

China Rocks!

Chinese Calligraphy on Stone

Una King

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Purpose: To introduce my seventh and eighth grade
Introduction to
Foreign Language students to China and the Chinese language
through the art of writing Chinese characters. After two
days
of background and calligraphy practice, students will paint
their
favorite Chinese character on stone.

State of Ohio Foreign Language Content Standards: (7th/8th Grade)
Cultures: Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
C. Investigate, discuss and report on products and
perspectives of the target
culture.

04. Reproduce artifacts from the target culture

Comparisons: Develop insight into the nature of language and culture.

C. Compare and contrast practices and perspectives of the
target culture and students' own culture.

04. Compare products and perspectives from the target culture
and
students' own culture

Essential Questions

1. Do the Chinese use an alphabet as the basis of their language?
2. How does this compare to the Roman alphabet?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Chinese character system?
4. How is calligraphy on stone an important part of Chinese cultural heritage?
5. Why is Chinese calligraphy considered art?

Rationale

For most of the middle school students who take the eighteen-week Introduction to Foreign Language class, it is their first time in a foreign language classroom. It is very important to expose them to at least one language that does not use the Roman alphabet that they are familiar with as primarily native English speakers. It has been my experience that many students are very curious about the Chinese language. For most of them, it is a mystery.

Teacher Preparation Before Lesson

- gather books on Chinese calligraphy
- gather a list of websites where students can view Chinese calligraphy
- gather supplies for students to create their own Chinese calligraphy
- prepare a power point presentation to introduce students to the China and the Chinese language. It should include
 - o the Roman alphabet compared to Chinese characters
 - o examples from ancient Chinese history of Chinese characters on stone.
 - o an explanation of the advantages/disadvantages of the Chinese character system
 - o examples of Chinese calligraphy as an art form

Materials

- thick markers, such as Crayola broad line markers
- padded surface for painting of rocks
- worksheet for students to fill in during calligraphy centers (Day #2)
- handouts of fundamental Chinese characters, such as love, peace, and truth
- old newspapers & scrap paper for practice
- paints, inks, and brushes in a variety of sizes
- small rocks (purchased for a craft store - large enough for painting one character)
- clear waterproof masonry varnish

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Calligraphy brushes on drying rack.

- Day #1 Students will . . .
- watch power point presentation as an introduction to China and Chinese calligraphy
 - discuss whether or not the Chinese have an alphabet

- brainstorm a pros/cons list on the Chinese character system
- practice writing a few Chinese characters using markers and scrap paper

- Day #2 Students will . . .
- be divided into six groups of students.
 - travel to six different Chinese calligraphy centers, spending five minutes at each center.
 - o Center #1 History of Chinese calligraphy
 - o Center #2 The Four Treasures: Materials
 - o Center #3 The Eight Strokes
 - o Center #4 Creating Characters - Stroke Sequence & Count
 - o Center #5 Fundamental Characters of the Human Spirit
 - o Center #6 Practice with markers and scrap paper

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The Eight Strokes

- Day #3 Students will . . .
- practice their five favorite Chinese "human spirit" characters
 - decide which character they'd like to paint on a rock
 - have a final practice on scrap paper
 - write name on bottom of rock in pencil
 - paint favorite character onto rock

- place rock in designated area to dry for twenty-four hours.
(After twenty-
four hours, rocks should be coated with clear, waterproof varnish
& allowed to
dry another day.)

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Stone rubbing of carved calligraphy
"love"
from the Han dynasty

Character for

Some excellent resources . . .

Aria, Barbara and Eng Gon, Russell. The Spirit of the Chinese
Character. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1992.

Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. The Cambridge Illustrated History of
China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Lavarini, Diana and Del Franco, Anna. A Brief History of Chinese Characters. Online. 1999.
<<http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Palace/1757/scrittura/scritturastoria.htm>.>

Lei Lei, Qu. The Simple Art of Chinese Calligraphy. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2002.

Matthews, Alison and Lawrence. The First 100 Chinese Characters: Simplified Character Edition. North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2006.