



GALLERY VISIT GUIDE CHINESE LANGUAGE WORKSHEETS

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INTRODUCTION

How to use this guide

Gallery visit guide: Chinese language worksheets is designed to assist Chinese language teachers with a self-guided excursion to the Art Gallery of New South Wales. A series of worksheets for both background and non-background speakers is ready to be printed for each student and used while viewing original works of art on display in the Edward and Goldie Sternberg Gallery of Chinese Art. The worksheets cover key areas of Chinese art which are explained for the teacher in the 'Background Information for Chinese Language Teachers'. These areas are:

- tomb sculpture
- painting and the scholar's studio, and
- early ceramics and imperial porcelain

The questions and tasks on the worksheets target stages 4 and 5 and progress from easy to difficult to accommodate differing student levels. A Gallery map is also included as an excursion tool.

The importance of looking at art for the language student

Art is a window to culture. Original works of art hold a treasure of history and meaning which can be unravelled by the language student through looking, responding and questioning. The language worksheets provide prompts for students to respond to the artworks through a variety of techniques designed to support different learning approaches. The artworks become the bridge between the learner and the language. *Gallery visit guide: Chinese language worksheets* employs successful education strategies developed by experienced teachers of Chinese and the Public Programs Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Syllabus links

Language activities are specifically linked to the New South Wales Chinese K–10 Syllabus Stages 4–5 and have been designed to complement the syllabus objectives:

- Using Language
 - Listening and Responding
 - Reading and Responding
 - Speaking
 - Writing
- Making Linguistic Connections
- Moving Between cultures

Resources

Adventures in Asia – an education kit for the Asian collection
Art Gallery of New South Wales Handbook, 1999
Art Gallery of New South Wales Collections, 1994
Art Gallery of New South Wales The Asian collections, 2003
Art Gallery of New South Wales Asian art mini website
<http://www.asianart.com.au/>

Programs

This resource can also be used to complement a booked practical workshop. Visit the AGNSW website for detailed information on programs for Chinese language students.
<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/712/languages/chinese>

A dynamic range of education services for K–6 and 7–12 students and teachers, primarily linked to the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions is available at the gallery.
<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHERS

What is Chinese art?

Chinese art has a very long history in human civilisation. According to archaeological findings, it had already existed as early as the Neolithic period. Ancient primitive inhabitants in China relied on hunting and fishing to survive in the early stage. Later they entered into more permanent settlements and began to develop agriculture and to rear animals, giving rise to the need for containers for holding water and food and the production of other utensils. These objects not only had functional purposes but also were incorporated with designs and decorations that reflected their cultures, aesthetic values and levels of civilisation. As time went by, they underwent continuous development and many other distinct art forms emerged throughout Chinese history, namely jade carvings, bronze sculpture, porcelain, paintings and calligraphy, leaving behind a vast number of invaluable pieces of art.

Chinese art objects can roughly be classified into the following groups:

- Decorative arts
- Sculpture
- Painting and calligraphy

Among these groups, the decorative arts are the most numerous in type and comprise objects made of various materials including jade, stone, metal, wood, lacquer, textile, enamel, glass, bamboo, ivory and rhinoceros horn. Some of them were made for functional purposes and some were purely decorative.

What is the significance to us of Chinese Art?

The Chinese writing system underwent many stages of development from pictograms to a more abstract writing system which further evolved into the simplified characters that people are using in mainland China today. Some of the notable types of scripts which appeared in the process of evolution can be seen on some bronze ritual vessels and works of Chinese painting and calligraphy. On the other hand, early traces of the use of brushes have been found in the way that pottery was painted in the Neolithic period, which was a prelude to the emergence of brush and ink painting and calligraphy in the later dynasties of China.

Chinese art objects allow us to see the life of the Chinese through a more pragmatic perspective. They were not only supporting materials to Chinese history but can also be viewed as art treasures that can enlighten our mind and spirit and broaden our horizon, something that reflects a philosophy different from its counterpart in the Western world. As the Chinese language is closely related to its arts in the contexts of history, culture and philosophy, it is worthwhile to look at Chinese art as a kind of cross-reference, especially for those who are learning Chinese language or culture. Moreover, Chinese art serves as a basis for people to develop a sense of cultural diversity in modern Australian society.

