits and homework assignments, students will research Web sites on Chinese Scroll Painting and Calligraphy. Using the information they have gathered, students will sketch ideas for their scrolls. I have found the Asian Art collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art to be invaluable. The following links are highly recommended. Please visit these sites: [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org) - The Metropolitan Museum of Art which links to their Asian Art collection, as well as to a special exhibition entitled: The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliot Collection; [www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html\\_pages/glossary.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html_pages/glossary.htm) -Glossary of Chinese painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; [www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html\\_pages/elegant3.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html_pages/elegant3.htm) -Chinese painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; [www.chinapage.org/callig1.html](http://www.chinapage.org/callig1.html) -Examples of Chinese calligraphy.

- Day 4: Students will explore the fine art of Chinese calligraphy.

Students study pictographic images (see attached worksheets), followed by teacher demonstration of brushstrokes using ink to create pictographs (symbols used to represent words) and images. The students create their own pictographic studies.

- Day 5: Using a theme in nature, students will choose three pictographs from worksheets to illustrate their theme.

They continue to practice the art of calligraphy, using brush and ink.

- Day 6: Students will create sketches to illustrate their nature themes.

Using the pictographs studied, the students now create a pencil sketch of their scroll. For example, students will illustrate a theme in nature using the pictographs for

mountain, water, and rock. They draw these pictographs along with a drawing of mountains, rocks, and waterfall as their illustration (see attached sample).

- Day 7: Students will creatively design an Oriental Scroll Painting.

Using 9"x18" white painting or rice paper, students pencil-draw their natural landscape designs.

- Day 8: Students will use the art medium of watercolor to paint Oriental scrolls. Using a limited palette of soft washes, students are introduced to painting their scroll background (students have previously been taught the art of watercolor). Teacher demonstration and review of watercolor techniques, "wash" and painting "wet on wet" are further explored.

- Day 9: Students will explore the art of watercolor as they paint their Oriental scrolls.

Students continue at their own pace using their watercolor painting skills.

- Day 10: Students will complete watercolor painting their scrolls.

Fine detail brushes are applied over washes to bring out features with strong lines.

- Day 11: Students will paint pictographs using brush and ink technique.

Over dry paintings, students use their Chinese brushstrokes to complement their paintings, which are compositionally and aesthetically pleasing to the eye. The three pictographs are usually painted together in a row across the top, or the upper of lower corners.

- Day 12: Students will prepare their scrolls for hanging and display.

Using 12" wooden dowels, students roll their scroll over the top and bottom and cover wood with glue. Once dry, they attach a thin cord to the top center of their scroll with strong clear tape. Completed scrolls are now ready for display in classroom art gallery.

- Day 13: Class evaluation and discussion.

- Day 14: Class visits to view gallery.

## Assessments

The assessment tools used for this lesson falls into two categories:

1. Student Performance Assessment - where students are judged against a list of criteria for this type of work. Art is a very personal subject and difficult to grade. I have based assessment of many lessons on overall criteria including the following: How well did the student follow instructions? Did he use his time effectively? Did he reach his goal or my objective? How creative was this student in his design? What specifics were utilized as far as craftsmanship? Overall appearance accounts for most of the grade, as well as the effort the student applied. Using a grade of 85% as a mid-point, I grade accordingly as I see warranted.
2. Evaluation Assessment – most effective when students have had time to practice giving constructive feedback. I would spend one period on a class evaluation. I would display all completed artwork on the blackboard at the front of the classroom. I would then write five evaluation questions on the board or, at times, ask the questions orally. Giving the students approximately half the period to record their answers, we would then review and discuss, and critique one another's work. The evaluation questions for this lesson can be found in my lesson plan.

## LESSON PLANS

### ART OF THE ORIENT: CHINESE SCROLL PAINTING

Mrs. L. Langsner, Art Teacher

AIM: 1. Students will recognize the achievements and contributions of the Chinese culture in Art.  
2. Students will creatively design an Oriental Scroll Painting.

DO NOW: 1. Silently read pages 68 -70 in *Understanding Art* by Mittler & Ragans, Glencoe/Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Publishers, 1992  
2. Copy and answer questions 1-6 on p. 69. (If textbook is unavailable, use the reading passage as seen on worksheet.)

Q1. Name two inventions credited to the early Chinese.

A1. Compass, kites

Q2. What religion was introduced to China during the Han dynasty?

A2. Buddhism

Q3. What is meditation? What has been its role in Chinese art of the last 2000 years?

A3. Focusing one's thoughts on a single object or idea. This experience allows the person to know the inner beauty of the object or idea.

Q4. What are scrolls?

A4. A long roll of illustrated parchment meant to be hung, or read like a book.

Q5. What art flourished during the Tang dynasty and during the Sung dynasty?

