Lesson 2 -

Lesson 2: Chinese Calligraphy

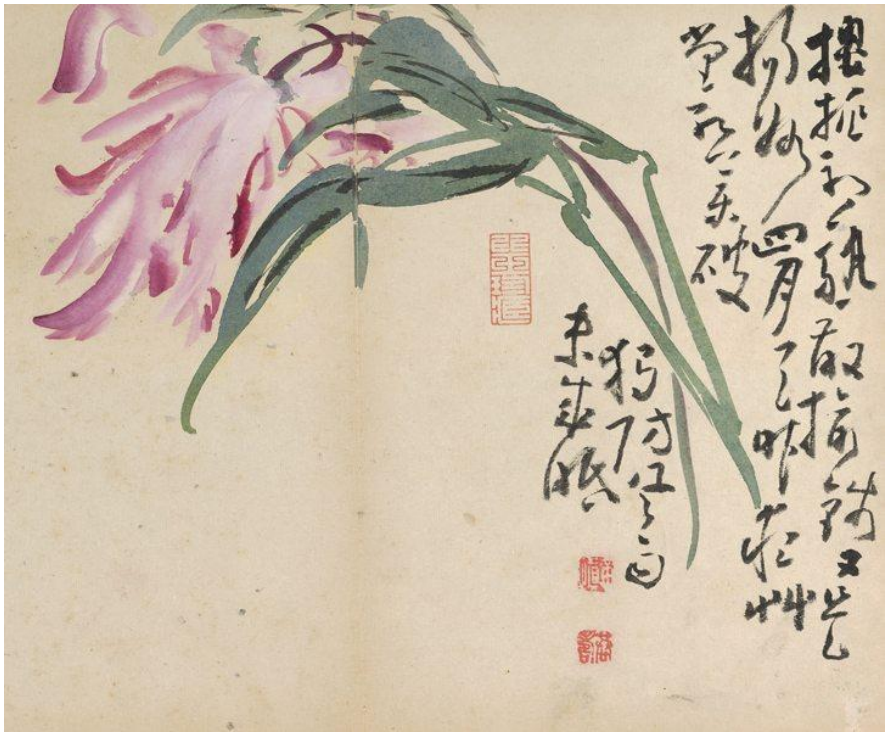
Teacher knowledge: Chinese calligraphy was thought of as an important art long before painting. Chinese painting and calligraphy use the same materials. The art of calligraphy in China emphasises practise and control. In ancient China students had to memorize many characters each week – it was thought that the brush was like an extension of the arm, the characters showing something about the person who painted them. In this lesson the children will use Chinese painting materials to paint various Chinese characters. This will enable them to explore how to use Chinese ink and brushes, varying width of line and density of ink.

