



Simply Bamboo

Bill Yarborough

After returning from a trip to China, I wanted to share some of that country's artistic legacy with my young students. To that end, I developed a simple lesson for my second graders to become acquainted with painting natural subjects with bamboo brushes. We used tempera cakes instead of ink, but you can adapt your approach depending on the materials you have available.

Getting Started

To begin, we looked at and discussed photographs from my trip and images of Asian ink paintings. I demonstrated methods of using the painting materials, and students set to work. They practiced making short paint strokes to make individual cylinders (the bamboo segments) on manila paper, starting at the bottom of the

page and working to the top.

Using the same technique, students added long stems and leaves to their bamboo, noting that stems and leaves originate at the joints. Since they were painting the bamboo segments one at a time, repeating the same strokes, variations in size along with overlapping created a three-dimensional effect to the delight of students. The paintings were set aside to dry.

Completion

During the next class, students used a circle pattern to add a moon behind the bamboo, and added shading with yellow and orange watercolors to enhance the three-dimensional

appearance of their brush drawings. The final step was to paint the sky. A neat extension would be to add calligraphy and a chop stamp to each painting. 🍵

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Bill Yarborough taught this lesson at Beck Elementary School in Trophy Club, Texas and

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NATIONAL STANDARD

Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

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