Imagine: Long ago, Chinese scholars studied, painted, played instruments, and wrote poems in gardens like this one. Imagine you are a scholar. What inspires you?

Look: Look out from the covered walkway. What do you see? The tile floor becomes an ocean, while the rocks rise higher like islands or mountain peaks. Which view from the walkway do you like best? What do you hear? The sound of trickling water might remind you of a babbling stream.

Write: Write your own poem about nature.

Imagine: Leave behind the hustle and bustle. Glimpse through the circle, past the rectangular doorway, to discover the magical garden beyond.

Look: Notice the Chinese writing, or characters, above the entrance. These read “In Search of Quietude.” Talk to family and friends about what these words might mean.

Pause and take a deep breath before you step into the garden.

Did you know? This entrance to the garden is called a moon gate because it’s round like the moon. In Chinese architecture, circles are often paired with squares. The circle symbolizes the universe. The square, with its four sides, represents the earth and its four directions—north, south, east, west.

Look closely to find circular and square shapes as you enter the garden.

Listen for the sound of water. Find it as you walk along the edge of the walkway.

Hearing a Garden: Use the gallery map in this guide to find Gallery 133.

Imagine: You are wandering through a Japanese garden on a hot summer’s day. You might refresh yourself with cool water from a stone basin, or container.

Listen for the sound of water. Find it flowing up into the round opening of Water Stone. Many Japanese gardens include stone basins that collect water from rain and surrounding mountain streams.

There is a round moon gate on the wall of the Chinese Garden Court. In nature, opposite sites like the ones you found in the Chinese Garden Court continually change and balance each other. List the opposites you notice in this sculpture.

Store Your Dreams: Use the gallery map in this guide to find Gallery 229.

Imagine: you’re wandering through a Japanese garden on a hot summer’s day. You might refresh yourself with cool water from a stone basin, or container.

Listen for the sound of water. Find it flowing up into the round opening of Water Stone. Many Japanese gardens include stone basins that collect water from rain and surrounding mountain streams.

Loco: In nature, opposite sites like the ones you found in the Chinese Garden Court continually change and balance each other. List the opposites you notice in this sculpture.

Did you know? This is called a moon jar and it may have been used to store grain.

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Use this guide to find and explore

THE ASTOR COURT, A CHINESE GARDEN COURT

in the Met’s Asian art galleries. Continue your journey through East Asia and find artworks inspired by nature in the Japanese and Korean art galleries!

YIN-YANG
Opposites play in this garden—outside and inside, light and dark, natural and man-made. These opposites in nature work together to create the changes and rhythms in our lives. This is the ancient Chinese idea known as yin-yang. What other opposites do you notice?

IT’S A FACT
This courtyard was inspired by one created in China nearly 400 years ago! A team of craftsmen traveled from China to New York City to build it. They even brought all the materials they needed and did not use a single nail in their construction!

WHO WANDERED THROUGH THIS GARDEN?
Chinese scholars were educated men who were respected for knowing their culture’s traditions. Being close to nature was important to them. In the Chinese art galleries, look for pictures of scholars in gardens that look like this one.

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MOON GATE
Enter Another World

WALKWAY
Wonder as You Wander

SCHOLARS’ ROCKS
Moving Mountains

DRIP TILES
Raining Fortunes

The Astor Chinese Garden Court
Ming dynasty (1368–1644), 17th-century style; China; Taihu rocks, granite terrace, ceramic tile flooring, roof tiles, and door frames, various woods (nan wood columns, pine beams, gingko latticework), brass fittings; Purchase, The Vincent Astor Foundation Gift, 1981
Use this guide to find and explore THE ASTOR COURT, A CHINESE GARDEN COURT in the Met’s Asian art galleries. Continue your journey through East Asia and find artworks inspired by nature in the Japanese and Korean art galleries!

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GALLERY 217 • Astor Chinese Garden Court

THE ASTOR COURT, A CHINESE GARDEN COURT
Ming dynasty (1368–1644), 17th-century style; China; Taihu rocks, granite terrace, ceramic tile flooring, roof tiles, and door frames, various woods (nan wood columns, pine beams, gingko latticework), brass fittings; Purchase, The Vincent Astor Foundation Gift, 1981

GREAT HALL

CENTRAL PARK

FIFTH AVENUE

SECOND FLOOR

GALLERY 217 • Astor Chinese Garden Court

GALLERY 229 • Water Stone

ASIAN ART GALLERIES (200–253)

GALLERY 233 • Moon Jar

SECOND FLOOR

GALLERY 217 • Astor Chinese Garden Court
Nature, Nature Everywhere
China, Korea, and Japan—known as East Asia—are neighbors. Travel through the East Asian art galleries and see the theme of nature in many works of art.

Find:
Mountains
Flowers and plants
Rocks
Water
The moon

IMAGINE:
What sound might it make?
What do you see in the rocks?
What opposites do you notice in this sculpture.

Look for circular and square shapes as you enter the garden.

Find a rock that towers above the others.

Look at the tiles along the edge of the slanted roof. Find the tiles that are shaped like triangles and have pointed ends. They’re called drip tiles.

Hear a Garden
Use the gallery map in this guide to find Gallery 229.

IMAGINE:
You are wandering through a Japanese garden on a hot summer’s day. You might refresh yourself with cool water from a stone basin, or container.

Listen for the sound of water. Find it flowing up into the round opening of Water Stone. Many Japanese gardens include stone basins that collect water from rain and surrounding mountain streams.

LOOK:
Search for a container that is milky white and round like the moon. Walk all the way around it. Look carefully at the color and describe it.

