In China, calligraphy was established as a "high art" form well before the Tang dynasty.

During the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, calligraphy continued to be a central art of the literati, closely associated both with painting and with the social and cultural life of the educated elite.

Calligraphy could also be seen on temple name plaques, on shop signs, and on couplets pasted by the doors of even very modest homes. Calligraphy, thus, formed an ever-present part of China's visual culture.
Chinese Calligraphy

- During the twentieth century, the social and political uses of calligraphy have been radically changed.

- Calligraphy is no longer an art associated primarily with the traditional scholarly elite.

- Not only has calligraphy been employed as a tool of revolution, but it has become a popular amateur art practiced by people of all walks of life.
Calligraphy Techniques

- The first step in learning the technique of calligraphy is knowing how to grasp the brush. Grasp it firmly between the thumb and first two fingers. Keep the ring and little finger lightly behind the brush as a kind of balance.
- Dip the bottom half of the brush in ink and make different kinds of shapes with it: zigzags, curves, dashes, and dots.
- You may have noticed that your arm became tense when you held the brush tightly. You will have the best control of your lines when you hold the brush rather firmly but keep your arm relaxed.
- When freshly dipped in ink, the brush will go more smoothly over the paper and produce clearer shapes than when it's drier. If you load the brush with too much ink, however, your lines will begin to spread out in blotches on the absorbent paper.
- Keep the brush in a strictly vertical position and write slowly as this will give you better control over the direction of the brush.
- In Chinese calligraphy it is essential to be able to vary the width of the strokes simply by applying a little pressure to the brush. If a line is too wide at one point or too narrow at another it cannot be "touched up" because the corrected area will show darker than the original stroke once the ink has dried. This is also a reason that each stroke must be done in one continuous movement.
Chinese Strokes (1)

- There are only eight different kinds of strokes in Chinese calligraphy! Every character is made of one or more of these strokes.

1. The Horizontal
   - a. Put your brush on the paper, press down at the start of the stroke.
   - b. Lift your brush slightly as you draw it toward the middle of the stroke.
   - c. Press down again at the end of the stroke.
2. The Vertical
   a. Put your brush on the paper, press down at the start of the stroke.
   b. Lift the brush up slightly as you draw it downward to the middle of the stroke.
   c. Press down again at the end of the stroke.
3. The Dot
The dot is basically triangular in shape. First, lightly touch the brush to the paper, then press down and bring the brush up again. If you have trouble making the last corner of the triangle, draw the brush around it as shown below.
4. The Left-Slant
This stroke is made from the top right to the lower left. Lift the brush as you pull it to the left so that the stroke will become gradually thinner. Of course, remember to press down at the start of the stroke so that it will begin with a wide top.

5. The Right-Slant
This stroke is made from the top left to the lower right. Gradually put more pressure on the brush so that the end will be broad. Then, at the very end, lift the tip to make a point.
6. The Hook
This is simply a vertical stroke with a leftward or rightward point on the end. Press down at the start of the stroke, lift at the middle and press down again at the end. When you reach the lowest point of the stroke, lift the brush so that the tip barely touches the paper, press down and gradually lift up to make the tapering end.

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{Hook} \\
\text{Character examples}
\end{array} \]
Chinese Strokes (5)

7. The Down-Slant
This stroke is made from right to left, becoming thinner. Press down at the start of the stroke and gradually lift the brush to a point.

8. The Up-Slant
This is made the same way as the Down-Slant, but remember that you're going in the opposite direction, from left to right.
The character "yong" which means "eternal" uses all the strokes we have learned.