



Chinese Dragons

Submitted by Leslie Burnham
For Grades 1 and 2

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to China and its culture through the exploration of dragons.

Essential Questions:

Where did dragons come from? What did they look like? Are they real? Why were they important to the Chinese? Why are certain colors considered lucky in China? Why is writing in China different than ours?

Objectives:

- Identify where China is in relation to the United States.
- Understand the history of dragons in Chinese culture.
- To learn about the nine different parts of a dragon and incorporate them into their own dragon.
- Learn the importance of certain colors in Chinese culture.
- Practice drawing the Chinese character for dragon.
- Become competent in drawing and using sideways arcs as scales.
- Complete a three foot long dragon that will be displayed during Chinese New Year.

Target Grade Level:

This lesson plan is designed for 1st and 2nd graders. It can be used for middle grades easily if more detailed information is planned to share about China and the dragons are adapted to use more detail and accuracy.

Standards:

- Visual Awareness; perceives straight, curved, zigzag, wavy and contour lines.
- Perceives Shape; differentiates between contour of the shape and surface decoration.
- Perceives Relationships; likenesses and differences within elements, positions and repeating patterns.
- Drawing; makes shapes and fills in, and draws around shapes.
- Cutting and gluing; cuts simple shapes and cut on a line, makes a collage, curls paper.
- Design and Composition; makes a design to fit and fill space, and use repetition in design.

- o Art Awareness; looks at art in the classroom, names elements in composition, names medium in art work, and discusses art work using positive comments.
- o Art History; becomes aware of how social groups express values and beliefs through visual art forms and becomes aware of cultural origins of art.

Materials Needed:

- o Power point presentation on China and Dragons
- o Map or globe
- o Yellow mural paper, cut into one 1 foot wide by three feet long strips
- o Red construction paper
- o Head and feet templates
- o Pencils, erasers
- o Markers
- o Sharpie markers
- o Metallic color crayons
- o Glue
- o Gold glitter
- o Chinese character worksheets

Required time for project:

This activity will require four or five weeks total.

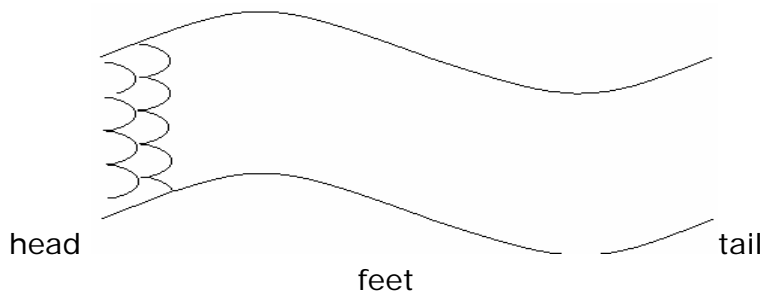
Class 1: Show power point presentation on dragons and China's history with dragons.

Teach how to draw scales and practice drawing scales in rows. Start with a row of upside down "U's" and begin a second row on the middle of the curve of the first "U" and continue to make rows of these "U" shapes.



Class 2: Read a story about Chinese dragons. Learn about the nine parts of a dragon.

Review how to draw scales. Draw curving lines along three foot long mural paper for the top and bottom of the dragon's body and draw scales onto dragon in rows between the top and bottom of the dragon. Begin to color scales with metallic color crayons.



Class 3: Trace, cut out and decorate feet and head for dragon. Heads, feet and tails are copied onto red construction paper for students to cut out. Continue to work on scales while several students at a time add glitter to their dragon head and tail. Cut out dragon body. Make sure each piece has student's name on it. (This process will probably take two weeks.)

Class 4: Finish all parts of dragon and glue head and feet on to body. Teach how to write character of dragon. Practice on work sheets. Add character for dragon onto own dragon with Sharpie marker.



Assessment:

Students will receive six different grades for different aspects of this project:

1. Scales drawn in an accurate, repeating pattern of "sideways U's" equals a satisfactory. Scales drawn in rotating repeated pattern from row to row equals an outstanding.
2. Using color patterns on scales equals a satisfactory. Using color pattern through rows equals an outstanding.
3. Traced and neatly cut head and feet equal a satisfactory. Cutting exactly on the traced line equals an outstanding.
4. Students are able to identify China on a map. Students are able to identify parts of a Chinese dragon.
5. Students are able to draw the Chinese character for dragon accurately.
6. Chinese dragon is glued together neatly and accurately equals a satisfactory. A dragon that is neat and uses additional details is equivalent to an outstanding.

Teacher Resources:

From its origins as totems or the stylized depiction of natural creatures, the Chinese dragon evolved to become a mythical animal. By the [Han Dynasty](#), the dragon's appearance is described as having the trunk of a [snake](#); the scales of a [carp](#); the tail of a [whale](#); the antlers of a [stag](#); the face of a [camel](#); the talons of [eagles](#); the ears of a [bull](#); the feet of a [tiger](#) and the eyes of a (dragon)[lobster](#). It has a flaming pearl under its chin. Chinese dragons are occasionally depicted with bat-like wings growing out of the front limbs, but most do not have wings, though oddly enough, they are still capable of taking flight.

wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_dragon

Books about Chinese dragons:

Dragon Parade: A Chinese New Year Story; Chin, Steven A. Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers, Austin, Texas, 1993

Red is a Dragon: A Book of Colors; Thong, Roseanne, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2001

Dragonsong: A Fable for the New Millennium; Young, Russell, Shen's Book's, Auburn, California, 2000

Children's book to help explain Chinese writing system and how to write dragon:

Long is a Dragon: Chinese Writing for Children; Goldstein, Peggy, China Books and Periodicals, San Francisco, 1991

Music to play during art class:

Music From China: Chinese Blossom Orchestra, LaserLight, Delta Music, Santa Monica, California, 1993