Rituals and Bronzes: The Shang Dynasty of Ancient China

Teachers’ information

This project is aimed at years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and designed to link directly to the history and art and design curriculums.

Outline of project

In the morning students will visit Compton Verney’s Chinese Collection with a member of the Learning Team exploring objects and artworks from Ancient China. They will investigate the ritual bronzes, exploring their importance and learning about religion and life during the Shang dynasty. Students will also take part in a handling session where they will explore original objects from the Shang Dynasty and Ancient China and discover how we learn about early civilisations from the objects they left behind.

In the afternoon students will create their own Chinese vessel using air drying clay. They will be shown different ways to make a clay pot and, taking inspiration from the Chinese bronzes, will base their designs on the ritual vessels they have seen in the morning.

Project timing 10am – 2.15pm
Important information for your visit

- This programme will be led by a member of the Learning Team.
- Coaches can drop off in the carpark. Coaches cannot drop off at the gallery owing to weight restrictions on the Upper Bridge.
- When arriving please enter through the gate behind the ticket lodge in the main car park.
- The walk from the car park will take approximately 10 minutes. A member of the Learning Team will meet you at the gallery.
- In the gallery students will work in groups with approximately 6 students in each group, a maximum of 5 groups. For the handling session they will work in 3 groups. Please arrange the
- We ask for 1 adult for every 6 students. Please inform us if this will not be possible.
- Behaviour management is the responsibility of school staff at all times.
- Each student will need to bring an art apron; all other materials will be provided by the Learning Team.
- Please bring suitable containers to transport clay work back to school, for example trays or cardboard boxes.
- The morning’s activities will include a visit to the gallery.
- We recommended staff bring a camera to record activities in the Learning Centre, park and permanent collections. Photography is not permitted in the exhibition galleries.
- Prior to your visit please make us aware of any students with additional requirements or special needs so we can make all necessary arrangements.
- Goodie bags are available to pre order from the shop. For more information please call 01926 645525.

Learning objectives

- To explore the Shang dynasty of Ancient China through original objects and artworks.
- To participate in an interactive gallery experience, including handling an original Chinese bronze.
- To gain an understanding of life in Ancient China including religion and ritual customs.
- To gain knowledge of the achievements of the Shang dynasty.
- To develop artistic skill and creative thinking.
- To create their own clay pot based on the designs of the Chinese bronzes.

Learning outcomes

- An appreciation of ancient Chinese art and ritual bronzes.
- An understanding of how the bronzes were used and the significance of different types of vessel.
- Knowledge of life, customs and religion during the Shang dynasty.
- An understanding of the achievements of the Shang dynasty.
- Developed artistic skills, including knowledge of different ways to make a clay pot.
• A clay pot based on traditional Chinese vessels

Timetable

For 1 group
(up to 35 students)

10am – 10.15am Introduction in the Learning Centre

10.15am – 11.30am Gallery
Students visit the Chinese collection and explore the objects. They take part in discussions and record their observations through sketching

11.30am – 12 noon Learning Centre
Students take part in a handling session with a real Chinese bronze

12 noon – 1pm Lunch
In the park or Learning Centre if raining. Picnic blankets will be provided.

1pm – 2.05pm Learning Centre
Students use air drying clay to make their own Chinese vessel

2.05pm – 2.15pm Plenary
Students and teachers share their work and review the day
For 2 groups
(between 36 – 70 students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10am – 10.15am</td>
<td>Introduction in the Learning Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10.15am – 11.00am | Group 1  
Gallery  
Students visit the Chinese collection and explore the objects. They take part in discussions and record their observations through sketching  
Group 2  
Learning Centre  
Students take part in a handling session with a real Chinese bronze |
| 11.00am – 12 noon | Group 1  
Learning Centre  
Students take part in a handling session with a real Chinese bronze  
Group 2  
Gallery  
Students visit the Chinese collection and explore the objects. They take part in discussions and record their observations through sketching |
| 12 noon – 1pm | Lunch  
In the park or Learning Centre if raining. Picnic blankets will be provided. |
| 1pm – 2.05pm | Learning Centre  
Students use air drying clay to make their own Chinese vessel |
| 2.05pm – 2.15pm | Plenary  
Students and teachers share their work and review the day |
Extension activities

Students could further explore how Chinese bronzes were made. They could investigate the piece mould method and compare it with other casting processes such as the lost wax method. They can find out more information in our further information guide for the Chinese collection which is available to download from the Chinese collection page of our website (www.comptonverney.org.uk).

The Chinese writing system is one of the most distinctive features of Chinese culture. China is one of three places where writing has been invented independently. The other two are the ancient near east (Mesopotamia and Egypt) and Central America (Mayan writing). The oldest surviving Chinese writing is from the Shang dynasty and the most important Shang writing can be found on oracle bones. Oracle bones were used by the King to ask questions about the future and before they were discovered (about 100 years ago), many people believed the Shang dynasty was mythical. Students could research how oracle bones were used and the type of questions that were asked. Students could also explore Chinese writing, learning what the characters mean and practicing writing them.

