

THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

DANCING DRAGONS

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas, and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson seed, students will explore traditional Chinese dragon dances by making their own Chinese dragon! This lesson seed can be used in conjunction with the Integrating the Arts Dragon Story Interactive found at <http://thewalters.org/integrating-the-arts/china/>.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Copies of **Flask with Dragon** and **Figurine ("Okimono") of a Dragon Emerging from the Waves**
- Wooden spoon
- Craft sticks
- Foam shapes
- Wiggle eyes
- Pre-cut lengths of ribbon (one long and several short lengths for each student)
- Glue

GUIDING QUESTION

How do other cultures celebrate holidays? How do people around the world celebrate the New Year?

ENGAGEMENT

Dragons are legendary creatures in Chinese mythology. In works of art, dragons may look like turtles, fish, or snakes. In Chinese art, dragons symbolize power, strength, and good luck. Explain to students that they will create a lucky dragon of their own!

ACTIVITY

1. Examine the *Flask with Dragons* or the *Figurine ("Okimono") of a Dragon Emerging from the Waves* to determine and discuss the characteristics of Chinese dragons. What animal parts are combined to create a dragon?
2. In China, the dragon is a powerful creature associated with the forces of nature and a symbol of power, strength, or good luck. In Chinese art, dragons may be illustrated using a combination of animal parts including the scales of a fish, the paws of a tiger, the body of a snake, and the beard of a goat.
3. Optional: Read a book about Chinese dragons. Suggested titles include *Chin Chiang and the Dragon's Dance* by Ian Wallace or *The Dancing Dragon* by Marcia Vaughan.
4. In China, Dragon Dances are performed at New Year's celebrations to bring good luck in the coming year. Have students discuss how people celebrate the New Year. What traditions do they have for good luck?
5. Have students discuss their New Year's wishes or resolutions. How would a dragon bring them luck in the New Year?
6. Students will create their own lucky dragons. Ask students to begin by sketching their dragon design. What colors or symbols will they use to decorate their dragon?
7. Students will use wooden spoons to create their lucky dragons. Using the wiggle eyes, foam shapes, and markers have students design a face for their dragon on the wooden spoon.
8. To make the body, have students take a length of the pre-cut ribbon and lay it flat on the table. Use shorter lengths of ribbon and knot them along the long ribbon to create a colorful, flowing dragon body.
9. Next, ask students to use the glue to attach the wooden spoon to the front of the ribbon dragon body. Use glue to attach a craft stick to the end of the body.

10. Now have students hang onto the handle of the wooden spoon with one hand and the craft stick with the other. By wiggling the sticks, students can make their dragon dance!

EXTENSIONS

- Ask students to create backgrounds for their dancing dragons using construction paper and markers.
- Research the Dragon Dance and New Year's celebrations throughout China. In groups, have students choreograph a dance. Dances can be performed in front of the class.
- Students can investigate elements of a story through the myth of the Rain Dragon by going to <http://thewalters.org/integrating-the-arts/china/>.

Figurine ("Okimono") of a Dragon Emerging from Waves 49.1733



Flask with Dragon (49.1632)