A5. Sculpture and landscape painting.

Q6. What art form reached its highest point during the Ming dynasty?

A6. Porcelain pottery.

3. Sketch the scroll painting landscape on p. 70.

HOMEWORK: 1. Using search engines, research Web sites on Chinese Scroll Painting and Calligraphy.  
2. Chinese artists began work only after long meditation. This helped to capture the mood he wanted to show. Choose an object in your home, sit silently for five minutes, and study the object from every angle. Then place the object out of sight, using a paintbrush and one color, draw what you have perceived.

VOCABULARY: 1. Orient - people from Eastern Asia.  
2. scroll - rolled up paper with words and pictures.  
3. calligraphy - beautiful handwriting, considered an art form in China.  
4. pictograph - picture symbols used to describe a word.

LINKS: [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org) - Metropolitan Museum of Art links to their Asian Art collections as well as to special exhibition - "The Embodied Image": Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliot Collection  
[http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html\\_pages/elegant3.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html_pages/elegant3.htm) - Chinese painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art  
[http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html\\_pages/glossary.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html_pages/glossary.htm) - Glossary of Chinese Painting

GRADE LEVEL: 6th grade art talent classes

ESTIMATED TIME: One month - class meets 4 times per week for 40 minutes

SETTING: Art Classroom

INTERDISCIPLINARY AREAS: Social Studies, Language Arts

MATERIALS: 9"x18" white painting paper, pencils, watercolor washes, black india ink, paintbrushes, water cups, newspaper, dowels (straws), string, wallpaper, glue

MOTIVATION: Chinese scrolls, student sample scroll paintings, magazine and book photos, Web visit to "The Embodied Image"

PROCEDURE: 1. Class discussion and interpretation of the art of the Orient.  
2. Review and analysis of scroll paintings.  
3. Web exploration of sites on Chinese Art and Culture.  
4. Student sketches of landscape, flowers, bamboo, dragons, and birds.  
5. Student pictograph studies.  
6. Teacher demonstration of brushstrokes using inks to create pictographs and images.  
7. Students will illustrate a theme based on nature.  
8. Background will be a watercolor wash.  
9. Pictographs will be added using brush and ink.  
10. Final interpretation of theme will be painted and illustrated.  
11. Completed painted scrolls will be mounted to floral wallpaper frame.  
12. Dowels and string will be attached for hanging.  
13. Class evaluation/discussion will follow.  
14. Classroom gallery of Oriental Art will be on display for class visits.

EVALUATION: 1. How does the art of the Chinese culture compare with the Ancient Egyptians?  
*Both cultures used picture symbols for words, hieroglyphics, and pictographs.*  
2. What are Chinese Scroll Paintings?  
*A scroll is a long roll of illustrated parchment or silk meant to be hung, or read like a book.*  
3. Name the two most important parts of a scroll painting.  
*The most important parts are the pictograph symbols and illustrations.*  
4. Why are pictographs a form of calligraphy?  
*Calligraphy is an art form, which means, "fine writing."*  
5. Which scroll painting do you like best? Why?  
*Students are to write their own opinions based on their understanding of the lesson.*

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES: 1. Have student's visit the collections of Oriental art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and create a book of the various artwork they have found and write their feelings about the art.  
2. Create a Haiku book of original painting and calligraphy  
3. Invite a class parent as a guest artist to demonstrate the fine art of calligraphy.

ADDITIONAL SITES: <http://www.chinapage.org/callig.html> – examples of Chinese calligraphy



## **SAMPLE WORKSHEETS**

### **The Art of China**

The Chinese have a long history of being highly creative. Two thousand years before the invention of the seismograph, they were recording earthquakes. Long before the first Texas oil wells were drilled, they were drilling holes 2000 feet deep. The compass and the kite are two other early Chinese inventions. The fact that the Chinese have a gift for creating can be found in their art. There are many contributions to today's society that are attributed to the Chinese culture. An important part of the Chinese religion, Buddhism, focuses on one's thoughts on a single object or idea. The Chinese were the first people to think of "picture painting" as honorable work. Many artists were scholars and wrote with brushes that made thick and thin lines. They used this brush technique to paint pictures, fans, pages of books and scrolls. Chinese artists began work only after long meditation on an object. This helped the artist capture the mood he wanted to show. Scrolls were meant to be unrolled a little at a time, and read like a book. (See comprehension questions in lesson plan.)

Choose an object in the room, sit silently for five minutes, and study the object from every angle. Then place the object out of sight, using a paintbrush and one color, draw what you have perceived.

# Pictographs

Pictured in this box is a comparison of early pictorial writing and the Chinese words, called characters, of today.

Below and on the following page are more words for you to chose from.

