

Showcase China:



Si Four: 4 Linking language and art

Curriculum connections	Focus concepts	Effective pedagogy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Visual arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SustainabilityCulture and heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Providing sufficient opportunities to learn.

Learning intentions

Students will:

- practice calligraphy in the Chinese tradition;
- design their own name/symbol into a 'Chinese chop';
- print the chop.

Background information

Ideally this unit on chops and calligraphy is linked to earlier work on Chinese culture and heritage. If possible, work with the teacher of activities 1-3 and develop from these ideas. It is also useful to share the developed chops with the students who are developing understandings in Chinese language, culture and heritage in other areas.

Chinese calligraphy is an art form that requires years of practice and dedication. It is also a form of communication and language. Today's written Chinese language reflects the traditional calligraphy, but in a simplified form. Students can still take classes after school to develop skills in the traditional art of calligraphy. **(Appendix 9)**

A **chop** is a developed block signature. Another word some people use is a seal. Chops are also used in Japan and in many other countries of the world to identify the maker or an item of craft (pottery, silverware, printing). A chop is typically made of stone or wood and uses red ink. A chop is almost always square. It is still a contemporary form of art and today in China you can buy a chop of your name on the streets. It is a unique, individualized art form. Have a look at this photo.

<http://www.asianz.org.nz/files/signature.pdf>.

Useful websites on calligraphy

See www.chinaculture.org site for lessons on how to hold a brush, strokes etc.

www.thinkquest.org/calligraphy

Useful questions and resources on calligraphy and graphic arts in China; suggested readings.

www.depts.washington.edu/chinaciv.contents.htm (

For examples of ancient seals see: http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_madeinchina/2005-06/28/content_70181.htm

Some examples of artists and the appreciation of the art of calligraphy (<http://www.chinapage.com/calligraphy.html> –.

- Complete **Language Focus 3 Numbers and writing**
- Look at the origins of calligraphy (link) **Developing symbols and signs 1**
<http://www.asianz.org.nz/node/502> and
http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/node_70.htm
- Integrate the learning of brush strokes and calligraphy with the learning of some Chinese numbers. Use **appendix 8** (Copy this and give to students.) Work initially to practise the numbers with a pen or pencil. Then if possible, use black Indian ink on paper to develop brush strokes.



Have the students practise their name with brush strokes as well as the numbers. Examine other symbols - e.g. Olympic calligraphy pictograms and practice writing these.

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- e) Examine other emblems – e.g. Olympic calligraphy chops.

Designing your own chop

Adapt this to suit your time constraints. You can make a chop in one or two periods or you could link it to a wider unit on Chinese art forms e.g. scrolls, banner making.

What you need

- obtain a number of 2cm by 2cm erasers (you can cut these in two – but the base needs to be square/rectangle to be able to be used as a 'stamp').
- a cutting implement (needle, small craft knife) **CAUTION!!!!**
- Ink stamp pad or relief ink.

- a) Draft – on paper: Part of the tradition of developing a chop is making it meaningful for the individual. The use of the Roman alphabet for NZ students is therefore appropriate, as is the use of NZ images and symbols. The outside shape is traditionally square/rectangle, but it can also be round or another shape.

To design their own chop, students could start off by using written names in English, Chinese, or another source of visual imagery (e.g. personal/ancestral imagery, a personal interest in for example music). They could look up their own name in Chinese (<http://chineseculture.about.com/library/name/blname.htm>).

They should make the chop as unique to themselves as possible – they could consider their Whakapapa and cultural design motifs that they identify with (Ask: *What does it say about you?*). For example, students could work in a language of their choice.

- b) Once the draft has been finalised, students start work on 'carving' their erasers – practice caution at all times and instruct students on how to cut away from themselves when they do this.
- c) Use ink (red is best) and practise getting the 'stamp' right. Once the chop is made, you can glue the eraser on to a small piece of wood to make it last longer. Use a stamp pad with ink or relief ink. In Chinese tradition, a chop 'signature' is usually red.
- d) Develop a **class scroll** by using the individual chops from each student on one long sheet. (see some ideas <http://www.asianz.org.nz/node/506>).

Teacher prompt questions:

- *What does your chop show?*
- *What influences traditional Chinese chops?*
- *What are the influences on your chop?*
- *What aspects of your culture and heritage does it show?*
- *What does the collective artwork on the scroll communicate? (ie consider a stranger viewing it – what would s/he be able to tell about your class?)*

Language Focus 4 Likes and dislikes (link)