

Calligraphy

Calligraphy means 'good' 'writing'. Chinese calligraphy is an art form, and calligraphers are highly respected. There are several styles of writing: Seal, official or clerical, regular, running or semi-cursive, and cursive. Each one has its own characteristics and purpose.

There are seven standard strokes. Some calligraphers believe there are up to thirty-two strokes. Either way, there are many interpretations.

The seven strokes or '**Seven Mysteries**' as they are called:

Horizontal line 

dot 

sweeping downward stroke 

vertical line 

sharp curve 

and 

downward stroke 

downward stroke 

Tools

Paper- The texture is fine and somewhat absorbent.



Chinese ink- It is solid, and usually comes in the shape of sticks. Black ink is made from the soot of pinewood or oil smoke, and a gum substance. Often, these sticks are decorated and highly prized by themselves.



Chinese inkstone- Inkstones are made from stone or pottery. They are flat and hard, and are sometimes shaped into beautiful objects. The calligrapher puts water on the inkstone, then grinds the stick of ink against it. This makes ink that can be brushed on paper. It is important to grind enough ink to finish what you start. If you have to grind more ink, you may not be able to make it the same shade.

Chinese brush- Brushes are made from animal hair that is bundled together and put on bamboo reeds. The Chinese use hair from wolves, sheep, rabbits, deer, foxes, or mice depending on the type of writing. For small delicate writing, use rabbit hair. For bold writing, sheep hair is good. You must take good care of the brushes to keep the point stiff and straight.



Brush rest- These stands are used to hold extra brushes. They are usually decorated.



When writing Chinese, you must always keep the brush straight up and down. Do not let your palm touch the brush. You must know how to hold the brush correctly to become a good calligrapher. Calligraphy takes lots of practice.

The stroke order of a character is important in mastering calligraphy. The stroke order creates the correct effect for the character.

