

Writing with Pictures

Chinese writing began as pictures scratched on oracle bones. Over time, these early pictures became pictographs, or written pictures. Pictographs can describe a person, thing, or idea.

Below are two ancient Chinese pictographs that sort of look like what they are describing.

human

tree

Below, two ancient Chinese pictographs are combined to describe a person, thing, or idea.

If sun and moon mean bright . . .

日 + 月 = 明

What do you think tree and tree mean? _____

木 + 木 = 林

Work with your partner to choose three words from the Vocabulary List below. On a separate sheet of paper, draw one or more pictographs to describe each of the three words you have chosen. Remember: You can combine two pictographs to describe a person, thing, or idea.

Write your names on your pictograph paper, but do **not** label what each pictograph means.

Vocabulary List

river
dog
king or ruler
soldier
village

horse
mountain
army
farmer
pottery

mountains
market
stone tool
walled city
desert