

Educator Resources: Framing Views



DR. SUN YAT-SEN
CLASSICAL
CHINESE
GARDEN



**An art activity inspired by
classical Chinese Garden leak windows**

Exploring Leak Windows and Framing Views



Welcome to Dr Sun Yat Sen Classical Chinese Garden!

This art activity is inspired by our traditional leak windows that frame and reveal Garden views.

Introduction

Our garden is modelled on garden-homes from the Ming dynasty period (1368 - 1644). Built by Scholar-officials to house themselves and their extended families, these homes were designed as a place to relax and be close to nature, away from the pressures of outside life. Scholars used the natural and architectural features of their gardens to create a sense of nature in miniature. These features, together with Daoist, Confucian and Buddhist symbolism found throughout the Garden, would serve as inspiration for the Scholar who was an accomplished artist and musician.

Hidden Views

The Garden reveals a series of hidden views as you wander through. Beautiful views are framed by the circular moon gates and doorways and observed in the reflections on the jade coloured water. The views are composed of the traditional elements of a Chinese garden: rocks, water, plants and architecture. The architecture compliments the nature that surrounds it by echoing the curved branches of trees for example.



Leak Windows

Views are also framed by the 43 'leak windows' placed around the Garden, each one with its own unique design. Leak windows are so called because, unlike regular windows, the intricate patterns reveal and conceal different features of the view behind, framing the viewer's gaze. A large view is framed but viewers can also choose to peek through one of the elements of the pattern to observe a smaller section of view.



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This window is slightly different from the others, in that it contains a large octagon shape that frames a view both sides. It is placed in our entrance and is said to resemble a Bagua mirror, an octagonal mirror used by Feng Shui practitioners.

This style of window that frames bamboo will form the basis of our art activity.

Student Activity

In this activity, inspired by the leak windows and views of a Chinese garden, students will think about a view they would like to frame and create it within the octagonal shape of the leak window frame. This activity can be adapted easily to the age of the students and the time available in class.

Suggestions for some pre-activity discussions:

Gardens: elements of Chinese gardens and other types of gardens around the world

Plants: typical plants found in a Chinese garden and other types of gardens

Bamboo: its uses and what it looks like (bring some bamboo into class if possible)

Views: looking through a window, framing of views.

See following pages for more views of our Chinese Garden to show to students. Ask what they observe (a Chinese Garden will always contain rocks, water, plants and architecture).

For more information about Chinese Gardens, visit these sites:

<https://vancouverchinesegarden.com/wp-content/uploads/Information-for-Educators.pdf>

<https://vancouverchinesegarden.com/wp-content/uploads/Glossary.pdf>

<https://www.chinahighlights.com/suzhou/top-five-gardens.htm>

https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cnat/hd_cnat.htm

Materials needed

Photocopiable sheets (see following pages)

scissors, glue sticks/double sided tape

paint/markers/crayons/coloured pencils

Optional:

paper plates

green paper straws

green paper

Suggestions (Please see the following page for pictures and ideas):

1. Have students paint or draw a simple garden view inside the octagonal frame.
2. Have students put paint on the outer side of the pinky or index finger and, keeping the finger straight, print on the paper to create a bamboo stem. Then leaves can be cut out of green paper and stuck on, or painted.
3. Colour in, cut out and stick a pre-printed page with bamboo design (see following pages)
3. Print the frame on cardstock. Cut out the middle octagonal section. Have the students create a scene on a paper plate using the above techniques. Alternatively, students could cut up paper straws and glue them to the plate as stems, cutting out leaves of green paper. Once the paper plate bamboo or garden scenes are finished, glue or tape the frame onto the plate for a 3-D effect.
4. Older students could consider the idea of drawing 'behind' the design of the frame, to give the impression of a view seen through all sections of the leak window.





Garden view in frame



Finger painted bamboo with paper cut-out leaves



Bamboo- style paper straws on paper plate with cut-out leaves. Frame is stuck on to the plate.