IMAGINE:
What could you store your dreams in a jar?
What is the dream you would put inside.

Look:
The rocks in this garden are called scholars’ rocks. They inspired scholars at their desks to think about the Chinese character for mountain (shan) and in their gardens. Craftsmen arranged the rocks to look like the Chinese character for mountain (shan).

Strike a pose:
Over the years, gardens have “three happiness” down on the garden and the people below.

Write:
You try your hand at writing the Chinese character for water (shui).

Did you know:
The rocks here to look like the Chinese character for mountain (shan).

DID YOU KNOW:
Chinese scholars of magical caves that are highly prized because they remind them of the awe-inspiring mountains of China, Korea, and Japan. Template for magical caves was a small basin or container that is put inside.

In nature, opposites like the ones you found in the Chinese Garden Court continuously change and balance each other. List the opposites you notice in this sculpture.

LOOK:
Find a rock that towers above the others. The more top-heavy and interestingly shaped the better! Look closely to discover the many holes. Rocks like these are highly prized because they remind Chinese scholars of magical caves that might lead to hidden worlds.

Look at the tiles along the edge of the slanted roof. Find the tiles that are shaped like triangles and have pointed ends. They’re called drip tiles.

Long ago, Chinese scholars studied, painted, played instruments, and wrote poems in gardens like this one. Imagine you are a scholar. What inspires you?

Look:
Leave behind the hustle and bustle. Glimpse through the circle, past the rectangular doorway, to discover the magical garden beyond.

Look:
Notice the Chinese writing, or characters, above the entrance. These read “In Search of Quietude.” Talk to family and friends about what these words might mean.

Pause and take a deep breath before you step into the garden.

DID YOU KNOW:
This entrance to the garden is called a moon gate because it’s round like the moon. In Chinese architecture, circles are often paired with squares. The circle symbolizes the universe. The square, with its four sides, represents the earth and its four directions—north, south, east, west. Look for circular and square shapes as you enter the garden.

WRITE:
Take your own poem about nature.

DID YOU KNOW:
The design on the tiles shows the Chinese character for water (shui). With coins and squares that stand for long life, or shou. When rain falls on the tiles it drips these wealth (opposites).

IMAGINE:
Down onto the garden the tiles it drips these wealth (opposites). What inspires you?

DID YOU KNOW?
Look at the tiles along the edge of the slanted roof. Find the tiles that are shaped like triangles and have pointed ends. They’re called drip tiles.

IMAGINE:
Do you hear the sound of a babbling stream? What do you see? The tile floor becomes an island or mountain peaks. Which view from the rocks you notice?

Notice the Chinese writing, or characters, above the entrance. These read “In Search of Quietude.” Talk to family and friends about what these words might mean.

Pause and take a deep breath before you step into the garden.

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Strike a pose:
Over the years, gardens have “three happiness” down on the garden and the people below.

Write:
You try your hand at writing the Chinese character for water (shui).
Imagine

Long ago, Chinese scholars studied, painted, played instruments, and wrote poems in gardens like this one. Imagine you are a scholar. What inspires you?

Look

Look out from the covered walkway. What do you see? The tile floor becomes an ocean, while the rocks rise upwards like islands or mountain peaks. Which view from the walkway do you like best? What do you hear? The sound of trickling water might remind you of a babbling stream.

Write

Write your own poem about nature.

Finding Mountains

In the Chinese character for mountain (shan), the first part looks like a mountain (shui) and the second part is the Chinese character for happiness (chu). When rain falls on the moon, it drizzles these small mountains. The rocks here to look like the Chinese scholars’ rocks. They inspired scholars at their desks long time ago. The rocks will inspire you now. Look closely to find the many holes. Rocks like these are highly prized because they remind Chinese scholars of magical caves that might lead to hidden worlds.

Imagine What you could store your dreams in a jar.

Moon Jar

This is called a moon jar and it may have been used to store grain. Did you know? This is called a moon jar because it is milky white and round like the moon. Walk all the way around it. Look carefully at the color and describe it.

Hearing a Garden

Use the gallery map in this guide to find Gallery 229.

Imagery you are wandering through a Japanese garden on a hot summer’s day. You might refresh yourself with cool water from a stone basin, or container.

Listen for the sound of water. Find it flowing up into the round opening of Water Stone. Many Japanese gardens include stone basins that collect water from rain and surrounding mountain streams.

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Find

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Flowers and plants

Rocks

Water

The moon

Find a rock that towers above the others. The more top-heavy and interestingly shaped the better! Look closely to discover the many holes. Rocks like these are highly prized because they remind Chinese scholars of magical caves that might lead to hidden worlds.

Did you know?

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Did you know?

The design on the tiles shows the Chinese character for long life (shou). What inspires you? The sound of trickling water might remind you of a babbling stream.

Look

Look at the tiles along the edge of the slanted roof. Find the tiles that are shaped like triangles and have pointed ends. They’re shaped the better! Look closely to discover the many holes. Rocks like these are highly prized because they remind Chinese scholars of magical caves that might lead to hidden worlds.

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Strike a Pose

Once in a garden like this one imagined the shapes of animals, dragons, and other creatures in the rocks. What creature do you see in the rocks? Pose like that creature.

Sculptures are artworks that are three dimensional. The way an artist makes a sculpture can change what you see. Look for the way around the sculpture. Describe it. Look carefully at the color and describe it.

Family Guide

Journey to a Chinese Garden Court

Discover the beauty of nature around you—right within the Museum’s walls!