Students could research important or famous people that lived during the Shang dynasty. They could investigate their lives and achievements. Below is a list of people they could explore. Although all of these people were probably real, many of the stories about them sound more like legends than history.

- King Jie of Xia. Last king of the Xia dynasty. Famously wicked. Defeated by King Tang.
- King Tang of Shang (Also called Cheng Tang, ‘Tang the Accomplished’). Founder of Shang Dynasty.
- Yi Yin. One of the most famous ‘wise ministers’ in Chinese history. Advisor to king Tang and his successors. One story is that he started out as a cook in the palace and was recognized as wise and capable by King Tang--now also seen as something like a patron saint of chefs and cooking.
- King Wu Ding. Presided over the Shang dynasty ‘golden age.’ Capital near modern city of Anyang. Lived at roughly the same time as Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II (Ramses the Great.)
- Fu Hao (also called Lady Hao). Consort/’Queen’ of Wu Ding. She a consort of King Wu Ding. Her tomb, excavated in the 1970’s, is the largest undisturbed Shang tomb ever found, and is one of the most important archaeological discoveries in China. Her tomb contained hundreds of bronzes and jades, the earliest known chariots in China, and many other objects for ritual, military and everyday use. Most of what we know about her comes from the objects she was buried with, but she is mentioned in oracle bone inscriptions too.
We know, for instance, that she led soldiers into battle, leading some to portray her as a ‘warrior Queen.’

- King Di Xin. Last king of the Shang dynasty. Also famously wicked. Defeated by the Zhou Dynasty.
### Compton Verney risk assessment

**Location**

| Compton Verney Art Gallery. | Exhibitions, collections and park | Ref: |

**Description of Work**

| Severity A | 1 = Low | 2 = Medium | 3 = High |
| Probability B | 1 = Low | 2 = Medium | 3 = High |
| Overall risk C = A x B | 1 = Low | 2 = Medium | 3 = High |
| Overall risk should be <= 4 |

#### Hazard(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequence</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Preventative Measures</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk from car/coach park to Gallery. Adverse weather conditions. Uneven surfaces.</td>
<td>Trips, falls, sprains</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Child welfare</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning suite rooms have tables and four legged stools. Students may fall off stools.</td>
<td>Bumps and bruises</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Planning and control</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be walking up and down stairs within the buildings carrying clipboards and pencils. Slips, falls, impact injuries.</td>
<td>Bumps, bruises, sprains, puncture wounds and cuts</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Learning Programmer present throughout activity delivering verbal instruction. Teachers and designated adults to supervise non-programmed activity time. Teachers and designated adults to be responsible for student behavior and discipline at all times. CV learning team to be made aware of any special requirements or access needs. All materials are appropriate for child use and project specific. Non and low toxic art materials are used - suitable for child usage. All learning delivers will be Enhanced CRB checked. All CV learning support staff will be CRB checked.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be using clipboards and pencils inside the galleries and in the park. (Project specific.) Slips, falls, impact injuries.</td>
<td>Bumps, bruises, sprains, puncture wounds and cuts</td>
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<td>Students may use scissors in practical sessions.</td>
<td>Cuts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Students may ingest glue or glue sticks.</td>
<td>Students may ingest paint. Splashes in eye.</td>
<td>Students may use collage materials from more than one source i.e. shop packaging. Contamination.</td>
<td>Students may use air drying clay, which contains nylon fibers. Use of appropriate modeling tools. Ingestion of clay.</td>
<td>Students may use mark making materials. Pencils, pastels, chalk, pens, wax crayons and felt tips. Lunch period Students have lunch in the park if the weather permits or in their allocated learning room.</td>
<td>Security staff on site. First Aid and emergency provision. CV risk assessment sent in advance to all schools. Park map to be sent in advance to all visiting schools. Regular tree inspections and surgery undertaken. Life lines at the lake edge.</td>
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<td>Students may use paints in their work Such as watercolors, poster paint, block paint and acrylic paint.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students may use paper or card based materials for their own art work.</td>
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## Compton Verney risk assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Risk Level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students cross a service road to access the picnic and play area on the West Lawn. Traffic Hazard.</td>
<td>Trips, slips, falls or sprains</td>
<td>2 2 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Disease and infection. Allergic reaction.</td>
<td>2 2 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rough ground, unstable or uneven surfaces.</td>
<td>Drowning</td>
<td>2 2 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficult to navigate.</td>
<td>Impact: scratches, bruises and puncture wounds. Eye injuries. Scratches, grazes and cuts.</td>
<td>2 2 4</td>
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<td>Contact with animals. Birds, insects, plants and pathogenic micro – organism.</td>
<td>E.g. branches, pine cones. Projecting low branches.</td>
<td>3 2 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment carried out by: 

Date of assessment: 

Date of review: 

I have read and understood the contents of this document

Signature | Name | Date
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