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ABSTRACT

In this lesson, designed to be taught within a unit on China, primary-grade students will learn about the history of papermaking and its origins in China and even learn how to make their own paper. After learning about Chinese art and culture in the lesson, students will write their own "cinquain" poem about China. The lesson presents an overview; suggests length and grade levels; lists subjects and subtopics; cites intelligences being addressed and dimensions of learning; notes materials needed and teacher resources; and discusses National Standards for Arts Education and other standards. It then cites instructional objectives; lists strategies; and provides a detailed, step-by-step instructional plan for the teacher to follow in the classroom. The lesson also suggests assessment and extension activities. A papermaking and poetry rubric is attached. (NKA)



Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Papermaking and Poetry

Resource Type: lesson

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Length: Five 50-minute periods

Grade: K,1,2

Subjects: Language Arts, Social Studies, Visual Arts

Subtopics: Folk Arts, Poetry, Social: Asian Studies

Intelligences Being Addressed:

- Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
- Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:

- Acquisition and integration of knowledge
- Extension and refinement of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge

Overview: Paper is a simple material, yet this simple product has had a tremendous effect on our lives. In this lesson, students will learn about the history of papermaking and its origins in China. They will learn about the papermaking process and will have the opportunity to make

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their own paper. They will also begin to think about the significance of the invention of paper. This lesson is designed to be taught within a unit on China. After learning about Chinese art and culture, students will write their own cinquain poem about China.

Equipment: • Computer Mac or PC with Internet access

Media & Materials:

Printouts: This lesson has printouts. They are referenced in the "Student Supplies" or "Other Materials" sections below.

Student Supplies:

- Other Materials:**
- train whistle
 - pictures of the Great Wall of China, panda bears, fireworks, an abacus, and Chinese calligraphy
 - traditional Chinese folk music (optional)
 - various kinds of handmade paper
 - scraps of paper (egg cartons can be used also)
 - decorations for paper: leaves, flowers, glitter, dried flowers, small pieces of ribbon, etc.
 - sponges and towels
 - bowl for soaking paper pieces
 - 3-4 blenders
 - big basins for paper pulp (needs to be larger than the deckle)
 - sink (for water and clean-up)
 - a deckle (a wooden frame with screen or nylon mesh)
 - liquid starch
 - many newspapers
 - "Sharpie" pens
 - plastic bags for storing used sponges and extra paper pulp
 - Assessment Rubric

Related Textbooks: None

Teacher Internet Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:
Resources:

- **Hand Papermaking**
<http://www.handpapermaking.org/ArticlesforBeginnersIndex.html>

This Web site of Handpapermaking Inc. provides the beginner papermaker articles and tips for getting started.

General Internet Resources:

- **Online Poetry Classroom**
<http://www.onlinepoetryclassroom.org/index.cfm>

This site provides teachers with resources related to teaching poetry in the classroom, as well as a searchable database of poets and poems.

- **Poetry 180**
<http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/>

This Library of Congress site contains the text of 180 poems selected by U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins, one for every day of the school year. Each poem is accompanied by suggestions for presenting and reading the text.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 1 : Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 4 : Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 6 : Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

[Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education](#)

Other National Standards:

- History K-4 #7, #8

Source of Standards:

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the [Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory \(McREL\)](#) website.

State Standards, if any:

California Standard: 3.0 Understanding the Visual Arts in relation to History and Culture. Students will be able to discuss the history of

papermaking, and their cinquain poem will reflect their understanding of what they have learned about China.

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the [National Conference of State Legislatures website](#).

Instructional Objectives:

Students will:

- make a piece of paper from raw materials.
- discuss the history of papermaking.
- write a cinquain poem about China at the conclusion of the China unit.
- use the paper for the display of their cinquain poem about China.

Strategies:

Direct instruction
Inquiry
Project
Individual work

Instructional Plan:

Vocabulary:

deckle – the frame used to make the paper
pulp – mixture of paper pieces and water
cinquain – poem with 5 lines that follows a certain pattern (see the "Follow Up" section of the instructional plan)

Introduction:

The teacher will take the children on a "trip to China" using an "alphabet train." The teacher will call the children to come up and join her on the train as she says a letter aloud. If the student's first name begins with that letter, he/she will join her (students hold onto each other's waists, creating a train). Teacher uses a train whistle and the class moves around the room, making various stops along the way to view such things as pictures of the Great Wall of China, panda bears, fireworks, an abacus, and Chinese calligraphy. They could also hear traditional Chinese folk music and see various kinds of "special" paper.

When the train "arrives," the students are "in China" and will begin their study of the various items mentioned above, beginning with paper production.

Ask the students what they know about China, and what kinds of questions they have about China. Record their responses. At the conclusion of the unit, they will add to this chart by summarizing what they have learned about China.

Share the following background information on the history of paper with the class:

Before paper was invented, the Egyptians used a plant called papyrus to use for their written products. They tore the leaves apart and pressed them until they were flat enough to write on. Papyrus was used for 4,000 years.

In 105 A.D., a man in China named Ts'ai Lun took tree bark, pieces of rope, rag, and fishing net, and ground them into a pulp and made the first paper.