Chinese art in the Asian Gallery at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

A permanent display of Chinese art is one of the components of the Asian Gallery, which is devoted to the display and promotion of art of Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Southeast Asian origin. The Chinese section houses authentic art objects from the Neolithic period to the 20th century, and includes ceramics, jade carvings, bronze ritual vessels, burial objects of the Han to the Tang dynasties, Buddhist sculptures, and items for the scholar's desk as well as classic and contemporary Chinese paintings and calligraphy. People are encouraged to visit the Art Gallery to look at these real objects of art, as we believe that experience is a very important part of learning. Moreover, standing in front of the real objects can be a very exciting experience that makes your visit unforgettable.

Where to start to look at Chinese art

There are many different approaches to appreciation of Chinese art. One way is to choose an object that you feel interested in. Find out the material, motifs or decoration, shape and form, colour, function and dating of the object. You can usually check these by looking at the labels on display. If you want to explore this object in greater depth after observation, you can try to interpret its significance of presence in its relevant history by considering why it was produced and how it related to people's life at that time. Sometimes imagination can bring you closer to the object, which usually belongs to a remote world in the past. However, check with books on Chinese art whenever you have doubts.

A more comprehensive way is to look at a certain type of art form and find out how the style and techniques changed through history. For example, you can look at the development of ceramics from the pottery of the Neolithic period up to the porcelain of the Qing dynasty. Let the history flow and observe the changes in shapes, forms, colours of glazes etc. Try to enjoy the experience. Sometimes you will discover something that you have never thought of. Finally, if you have developed an interest in Chinese art, you can start to do some further reading on the topic.

Some common forms of Chinese art

Ceramics

The earliest pottery wares found were earthenware made in the Neolithic period. They were made from clay and painted with decorative patterns that reflect their daily life, for example, net, fish, plants and waves, which were then fired at a certain temperature. Later, it was discovered that a thin layer of chemical coating, known as glaze, can give the pottery a shiny surface after firing. Throughout Chinese history, potters made continuous improvements in the quality of the clay, the glaze and firing conditions. The result is an amazing variety in form and decoration. Porcelain, which has a white clay body, was one of the greatest achievements among all. It was made not only for the local market but also for export to many parts of the world.



Dish with bouquet design
porcelain with underglaze blue decoration
7.4 x 40.9cm
Bequest of Kenneth Myer 1993
575.1993

Jade carving

Jade was used as early as the Neolithic period to make utensils and was used to replace rough stones that nomadic people used to create sharp weapons such as axes. Using jade, they produced not only practical tools but also jewellery, religious artefacts, burial items and pieces symbolising power. In ancient China, jade was often associated with human integrity because of its smoothness and purity of colour. It was believed to have the power to preserve dead bodies from decay and used to make burial suits for kings and nobles in the Han dynasty. The most popular form of ceremonial jade in ancient China was the *bi* disc which, as a symbol of heaven, was usually placed at the head of the deceased.



SHANG DYNASTY (c1700 – 1027 BCE)
Ritual disc *huang*
nephrite, 6 x 12cm, 6.6cm (hole diameter)
Gift of Anne Ryan in memory of her brother Patrick
289.1996

Tomb sculpture

In the burial practices of Bronze Age China, it was usual for an extraordinary wealth of ritual objects, bronzes, jades, weapons, chariots, horses and even humans to be buried along with a deceased member of the ruling elite. As the Bronze Age faded, attitudes began to change and by the Han dynasty (206BCE – 220CE) the custom of furnishing tombs instead with pottery facsimiles of the objects and people who served the deceased during life was firmly established. Ranging from buildings and animals to servants, attendants, soldiers, guardians, officials, entertainers and courtesans, these ceramic models reached a zenith in the Tang dynasty (618–906CE), with the application of three colour glazes.



