



Asian Bamboo Painting

GRADE: 4 and up

TIME: 1-2 sessions

Developed by Karen Stomberg

KIT INCLUDES:

- lesson plan
- vocabulary board
- books: *Japanese Ink Painting*, *Basho and the Fox*
- instruction boards(10):
 - bamboo photos
 - full scroll painting example
 - The Four Treasures
 - painting set-up & examples
 - brushstroke practice including stalk, branch, leaf practice
 - composition, mounting
 - bamboo painting examples
- class sets: brush stroke guides, 24 bamboo brushes
- Chinese marble ink chop
- red stamp pad

MATERIALS:

- painting:
- bamboo brushes
 - 8.5" x 14" white copier paper
 - water cups
 - black tempera cake or liquid paint
 - brush stroke guides
 - small trays (styrofoam meat tray, top of egg carton, etc.)
 - paper towel
- mounting:
- 11" x 18" construction paper
 - 2" x 8.5" strips patterned paper (wallpaper samples, wrapping paper)



LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students discuss the meaning of tradition as applied to Chinese/Japanese painting and calligraphy. They practice brushstrokes using traditional tools, create paintings of bamboo, mount them scroll-style with patterned borders and finish them by stamping with a red signature chop.

VOCABULARY:

Asian	asymmetrical
China, Japan	composition
Haiku	calligraphy
culture	scroll
tradition	signature chop
bamboo	

ART ELEMENTS:

☒ Line
☒ Shape/Form
☐ Color
☒ Value
☐ Texture
☐ Space/Perspective

ART PRINCIPLES:

☒ Pattern
☒ Rhythm/movement
☒ Proportion/Scale
☒ Balance
☒ Unity
☐ Emphasis

CONTENT CONNECTIONS:

- Language Arts--poetry
- Social Studies--Asia

THEMES:

Cultural Traditions

OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: Students will:

- discuss meaning of tradition; consider the role of ancient, unbroken tradition in modern Asian life and art making.
- explore how Chinese calligraphy influenced painting in Japan and China.
- observe Asian paintings and discuss the scroll format, asymmetrical balance, the use of space and composition.
- practice with the tools and processes of bamboo brush painting.
- create a finished bamboo painting with a red signature chop and a patterned border.

PREPARE:

- Gather materials.
- Cut patterned paper into strips and cut down construction paper to 11" x 18."
- Review lesson so you feel confident.
- Practice brush strokes so you can demonstrate for your students.

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE:

Explore the idea of tradition:

- What is tradition? Write the word on the board and ask students to define it. They will usually say tradition is something you do over and over, ways of celebrating, something passed down. Traditions can be religious, national, cultural and family based.
- In America, Thanksgiving is our oldest national tradition. Ask students, *How old is Thanksgiving?* Thanksgiving celebrates the white settlers first harvest about 400 years ago.
- Asian traditions are much older. Long periods of cultural stability in Japan and China created consistent practices for thousands of years, from ancient to modern times.

Introduce students to Chinese calligraphy and ink painting.

- Tell students they are going to practice Asian ink painting that had its origins in Chinese calligraphy developed 6000 years ago! (Calligraphy is the art of writing.) Japanese and other Asian cultures borrowed Chinese calligraphy forms, techniques and tools.
- Learning ink painting in the traditional Asian way meant years of copying certain subjects in very specific ways. Apprentice painters had to capture exact ways of painting, which were passed down from century to century in Asia. An individual flair in an artist's painting style might have been appreciated, but in general, individual creativity wasn't the object of painting.



1. Show board with full scroll and artist hands.

Since ink is permanent, the strokes in calligraphy and ink painting can't be corrected—work has to be redone. Each brush stroke is unique in the moment it is made. The calligrapher or artist has practiced the same strokes for years to be able to work in a confident, relaxed way.

- Ink paintings are traditionally mounted on long scrolls with decorative silk fabric borders. These might be many feet long, either horizontal or vertical.
- The subjects (birds, flowers, people) in Chinese paintings are simplified to show the essence or spirit
- Point out the red signature 'chop'. Each person, family, teacher, company or studio has a 'chop' symbol to use with their signature.



2. Show the board of calligraphy tools, known as “The Four Treasures.”

These traditional tools are still used today for both calligraphy and Asian ink painting.

- **Ink**--in solid dry stick form or liquid.
- **Ink stone**--for grinding a dry ink stick. It is designed with a flat area and a sloping well for water to blend with the dry ink.
- **Brush**--usually has a bamboo handle, comes in a variety of sizes and hair types
- **Paper**--made from a variety of natural fibers, called “rice paper” in the west.