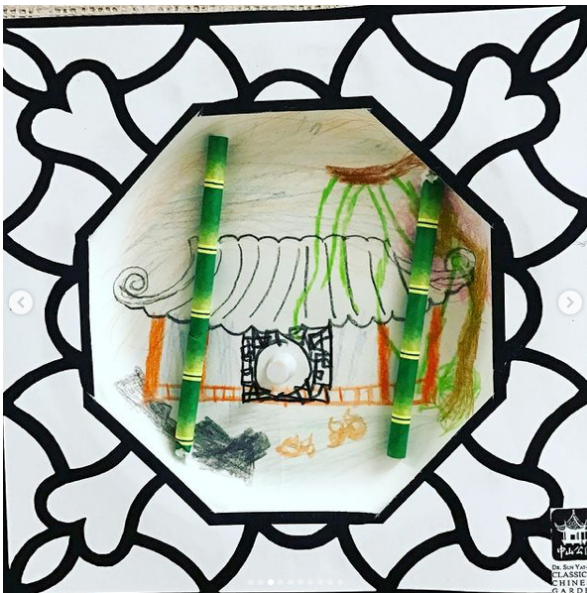
Brush painting bamboo



Garden view behind frame, black marker and coloured pencils



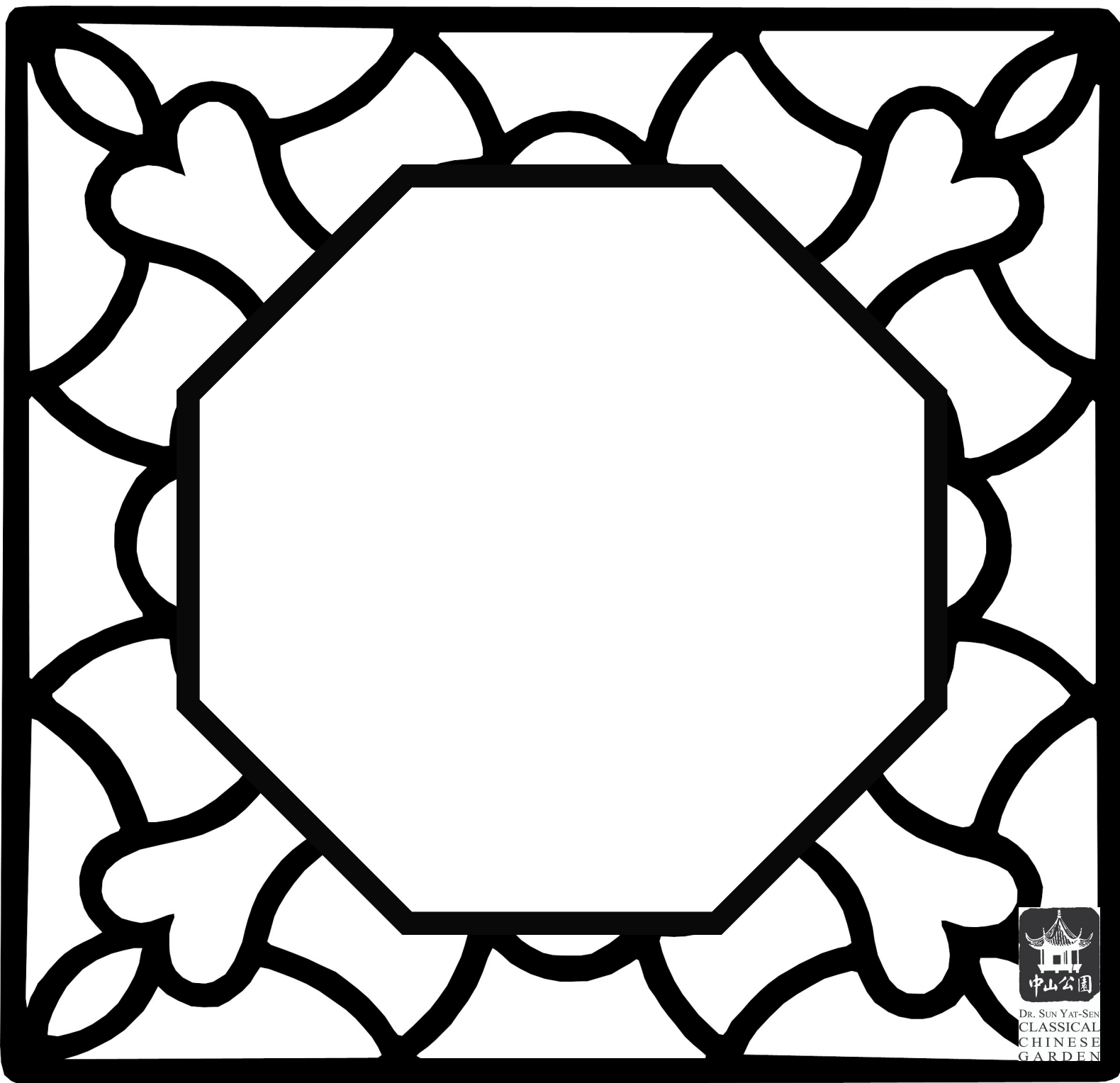
With thanks to Mme Vose's Gr 3 class, Laura Secord Elementary, Vancouver

