

History
Pacific Asia Museum

Landscapes of the Mind

Time As needed

Grade 7

California History-Social Science Standards 7.3 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of China in the Middle Ages.

California English-Language Arts Standards

Writing Strategies

1.1 Create an organizational structure that balances all aspects of the composition and uses effective transitions between sentences to unify important ideas.

1.2 Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

Indicators of Achievement

Student describes the scholar-official class and its influence on Chinese society.

Student designs a postcard which demonstrates satisfactory understanding of concepts learned about Chinese landscape painting.

Materials/Resources

Transparency of *Scholars Among Pavilions and Forests* by Chang Hsi-an (1761-1829), Pacific Asia Museum exhibition *Landscapes Of The Mind* (October 9, 2004 – mid-January 2005)

Books: *Chronicle Of The Chinese Emperors* by Ann Paludan, Thames and Hudson; *Chinese Painting* by James Cahill, Rizzoli; *The Chinese Garden* by Maggie Keswick; Rizzoli.

Art Materials: cardstock cut to 5”X7” or any size suitable for a post card, markers, colored pencils, fine line black pens, water colors, brushes and water containers, glue sticks, examples of Chinese calligraphy, examples of landscape paintings from many cultures and time periods, example of Chinese poem, historical time line of world events

Vocabulary

landscape, scholar, harmony, pavilions, calligraphy

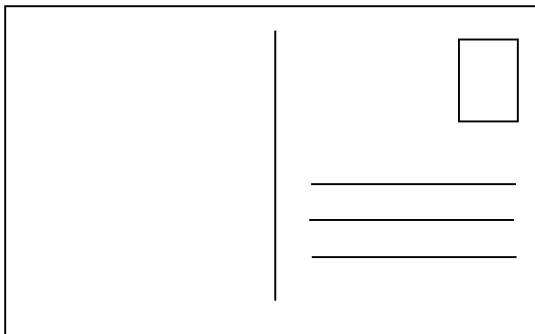
Preparation/Background

Chinese art speaks of harmony among all aspects of nature, and Chinese say, “Heaven and earth and I live together.” The harmony in nature is illustrated in the balance between such elements as water and mountains. Waterfalls and mountain peaks make up much of the Chinese landscape painting, and the people are seeking to understand the secrets of power and nature. In most Chinese landscape paintings, humans have a place. They are participants in the natural, but they do not dominate it. Many Chinese paintings include calligraphy, which may include artist information or poetry.

Activity

1. Display a historical timeline of world events so student can get a sense of the time they will be studying about as you give them background information.

2. Ask students to imagine an ideal landscape and what he or she would be doing in the landscape.
3. Show students the painting entitled *Scholars Among Pavilions and Forests*, which was imagined and painted by Chang Hsi-an (1761-1829). Use the following questions to elicit responses from the students: Chart all responses so students can refer to them. Word webs might be helpful here.
 - What kind of a person would imagine himself in this Chinese landscape painting?
 - Why do you think nature was important to the Chinese people and why do you think they make so many paintings of this subject?
 - Why do you think Chinese scholars frequently paint from their imaginations rather than from reality?
 - Why do Chinese landscape paintings frequently have poems written on them?
 - Who were scholar-officials, what was their function in government, and how did they get there?
4. Give students cardstock or postcard form for the writing part of the assignment. Using markers, colored pencils, watercolors and brushes, students will do a landscape drawing or painting from their imaginations. Then on the other side of the postcard the students will write a poem, or if they have visited the Pacific Asia Museum, they can write a message about what they saw or learned.



You can offer the students a postcard form or have them make their own.

Assessment

Evaluate the student's postcard. Does it indicate understanding of the concepts presented and learned about Chinese landscape painting and the Chinese scholar-official class?

Examples of Chinese Poems

These are examples of Chinese poems that might be found on a landscape painting.

Snow on the river
 Over thousands of mountains, no bird flies
 Over thousands of paths there is no trail of footprints.
 On a lonely boat sits an old man with bamboo hat and cape,
 Fishing silently in the snowy river.

The snow has gone from Chung-nan; spring has almost come.
 Lovely is the distance, its blue color against the brown of the street.

A thousand coaches, ten thousand horsemen pass down Nine Roads;
Turns his head and looks at the mountain, not one man!

Contact and Field Trip Information

Pacific Asia Museum 626-449-2742

Music

The Pasadena Symphony

The Firebird

Time 60 min

Grades 6-8

California VAPA Content Standards

Music

Grade 6

Aesthetic Valuing 4.2 Explain how various aesthetic qualities convey images, feeling, or emotion.

Grade 7

Aesthetic Valuing 4.1 Use criteria to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of musical performances and compositions.

Aesthetic Valuing 4.2 Apply criteria appropriate for the style or genre of music to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations by oneself and others.

Grade 8

Aesthetic Valuing 4.1 Use detailed criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of musical performances and compositions and apply the criteria to personal listening and performing.

California Science Content Standards

Grade 6

Investigation and Experimentation

7a. Develop a hypothesis.

