

Artistic Techniques

## The Magic of Water, *Sumi* Ink, and Brush

### FEATURED ART

[Horses by Soga Shōhaku](#)



*Horses* by Soga Shōhaku

#### **Objective One**

Students will be able to explain some techniques used in the creation of art during the Edo period.

#### **Objective Two**

Students will be able to describe the materials and techniques used in *sumi-e* ink painting while applying this knowledge as they create a sample painting.

#### **Objective Three**

Students will be able to use visual clues to draw conclusions about the ways in which artists manipulated line, shape, value, and space to create an expressive work of art.

## Recommended Readings for Teachers

1. [“An Introduction to Japanese \*Sumi-e\* Ink Painting” by Brenda Jordan](#)
2. [“The Basics: Background and Essence of Japanese Ink Painting” from \*Japanese Ink Painting: The Art of Sumi-e\* by Naomi Okamoto](#)
3. [Introduction to The Magic of Water, \*Sumi\* Ink, and Brush](#)

## LESSON PLAN

### Objective One

Students will be able to explain some techniques used in the creation of art during the Edo period.

On [Google Slides Page 1](#)

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Image	<a href="#">Horses by Soga Shōhaku</a>
Video	<a href="#">Brush Strokes: Shōhaku's Horses</a>
Worksheet	<a href="#">This in That</a>

Show students Soga Shōhaku's *Horses*, asking them to describe the types of lines, shapes, space, and values used in this work. Refer to the lesson's Introduction for more information on how they were created.

Using the **This in That** statements on the Worksheet, investigate how techniques used by Edo artists like Shōhaku helped them develop new ways of expressing emotion. Show students the video *Brush Strokes: Shōhaku's Horses* before working on the statements.

Ask students to consider how the emotions expressed in this work might be indicative of bigger changes in the purpose of art. Do they believe that this work is a one-of-a-kind or showcases a new style or belief? Why or why not?

### Objective Two

Students will be able to describe the materials and techniques used in *sumi-e* ink painting while applying this knowledge as they create a sample painting.

On [Google Slides Page 2](#)

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Images	<a href="#">Geese, moon and water-plants by Kano Tsunenobu</a> <a href="#">Moonlit Landscape by Nagasawa Rosetsu</a>
Assigned Reading	<a href="#">“An Introduction to Japanese <i>Sumi-e</i> Ink Painting” by Brenda Jordan</a>

Using *Moonlit Landscape* and *Geese, moon and water-plants*, explore the art of *sumi-e* ink painting. As with *Horses*, ask students to describe the types of lines, shapes, space, and values they observe in these two works. Explain how artists adjust the amount of water they add to

the ink, apply water to the paper before painting, or adjust the pressure they apply to their brush to create different effects.

Students can read “An Introduction to Japanese *Sumi-e* Ink Painting” to better understand how artists used brush, ink, and water on paper to create different effects. Provide students with the necessary materials to reproduce a scene like one of the two artworks, using a brush and ink (or watercolors) on paper to create lines, shapes, and various values in their simple landscape painting.

Debrief this hands-on experience with a cheer-and-check critique. Either out loud as a group or independently (by attaching a sticky-note to their work), acknowledge a success in their sample painting (a cheer) and something they would like to improve in their next work (a check).

### **Objective Three**

Students will be able to use visual clues to draw conclusions about the ways in which artists manipulated line, shape, value, and space to create an expressive work of art.

On [Google Slides Page 3](#)

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Image	<a href="#">Dragon and Tiger by Kaihō Yūsetsu</a>
Worksheet	<a href="#">Dragon and Tiger</a>

Introduce Kaihō Yūsetsu’s *Dragon and Tiger* with a puzzler activity using the *Dragon and Tiger* Worksheet. Print copies of this work and cut each copy into nine equal-size squares. Provide students with only eight of the nine pieces necessary to complete the work. Have students assemble the puzzle pieces on a sheet of paper and use a pencil or brush and ink to paint onto the background paper what they imagine is on the missing square.

Participate in a brief “gallery walk,” giving students the opportunity to see how their classmates imagined the missing square. Show them the complete work. Ask students to compare how they imagined the blank area. In what ways might their drawing be interactive with the dragon? Have students evaluate and explain which of their drawings they believe is the most creative and why.

### **CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS**

#### **Studio Art**

Before showing the animated video [How does an ink painting come together?](#), help students define the following terms so they can understand the narration: contemporary painter, animation, wash, negative space, layering strokes, hue, intensity, accents, and virtuosity. Discuss how the animation helps them understand the painting process and how artists build their compositions. Ask students to apply these techniques to paint their own version of one of the horses in Shōhaku’s *Horses* on Google Slides page 1.