



Year 5 Chinese Painting and Ceramics

The first part of this unit focusses on Chinese brush painting: the materials used for paintings and calligraphy, subject matter and typical compositional devices. Traditional Chinese painting, which is displayed in scrolls, has clear, defined features. It is often of nature, uses black ink or limited colour and has a symmetrical, simplified and ideal (rather than real) design. Chinese paintings often include writing which can be commentary by subsequent owners, seals indicating ownership and poetry.

The children then study Chinese ceramics, at first investigating Ming Dynasty porcelain, how this was made and decorated with cobalt blue. They then learn how the Chinese traded porcelain with Europe, the Portuguese and then the Dutch, until the trade diminished in the early 1700s when the Europeans started to make porcelain themselves.

Over the course of six lessons the children use traditional Chinese painting materials for calligraphy and for painting typical Chinese subjects such as bamboo and flowers. The use of these materials allows them to focus on producing clear, expressive brushstrokes.