3. Show the photographs of growing bamboo. Explain to students that bamboo grows easily in much of Asia and it is an important material for making many things. Bamboo is also considered good luck.

- Ask students to look carefully at the bamboo and describe the main stalks, branches and leaves.
- Point out the joints where the sections of the stalk meet, how the branches grow in a 'v' shape from the joint sections.



4. Show the boards of finished and mounted bamboo paintings. (2)



Look at the composition in the paintings.

- Ask students if they are symmetrical (the same on both sides if you draw a line down the middle)? Chinese painting is almost always asymmetrical.
- Point out the white space in the paintings. Most Chinese paintings do not have developed backgrounds and white space is important.
- Why do the main stalks look 3D? (the shaded stalks, curved strokes at joints)

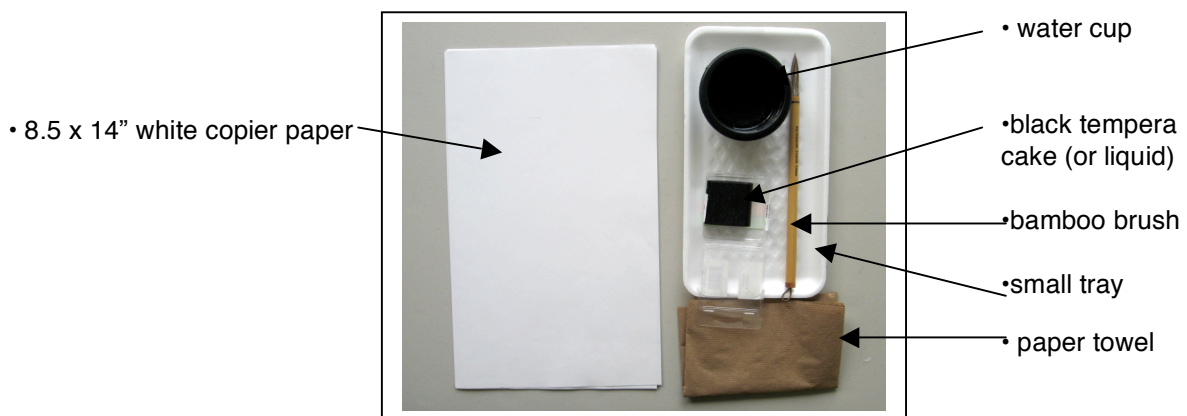
CREATE:

1. Display the Traditional Calligraphy Board.

- Point out the illustration of the poet Basho in Japan in the 17th century from the book *Basho and the Fox*. He is sitting in his hut writing haiku poetry using traditional calligraphy tools.

2. Look at traditional painting work stations and then set up student desks as shown below:

- brush stroke guide (not shown)



3. Display stroke practice board (attached to Traditional Calligraphy board) and point out holding the brush, loading ink and practicing strokes.

Demonstrate each step. Tape up white copier paper on board to show painting strokes.

- a. Practice holding the brush.** Have students practice with dry brush while telling them:
- hold brush vertically, with arm in a loose curve, sit tall, no part of hand or arm touching desk.
 - make circular strokes in the air above the desk, use whole arm and shoulder.
 - make straight strokes away from self and pulling toward self.

- b. Practice loading ink.** Load grey and black 'ink' to create light and dark values.

tempera cake:

- wet brush, then make 1 or 2 strokes across black tempera cake to create grey ink.
- blot on paper towel so brush isn't dripping, then using just the tip go over the tempera cake again to get blacker ink on the tip.

liquid tempera on paper plate:

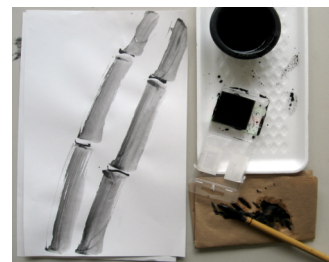
- make a puddle of grey paint by mixing a little paint with water on one side of plate, then load the brush with grey paint, blot, add dark black paint to the tip.

- c. Practice strokes.** Practice making quick strokes on white copy paper.

- try pushing down slightly at the beginning of stroke then lifting at the end.
- blot brush on paper towel to make point again between strokes.
- experiment and practice with wet and dry strokes, pull strokes toward you and away from you.

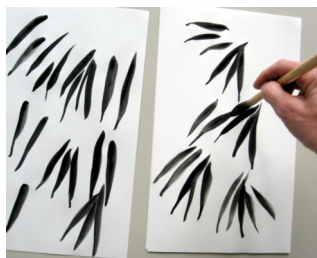
4. Display stalk board. Practice stalk stroke: (Note: Bamboo sections get thinner and longer as they grow.)