Knowledge Objective	Task	Lesson Detail	Vocabulary
To understand the importance of calligraphy in Chinese art **Knowledge goals** **There are many spoken Chinese languages, but only 1 written language.** **Written Chinese symbols are called characters.** **Chinese writing is done in columns, from the right-hand side of the page.** **Calligraphy is a very important form of Chinese art and uses the same materials as Chinese painting.** **Chinese calligraphy takes practise and control.**	Task: To paint Chinese characters Success Criteria: I can paint 3 different Chinese characters. I can vary the width of my lines. I can vary the density of the ink I use.	Prior learning: Show children picture of Chinese painting set looked at last lesson. Ask them to name the different parts of the set. Vocabulary: Read through Knowledge Objective and vocabulary. Talk task: Ask children to guess how many languages/dialects are spoken in China – explain that there are around 3000. Ask children to guess how many written languages they think there are in China – explain there is only 1. Ask if they know the word for a Chinese symbol (this is not strictly at letter – a character). Remind the children we have 26 letters in our alphabet. Ask how many characters they think there might be in Chinese. Explain there are around 50,000 and that an educated person will know about 5000. Show children old characters for water, sun, mountain and rain (see resources) and ask them to guess what they mean (explain they all have to do with the weather/nature). Teach: Explain following facts: In ancient China, students had to memorize many pictures or characters each week and used brushes and ink to paint the "words". Chinese character writing is done in columns, from top to bottom and from right to left. So, you start writing in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Chinese calligraphy uses the same materials as Chinese painting. Chinese calligraphy was thought of as a very important art form long before painting. Chinese characters, themselves, are seen as important in a poetic way. Calligraphy takes practice, and control. The brush is like an extension of the arm and the character will show something about the person who has painted it. Show children Fisherman from Knowledge Organiser. Remind them that the Chinese characters on the painting are a poem. Demonstrate/Task: Show children the modern characters for water, sun, mountain and rain (see resources). Explain that they are going to write these letters with Chinese ink and brushes in their sketchbooks. They should concentrate on how they use the brush as this is very important both in Chinese calligraphy and painting. They should try and vary the width, speed and pressure of the brushstroke. Demonstrate how to do this. They should also vary the density of the ink they use. Explain the meaning of this: the more water they add to their brush the less the density of the ink. Partner teach/Plenary: Ask: How many spoken/written languages are used in China? What materials are used for Chinese calligraphy? Describe how you have varied the density of ink and width of the line when painting the Chinese characters.	Calligraphy, character, rice paper, ink stick, ink stone. Relevant Art Fisherman painting (see Knowledge Organiser)

Suggested resources: Chinese ink stick and stone, water pots, a variety of Chinese brushes (small, medium and large), sketchbooks. For information on Chinese calligraphy see https://www.china-family-adventure.com/chinese-writing-symbols.html#.U1aSuFcZrdI and https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chcl/hd_chcl.htm

Year 5
spring 2…
Lesson 2

Chinese Art



Prior Learning

Can you identify these items with your partner?



Our Knowledge Organiser

Knowledge Organiser – Chinese Art (Visual Arts - Year Five)

Key Vocabulary	Definition
dynasty	A line of rulers of a country from the same family. Parts of modern-day China were ruled by different dynasties for thousands of years.
Ming dynasty	Chinese dynasty from 1368-1644 C.E.
calligraphy	Decorative handwriting
character	Chinese writing symbols
rice paper	Thin paper used for Chinese painting.
scroll	A roll of paper or silk for writing or painting on. When rolled up, stored in a box.
hand scroll	A long, narrow, horizontal scroll, viewed by being held by the viewer, maybe on a table.
hanging scroll	A scroll displayed vertically on a wall for a short period of time.
ink stick	A solid stick of ink.
ink stone	A stone for grinding ink on.
ceramic	Fired clay.
porcelain	A white translucent ceramic.
Ming ware	Ming dynasty ceramics.
cobalt blue	A deep blue pigment

Paintings and Calligraphy



Finches and Bamboo
Early 12th century
Handscroll - ink and colour on silk



Fisherman (with poem)
c.1350
Handscroll - ink on paper



Summer Mountains
c.1050
Handscroll ink and colour on silk

Ming Ware



Early 15th century,
Porcelain with cobalt blue



Late 17th century
Porcelain with cobalt blue, for European market

Knowledge L.O: To understand the importance of calligraphy in Chinese art

Task L.O: To paint Chinese characters

Success Criteria:

I can paint 3 different Chinese characters.

I can vary the width of my lines.

I can vary the density of the ink I use.

Here are today's key words:

- Calligraphy
- Character
- rice paper
- ink stick
- ink stone.

Talk Task

Can you guess how many languages/dialects are spoken in China?

There are around 3000

Can you guess how many written languages there are in China?

There is only 1.

Talk Task

Do you know the word for a Chinese symbol?



A character

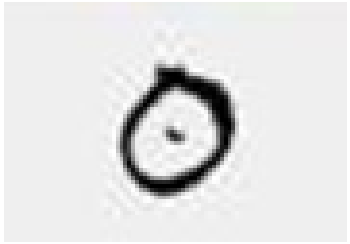
We have 26 letters in our alphabet.
How many characters do you think there are in Chinese?