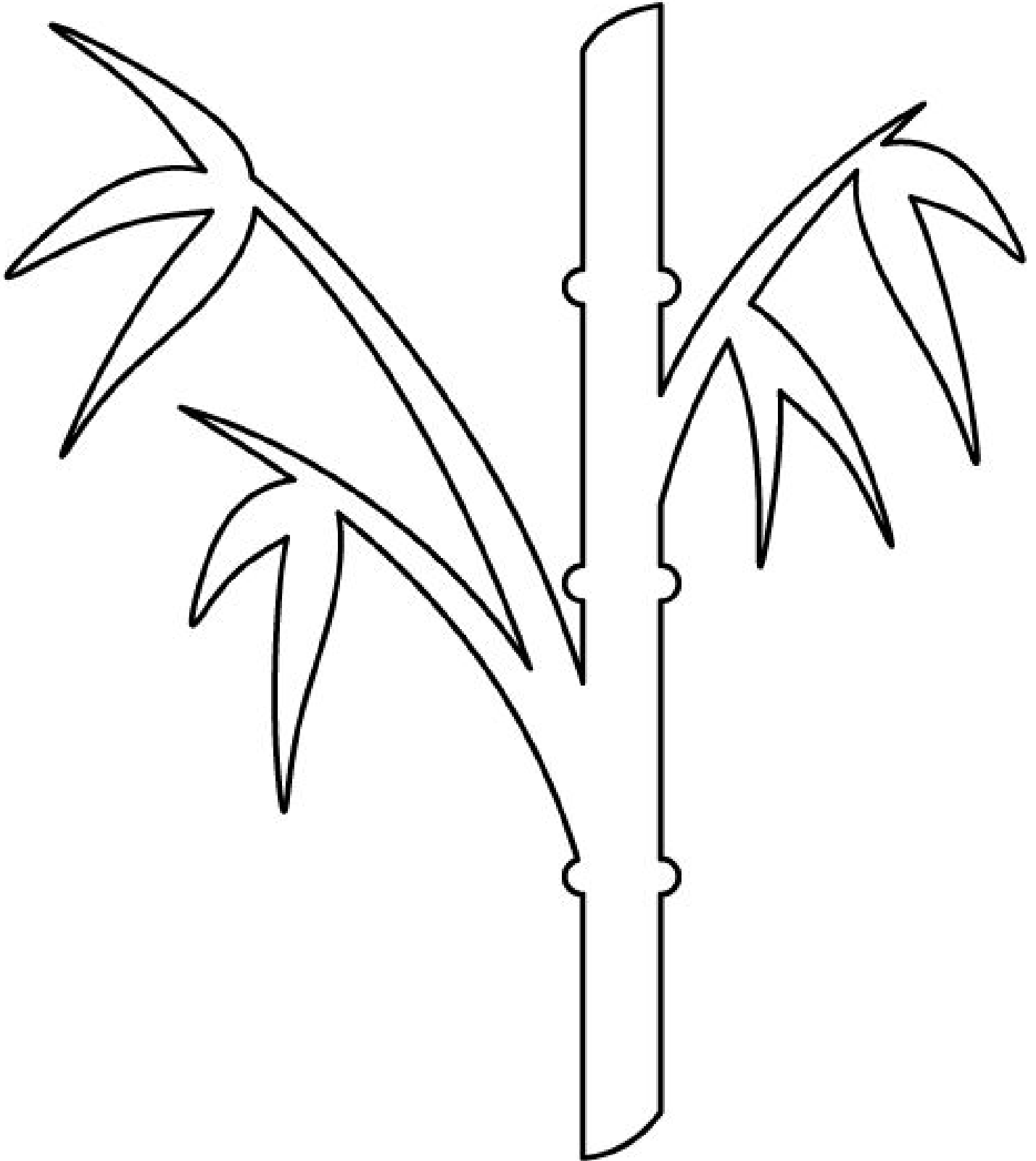


Photocopiable sheet

Nature and views in a classical Chinese garden

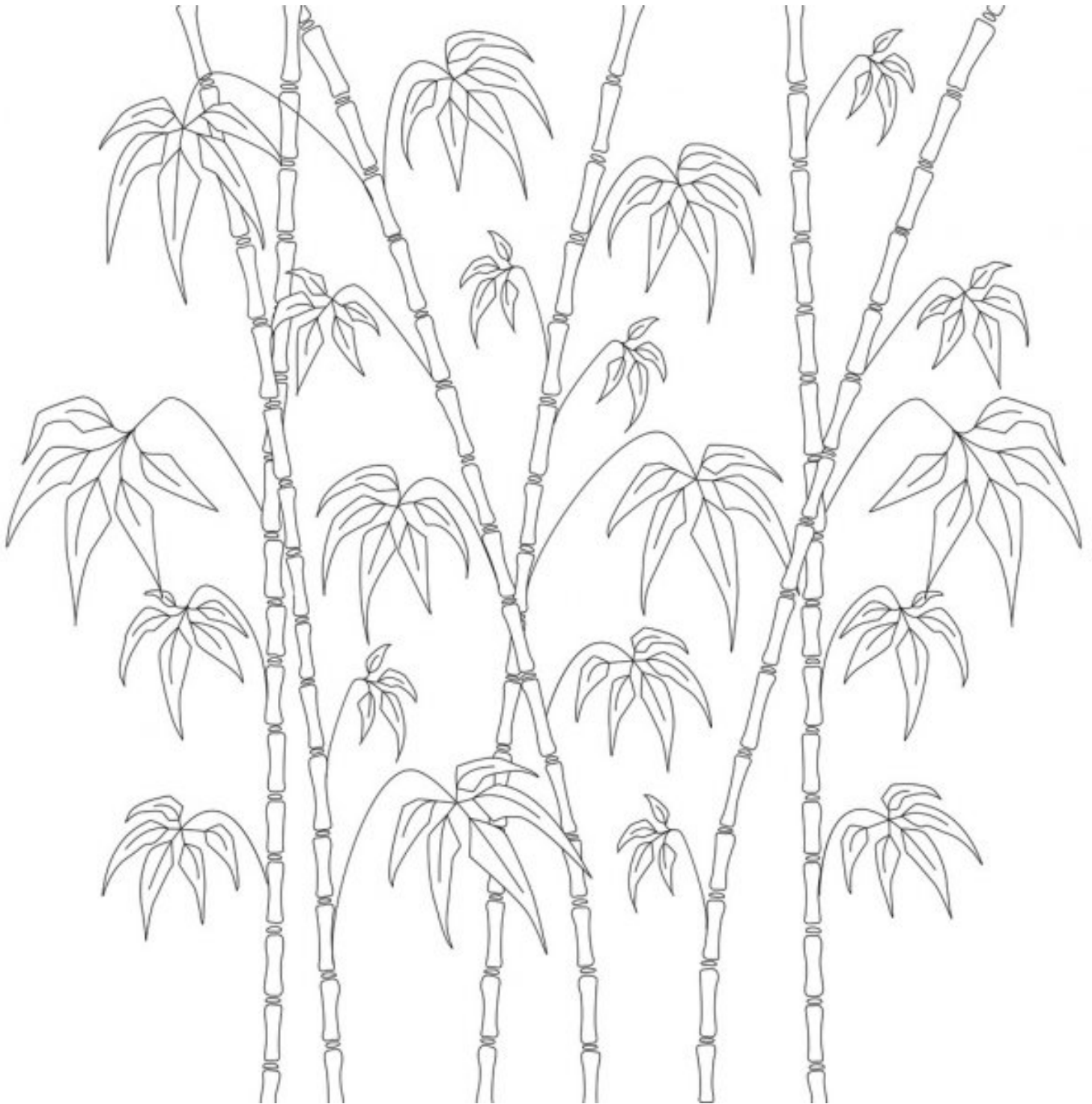






Photocopiable sheet - bamboo template





Bamboo is a name used for many types of tall, treelike grasses. There are hundreds of different species, or types, of bamboo in the world. They grow in mild to warm and humid areas. Most are in Asia and on islands of the Indian and Pacific oceans.

Bamboo is used for a variety of purposes, especially in Asia. In some countries, the seeds are eaten as grain, or the young shoots are cooked and eaten as vegetables. Cattle eat the leaves. Some types of bamboo are crushed to make paper. The stems of other types are tied together and used as rafts. They are also used to form scaffolding, or a framework on building construction sites. Bamboo stems are also used to make buckets, pipes, furniture, walking sticks, fishing poles, garden stakes, chopsticks, and other utensils.

From <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/bamboo/352821>