

ACTIVITY

Seal Script Stamp

Seal script developed directly from China's most ancient forms of writing. Create your own seal script stamp and use it to "sign" a decorated postcard.

DURATION

45 minutes – 1 hour

MATERIALS

FOR THE SEAL STAMP

Pencil
Seal script practice sheet
1-inch-square piece of craft foam or thick cardboard
An old building block or Lego brick
Glue

FOR THE POSTCARD

Cardstock cut into 4 × 6-inch postcards
Drawing and coloring implements
Pen or a pencil
Inkpad
Address of someone you'd like to connect with
Postage stamp

PROCEDURE

- 1 First, practice writing seal script characters using the provided practice sheet.

After finishing the sheet, look over the characters and note:

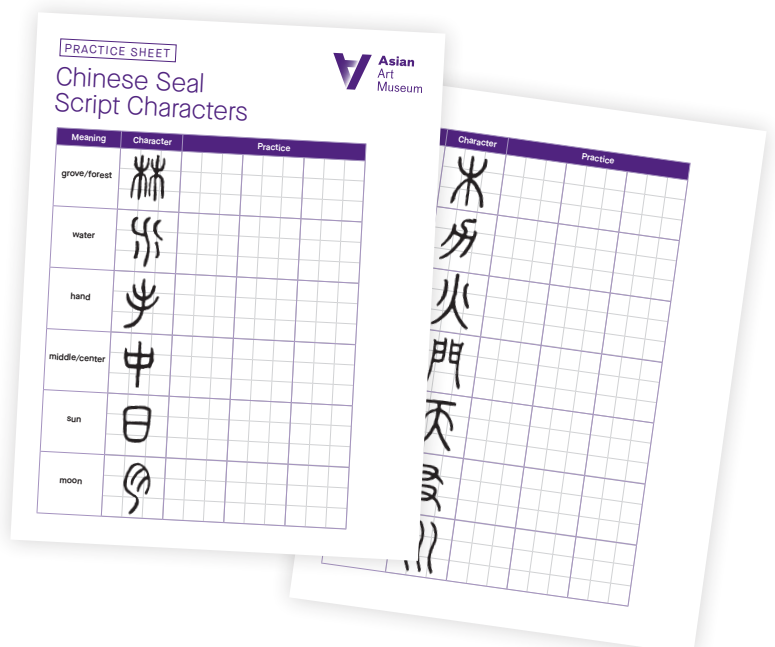
Do some of the characters resemble the objects or ideas they represent?

Which ones?

How?



Seal, China. Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). Brass. Asian Art Museum, Gift of The Yeh family, 2010.76. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.



PROCEDURE

- ② Choose a favorite character from the practice sheet to create your own seal. It could be:
- a character you think represents you,
 - a character you find visually pleasing,
 - or a character that brings up a good memory.

- ③ For example, here is the character for “fire” etched into a foam square with a pencil. If you don’t have foam, you can use a piece of thick cardboard.

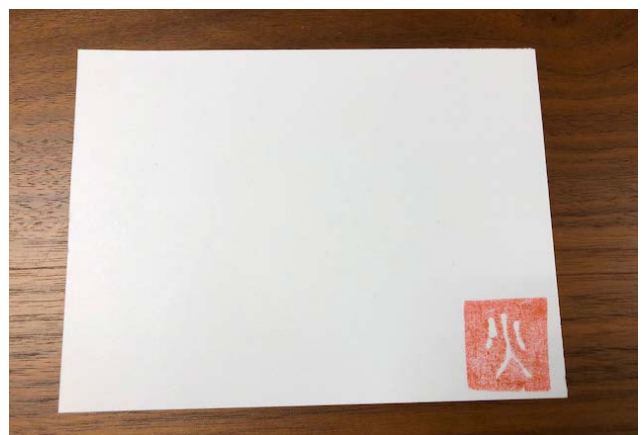
Note: If your chosen character isn’t symmetrical, you need to etch it backwards on the foam. That way, when you use it as a stamp, the character will read correctly.



- ④ Glue the foam square onto a small wooden block or a Lego brick. Now it’s ready to be used with the stamp pad.



- ⑤ A piece of blank cardstock can be decorated to become a postcard. Draw and color in a landscape, a portrait, or a design on this side of the card. Then use the stamp and inkpad to “sign” your artwork.



PROCEDURE

- 6 On the other side of the card...



Dear Reina,
Hope you're well! Have
you been busy since the
museum's reopening?
Is there new art in
the galleries? I'll try
to visit soon!

Your friend,
Jamie

Reina the Rhino
Asian Art Museum
200 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

The postage
stamp goes here.

Write a message to a
friend or loved one
on this half.







Write the name and address
of the person you want to
receive this card.

- 7 Mail your postcard to catch up with your friend or loved one!

Chinese Seal Script Characters

Follow this general order of strokes for each character:

1. Move from top to bottom, left to right.
2. Move from the center to the outside.
3. Fill in enclosures before closing them on the bottom.

Meaning	Character	Practice					
grove/forest							
water							
hand							
middle/center							
sun							
moon							

Meaning	Character	Practice											
wood/tree	木												
strength	力												
fire	火												
door	門												
sky	天												
friend	友												
river	川												