Watch tower
1st – 2nd centuries CE
earthenware, 144.8 x 38.5 x 38.5cm
Edward and Goldie Sternberg
Chinese Art Purchase Fund 1992
308.1992.a-e

Bronze sculpture

Copper can be strengthened by adding metals such as tin and lead to become a grey-green coloured alloy known as bronze. Bronzes were produced in China before the Shang dynasty and remained very popular through the Zhou dynasty. Besides tools and weapons, bronze was also made into food containers, ritual vessels, wine vessels, musical instruments, garment hooks, mirrors, chariots and harnesses, coins and weight measures. The casting of bronze was once the privilege of kings and nobles in the Western Zhou dynasty. On some bronze ritual vessels, lengthy inscriptions are found, which is good material for understanding Chinese language and ceremonies. After the Warring States period, the coming of the Iron Age finally brought about the decline of the Bronze Age.



Circular cauldron *ding*
1100s – 1000s BCE
bronze, 21.5 x 18cm
Bequest of Kenneth Myer 1993 572.1993

Buddhist sculpture

The opening of the Silk Road marked the expansion of change of cultural exchange between China and Central Asia. One of the outcomes was the introduction of Buddhism, which came to China in the Han dynasty and flourished in the succeeding dynasties. Buddhist establishments and clergy were patronised by the rulers and large-scale cave-temples were also built in several provinces. Early Buddhist sculptures demonstrate profound influence from India and this is reflected by slim-built Buddhist figures. By the Sui and Tang dynasties, a dramatic change in approach had taken place and Chinese Buddhist sculptures adopted a style and aesthetic that is closer to Chinese tradition. For example, the more rounded Buddhist figures reflect the prosperity and the change in aesthetic values of the people of the Tang dynasty.



Votive Stele
c530
sandstone, 143.8cm
Purchased with the assistance of the Art Gallery Society
of New South Wales and the Edward and Goldie
Sternberg Chinese Art Purchase Fund 1995
202.1995

Chinese ink painting

Traces of Chinese paintings can be seen as early as the Neolithic period from images on painted pottery. Archaeological excavations show that the earliest painting on silk dates back to the Warring States period. In the Tang dynasty, due to its prosperity, a new height in Chinese painting was reached and distinct categories emerged, including figure painting, landscape painting and bird-and-flower painting. In the Song dynasty, landscape painting became prevalent. Literati painting also emerged and had profound influence on paintings in Yuan and Ming dynasties. Literati painters strongly opposed the copying of paintings of former masters and the use of mundane and programmed rendition of subjects. Instead, they encouraged the study of nature and hence got inspiration there. What was represented in their paintings was the expression of their spirituality and personality rather than a realistic approach to subjects. The mastery of all four components in a Chinese painting, namely, poetry, calligraphy, painting and seal carving, was a skill highly regarded by literati painters. In the early 20th century, a movement was brought about by a group of Chinese painters who studied overseas and then incorporated Western painting techniques into Chinese painting, such as the representation of light and volume of subject matter. This saw a marked development and had a profound influence on the modernisation of Chinese painting.

According to the differences in techniques, the styles of Chinese painting can basically be classified into the two different styles of *xieyi* (delineating idea) and *gongbi* (fine brush). The *xieyi* style is characterised by bold and simplified brushstrokes with strong tonal contrasts of ink in the depiction of subject matter. Its counterpart is the more delicate *gongbi* style, which is accompanied by definite forms, fine finished touches and gradual gradations of colours and ink.



HUA Yan (1682 – 1756)
Landscape after the style of Mi Fu
hanging scroll, ink on paper, 129.5 x 61cm
Gift of the Art Gallery Society of New South Wales 1993
570.1993

Chinese calligraphy

The sprouting of the Chinese writing system and hence calligraphy can be reflected by the symbols on pottery and rock carvings in the prehistoric period. Chinese characters were developed on the basis of pictorial symbols towards a path of abstraction. The inscriptions on the plastron of the Shang dynasty and the archaic scripts found on bronze ritual objects give us an idea of the early writing systems. The seal script matured in the Qin dynasty and it still had traces of pictorial elements which were constraints eliminated by the clerical script that followed. The development of standard script further enhanced speed and convenience in writing. Running and cursive scripts, which matured in the Wei dynasty and reached their heights in the Tang dynasty, are metaphors of the standard script and are characterised by strong contrasts in fluidity and speed.

During the Han dynasty, the Confucians succeeded in having a stage college and system of competitive examinations set up. The system evolved into the civil service examination which became a means of recruiting officials from the Tang to the Qing dynasty.

