

Take time to reflect on all that
you have learnt about art
with us, ARTIE, SMARTIE and
DOTTIE!

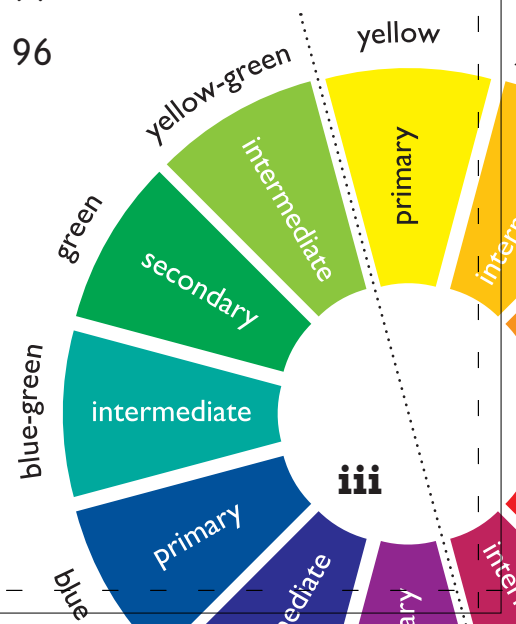




Contents



Preface and Features	iv
Start with Art!	vi
Unit 1 Different Strokes	2
Unit 2 Making Prints	8
Unit 3 Moving On	14
Unit 4 Spot It!	20
Unit 5 Colour Pairs	26
Unit 6 Action Painting	33
Unit 7 From 2-D to 3-D	39
Unit 8 Into the Distance	45
Unit 9 Patchwork Montage	51
Unit 10 Framed!	57
Unit 11 In Proportion	64
Unit 12 All Wired Up	70
Unit 13 Public Art	76
Unit 14 Digital Designs	82
Unit 15 Our Art Exhibition	91
Glossary	96



1 Different Strokes

Chinese brush painting is one of the oldest art forms in the world. It involves using a Chinese brush and ink to paint. The brushstrokes are very expressive and can be soft, powerful, thick, thin, textured or smooth.

Xu Beihong. *Galloping Horse*, 1941.
Ink on paper.



This painting was created by famous Chinese artist Xu Beihong. He was a master of Chinese brush painting.



Chinese brush painting often features scenery, bamboo plants, flowers and animals.

Think Like an Artist

Look at the horse's tail, mane, legs and body. Can you tell if the horse is in motion or standing still? How do the different brushstrokes Xu used make the horse come alive?

Getting Started

To do a Chinese brush painting, you will need a Chinese brush, Chinese ink, rice paper (or drawing paper), a saucer (or palette) and a cup of water.

Did you notice that the tools used in Chinese brush painting are different from the painting tools that you have used throughout primary school?



The picture on the right shows how to hold a Chinese brush correctly. Hold the brush perpendicular to the table surface and position your fingers as shown in the picture.



Sit up straight. Place your feet shoulder-width apart and flat on the floor. Lift your wrist so that it does not touch the table. This will allow you to move the brush freely across the paper as you paint.



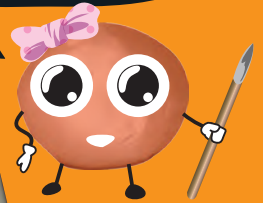
ART Tip!

If you need to paint very fine details, you may rest your wrist lightly on the table for support. This will allow you to make very careful and controlled brushstrokes.

Basic Brushstroke Techniques

Pour some Chinese ink into a saucer. Dip half of the brush in the ink. Remove excess ink by wiping the brush against the edge of the saucer. Practise the following basic brushstroke techniques.

Be careful not to get ink on your uniform. Ink stains are very hard to wash out!



Pull Stroke

Gently pull the brush down or to the right. Hold the brush perpendicular to the surface of the paper. This is the most basic brushstroke.



Push Stroke

Push the brush up or to the left. Allow the brush tip to bend backwards. This brushstroke creates texture.



Thin Stroke

Hold the brush upright. Let only the tip touch the paper as you pull the brush. This creates thin, sharp lines.



Thin and Thick Stroke

Hold the brush upright. As you pull the brush, alternate between pressing it down and lifting it up. Make sure the tip touches the paper throughout.



Side Stroke

Hold the brush at an angle. Push the brush hairs flat against the paper as you drag the brush. Practise dragging it to the side as well as up and down.



Round Dot

Hold the brush perpendicular to the surface of the paper. Press the tip down onto the paper and lift it up smoothly.

Here is an example of how some of these basic brushstrokes can be used to create a Chinese brush painting.

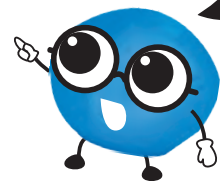
Van Su Mei (14 years old). *Song of the Dawn*, 1997. Ink on paper.



Think Like an Artist

What brushstrokes did the artist use to paint the bamboo plants?

This Chinese brush painting was created by a secondary school student. It shows some bamboo plants with a bird perching on one of the branches.



Beautiful Bamboo

Beginners in Chinese brush painting often learn to paint bamboo first because it uses many of the basic brushstroke techniques. The following steps show you how to paint a picture of bamboo in the style of Chinese brush painting.

