

Dragon Scroll Lesson Plan
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Winning student work by Katie Romo 4th grade



Chinese New Year Dragon Scrolls

- *Students will identify some characteristics of both Asian and western dragons
- *Students will look at a Chinese Zodiac calendar and find the animal associated with their year of birth
- *Students will share and apply insights about how color and shapes affect the expressive character of their dragons
- *Students will learn to write Chinese characters for their English names

Materials: 12 x 12 Water color paper
Tagboard dragon face “starter”----- cowskull shape
9 x 12 black paper-----2 sheets
pencils, sharpies, water color sets and brushes, color markers and water color brushes
rulers and gold paint pens

Concepts & Background:

- *Dragons are mythological creatures and are perceived very differently in different cultures. In China and most Asian cultures, dragons are beneficent---they bring blessings and rain and good luck. They have no wings and fly by magic. The year of the Dragon was in 2000 and will occur again in 2012. People born in the year of the Dragon are supposed to be creative, energetic, bold, and make good artists. Western dragons are seen as evil, have bat-like wings, hoard gold and jewels, live in caves, breathe fire, burn villages, and eat princesses!
- *Although the Chinese traditional good luck color is red, dragons could be many different shapes or colors
- *Shape & color choices will determine the expressive qualities of your dragon.

Vocabulary: mythological, beneficent, zodiac, lunar New Year, symmetrical, expressive, mood, calligraphy, characters, scroll

Methods: (discussion and demonstration & student independent work at tables)

* I do this in February, close to Chinese New Year---so we look at a Chinese zodiac to see what year we are in currently and what year is coming up. Children quickly find their birth years and identify themselves, brothers, sisters, etc. by their animals. I show some pictures from the internet of Chinese New Year’s celebrations with parades and dragon dances. I give them some background on the difference between Chinese and western dragons. We discuss color choices and how these will express the character of their dragons.

* Students begin drawing their dragon faces with pencil. I provide an optional generic tagboard tracer that looks like a cowskull---this helps them get a large enough scale and symmetry. Students then individualize their dragons by adding different horns, expressive eye shapes, teeth, scales and other details. They will trace over these beginning drawings with a sharpie marker.

*next session: Students complete any sharpie work they may have left and carefully erase any pencil lines that still show. Students then choose how to color in their dragons. We have previously done some water color projects, so they are familiar with wet on wet and wet on dry and glazing techniques. They have also colored in areas using color markers and extending the color with a watercolor brush in the past. I let them choose their approach or use a number of techniques. While they are doing this, I have one student at a time come up to the computer and type in their English first name at a Chinese names website. I use Chinesenames.com. We print these out and save them for next session.

*last session: (My classes are one hour long---so shorter classes will need more sessions)
Students use a ruler to lay out where they will write the character for “dragon” and where they will write their Chinese names. I have them practice the characters on the print out sheet before they draw the characters in pencil on the black paper. When they have the characters on the black paper and have checked with me, I let them go over the characters with gold paint pen and also draw in a border on the black paper. We staple these on to the sides or top and bottom of the dragon face to resemble a scroll. If the dragon is still wet, they will have to wait until the following class session to staple it together



(Another, much fiercer dragon....) Students enjoy making their dragons look different from everyone else's dragon, and even talk about what their dragon would do and how it would act.

Assessment---I did not make a rubric for self-assessment last year, but will this year