

GP3117

Chinese Writing Essentials (Pk/24)

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Principle: A **principle** is a *law* or *rule* that has to be, or usually is to be followed, or can be desirably followed.

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY:

1. Posture: It is important to sit up straight.
2. Knowledge: Good knowledge of the tools.
3. Control: You must know how to control the brush.
4. Rhythm: The characters should flow smoothly down the page.
5. Balance: Make sure all the lines are the right thickness and length.

If you had to list 5 principles of handwriting in the United States what would they be?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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Kit may contain silicone gel packets, which should be removed before use.

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Chinese Writing Essentials (Pk/24)

PLEASE READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE STARTING



YOUR KIT CONTAINS:

- Assorted Paint-a-Dot Design Cards
- Brushes

YOU WILL NEED:

- Cups of water
- Paper Towels
- Flat Work Surface
- Pencils

EACH PERSON SHOULD HAVE:

- 1 "Basic Strokes" Paint-a-Dot design card
- 1 "Strength" Paint-a-Dot design card
- 1 "Forever" Paint-a-Dot design card
- 1 Paint brush
- The cups of water, pencils and the paper towels will be shared among the group

NOTE: This kit will create 24 sets of 3 different designs.

AGE GROUP: 5 and up
PROJECT TIME: 30 minutes

INTRODUCTION:

This kit is designed to introduce the essentials of Chinese character painting. In China, painting and writing were developed hand-in-hand. Chinese writing (also called calligraphy) is composed of block-like symbols which represent ideas. The symbols are most often referred to as characters. Each character is made up of a combination of up to 8 different strokes. This kit introduces the 8 basic strokes of Chinese Characters, then kids use a simple combination of strokes to create the word “Strength” and then use a more complicated combination to create the word “Forever.”

INSTRUCTIONS:

TIP: Before beginning the project, have each person write their name on the back of all 3 design cards.

1. It is important to start with the “Basic Strokes” paint with water design. This design shows the 8 basic stroke shapes that are used in creating thousands of Chinese characters. Traditional Chinese character writing uses bamboo brushes which allow the artist to create the strokes with 1 brushstroke. Get the brush slightly wet and carefully brush over the black paint dots. The wetter the paintbrush, the lighter the paint will be. Have the kids practice painting these basic strokes and see if they can paint each shape in one brush stroke.

TIP: You can make photocopies of the basic shapes design and have the kids practice painting the shapes just using water on the photocopies. This technique of practicing with water is commonly used in China.

2. Once the group has completed the Basic Strokes design, have everyone clean their brushes. To begin the “Strength” design, encourage everyone to try painting the design in as few strokes as possible by making long sweeping strokes within the black outline.
3. To finish the set of 3 designs, complete the “Forever” character starting with a clean brush and as few strokes as possible.
4. Let all the completed designs dry on a flat surface.

WHILE THE GROUP WORKS ON THE DESIGNS, HERE ARE SOME FACTS TO SHARE AND DISCUSS:

- China is the fourth largest country in the world. It is located on the opposite side of the World from the United States.
- China is large enough to have several time zones but, only has one.
- The Chinese year is based on the cycles of the moon. This is called a lunar schedule. The Chinese new year is different every year, but it usually comes between the end of January and the middle of February.
- Each year is represented by an animal. There are twelve animals which represent the twelve months. The Chinese believe that you have some of the characteristics of the animal representing the year in which you were born.
- Beijing is the capitol of China.
- China is such a large country that it has everything from tropical to subarctic conditions.
- In the United States we read and write from left to right, top to bottom of a page.
- In China, characters are written in columns, top to bottom from right to left.
- The English alphabet is made up of 26 letters used to read and write.
- A Chinese adult can know up to 4,000 characters to read and write!

BRAINSTORM WITH THE GROUP:

- Traditional Chinese writing is done in black ink. How many different colors of pens do people in the group use? What is the average number of colors?
- The supplies used in Chinese writing are known as the 4 Treasures. All 4 were invented in China. The 4 Treasures are writing brushes, ink stones, ink sticks and paper. What kind of supplies do we use in the U.S.A to write?
- There is a specific set up for the workspace of Chinese writing. It includes the paper on the left, with the brush ink stick, ink stone and water to the right. It is a neat and organized space. How do people in the group set up their workspaces when writing?

RESOURCES:

For more information on Chinese Characters, Calligraphy and more, check out your local library or online resources!

BOOKS:

The Chinese Language for Beginners

Cooper, Lee

Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, inc. 1971 (first printing)

Chinese Calligraphy

Yee, Chiang

MA: Methuen & Company, Ltd., 1938, 1954, 1973, 19790

You Can Write Chinese

Wiese, Kurt

Viking Press, 1945

ONLINE:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/3614/drawing.htm>
www.asianart.org/

MORE IDEAS...



On the back of the character designs, have each person write the definition of “Strength” and “Forever” and what it means to them



Use a paper punch to make holes at the top of the finished design cards to attach string or ribbon for hanging!