The composition of poems and calligraphy was one important component of these examinations. The mastery of the brush and the qualities of lines and strokes are significant in Chinese calligraphy which was considered to represent the spirit and mind of scholars and indicate their academic achievements. The balance of characters, contrast of black and white, speed, rhythm and tension created in their works are some of the key concerns of calligraphers and these serve as a basis for understanding Chinese calligraphy.



Duanfang (1861–1911)
Calligraphy (Li Bai's poem in semi-cursive script)
dated 1905
hanging scroll, ink on paper, 66.3 x 27.1cm
Gift of James Hayes 2003 255.2003

Chronology of the Chinese dynasties

Neolithic Period (ca. 7000 – 21st century BC)

Xia Dynasty (ca. 21st – 16th Century BC)

Shang Dynasty (ca. 1600–1027BC)

Zhou Dynasty (1027–771BC)

Spring and Autumn Period (771–475BC)

Warring States (475–221 BC)

Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC)

Han Dynasty (206BC – AD220)

Three Kingdom (220–280)

Jin Dynasty (265–420)

Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589)

Sui Dynasty (581–618)

Tang Dynasty ((618–907)

Five dynasties (907–960)

Liao dynasty (916–1125)

Song Dynasty (960–1279)

Jin Dynasty (1115–1234)

Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368)

Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)

Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)

GETTING TO THE GALLERY

Art Gallery of New South Wales
Art Gallery Road, The Domain, Sydney, NSW 2000
General enquiries: tel (02) 9225 1744
www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au

Walking

Five minutes from Macquarie Street or Hyde Park.

School buses

Please note drop off and pick up zones available in front of the Gallery. There is no street parking for school buses near the Gallery.

Public buses

Route 441 departs York St side of Queen Victoria Building on the hour and every 20 minutes during the week and every 30 minutes on weekends and public holidays.

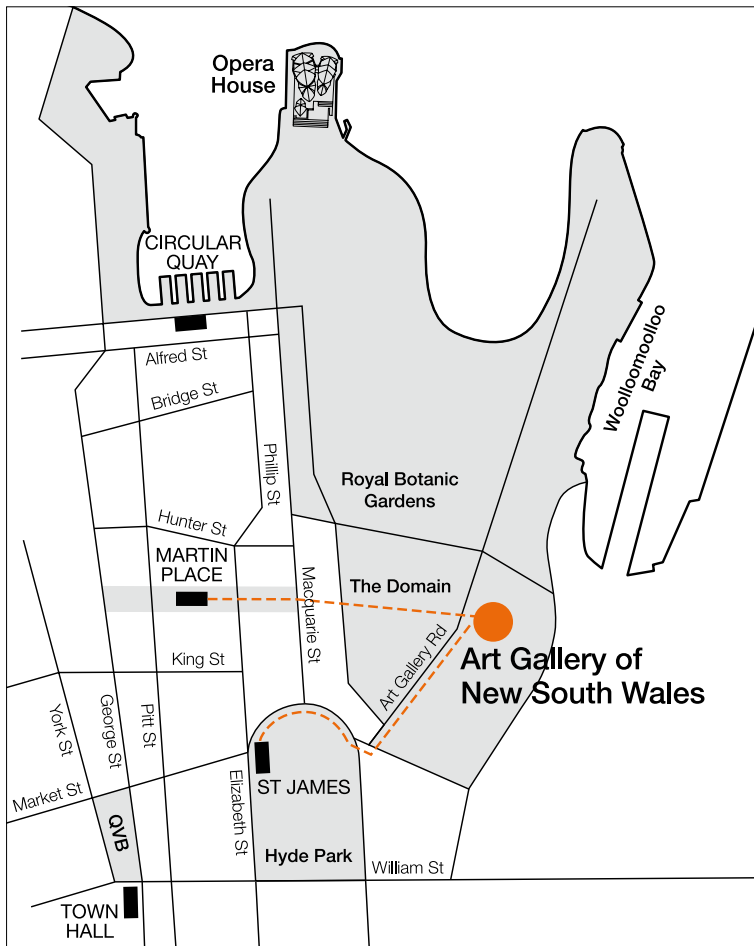
The Gallery is on the Sydney Explorer bus route – stop 6.