This paper was also used for clothing, blankets, and even shoes. The Chinese also used this paper as money by stamping pictures and words on the paper. This paper money was called "flying money" because it was light compared to the metal coins. They spread oil on the paper and made umbrellas, and they glued this paper to walls and invented wallpaper. The Chinese kept this papermaking a secret for over 500 years!

Until 1798 each piece of paper was made one piece at a time because machines to make paper were not yet invented. Now there is equipment that can make a piece of paper 26 feet wide and 40 miles long in just one hour!

Procedure:

Demonstrate the following procedure for making paper:

1. Tear scrap paper into small, postage-size pieces. Place in large basin. Add hot water and soak for at least 30 minutes.
2. Fill the blender 1/2 way with warm water, and add a few handfuls of the soaked paper.
3. Blend at medium speed until the mixture has a soupy consistency.
4. Mix in decorations for the paper, such as small flowers, glitter, leaves, etc.
5. Pour pulp into basin and mix with hands until evenly blended. A few ounces of liquid starch will make the paper more firm.
6. Slide the deckle into the basin and move it back and forth to get an even layer of fibers on the screen.

7. Lift the deckle out of the basin and allow it to drip until most of the water has drained.
8. Press the pulp with your hand and absorb the excess water from the bottom with a sponge.
9. Place a few layers of newspaper on a flat surface and turn the deckle over and deposit the wet paper on the newspaper.
10. Cover the paper with a cloth or other absorbent material and allow the paper to dry.
11. Peel the paper off the newspaper, and admire the product!

With the help of volunteers (parents, guardians, etc.), each student can create their own paper following the procedure outlined above. Three to four work stations could be set up in the classroom.

Closure:

Discuss the following:

- What materials were used in papermaking?
- What is the difference between this paper and the paper we use in class every day?
- What would you use if you didn't have paper (before the Chinese invented it)?
- What did you learn about making paper?

Clean-up:

Each student will gather up all newspapers and throw them away. Helpers will strain all pulp with a strainer and put in a plastic bag to freeze for making more paper in the future. Helpers will also clean the deckle and blender jar in a tub of warm water. Sponges will be cleaned and towels will be rinsed out and placed in bags to be washed at home.

Follow-up:

After the entire unit of China has been presented (and the paper has had time to dry), students will update their charts about what they learned about China, which they started at the beginning of this lesson. Based on information on this chart, students will write a cinquain poem. Explain to students the format of a cinquain poem.

Line 1: a one-word title

Line 2: a two-word phrase (or two separate words) describing your title

Line 3: a three-word phrase describing an action relating to your title, or three action words

Line 4: a phrase (usually four words) that describes a feeling relating to your topic, or four "feeling" words

Line 5: one word that refers back to your title

The following is an example of a cinquain:

China
Pandas, fireworks
Building, making, creating
I liked visiting China.
Fun!

Each student should now be able to create their own cinquain poem about what they have learned about China. Students can choose items from the chart the class developed, or they can brainstorm their own ideas. Students should work on their poem on notebook paper and the teacher should check the work for accuracy, spelling, and punctuation. After the teacher approves the draft, each student can write his/her final poem on the handmade paper.

Assessment: Assess the students' work in the following categories.

- Did the student follow directions?
- Did the student make a piece of paper?
- Did the student use the additional materials for the papermaking?
- Did the student clean up appropriately?
- Did the student write a cinquain poem relating to China?
- Can the student give a brief history of papermaking?

Teachers may also use the [Assessment Rubric](#) (see attached).

Extensions: None

Teacher References: American Forest Foundation. *Project Learning Tree*. Washington, DC: American Forest Foundation, 1994.

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ARTSEGENotes: This lesson was written in collaboration with students in the Curriculum Development and Instruction class in the Education Department at California State University, Chico.

Papermaking and Poetry Rubric

Skill	Emerging	Partial Mastery	Mastery
Process of making paper	Student followed only a few, if any, steps in the papermaking process. Unable to use product for presentation of calligraphy or poem.	Student followed most or all the steps in the process. Paper acceptable for use, but consistency of paper not adequate for good transfer of poem to paper.	Student followed all steps in process and was able to help others with process. Product of good consistency and transfer of poem to paper of high quality.
Understanding of history and importance of papermaking	Student was able to give less than 3 facts about the history and importance of papermaking.	Student was able to give 3-5 facts about the history and importance of papermaking.	Student was able to give more than 5 facts about the history and importance of papermaking.
Presentation of paper with personal form of "Chinese calligraphy"	Paper and poem are lacking or incomplete. Little or no personal calligraphy is present.	Student's project has some quickly-crafted calligraphy. Poem is placed on paper in "random" fashion.	Student's project had "expressive" placement of poem on paper and personal calligraphy is creative.
Writing cinquain poem with correct form, content, and placement of poem on paper	Student did not finish poem and content connected to lesson is minimal.	Student had completed poem, but form or content of poem was incorrect or not complete.	Student had proper number of words in poem with content connections to lesson content about China.



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