SPRING  
ch'un

SUMMER  
hsia

AUTUMN  
ch'u

WINTER  
ang

LEAVES  
yeh

春  
夏  
秋  
冬  
葉

日	SUN			
月	MOON			
星	STAR			
雲	CLOUD			
雨	RAIN			
山	MOUNTAIN			
水	WATER			
舟	BOAT			
祈	PRAY			
囚	PRISON			
室	HOUSE			
魚	FISH			

Skill Sheet / Main Idea

Read each paragraph below and circle the main idea.

1. We painted a picture showing the change of season from summer to autumn. In it, we painted the brightly colored leaves orange, red and yellow. We also painted people walking through the woods all bundled up for the cool weather.

The main idea is:

a. leaves

b. Autumn

c. tree

葉

秋

樹

2. Yesterday, we had a very heavy rainfall. Before the rain began to fall, we saw dark clouds in the sky. The darkness hid the sun. We sat inside during the storm, listening to the rain hit the house.

The main idea is:

a. house

b. rain

c. cloud

室

雨

雲

3. Many flowers bloom in the spring. Some flowers are planted, but many grow in the wild. Flowers can be found in different shades of many colors. They need the right amount of water and sun to grow beautifully.

The main idea is:

a. spring

b. water

c. flowers

春

水

花

4. Paper can be used to make many things. If you fold it in the right way, you can make a boat that will float on water. If you cut the paper and fold it, you can make a flower. You can even glue pieces of paper together to make a sculpture.

The main idea is:

a. boat

b. paper

c. flower

舟

紙

花

HAPPINESS  
fu

福

WATERFALL  
chuan

泉

ROCK  
shih

石

STRENGTH  
ssu

勢

TREE  
shu

樹

FLOWER  
hua

花

PEACE  
ping

平

MIST  
mu

霧

PAPER  
chih

紙

HEAVEN, DAY  
den

天

SPIRIT  
chi

氣

FEMALE  
yin

陰

RHYTHM  
yu

韻

FATHER  
fu

父

MALE  
yang

陽

BRIDGE  
chiao

橋

MOTHER  
mu

母

In my scroll, I will use the following Chinese words:

LOVE  
ai

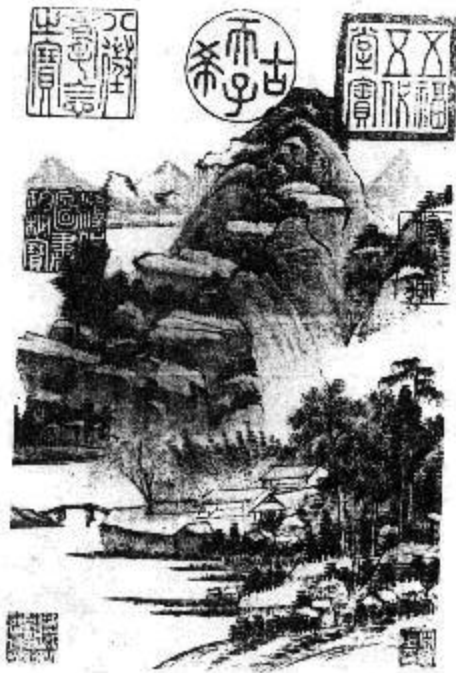
愛

FAMILY  
chia

家

My theme or main idea is

Authentic Scroll Paintings



## RESOURCES

### I. Web Sites

#### A Look at Chinese Painting

[http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html\\_pages/elegant3.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html_pages/elegant3.htm)

#### Glossary of Key Terms

[http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html\\_pages/glossary.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/chinese/html_pages/glossary.htm)

#### Chinese Calligraphy

<http://www.chinapage.org/callig.html>

#### Chinese Brush Painting

[http://www.asia-art.net/chinese\\_tech\\_brush.html](http://www.asia-art.net/chinese_tech_brush.html)

### II. Materials

- A. Rice Paper – 100-sheet package - \$7.50
- B. Watercolor Paper –100-sheet package - \$49.50
- C. Oriental Decorative Brushes – set of 9 - \$13.95
- D. Prang Watercolor Sets – 8-color set - \$4.20
- E. Speedball India Ink – 2 fl. oz. - \$3.95

### III. Books

- A. Understanding Art by Mittler & Ragans, Glencoe/Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Publishers, 1992

### IV. Field Trips

A class trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art will cost approximately \$150.00 for a self-guided gallery visit, or \$300.00 for a museum-educator-guided tour.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

O'Brien, Bernadette C. Learning To Read Through The Arts – Curriculum Guide-Reading Oriented Arts Workshops Lesson. New York: Board of Education, 1981.

Mittler, Gene and Rosalind Ragans. Understanding Art. California: Glencoe-Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, 1992

New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. <http://www.metmuseum.org>

**SAMPLE STUDENT WORK**