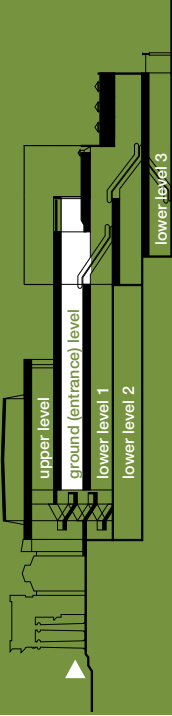
Train

Nearest train stations are St James and Martin Place.

Both are 10 minutes' walk.

*For further information on bus and trains,
telephone Sydney Transport Authority 131 500.*

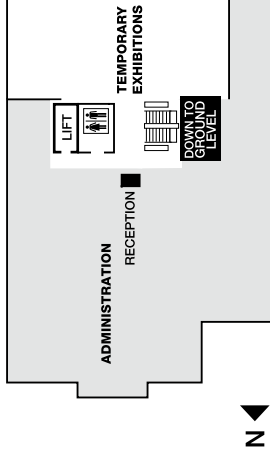




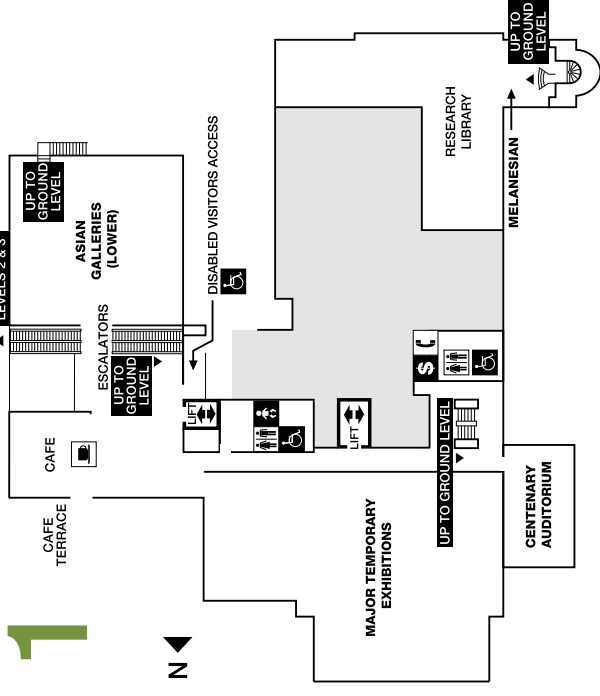
- upper level**
- Administration
- Temporary exhibitions
- ground level**
- Information
- Temporary exhibitions
- 19th-20th C Australian
- 15th-19th C European
- Gallery Shop
- Asian
- The Restaurant
- lower level 1**
- Temporary exhibitions (major)
- Asian
- Café
- Research Library
- & Melanesian art
- Parents' Room
- Centenary Auditorium
- lower level 2**
- Contemporary
- 20th & 21st C International
- Prints, Drawings &
- Photography Study Room
- (appointments recommended)
- lower level 3**
- Yiribana: Aboriginal &
- Torres Strait Islander gallery
- Art Gallery Society
- Domain Theatre

- i** Information
- Escalators**
- Disabled**
- Toilets**
- Parents' Room**
- Café**
- Restaurant**
- Public telephones**
- ATM**
- No public access**

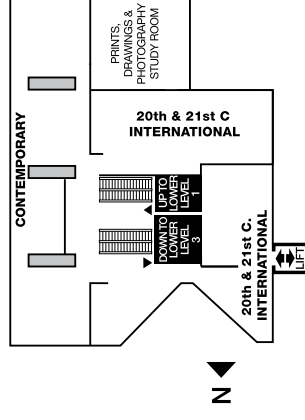
upper level



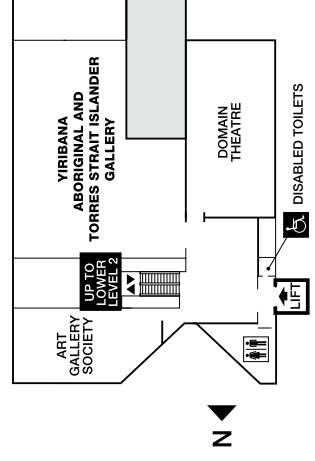
lower level



lower level



lower level



ground level