There are around **50,000** and an educated person will know about **5000**

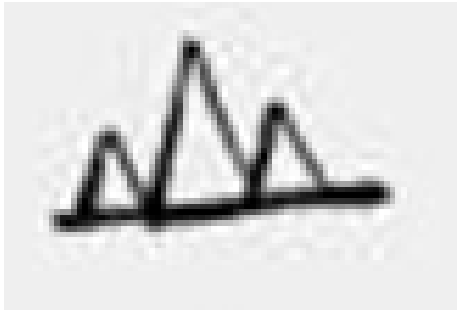
Talk Task

These are old characters, can you guess what they mean? They all have to do with the weather/nature.

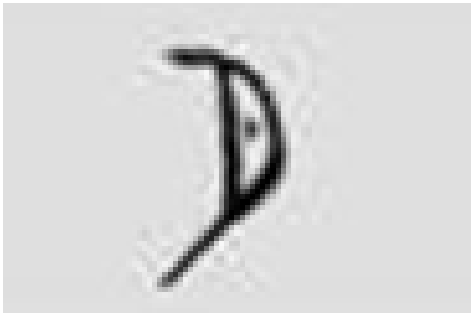
The sun



Mountains



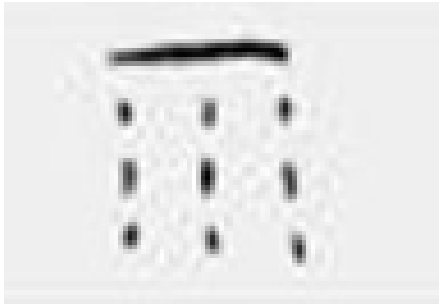
The moon



Water



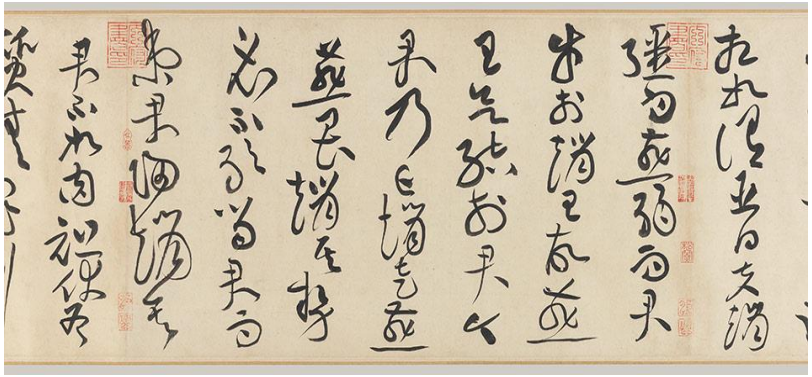
Rain

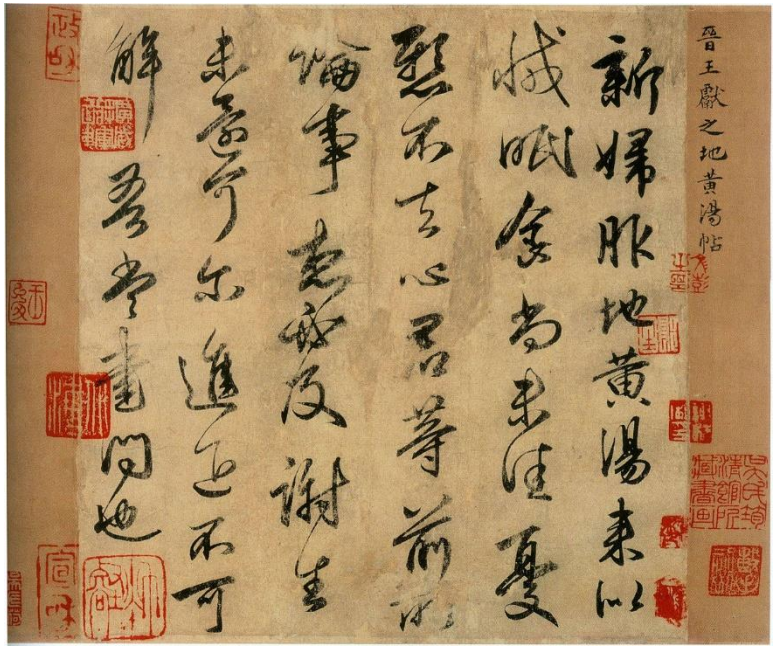


Teach

In ancient China, students had to memorize many pictures or characters each week and used brushes and ink to paint the "words".

