Calligraphy Lesson Plan (Teacher's Version) | Level: P4–P6

Unit 3: The Body of Characters and Structural Aesthetics

Topic: Understanding the Aesthetics of Character Forms Through Structure and Empty Space

Level: P4–P6

Duration: 30–45 minutes

Learning Objectives:

1. Analyse the structure, centre of balance, and spatial distribution of Chinese characters.
2. Use structural-grid practice to improve problems such as leaning, overcrowding, and excessive spacing.
3. Design a character from their own name while considering structural aesthetics.

Key Learning Points:

- The role of the centre of balance, proportion, and empty space in character forms.
- Using the Nine Palaces Grid, Grid of the Rice Character, Grid of the Return Character and Grid of the Togetherness Character to improve character forms.

Learning Challenge:

- Applying the results of structural analysis in actual writing.

Teaching Materials:

- Sample character cards showing well-written and less well-balanced examples.
- Practice sheets with different structural grids.

Lesson Flow:

1. Introduction (about 5–10 minutes)

Teacher Activities:

・Write several versions of the same character on the board: leaning, too crowded, too spread out, and a more balanced version.

・Ask: Which character looks the most stable? Which one looks most likely to "fall over"?

Student Activities:

・Identify the character they think looks most stable and explain why.

2. Development Activities (about 20–25 minutes)

(1) Structural Grids and Character Design

Teacher Activities:

・Divide students into groups. Each group chooses one structural grid (Nine Palaces Grid, Grid of the Rice Character, Grid of the Return Character or Grid of the Togetherness Character) for more focused practice.

・Assign several characters to each group. Discuss the position of the main form, distribution of balance and use of empty space.

Reference Webpage: [The Body of Characters - Basic Structural Grids for Chinese Characters]

[Grid Examples: Practice Sheets]

Student Activities:

・Try writing the assigned characters on structural-grid paper.

・Write down suggestions to improve character forms.

(2) Diagnosing Structural Problems

Teacher Activities:

・Provide several examples of "problem characters", such as left-right imbalance, top-heavy forms, overcrowding and excessive spacing.

・Ask students to identify the problems, such as a shifted centre of balance, uneven proportions or insufficient empty space.

Student Activities:

・Record their diagnosis and suggested improvements on the worksheet.

(3) Designing a Character From Your Name

Teacher Activities:

・Guide students to choose one Chinese character from their own name as the design subject.

・Encourage them to create several versions within a structural grid and select the one they like best.

Student Activities:

・Complete their "Name Character Grid Design" and prepare to present it in the next lesson.

3. Consolidation and Summary (about 5–10 minutes)

Teacher Activities:

・Invite several students to present their name-character designs. Discuss the centre of balance and spatial aesthetics as a class.

Student Activities:

・Listen to classmates' presentations and offer suggestions and positive feedback.

4. Classroom Assessment and Extension

・Assess whether students can identify problems with a character's centre of balance and explain the role of empty space.

・Extension: Encourage students to apply structural aesthetics to handwriting in other subjects.

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Worksheet (1)

Unit 3: Character Structure Diagnostic Card | Level: P4–P6

Name: _____ **Class:** _____ **Date:** _____

1. Diagnosis

Your teacher will provide several characters that are not ideally balanced. Identify the problem:

Example 1: _____

Problem: off-centre / too crowded / too spread out / other: _____

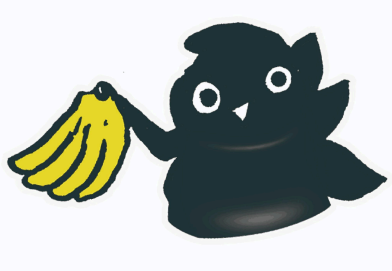
Example 2: _____

Problem: off-centre / too crowded / too spread out / other: _____

2. Suggestions for Improvement

Write down how you think the character could be improved. For example:

- Add more empty space / reduce the size of one part / adjust the centre of balance.



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Worksheet (2)

Unit 3: My Name Character Grid Design | Level: P4–P6

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

1. Analysis

The character from my name is: _____

Its structure is: left-and-right / top-and-bottom / inside-and-outside / other: _____

The structural grid I chose is: Nine Palaces Grid / Grid of the Rice Characte / Grid of the Return Character / Grid of the Togetherness Character

2. Practice

Write three versions on the structural-grid paper provided by your teacher. Circle the one you like best and explain why:

I like this version best because _____.