- begin at bottom of paper.
- push brush down with bristles on side.
- stroke sideways quickly upward and stop.
- push brush down again and lift.
- repeat to top of paper.



5. Display leaf board. Practice leaf stroke.

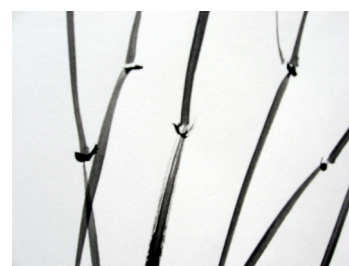
- leaves are pointed at both ends.
- start with brush straight up.
- touch paper lightly with pointed tip.
- pull brush forward and push down.
- finish leaf stroke by lifting the tip.
- start painting leaves from branch end.



6. Display branch board.

Practice branch stroke:

- hold brush upright.
- pull upward lightly touching the paper.
- push down a little bit then lift.
- branches grow in a Y from stalk sections.
- like stalks, branch sections get thinner and longer as they grow.



7. Practice painting joints:

- use dark black ink.
- hold brush in vertical position.
- use the tip of the brush.
- make a thin curved pulling stroke.
- push down a bit at both ends.



8. Create full compositions:

- paint stalks first, from bottom to top of paper.
- curve or angle 2 or 3 stalks.
- paint branches growing from joints.
- paint leaves in groups—they may overlap!



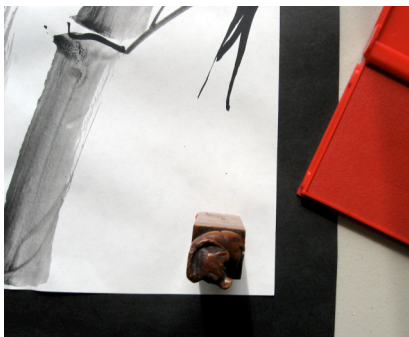
9. Mount favorite painting to look like a scroll:

- glue painting to 12" x 18" construction paper.
- add 2" x 8.5" strip of patterned paper to imitate brocade fabric. (wallpaper, wrapping paper)



10. Add red signature chop and sign in lower right corner:

- stamp marble chop on red ink pad, then stamp on mounted painting carefully, just once.
- sign your name in pencil on lower right.



CLOSE:

ASSESSMENT: Hang paintings gallery style. Ask students to talk about their work. They can point out their favorite part and explain why. Ask them about the composition of their work. Is their painting asymmetrical? How does the white space help their composition?

FOLLOW UP: Read the book *Basho and the Fox* about the 17th century Japanese poet Basho. Basho wrote some of the most famous Haiku ever written. Many ink paintings are accompanied with poetry written in beautiful calligraphy.

Have students create a 17-syllable Haiku to add to one of their paintings. Rewrite poem neatly on small white paper with black pen *or* use a computer.

Teacher administered assessment tool

DN	OK	UP	Lesson_____ Teacher_____
			Grade_____ Date_____ Number of Students_____
			Using the thumbs up, ok, and down technique, ask your students the following questions and record their answers. (K=knowledge, S=skills, C= creativity, A=attitude, E=engagement)
			1. Can you explain why bamboo was an important painting subject? (K)
			2. Can you name one country that traditionally paints bamboo? (K)
			3. Did you practice making bamboo stalks, branches and leaves? (S)
			4. Could you tell me what the four traditional painting tools are called? (S)
			5. Did you mount your painting like a scroll with borders and a 'chop'? (S)
			6. Did you add your own imaginative touch to your painting? (C)
			7. Did you listen carefully and follow directions? (A)
			8. Did you work hard during this lesson? (E)

Teacher self-critique

8. My teaching of this lesson:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
needed improvement							was highly successful		

9. What would I do differently next time?

ALIGNMENT:

Alignment of Standards:

Art: A1,2,3; B2,3,7,8; C2a,b,4; D5
English: A, B, E
Geography: B, E History: A, C
Science: F
Cultural Standard: D

Alignment of GLE's:

Reading: R2.2, R2.7, R2.11.
Science: SA3, SF2

CREDITS:

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ASIAN BAMBOO PAINTING

We learned the meaning of tradition as applied to Asia painting and calligraphy (writing). Using traditional tools we learned how to the different parts of paint bamboo—the stalks and joints, branches and leaves. After practicing we made a painting and mounted it scroll style. We added patterned borders and signed it just like Asian artists do--with a red signature chop.



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