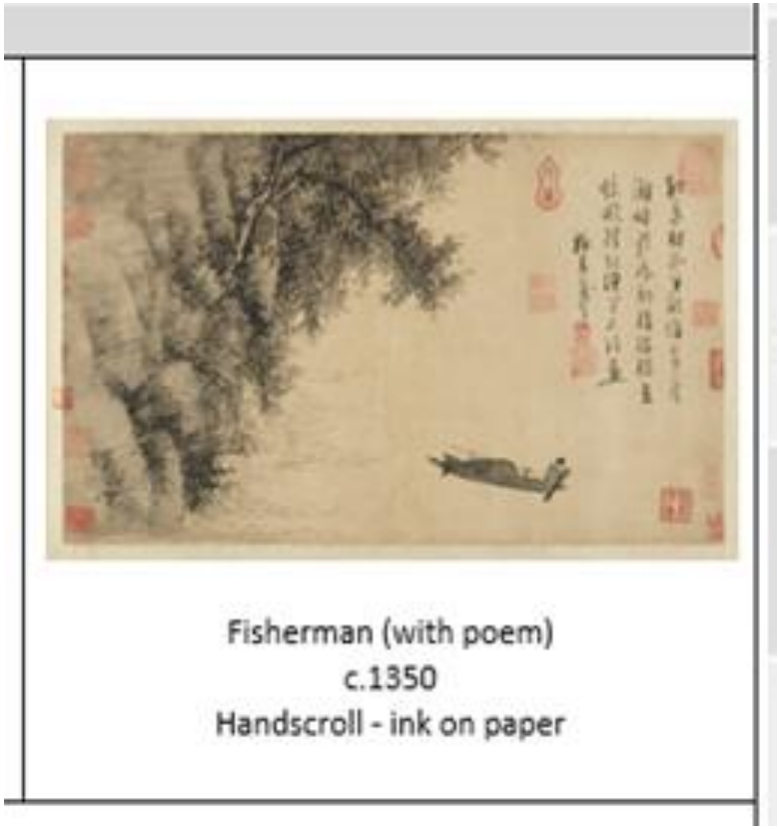
Chinese character writing is done in columns, from top to bottom and from right to left. So, you start writing in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Chinese calligraphy uses the same materials as Chinese painting.





Teach

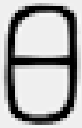
Chinese calligraphy was thought of as a very important ‘art form’ long before painting. Chinese characters, themselves, are seen as important in a poetic way.
Calligraphy takes practice, and control. The brush is like an extension of the arm and the character will show something about the person who has painted it.



The characters on the *Fisherman* painting form a poem.

Task

This shows the evolution of characters in Chinese

						Characters used today
Sun						日
Moon						月
Mountains						山
Water						水
Rain						雨

For your task, you are going to write the new letters (characters) on the right with Chinese ink and brushes in your sketchbooks

If you are not in school then you may just have a pencil or felt pen available. You could use a house paintbrush and water and try this on the path outside.

Task

To draw them, you need to:

- concentrate on how you use the brush as this is very important both in Chinese calligraphy and painting.
- try and vary the width, speed and pressure of the brushstroke.
- vary the density of the ink you use so the more water you add to the brush the less the density of the ink (paint) .

And finally…

Step for depth:

Describe how you have varied the density of ink (paint) and width of the line when painting the Chinese characters.

Plenary

How many spoken/written languages are used in China? What materials are used for Chinese calligraphy?