Things You Need

- Rice paper or drawing paper
- Black Chinese ink
- Saucer or palette
- Chinese brush
- Newspaper
- Cup of water
- Rag

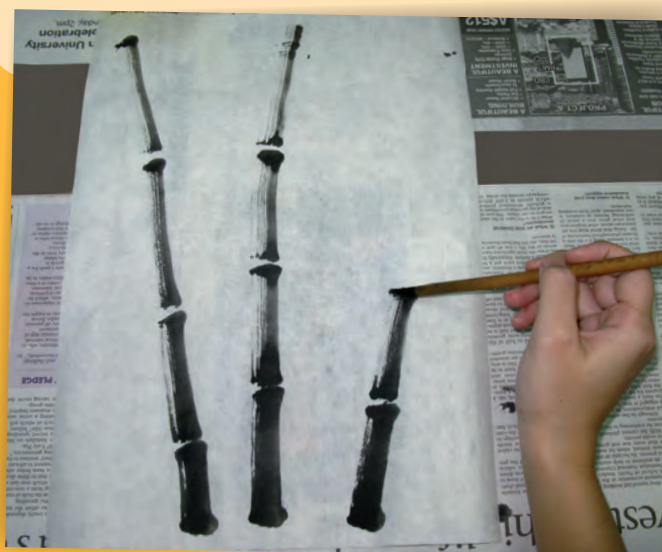
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Paint the stem of the bamboo first. Dip your brush in clean water before dipping it in ink. This will give you a lighter ink tone. Make sure the brush has enough ink to paint one whole stem.



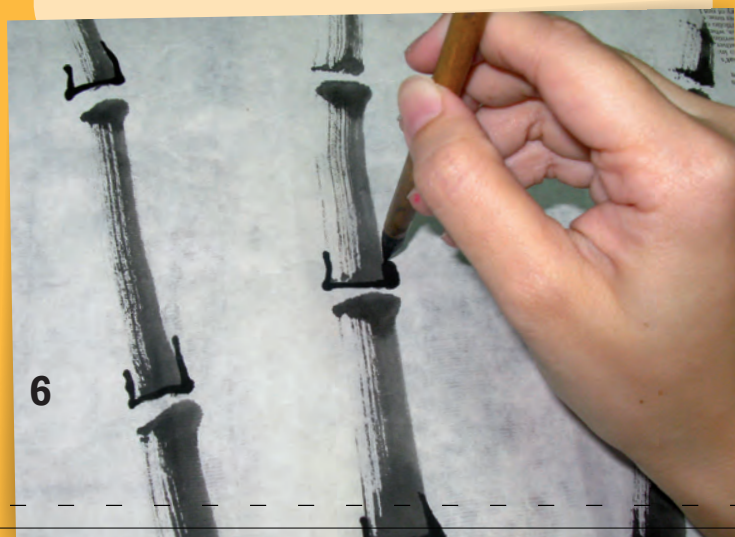
2

Start from the bottom of the paper. Use an upwards side stroke to paint each section of the stem. Leave a small white space between each section. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until you have two or three bamboo stems.



3

Then, use a darker ink tone to paint the joints between the stem sections. Dip the brush in ink. Use the pull and push strokes to paint an angular 'u' in the white space between two stem sections.



6

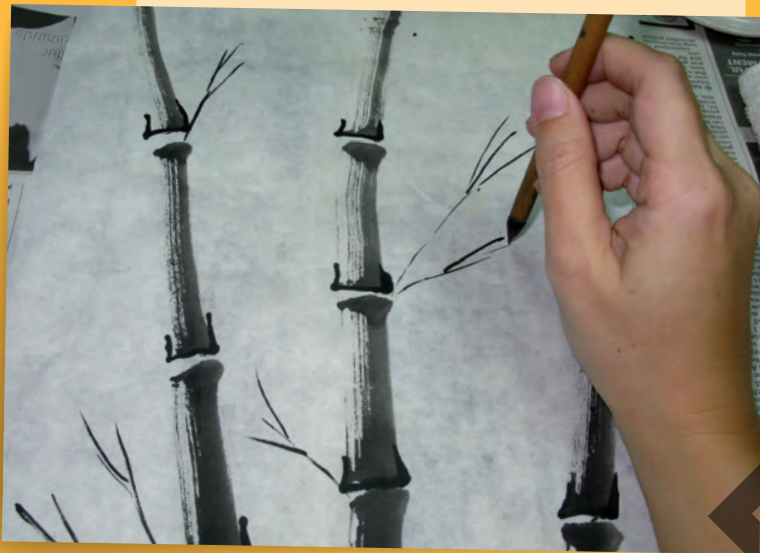
ART Tip!

Create different ink tones by varying the wetness of your brush. Control the amount of water in your brush by blotting it on a rag before dipping it in ink.

Why must the brush carry enough ink to complete one entire stem? What happens if the brush is reloaded in the middle of painting a stem ?

4

Next, paint the small branches that grow from the joints between the stem sections. Paint using thin strokes in an upwards motion. Each joint should not have more than two branches growing from it.



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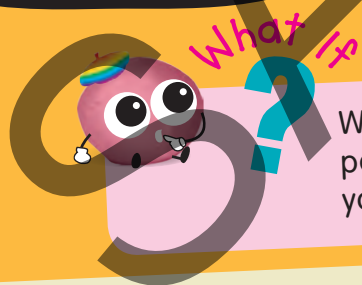
Lastly, paint the leaves. Use a single thin and thick stroke to paint each leaf. Make the centre the thickest part of the leaf. Paint three to five leaves on each branch. Overlap some of the leaves.



Did you know that in the Chinese culture, bamboo symbolises strength and flexibility? The stem of the bamboo plant never breaks in a storm; the strong winds may cause it to bend, but it springs right back up after the storm has passed!



Discuss your painting with a partner. Did your paintings turn out differently even though both of you followed the same steps? Which parts of the bamboo do you need more practice in painting?



What if you had used brushes of different sizes for painting the different parts of the bamboo? Would your painting have turned out differently?

Let's Reflect...

- What are some of the different types of brushstrokes that are used in Chinese brush painting?

