



China: Art and Culture

Post-visit Activity: Creative Writing

In China, calligraphy occupies a distinguished position in the field of traditional art. It is not only a means of communication, but also reveals one's personality. It can mold and improve a person's temper and promote well-being. Ancient people paid great attention to calligraphy. It gave a first impression when applying for a governmental position. Children of high government officials had to learn and try to write a good hand; even emperors themselves were good at calligraphy. Of course, emperors could appoint someone to write for them, but the ability to write in calligraphy showed control and inner peace. It was a sign of status. The emperor had the highest status of all. The art of calligraphy has endured for more than 2,000 years.

To practice calligraphy requires the basic tools of the 'four treasures of study' (writing brush, ink stick, paper, and ink slab) as well as much concentration guiding the soft writing brush charged with fluid ink, and writing on the paper where the ink will diffuse quickly. Once the brush movement hesitates, a black mark is created, so speed, strength and agility is the essence of fine artwork. When writing, many calligraphers will forget all worries and even themselves, combining all thoughts in the beauty of their art. It is a silent reflection of the soul.

English words are made up of a collection of letters each with its own sound. The Chinese use logograms—where a symbol represents meaning or a word. Good examples of logograms that you might use every day are numbers. If you see '2' written, you know that it means 'two'. A French person looking at the same symbol '2' would say it meant 'deux'. The basic principles behind Chinese writing have remained unchanged for thousands of years. Each character consists of a number of strokes or lines set inside an imaginary square. Thousands of bones from the Shang dynasty have been unearthed with writing using characters that still exist today.

Sources:

<https://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/arts/chinese-calligraphy.htm>

<http://china.mrdonn.org/calligraphy.html>



China: Art and Culture

Post-visit Activity: Quick Write Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____

Cinquain Poetry

After reading the above passage on Chinese calligraphy create your own cinquain poem. To create a cinquain poem, name a topic and then describe the topic by completing each line in the format shown below:

Summarize Basic Elements

Name:

Two adjectives:

Three Verbs:

Simile ("like a..." or "as a..."):

Synonym for the first line:

Student Sample about History

History

Ancient, Contemporary

Discovering, Debating, Evaluating

History is like an Energizer Battery,

It keeps going and going and going...

Life

Source:

Dearie, Kurt, Groesch, Gary *The Write Path - History/Social Science: Interactive Teaching and Learning*. San Diego: Avid Press, 2011. Print.

