

# Dragons

SCHOOL WORKSHOPS | Classroom Connections  
Grade Level: 2nd –4th

The  
Nelson-Atkins  
Museum  
of Art



## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Students look at dragons from Eastern and Western cultures in the Museum's galleries and discover the imaginary creature's role in art. Guided by gallery inspiration, students manipulate clay to create a three-dimensional dragon.

## WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Define a dragon as an imaginary creature in Eastern and Western cultures that is composed of various animal features.
- Demonstrate three-dimensional construction techniques as they apply to clay.
- Create a three-dimensional clay dragon that indicates surface texture and includes embellishments with papers and wire.

## COLLECTION FOCUS

A variety of two and three-dimensional dragons from Eastern and Western cultures will be viewed throughout the Museum.

*Certain collections or galleries may be unavailable due to rotations or construction. We apologize for the inconvenience.*

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

### National Visual Arts Standards

- Elaborate on an imaginative idea (Cr1.13a)
- Use observation and investigation in preparation for making a work of art (VA:Cr1.2.1a)
- Create artwork using a variety of processes and materials (VA:Cr2.1.3a)
- Adding details in an artwork to enhance visual meaning (VA:Cr3.1.3a)
- Explain where different cultures record stories through art (VA:Pr6.1.3a)
- Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery (VA:Re.7.7.5a)
- People from different places have made art for a variety of reasons (VA:Cn11.1.1a)



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School Workshop Scheduler  
[StudioWorkshops@nelson-atkins.org](mailto:StudioWorkshops@nelson-atkins.org)

## BEFORE YOUR VISIT

- Read the story of “Saint George and the Dragon” or “East Dragon, West Dragon” by Robyn Eversole and Scott Campbell.
- Review vocabulary/concepts list.

## VOCABULARY/CONCEPTS

**Dragon:** A mythical creature

*Eastern Dragon* Good-natured, wise, benevolent creatures who lived in all forms of nature and were deeply respected in Eastern culture

*Western Dragon* An threatening creature that appears in legends where good conquers evil

**Sculpture:** A three-dimensional work of art

**Three-dimensional:** Having or appearing to have height, width and depth

**Two-dimensional:** Having or appearing to have height and width

**Texture:** An element of art that refers to how something feels on the surface

**Imaginary:** Something that is not real



*Flower Vase with Dragon Motif, Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127)*



*Saint George and the Dragon, ca. 1500*

## AFTER YOUR VISIT

- Use a world map to locate various Eastern and Western countries that will be referred to in the workshop when discussing the origins of the dragon. Some suggestions include: China, Japan, Germany, France and Italy.
- After your visit, have students write a short story describing their dragon and telling of the dragon’s adventures.
- Ask students to identify which characteristics of their dragons are similar to Eastern or Western dragons, and give them an opportunity explain their choices.



## EDUCATOR RESOURCE CENTER

*The ERC can help you expand your before and after visit activities to fully connect your museum experience with your classroom curriculum. The ERC provides:*

- Curriculum consultations
- Circulating Resources including Art Connection Kits
- Professional Development Workshops

[nelson-atkins.org/educators/](http://nelson-atkins.org/educators/)