7d. Communicate the steps and results from an investigation in written reports and oral presentations.

Grade 7

Investigation and Experimentation

7c. Communicate the logical connection among hypotheses, science concepts, tests conducted, data collected, and conclusions drawn from the scientific evidence.

Grade 8

Investigation and Experimentation

9a. Plan and conduct a scientific investigation to test a hypothesis.

9b. Evaluate the accuracy and reproducibility of data.

Indicators of Achievement

- Students will become familiar with the last Movement of Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* and how the music expresses the emotions, characters and setting of the Old Russian fairytale upon which the piece is based.

- Students will take detailed steps in writing a descriptive essay with a hypothesis on the sounds and environment of the firebird. The essay will include supporting details and precise verbs, nouns, and adjectives to paint a visual image in the mind of the reader.

Materials

CD excerpts from the final movement of Stravinsky's *Firebird* will be located with the school site arts representative.

Vocabulary

feelings/emotions, senses, sensory, environment, visual, aural, sequence

Preparation/Background

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was born in St. Petersburg, which was the capital of Russia at the time. His father was a famous opera singer, so as a child, Igor was able to spend a lot of time at the opera house, where he met all the famous musicians of the day. Igor began taking piano lessons at age 9. When he grew up, he started studying law. One of his fellow law students was the son of composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who agreed to give Stravinsky composition lessons. Law fell by the wayside completely after Stravinsky had such success with *The Firebird*, which he composed for Serge Diaghilev, head of the Russian Ballet.

The Story of the Firebird

Long ago a prince named Ivan went hunting far from his own land. He lost his way until at last he discovered a high stone fence with a golden gate. Peering through the gate he saw a garden filled with graceful trees and flowers.

Suddenly the garden blazed with golden light. Ivan watched a magnificent Firebird flitting from branch to branch. Sometimes the firebird seemed like a bird and sometimes a woman. In fear, he immediately reached for his bow and arrow but then stopped, not wanting to harm such a glorious creature.

From his belt he instead took a net and caught the Firebird. The Firebird then said, "Free me and I will give you a magic feather. If you need my help, wave it three times in the air and I will come to you." Ivan thanked the bird, set it free and placed the feather into his shirt, where he felt it resting warm against his heart.

Suddenly, Ivan came across the lovely Princess Elena dressed in violet. She told Ivan that the wizard Kashchei, disguised as a black whirlwind, kidnapped her. Ivan promised Elena that he would help her escape. Elena warned Ivan that there was no escaping the garden and that anyone who Kashchei touched will turn into stone.

The air around them began to hum. Soon the humming turned into howling that split the sky. A dark storm cloud appeared and changed into the dark, slender magician. And just as the Firebird appeared sometimes a bird, sometimes a woman, the magician appeared sometimes as a man and sometimes as a skeleton with black bones.

Kashchei was about to offer to shake the Prince's hand but Elena shouted, "One touch will turn you to stone!" Suddenly, fierce creatures crowded Ivan and the young prince drew out the Firebird's feather and waved it three times. The light from the firebird

blinded the creatures and they fell into a deep sleep. The presence of the firebird helps the Prince destroy the evil Kaschei. Prince Ivan and Princess Elena married and lived happily.

Activity

Students will create a hypothesis on the environment for the Firebird and complete a creative writing assignment

1. Students will listen to a movement of the Firebird Suite
2. Teacher will guide students into a discussion, creating a “word web” on the board. The “word web” will be used as a tool to brainstorm words that give insight to the story of the Firebird. (e.g., senses, emotions, feelings)
3. Using the words from the “word web” students begin to write a hypothesis on what they think the Firebird’s environment will look, feel, and sound like. Students will be adding sensory detail with each step (play the Firebird CD in the background during this exercise): Write a paragraph describing the setting of the Firebird. Use visual and/or aural details. Describe only what a person would see if they went to that place. Students should end up with a description that allows a reader to both visualize the setting, and imagine what it sounds or feels like there.

Assessment

Discuss with students about how an environment can create different types of feelings and emotions. Also explain how descriptive words can convey a certain mood. Then ask students to consider the following questions. Is the student able to contribute successfully based on participation in the activities of this lesson?

- Was your Firebird’s setting an enjoyable environment? Why would you want to live there or why wouldn’t you?
- What particular parts in the music truly express the mood of your created environment?
- What part of your description was the similar to the original Russian tale? What was different?
- Were your descriptions/words similar to your classmates?

Extensions

Word Web: Students should edit and re-write their descriptions. This exercise can continue by having students write their own version of The Firebird story. Students can continuously add to the word web by writing adjectives or other words that describe the firebird and posting it on the board. (can possibly use Post-it Notes)

Scenes from the Firebird: Using a sheet of construction paper, dividing it into 4 parts, students can illustrate 4 or more scenes from the story, possibly in sequential order.

Contact and Field Trip Information

Jerri Price: jprice@pasadenasymphony.org
www.pasadenasymphony.org